



AgulhasNPark eBulletin



South African
NATIONAL PARKS

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Happy Festive Season to All

www.sanparks.org

A Happy Festive and Holiday Season to all our readers and visitors to the Southernmost Tip!!
Please look after the Angulate Tortoises, African Penguins, Black Oystercatchers, Abalone
and all other animal and bird life around you.

'When one tugs at a single thing in nature, he finds it attached to the rest of the world' – John Muir

The National Environmental Education and Training Strategy and Action Plan

Sustainable development means the integration of social, economic and environmental factors into planning, implementation and decision making to ensure that development serves present and future generations. The National Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries (DEFF) is at present rolling out a **National Environmental Education and Training Strategy and Action Plan**. A healthy, natural environment is the fundamental pre-requisite for **sustainable human development – and human survival**. **Environmental degradation** and associated **unsustainable patterns of development** are increasingly affecting a wide variety of social practices, including workplace practices. Therefore, people need to learn to understand **environmental issues and risks**, and their **causes**, and they need to develop the **values** and **action competences** necessary to respond and to develop **alternatives, solutions, and changed practices**. The process of **empowering** all our people towards this **awareness**, and preparing for the next step – action in support of this understanding – is termed **Environmental Education Strategy and Action Plan**. Environmental Education Strategy and Action Plan embodies the elements of **knowledge, attitudes, skills**, and an **orientation** which encourages action to achieve sustainable human development. The strategy reflects current thinking beyond conservation to embrace the context of sustainable development – **society, economy and environment** inextricably interwoven.

SANParks Honorary Rangers Agulhas Region donations to Agulhas National Park – Alliston Appel

The SANParks Honorary Rangers (SHRs) support SANParks in various ways and through a range of initiatives. Annually the Agulhas National Park presents a wishlist with priority items and duties to the SHR Agulhas Region and through a process, agreement is reached on these and other requests. During 2020 the following items were donated: In March a new gas burner was installed at the Bosheuvel Environmental Education Centre. This is a much appreciated solution to an emergency situation when groups of learners need to be fed during a power failure. SASOL Bird books were donated to the Conservation Department which will be very useful to identify birds during patrols and to learn more about the birds in the park. A collection of footwear and other camping gear was also donated. We also received much needed and valuable food parcels for distribution in neighbouring communities to vulnerable households from the SANParks Honorary Rangers as a whole. The Agulhas Region supported the People and Conservation section throughout the year with the Soutbosch Open Days programme and preparations involving activities such as walking trails around Soutbosch farmstead and restorative actions needed to maintain the old Soutbosch house. The Agulhas National Park's management and staff are very grateful for this support.



EXPANDED PUBLIC WORKS PROGRAMME
CONTRIBUTING TO A NATION AT WORK



Working for
the coast
Agulhas Region



Working for
the coast
Agulhas Region

Connecting to Society

The Cape Honey Bee: nature's miracle worker – Richard Penwill, the Bee-keeper continues

The domestic arrangements of bees are also extraordinary. In nature a colony of bees will typically occupy a hollowed-out log, rock crevice or any other spot that offers some shelter from wind, rain or predators. Wherever they settle, they immediately start to manufacture wax-comb. The broad dimensions of the comb will depend on the space that they occupy and additional combs will run equidistant to the initial comb and one another. The comb itself is made up of bee-size hexagonal cells which all fit together without any gaps. The shape of the inner walls of a cell make up the outer walls of its adjoining cells. The cells are duplicated on either side of a partitioning wax wall and are sealed with a wax capping. Architecturally, this design is splendid in its simplicity and economy and has long attracted the attention and admiration of designers and mathematicians alike.



The temperature of a hive – whether natural or man-made – is carefully controlled by the bees. Undesired drafts are blocked off with *propolis*, a gummy substance made by the bees from plant scar-tissue. The air temperature is controlled by the bees who may cluster over the comb in cold weather or, when too warm, they will generate an air-flow, over brought in moisture, to produce a cooling evaporation across the comb by all flapping their wings. They can do this without taking off by temporarily dislocating their wings from their shoulders.

Honey is an extraordinary foodstuff. It is both delicious and nutritious. This is something that mankind has appreciated and enjoyed for thousands of years. The Promised Land of biblical times was described as the 'land of milk and honey' – (implying verdant pasture and flowering plants). Honey has also been long-recognised for its superlative medicinal properties. One of the characteristics of honey is that, when effectively sealed against moisture (in wax comb or a container), it can last for centuries. (It has been found in recognisable form in the tombs of Egyptian pyramids). It is surely a tribute to the selflessness and species survival instincts of the worker bee that, as a matter of course, she manufactures food that by definition (and predators permitting) could outlast her own lifetime thousands of times over – providing potential sustenance for her successors far into the very distant future. This ability to manufacture and store food is a super-survival strategy.

Western Cattle Egret – Wim De Klerk

Western Cattle Egret (Veereier, *Bubulcus ibis*) originally came from Central Africa before it began its range extension. Most of the African continent was colonised between 1920 and 1940. Cattle Egret reached the South Western Cape only in 1934. Records for the Agulhas Plain published in 1957 said: "Not as numerous as Yellow-billed Egret". SABAP1 which ran from 1987 to 1991 recorded a massive 328 records with a reporting rate of 73.4%. This exponential increase was thought to be due to the increase of cattle farming. So what do we see today in the Agulhas Plain?



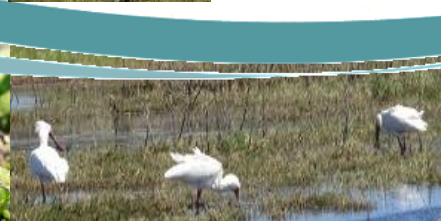
The reporting rate in the past 10 years has dropped by almost 50%! Should we be alarmed? Further studies are warranted.

Birding after a good rainy season

Agulhas National Park measured from May until October 359,6mm of rain with 115,8mm in August. This accounts for very interesting bird sightings in L'Agulhas village. Look out for the **Ground Woodpecker (Grondspeg, *Geocolaptes olivaceus*)**, **Black-winged Kite (Blouvalk, *Elanus caeruleus*)**, **Black Harrier (Witkruisvleivalk, *Circus maurus*)**, the **Rock Kestrel (Kransvalk, *Falco rupicolus*)** and many more. Along the coast around the Southernmost Tip look out for the **Whimbrel (Kleinwulp, *Numenius phaeopus*)** and **White-fronted Plover (Vaalstrandkiewiet, *Charadrius marginatus*)**.



On Springfield 390mm of rain was measured from May until October, more than what was measured for the whole of 2019. Look out for the **Kittlitz's Plover (Geelborsstrandkiewiet, *Charadrius pecuarius*)**, **Denham's Bustard (Veldpou, *Neotis denhami*)**, **Flamingos** and **Ostrich** at the Saltpans and many more.



Groundwater hydro census in Agulhas National Park - Ruth-Mary Fisher, Cape Research Centre

A groundwater census was conducted within Agulhas National Park between November 17 and 19 by scientists from the Cape Research Centre and park staff. A total of 33 groundwater sites were documented, with 31 sites visited. These included natural springs at Waterford and Rietfontein, boreholes providing water to internal SANParks accommodation and offices and to the nearby towns. The hydro census documented the state of the groundwater sites (defunct or still in use), and the depth and water levels at each borehole. What is a Groundwater hydro census? A groundwater hydro census is aimed at documenting all the groundwater sites within a particular area. Groundwater sites refer to boreholes, natural springs where groundwater receives daylight and well points. Why do we need a groundwater hydro census? As national parks we need to manage all our natural ecosystems under conservation in our parks. To manage this need to understand the functioning of groundwater. The recent drought experienced in South Africa also added pressure to our groundwater resources when dams and rivers dried up. National parks, especially those in the Central Karoo region, received applications to develop well fields, a series of boreholes, within or close to their borders. Thus, understanding the current groundwater ecosystem functioning and resources within the national parks, will allow SANParks to better manage and monitor the resource, conserve groundwater dependant ecosystems, and mitigate against potential negative impacts of future regional aquifer developments (Petersen 2019). The hydro census forms the foundation of a groundwater monitoring programme for the park.



Waterford fountain



Rietfontein fountain



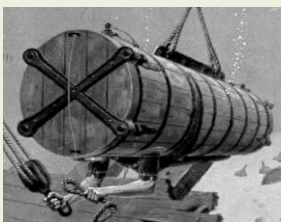
Rasperpunt well point



Defunct bore-hole

Contributions to our knowledge of shipwrecks – Jimmy Herbert

The historical and archaeological records indicate that almost all relevant knowledge in the field of maritime history and archaeology, over the last decades, has mainly come from verbal reports (locals and divers), research, search and discoveries (diving community), related books (non-archaeology community) and journal publications (diving and non-archaeology community). The new realm of such sub-aqua discoveries, namely deep water (up to 5km deep and more) also comes solely from the aquatic adventurers and the non-archaeology community. Already in 1685, a diving bell was used to recover cannons from the Swedish ship VASA. The British explorer, Sir William Phipps, also used a diving bell in 1687 to recover vast riches from the bottom of the ocean. In the 1700s it was John Lethbridge's diving machine that continued adding to our knowledge of shipwrecks and artefact recovery. By the 1800s it was the diving helmet which opened new underwater possibilities. Our Overberg forefather, Michael van Breda, also had such a diving suit and helmet for the purpose of local salvage. With the invention of the open circuit demand **scuba** (Self Contained Underwater Breathing Apparatus) in 1943 the efforts by the Frenchmen, Jacques-Yves Cousteau and Émile Gagnan, the underwater realm was put into the reach of the ordinary diving public.



Over the last number of years, maritime enthusiasts often debated the question of "Which group, divers or archaeologists, has contributed the most to our present-day knowledge of maritime history most to our present-day knowledge of maritime history and archaeology?" Unfortunately, today one can only sadly report, with hindsight in our favour, that up to the mid-80s almost all contributions to the world's knowledge of maritime archaeology came directly or indirectly from the global wreck diving community. It is sad to say, but virtually nothing came from professional archaeologists. Even the two ships, WASA (Sweden) and MARY ROSE (UK), that provided the world with a treasure trove of archaeology knowledge, were not discovered by archaeologists. Regrettably and incomprehensibly this trend persists to this day.



Furthermore, of all the hundreds of artefacts recovered from under the water, donated to and accepted by the Cape Town museums (today IZIKO Museums), not even one item that I know of is on display for the South African public to see and enjoy. No silver bars from the many recovered from the JOANNA (1682) are to be seen nor a display of the many NICOBAR (1783) rare Swedish plate money cargo items already donated to the Cape Town museums in the 1980s. Not even one porcelain item, from the well over 150,000 porcelain items lying on the BREDERODE (1785), has been seen. As with virtually all other wrecks discovered along the South African coast, these three ships were also discovered by divers and NOT archaeologists. One can but ask the question: What have our maritime archaeologists contributed in all this time?

Train and Horse cart travelling to the Southernmost Tip in 1896: route description to Cape Agulhas from Cape Town to Sir Lowry's Pass by train and from there by horse cart

Mail carts left Caledon on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays at 02:00 for Bredasdorp, a distance of about 45 miles, occupying 10 hours (fare 15s.). The road runs for a great part of the distance over light sandy plains, admirably adapted for sheep walks, and large quantities of wool are raised in the district. The carts stopped at Napier (pop. 539), 36 miles from Caledon, a village with Dutch and English churches and a small hotel and the only place on the road where refreshments were obtainable. The next stop was Bredasdorp (pop. 600), the chief town of the division, with English and Dutch churches, a small library and the Standard Hotel. There is good sport (*hunting*) to be had, including bontebok, a permit to shoot these being necessary. Horses to continue the journey can be obtained. A cart left for Cape Agulhas on Saturdays at 13:00, travel time five hours. Cape Agulhas was 20 miles from Bredasdorp, the most southerly point of the African Continent. A lighthouse has been erected on the Cape, 100 feet high, with a light visible at six leagues. Agulhas, signifying needles, is derived from the saw-edged reefs and sunken rocks which run out to sea and are most dangerous to vessels hugging the land too closely. Probably the best known of the many wrecks, caused by the Agulhas Bank, is that of the Birkenhead, which struck on the reef near Danger Point on the 26 February, 1852. The meridian of Cape Agulhas (20° E) is that adopted as the dividing line between the Atlantic and Indian Oceans. (SOURCE: THE GUIDE TO SOUTH AFRICA: for the use of Tourists, Sportsmen, Invalids and Settlers, 1897-8 ed., edited by A. Samler Brown and G. Gordon Brown. Cape Town: J.C. Juta, 1897, p 310 to 311.)

Festivities, Places to visit and Activities at the Southernmost Tip

Maakit Mooi Coffee Shop, 82 Church street, Elim : Summer holiday activities

Maakit Mooi invites you to join in a fun summer holiday programme:

1 hour guided mountain biking through Elim Fynbos.

1 hour guided tour on bicycle through historical town of Elim

1 hour horse-cart riding to Elim Fynbos at Geelkop or village tour.

10km Fun walk and 17km Cycling event to Sandberg Fynbos Reserve (Pilgrims of Hope Hiking Route), 19 December 2020.

Elim Brass Ensemble – Christmas Carols, 20 December 2020 at 15h00 tot 17h00.

Bookings are compulsory. Contact Carl at 082 780 5448 or enviro.richter@gmail.com.

At the Coffee Shop you can enjoy quality grinded coffee, cappuccino's, espresso, breakfast, light meals, milkshakes, homemade bread (on order only), homemade biscuits, scones, milk tart and cake. Contact Madelein at 082 481 4782 / 028-4821693 or madelein.richter96@gmail.com.



Visit the Cape Agulhas Tourism website, www.capeagulhas.org, and facebook pages, Cape Agulhas Municipality en Discover Cape Agulhas for information on events and activities during the December holidays.

29 DEC 2020

MTB RACE

34°47'59.88"S 20°02'56.87"E

DISTANCES
35KM, 46KM, 63KM

ONLINE ENTRIES AT
www.capeagulhasmtb.co.za

REGISTRATION
28 December 2020 17h00 - 19h00 | 29 December 2020 06h00 - 08h00

STRUISBAAI CHURCH GROUNDS IN MARQUEE TENT

ENTRY FEE: R114 PER PERSON
START TIME FOR ALL DISTANCES: 06h30 - 08h00
TIMING: STRAVA

MEALS FOR ALL FINISHERS | NO PRE-BOOKING | RESULTS ON STRAVA

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[@capeagulhasmtb](https://www.facebook.com/capeagulhasmtb)

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PSG Wealth

CAPE AGULHAS CLASSIC
Africa's Southernmost Mountain Bike Race

STRANDVELD VINEYARDS

ANNUAL TRAIL RUN & BUBBLY BREAKFAST

Join Strandveld Vineyards for their Annual Strandveld Trail Run and Methode Cap Classique breakfast on Tuesday 29 December 2020

Enjoy a scenic 16 km trail run through vineyards, fynbos and pastures along a jeep track onto the Sandberg with breath-taking views of the Agulhas Basin and wetlands, wheat fields and the surrounding coastline.

There is also an 8 km vineyard run/walk with a 4½ km shortcut for the slightly less fit and competitive.

Afterwards enjoy a glass of the delightful Strandveld Skaamgeestig Pinot Noir Brut MCC and a delicious, country breakfast.

Pre-booking your spot for the day is essential as only a limited number of tickets are available for the bubbly breakfast.

Additional tickets for the trail run only are available and include bubbly or juice at the finish line. Places will be awarded to the first three male and first three female finishers of the 16 km.

Contact Jackie@strandveld.co.za or 028 482 1902 for more information and to book your ticket and to request a booking form.

29 DECEMBER
16 KM STRANDVELD TRAIL RUN
8 KM VINEYARD WALK/RUN
4.5 KM THE SHORT CUT

BREAKFAST & TRAIL RUN
R200 PER ADULT | R100 PER CHILD

TRAIL RUN & BUBBLY/JUICE
R100 PER ADULT | R50 PER CHILD

06:30 REGISTRATION
07:00 RACE START

STRANDVELD VINEYARDS WINE ESTATE
DIE DAMME ROAD, BLM, CAPE AGULHAS

028 482 1902 www.strandveld.co.za

Agulhas National Park Tourism facilities and the Cape Agulhas Lighthouse

All the **Rest camps** in the Agulhas National Park are open for bookings. Contact the Central Reservations at

012-428-9111,

e-mail reservations@sanparks.org

www.sanparks.org

The **Cape Agulhas Lighthouse** stays closed until further notice. You can explore the precinct and walk along the boardwalk to the **Southernmost Tip**, the Iconic Map of Africa and Monument.

Explore the **coastline** to experience the geology, birdlife, marine life in the rocky pools and the fish traps at Rasperpunt.



December in Khoe /*gǀ*kani means small eland

