



AgulhasNPark eBulletin

VOL 11 • NR 10 • September xoub/gul/kuhab 2021

Heritage & Tourism month

www.sanparks.org

South African
NATIONAL PARKS

Heritage and Tourism Month 2021

Heritage and Tourism are celebrated annually in September in South Africa, with Heritage Day on September 24 and Tourism Day on September 27. The celebrations are to mark the nation's diverse culture and heritage. Government calls on all South Africans to use Heritage Month to foster greater social cohesion, nation building and a shared national identity. The celebration of Heritage Month has created a conducive environment for all people to embrace and celebrate what was inherited or bequeathed to us by our forebears. Celebrate Tourism month by visiting all the heritage sites in your area.

(SOURCE: [https://www.gov.za/Heritage & TourismMonth2021](https://www.gov.za/Heritage%20and%20TourismMonth2021))

Heritage sites to visit at the Southernmost Tip and in the Agulhas Plain



Southernmost Tip of Africa
1421, 1488, 1502



Cape Agulhas Lighthouse
1849



Fish traps, Rasperpunt
Late Stone Ages



Saltpans, Springfield
c 1705-1713



Soutbosch
1740s



Hotagterklip
c1820s



Struisbaai Church
1906



Ratelrivier
1755



Struisbaai Harbour
1959



Elim village
1824

For more information on these sites:

Agulhas Reception, 214 Main Road, L'Agulhas
Cape Agulhas Lighthouse, 028-4356078
Emmerentia De Kock, 072 601 6168
Alliston Appel, 084 556 2836
Amanda Cloete, 082 678 0450
Carl Richter, 082 780 5448

SANParks Agulhas Park week 6 – 10 September
Venue: Soutbosch, Elim gravel road
Activities: Walking, Birding, Canoeing, visiting the
Saltpans and a Milkwood stand

2021 Environmental calendar day

The sustainable development goals for September are Good jobs and Economic Growth, Responsible Consumption, Climate Action, Life below Water and Life on Land.

September

Arbour Month

30-5 Arbour week **15**

1 Spring day

2-6 National Parks week

16 World Ozone day **13**

18 International Coastal Clean-up day

18 World Water Monitoring day **14**

22 World Rhino day

26 World Rivers day **14**

27 World Tourism day **8**

28 Green Consumer day **12**

8 GOOD JOBS AND
ECONOMIC GROWTH



12 RESPONSIBLE
CONSUMPTION



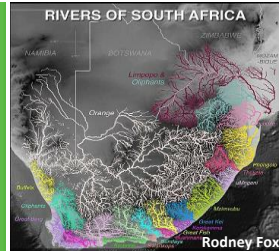
13 CLIMATE
ACTION



14 LIFE BELOW
WATER



15 LIFE
ON LAND



Biodiversity and Climate Change

The IPBES-IPCC Co-Sponsored Workshop on Biodiversity and Climate Change explored diverse facets of the interaction between climate and biodiversity, from current trends to the role and implementation of nature-based solutions and the sustainable development of human society. Planting bioenergy crops (including trees, perennial grasses or annual crops) in monocultures over a very large share of total land area is detrimental to ecosystems, reduces supply of many other of nature's contributions to people and hampers the achievement of numerous Sustainable Development Goals. Negative impacts typically arise from competition for space — including displacement of other land uses locally or through indirect land-use changes elsewhere, with associated carbon and biodiversity losses. Scenarios that project the annual scale of bioenergy CO₂ requirements by 2050 are enormous (equivalent in magnitude to today's existing carbon sink in all land ecosystems), but they exceed limits for sustainable implementation, for example the land area required may exceed 1.5 times the size of India. In addition to using huge areas of land, intensive bioenergy crop production can negatively affect biodiversity and ecosystem services, through fertilizer and pesticide use, or by increasing agricultural water withdrawals, thus also impacting on human capacity to adapt to climate change. When considering a range of sustainability criteria (including restricting bioenergy crops to 'marginal' land and/or excluding expansion into currently protected areas), studies suggest that bioenergy has the potential to supply between 50 and 90 EJ per year (1 exajoule is equal to 10¹⁸ joules). This is about one sixth of today's total global primary energy production (~600 EJ) and equivalent to mitigating approximately 1 to 2.5 Gt of CO₂ (about 13 – 33 million tanker trucks of fuel). As part of a climate change mitigation portfolio, alongside pronounced and rapid reductions in fossil-fuel emissions, these levels of deployment of dedicated bioenergy crops for electricity production or fuels may provide co-benefits for adaptation and biodiversity. To be continued... (SOURCE: IPBES-IPCC Biodiversity and Climate change report, 2021 or visit <https://ipbes.net/events/ipbes-ipcc-workshop>)

Custodians of Rare and Endangered Wildflowers (CREW)

The Custodians of Rare and Endangered Wildflowers (CREW), is a programme that involves volunteers from the public in the monitoring and conservation of South Africa's threatened plants. CREW aims to capacitate a network of volunteers from a range of socio-economic backgrounds to monitor and conserve South Africa's threatened plant species. The programme links volunteers with their local conservation agencies and particularly with local land stewardship initiatives to ensure the conservation of key sites for threatened plant species. Funded jointly by the Botanical Society of South Africa (BotSoc), the Mapula Trust and the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI), CREW is an integral part of the work on monitoring threatened species for South Africa. For more information on CREW in the Overberg, contact Stephen Smuts at 076 972 0450 or stephensmuts1@gmail.com. Also if you want information on the Southern Overberg Branch of the Botanical Society, contact Stephen Smuts.



The South African Seed Bank in the United Kingdom

South African plant seeds, which includes Fynbos, are kept at the Millennium Seed Bank at Wakehurst Place in the United Kingdom. Carly Cowell, previously employed at the Cape Research Centre (CRC), was the Cape Project co-ordinator for the Cape Region when this seed bank was established in 2000. The Millennium Seed Bank Partnership (MSBP) is an international plant conservation project aiming to collect and conserve seeds from 25% of the world's orthodox plant species by 2020. The Project collaborates with partner organisations across 50 countries including South Africa. It has been in partnership with the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI) for the past 15 years. Through the work of the MSBP in South Africa many rare and common plant species within our unique mega diverse flora have been and will be safeguarded from extinction. A significant contribution is made to the conservation of SA flora by collecting and banking the seeds from indigenous wild plant species, with a particular focus on species of conservation concern. The seeds, together with herbarium specimens and field data are collected and sent to the MSBP in the United Kingdom and duplicate collections are kept at the National Plant Genetic Resources Centre (NPGRC) at Roodeplaat, near Pretoria. The seed should remain viable and available for use for hundreds of years. The MSBP in South Africa successfully reached its first milestone by banking the seed of 10% of the country's wild plant species. The principal aim was to collect 2500 of South Africa's plant species by 2020 of which about 50% must be of conservation concern and which includes 1000 threatened species. (SOURCE: <https://www.sanbi.org/biodiversity/foundations/biosystematicscollections/millennium-seed-bank/>)



Trevor Adams, Biotechnician, CRC, visiting the MSB in 2009

The Tale of Two Leopards at the Southernmost Tip of Africa: the project

The Tale of Two Leopards project consists of research, conservation and community outreach components. The main goals are a) to improve knowledge of the ecology, presence, and threats to leopards and Western Leopard toads in the Overberg region, b) to identify actionable interventions to protect threatened and endangered species in the Overberg and improve landscape resilience, and c) to educate and support local communities to become conservation stewards. The study area incorporates a section of shared habitat for both species and extends along the Agulhas Plain coastal belt, from the Bot River estuary in the west to the western boundary of the De Hoop Nature Reserve in the east. The Cape Leopard Trust (CLT) and the Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT) are very excited about this partnership and the scope for future collaboration. This project is viewed as a synergistic platform where the eventual outcome will be more significant than what can be achieved individually. There is an established and respected network of environmental NGOs in the Overberg with whom the partners are already collaborating. These partnerships will have great potential in terms of declaring a biodiversity corridor of national importance and improving climate change resilience within this landscape. The CLT research team has identified locations in the Overberg and prepared sites for a large-scale leopard camera survey, which will soon be officially underway. The EWT Threatened Amphibian Programme team also started fieldwork with regular field visits to locate Western Leopard Toad presence points. (SOURCE: bit.ly/To2LIntro)

Ratel River, the river and its wetlands

It was always believed that the Ratel River had two river beds, one manipulated by man to keep the water away from the farmstead during winter months. Ratel River, however, flows from Gonnakraal and Wolvengat area passed Dirk Uyskraal into the Ratel River wetlands. The river was manipulated from the *Bloubrug* area to flow in a more straight direction towards the sea, away from the natural vlei in that specific area; mainly to channel water from areas for ploughing fields. The waterway or river passing the farmstead on the eastern side is most probably the Buffeljags River or, as believed, the real Ratel River. Trenches were bulldozed to keep this water flow away from the farmstead. The Ratel River rises to the west of Elim within and outside of the Waterford section of the Agulhas National Park. It flows into the sea via an extensive Floodplain wetland 20km east of Quoin Point. The catchment of the Ratel River is 405km² and the mean annual simulated runoff is 7.05 x 10⁶ m³. **Two endemic and highly endangered species, the Cape platanna (*Xenopus gilli*) and the Micro frog (*Microbatrachella capensis*) were recorded in the Ratel River catchment. The Red Data listed Western Leopard toad (*Bufo pantherinus*) has a viable population in this area.** The endemic, restricted and endangered southern adder *Bitis armata* occurs in the area. To be continued. (SOURCE: The Agulhas National Park State of Knowledge, 2008)



Ratel River wetlands 2013



**ENDANGERED
WILDLIFE TRUST**
Protecting forever, together.



capeleopard.org.za

My fynbos garden – Johann Pienaar

The Cape Floral Kingdom is the smallest of the six plant kingdoms of the world, containing about 9 600 plant species of which 70% is found nowhere else in the world, according to Professor Brian van Wilgen of the Centre for Invasion Biology at the University of Stellenbosch. I have the privilege of living in this floral kingdom. Suiderstrand is one of only three private developments in South Africa that are surrounded by a national park. The Agulhas National Park contains some of the most beautiful and pristine fynbos to be found anywhere in the world. But, around me in the village, the fynbos is being removed to clear stands for buildings and then alien invaders take over. I bought my erf in Lagoon Road Suiderstrand in 1981. When I built my retirement home in 2002 I had all the invasive plants removed and allowed the fynbos to grow back. Every weekend that I came to Suiderstrand I patrolled my erf and pulled out the small Rooikrans and Manitoka trees that sprouted. Today my erf is covered with indigenous fynbos that I enjoy each and every day retiring full time to Suiderstrand in 2016. A fynbos garden has tremendous advantages over other gardens and I want to mention just a few. Although my erf falls away at a steep angle towards the sea I never had any erosion or flooding because the fynbos controls the flow of water over my erf. A number of other properties in Lagoon Road were damaged during the recent heavy rains because the properties were cleared of fynbos. I never have to water my fynbos garden enabling me to save thousands of Rand over the years. My neighbours with their lush lawns have had sprinkler systems installed to keep the lawns green. I have an abundance of birdlife in my garden that eat the berries and seeds of the great variety of plants that are around. There are also Sunbirds feasting on the flowers that are in bloom almost all year round. In winter my garden is painted in various colours when plants like the Bietou (*Osteospermum moniliferum*) and Blombos (*Metalasia muricata*) are flowering. In springtime I have yellow and purple flowers all over my garden. I have two Cape Grey Mongoose (*Herpestes pulverulentus*) that live in the fynbos in front of my house. They are very inquisitive and like to peek through the sliding door windows to see what I am doing. I also have a large group of Cape Spurfowl (*Pternistis capensis*) that visit daily to see if there is not perhaps some birdseed to be had. I feel strongly that we must preserve our fynbos plants by not allowing them to only grow in the wild, but also allowing them to grow undisturbed in our gardens. We must also be more aware of alien invader plants especially the Manitoka (*Myoporum tenuifolium*) tree that comes from Australia. The detrimental effects which Manitoka have on the ecosystem are much the same as Rooikrans. These trees are poisonous to mammals and the seeds are spread over vast areas by birds to sprout and grow and displace the fynbos.



The changing face of tourism and tour-guiding – Ora Laubscher

COVID 19 has presented Tourism with a huge opportunity. Living and surviving in a constantly changing world is all about adapting and reinventing yourself and the services you render as you go along. Gone are the days when busloads of foreigners criss-crossed the world, the African continent and South Africa in a variety of state-of-the-art tour buses on a daily basis. As the saying goes, now is the time to “either adapt or die”. The Field Guide Association of South Africa (FGASA)’s Travel Companion initiative was launched towards the end of 2020 when the whole country went through stages of lockdown. The initiative is geared at introducing experienced tour guides and other role-players in the tourism industry to the concept of acting as informed and well-versed travel companions cum guides to a single or much smaller group of would-be tourists or travellers. With Covid-19 and many otherwise normal travel restrictions still firmly in place, acting as a companion to a single person, a couple or a very small group or family unit, is much safer. This mode of travelling also allows the companion guide to render a service aimed at and in line with the special wishes and interests of the members of the group, very much like specialised foreign language or special interest tours. Travellers usually have special interests and special needs, among them, shopping!



Xoub/gu/khab in Khoe means diarrhea moon (abundance of milk causes diarrhea)

