



SOUTH AFRICAN TOURISM

Accelerating tourism growth

South African Tourism (SA Tourism) markets South Africa internationally as a preferred tourist destination. Its broad objectives are to increase the contribution of tourism to the gross domestic product (GDP), to create jobs and to transform the industry to be truly representative of the South African nation.

Tourism has been identified as a priority sector in the Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa (AsgiSA), the National Industrial Policy Framework (NIPF) and the 2007/08 Industrial Policy Action Plan (IPAP). The World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) calculated that in 2008, tourism contributed an estimated 8.4% (R178.6 billion) to GDP, while the number of jobs created in the economy (directly and indirectly) through tourism in 2008 was 1 014 000. South Africa was fortunate to be somewhat insulated from the first-round impacts of the current global economic crisis. This has been due, particularly, to exchange controls and banking regulations. However, it cannot escape the second-round effects like the depreciation of the currency, the movement of money out of emerging markets and slow global growth.

The work of SA Tourism is driven by six key objectives: increasing tourist volume, increasing tourist spend, increasing

length of stay, improving geographic spread, improving seasonality patterns and promoting transformation. These are central to the Tourism Marketing Growth Strategy, the strategy that informs SA Tourism's work.

Tourist arrivals are one of the most efficient tools to measure tourism growth. The total number of arrivals in 2008 was 9.59 million. This was 500 000 more than the 9.09 million for 2007. It was driven off an increase in arrivals from Africa, as arrivals from both Europe and Asia declined in the second half of 2008 as a result of the growing financial crisis in the banking sector and the recession that followed.

In 2008, the United Kingdom market reflected a decline of 2.5%. The performance has been eroded by the economic downturn. The total growth of the United States market was 3.8%. The Canadian market recorded a growth of 7.6%. Tourist activity from the Asian and



South Africa exceeded the global growth in tourism in 2008.

Australasian region was as follows: arrivals from Australia grew by 4.8% and from India by 0.2%, while arrivals from China declined by 14.9% and from Japan by 13.3%. European arrivals from France grew by 11.2%, from Italy by 1.3%, while arrivals from the Netherlands declined by 0.7% and from Germany by 6.5%.

Interestingly, the tourist spend per trip increased. There was a continued increase in spend by air markets, which was driven by increased marketing efforts and favourable exchange rates for foreign tourists. The average spend in South Africa per trip for 2008 was estimated at R8 100, which translates into an estimated R74 billion in revenue generated from foreign tourism in 2008.

Although South Africa exceeded global growth in tourist arrivals in 2008, this was due to growth in land markets, such as Zimbabwe and Mozambique. Growth from the overseas markets slowed to 0.3%, which is in line with the revised growth projections by the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO).

There has also been a slower growth in arrivals from Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries, driven by a decline in tourists from Lesotho and Botswana. The outlook in the domestic market is also very bleak

in view of rising inflation and fuel costs. Arrivals for 2008 totalled 804 701 from Botswana, 1 226 989 from Mozambique, 1 088 033 from Swaziland and 2 163 372 from Lesotho. Arrivals from other countries in Africa totalled 26 939 from Kenya and 43 489 from Nigeria.

SA Tourism excelled in performing its marketing functions during the financial year and received many awards. These included being selected as the best national tourism organisation in India, the best international adventure tourism destination of 2008 and a marketing award from CNN for online marketing.

One of its core responsibilities is the international marketing of South Africa. In the financial year, it ran a global advertising and online campaign across BBC, National Geographic, CNN EMEA, Eurosport and News Corp. More than 91.9 million consumers were reached in this campaign. A global cinema campaign was also launched in 48 theatres, reaching an estimated 1.4 million consumers. The e-marketing strategy included the addition of a tourism layer for South Africa on Google Earth, the implementation of Google Analytics on the website www.southafrica.net and a global consumer competition on YouTube.

The Google Earth layer of SA Tourism received an international award for innovation. The layer is built on existing Google Earth technology that allows users to travel the world by means of satellite imagery and aerial photography. The South African layer includes over 120 points of interest and a fully functional supporting website, providing an itinerary planner and detailed information about specific areas. The layer is the third official tourism layer to be integrated into the Google Earth core.

Other websites on which South Africa has a presence are *The Telegraph* microsite, the *Lonely Planet* microsite and the 'My South Africa' page on Facebook. The Chinese SA Tourism website was launched and recorded a total of 101 958 visits.

Shows and exhibitions are important marketing and promotional tools. SA Tourism produced promotional material, such as banners, brochures and maps, and dispatched them for use at exhibitions in Denmark, Norway, Austria and Spain. It also hosted a South Africa Trade Village Show in China that showcased South African holiday experiences and gave South African trade an opportunity to interact with their Chinese counterparts.

SA Tourism operated a stand together with 14 other trade partners at a three-day tourism fair in Italy. It also manned a stand, with the theme WOZA2010, at the Japan Association of Travel Agents (JATA) World Trade Fair in Japan for three days, where it presented South Africa as the host country for the 2010 World Cup.

SA Tourism aims to build a distinctive brand image in the USA that compels people who are considering travel to visit South Africa now. As part of this marketing drive, South Africa was featured as a destination on the CBS

Early Show. This programme has a viewership of three million people. SA Tourism also participated in the Miami Book Fair that was presented by the South African embassy. The Food, Wine and South African Tales campaign was launched to West Coast consumers at the *LA Times* Festival of Books and the Aspen Food and Wine Classic.

As part of its marketing campaign of South Africa as a preferred destination for meetings, SA Tourism produced a supplement to the *Successful Meetings* magazine, of which 43 000 copies were distributed. A newsletter was also distributed to over 3 000 conference and incentive agencies, production companies, venue finders and corporate meeting managers. SA Tourism's conference arm, Meetings Africa, was awarded the hosting of the international conference of the Society for Information Technology and Teacher Education (SITE) in 2010.

The first winner of the Ubuntu Awards, key2holidays, was announced in November 2008. The awards focus on recognising innovation and vision in marketing South Africa as a tourist destination. Twenty marketing proposals were received, and key2holidays was chosen for having the most innovative 360-degree campaign.

As part of its drive to focus on the domestic young and upcoming market segment and to increase leisure holidays by 2%, SA Tourism secured alternative channels for its 2008 *Sho't Left* footage, such as on-board television on Mango airline, the Premier Lounge at the OR Tambo Airport in Johannesburg and taxi television. It also launched an interest group on Facebook, which has 320 registered fans.

In order to promote South Africa as a tourist destination in Kenya, the first consumer activation agreement was signed with the Kenya Golf Union, and

the resulting South Africa Golf Series tournament took place in September 2008. The first Kenya consumer and trade newsletter was also launched in September 2008.

The highlight of the tourism leisure calendar is the annual Indaba in Durban, which is organised by SA Tourism. In 2008, a record attendance was recorded.

In addition to marketing for leisure tourism, SA Tourism also markets South Africa as a destination for conferences and meetings. SA Tourism recently acquired Meetings Africa as the platform for marketing business tourism. It is currently working on major bids to host conferences in the next three years to put South Africa on the map as a business tourism destination.

The newest marketing unit is the events unit that was established to use major sporting and cultural events to promote South Africa. One highlight was SA Tourism's sponsorship of the first 20-20 competition in 2008, for which it acquired on-the-pitch coverage for South Africa. The events unit works closely with the local organising committee to make sure that South Africa gets maximum publicity out of every stage on the road to the World Cup in 2010.

Tourism councils

SA Tourism has two business units with their own advisory boards that report directly to the Minister. These are the Tourism Grading Council of South Africa (TGCSA), which provides leadership in quality assurance by grading tourism accommodation establishments, and the Tourism Empowerment Council of South Africa (TECSA), which is responsible for monitoring and reporting on the transformation of the tourism sector.

Tourism Grading Council of South Africa

The Tourism Grading Council of South Africa (TGCSA) was established in 2000. It manages a process of quality

assurance across the many tourism accommodation facilities offered to the consumer in this country. This process entails the quality assessment and grading of all tourism accommodation facilities, including hotels, bed and breakfast establishments, guest houses, lodges, restaurants and transport services.

The council started the 2008/09 financial year with a comprehensive review of its operations. The independent review, conducted by KPMG, resulted in a number of recommendations that are being implemented to ensure that the TGCSA becomes internationally competitive in terms of leadership in tourism quality management. Specific matters that were investigated during the review include the criteria and minimum standards used for grading, internal management systems and operations, the client feedback management system, information technology infrastructure, institutional arrangements, funding arrangements and the legislative environment in which the TGCSA operates. The review revealed that the TGCSA compares well with international best practice in terms of the voluntary grading system, and grading criteria and categories.

The most critical achievement during the financial year was the formal service provider agreement (SPA) that the TGCSA signed with all grading assessors, who are self-employed entrepreneurs. The SPA will assist in ensuring a more professional relationship between the TGCSA and assessors, as well as between assessors and graded establishments. Furthermore, the agreement will serve to protect all graded establishments and ensure professional service from TGCSA-accredited assessors. In addition, the council will, for the first time ever, be able to monitor and measure assessor performance on an annual basis, which will be used to influence their annual accreditation as grading assessors.

A breakdown of currently graded establishments is as follows:

Category	Eastern Cape	Free State	Gauteng	KwaZulu-Natal	Limpopo	Mpumalanga	North West	Northern Cape	Western Cape	Grand total
Backpacker and hostelling	11	2	15	11	4	6	4	9	24	86
Bed and breakfast	237	72	218	313	17	39	47	65	352	1360
Caravan and camping	13	6	5	21	17	27	6	20	22	137
Country house	12	10	14	33	8	22	4	2	67	172
Guest house	246	109	418	201	85	128	125	169	765	2246
Hotel	61	27	132	67	38	37	21	34	182	599
Lodge	60	21	46	76	97	80	60	19	31	490
Self-catering	140	52	110	213	108	128	40	66	658	1515
Total	780	299	958	935	374	467	307	384	2 101	6 605

With regard to the training of assessors, the TGCSA embarked on a public tender process to appoint a professional training service provider that will deliver internationally benchmarked quality assessment training for all grading assessors. This training will be recognised and certified by a tertiary institution, which will add more credibility to the quality of its assessors. A skills audit of all assessors is in the pipeline.

During the financial year, the TGCSA Advisory Board approved the creation of new, additional positions in the organisation, called provincial master assessors. They will be based in the provinces and will assist not only with representing the TGCSA at grass-roots level, but will also ensure that graded establishments have easier access to the TGCSA and an improved turnaround time on enquiries. The appointment of these provincial master assessors will go a long way towards ensuring that the TGCSA maintains firm management of quality issues in tourism accommodation establishments.

On the media and marketing front, the council launched a brand new website

that is more user-friendly and provides establishments with a better content format, more pictures and a world-class search engine facility. Tourists can use an interactive map when searching for accommodation. National and international tourists are also able to voice their opinions on the graded establishments, as customer feedback is the single most important aspect of the management of an effective quality grading system.

The annual Accommodation Guide has been given a make-over in terms of look, content layout and design. It also has a new name: *The Star Guide*. It is the official tourism accommodation guide in South Africa and will be launched at the Tourism Indaba in May 2009. It will be distributed to all the major centres of the world via SA Tourism's marketing activities.

With regard to the grading of establishments, 2008/09 saw a 34% increase in the grading of properties submitted by assessors. There was a total of 5 667 renewals of graded establishments and 1 542 new gradings.



The grading of establishments contributes to quality assurance.

Tourism Empowerment Council of South Africa

The Tourism Empowerment Council of South Africa (TECSA) is responsible for monitoring and reporting on the transformation of the tourism sector. It operates as a business unit of SA Tourism, with its own advisory board that report directly to the Minister.

It developed following the institutionalisation of the Tourism Charter, which was launched in 2005. This council envisions a growing and transformed, vibrant and globally competitive tourism sector that reflects the demographics of South Africa and contributes to the establishment of an equitable society.

A process has been initiated to gazette the Tourism Charter as Codes of Good Practice, so that it would be legally binding on all organs of state. The targets of the Tourism Empowerment Council of South Africa are currently being aligned with those of the BEE Charter, which was gazetted as a sector code, coupled with the BEE Scorecard.

It provides a range of services to individuals and organisations in the tourism sector, which address the seven BEE indicators covered by the Charter: ownership, management control, employment equity, skills development, preferential procurement, enterprise development and socio-economic development.



Conserving our heritage

South African National Parks (SANParks) manages a network of 22 national parks (including the corporate head office property in Pretoria, which is also proclaimed as a national park). The proclamation of the Garden Route National Park (consisting of Tsitsikamma, Wilderness and the Knysna Lakes Area) will reduce this network to 19 national parks. The network of parks represents the indigenous fauna, flora, landscapes and associated cultural heritage of the country. SANParks promotes the conservation of the country's natural and cultural heritage at local, national and international level, and plays an important role in promoting ecotourism.

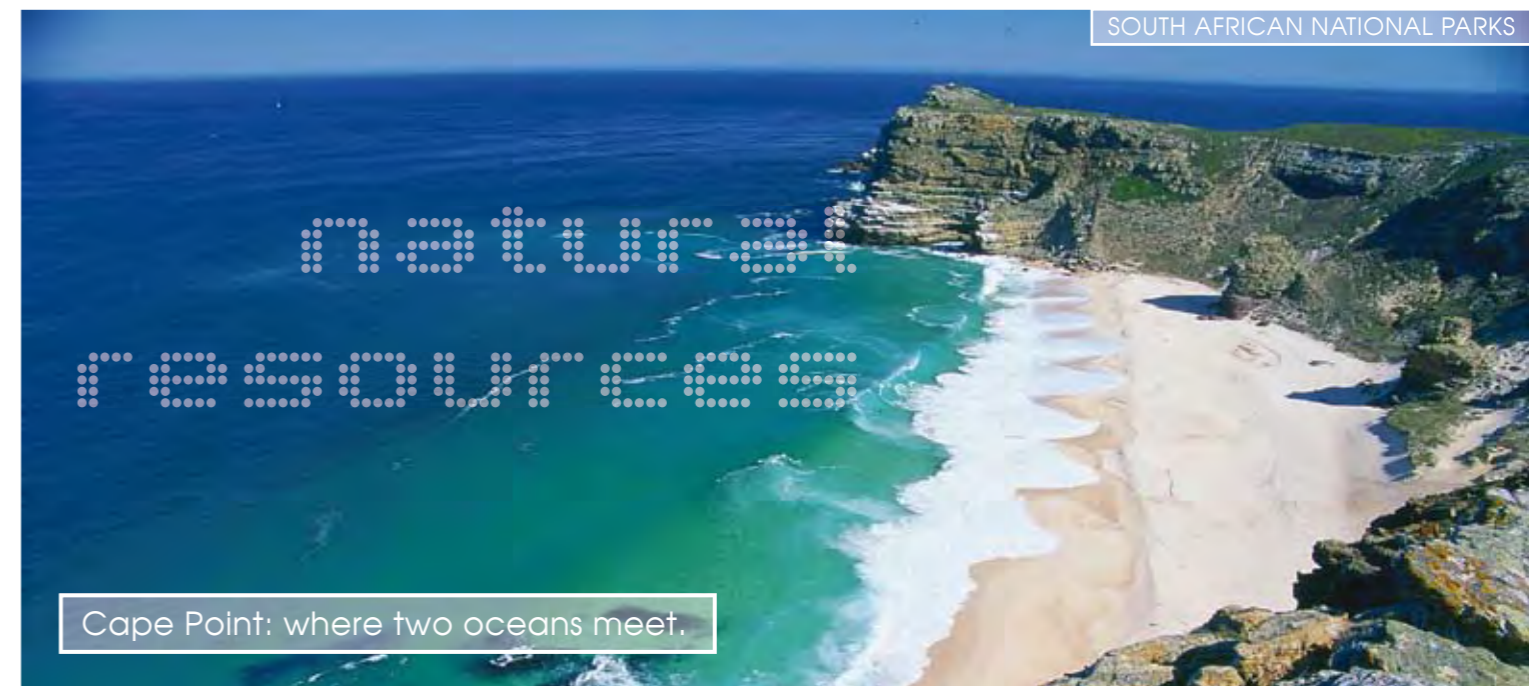
Expanding the conservation estate

South Africa aims to have 8.5% of the country's terrestrial area under protection by 2013, and 12% by 2020. Marine targets include the conservation of 20% of coastline areas by 2013. SANParks has contributed significantly to the expansion of the national conservation estate over the last decade.

The DEAT land grant of 2008/09 (R49.260 million) added a total of 16 692 hectares (above the set target of 13 700 hectares) to four parks (Agulhas, Addo Elephant, Mokala and Tankwa Karoo). Funds from the National Parks Trust and the self-generated Park

Development Fund of SANParks further contributed R5.5 million to acquire 2 265 hectares in the Addo Elephant, Agulhas and Karoo national parks. Donors have provided R21 million for approximately 16 000 hectares of land to be acquired over the next two years, mainly in Namaqua and Tankwa Karoo. The amalgamation of the Qwa-Qwa Park and Golden Gate Highlands National Park through the proclamation of the Qwa-Qwa Reserve has increased the size of Golden Gate Highlands by a further 22 000 hectares.

The Garden Route National Park, estimated to cover 121 000 hectares, was declared in March 2009. It consists of approximately 52 500 hectares of



newly proclaimed land, as well as 68 500 hectares of the Wilderness and Tsitsikamma national parks. The diverse biomes in the Garden Route include indigenous forests, the Knysna estuary, the Wilderness Lakes Area, marine protected areas, lowland fynbos and mountain catchment areas of national importance.

A 99-year lease agreement has been entered into with De Beers Consolidated Mines, whereby 36 000 hectares of land owned by De Beers will be incorporated into the Namaqua National Park. An agreement was also reached in principle with the Richtersveld Joint Management Committee to develop Oograbies-Wes/Klein Duin as a conservation area in the context of economic beneficiation for the Richtersveld community. The property (20 000 hectares), in the vicinity of Port Nolloth, is of high biodiversity significance.

An acceptable legal framework has been drafted for 16 landowners in the Agulhas Plains, including the Elim community, to commit their properties to and undertake land-use in a manner that supports and promotes a number of conservation objectives identified and promoted by the Agulhas Biodiversity Initiative. In this way, landowners are able to apply to the Minister of

Environmental Affairs and Tourism to recognise this area and declare it a national protected environment. The landowners will be appointed as the management authority. This will be a landmark case study.

Sustainable resource use

Several flagship resource use projects were initiated during the financial year. A post-restitution programme to ensure sustainable resource use resulted in an agreement on cultural heritage resource-use protocols with the Khomani San community, including the contentious issue of traditional hunting and gathering of plants in the Kgalagadi Transfrontier National Park.

Other projects in national parks included the Suurvy Harvesting Project in Agulhas, the Rustafarian Rooiwortel Nursery Project in Knysna, the Kruger National Park Thatch Grass Harvesting Project, the Outeniqua Eco Honeybee Farming Project in Wilderness, the Mopane Worm Harvesting Project in Mapungubwe and the Fern Harvesting Project in Tsitsikamma. Resource use is permitted subject to the following conditions being met:

- The rate of resource use must be less than the natural replenishment rate of the resource by an amount that

takes into account the uncertainties in both estimates and the scarcity of the resource inside and outside the protected area.

- o The resource itself, any other resource, ecosystem process or dependent biodiversity element must not be threatened.
- o The activities associated with the resource use must not have an unduly negative impact on the benefits that can be derived from other resources (in meeting park objectives) or on the risks associated with custodianship of the park.

Biodiversity management

The State of Biodiversity Reporting System was rolled out in all national parks for the first time in 2007/08. The survey results were analysed and yielded an overall average state of biodiversity score of 54% across all parks. There was considerable variation between parks: the older and more well-established parks yielding higher scores than the developing parks. The scores ranged from 37% for Mapungubwe to 67% for the Kruger National Park. The survey was repeated in 2008/09 for all parks, focusing on biodiversity objectives, and threats and pressures that prevent the achievement

of biodiversity conservation objectives. The results are in the process of being analysed.

Historically, SANParks has measured the response of elephant populations to management interventions, but has not measured the associated changes in elephant impacts. The strategic focus of the elephant management plan is, therefore, to vary the intensity with which ecosystems are used over space and time, to induce spatial variation rather than simply control animal numbers, and to develop and use thresholds that reflect mechanisms of elephant impact. SANParks is currently in the process of defining a defensible framework to evaluate, understand and manage elephant impacts across the four national parks with elephant populations, in line with the national norms and standards. Elephant exclusion areas are being constructed in Mapungubwe. Terms of reference were developed for an elephant conservation and management strategy for the Limpopo-Shashe Transfrontier Conservation Area. These were accepted by the Trilateral Technical Committee (TTC) in September 2008. A similar process is envisaged for the development of an elephant management strategy for the

Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park. SANParks is still in the process of establishing the cause of pansteatitis, a disease that is killing crocodiles in the Olifants River in the Kruger National Park. Scientists from various reputable institutions are assisting SANParks to determine the causes of the problem and are suggesting possible responses.

In terms of the SANParks Research Programme, a total of 202 projects were registered and classified according to relevance (in contributing to the meeting of park objectives) by the end of March 2009. Of these, 75% of projects were classified in the essential and important categories. The set target of 80% of research projects in the essential and important categories was therefore narrowly missed. Currently, SANParks attracts 70% of its research from South African scientific and tertiary research institutions, while 30% of all research projects are performed by international research institutions. This leads to a significant inflow of international research funds, expertise and research capacity-building into South Africa. The Savanna and Arid Research Cluster registered about 154 projects, the new Cape Research Centre registered 28 projects and the Garden Route Cluster registered 20 projects. SANParks is clearly a major drawcard for international research funding into South Africa and is an important facilitator of research. This research interest could be further improved if SANParks was able to provide an enabling infrastructure (such as visiting researcher accommodation at subsidised rates and appropriate telecommunications) and support services (including technical support and game guards) in national parks. The announcement that was made in September 2007 for funding to the value of R500 million by the Central Energy Fund did not materialise. This led to a suspension of the planned Energy Efficiency Programme. Other funding alternatives are being explored.

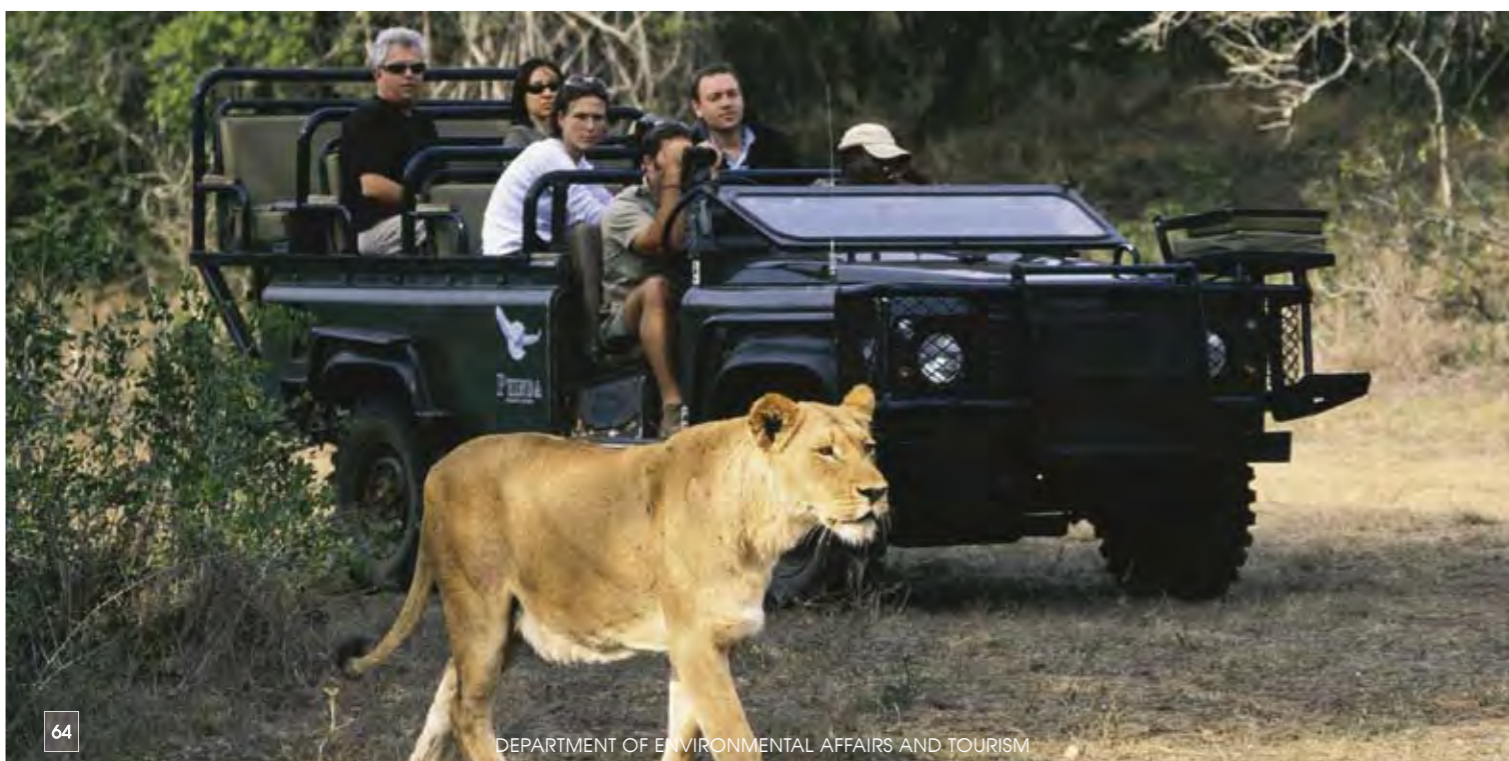
Tourism

The financial year was marked by the 10 000th reservation made through SANParks's web-based online reservations system. This milestone was achieved without much marketing of the service that was launched in November 2007.

SANParks continues to perform well in terms of tourism accommodation occupancy levels. The average occupancy rate for 2008/09 was 72.5%, compared to 70.9% for the previous financial year. The positive performance on accommodation occupancy levels is due to a cushion built in via SANParks's 12-month advanced reservations system. This performance contradicts that of the total visitor numbers, where a greater component is made up of day visitors to the parks who are not required to make reservations prior to their visits. This performance indicator experiences immediate sensitivity to changing economic conditions.

Occupancy rates were negatively affected by the economic squeeze and non-availability of the Easter long weekend during the financial year, as this weekend fell in March 2008 and thus formed part of the figures for the previous financial year. Occupancy rates were also affected by the unfavourable weather conditions in the Table Mountain National Park, the spring tide flooding with severe damage to accommodation and infrastructure at Storms River Mouth and the non-accessibility of the Tsitsikamma Storms River Bridge.

These national parks, together with the Kruger National Park, are the biggest contributors to day visitor numbers. Consequently, by the end of the year, total visitor numbers had decreased by 7.3% when compared to the same period in the previous year.





Tranquility of the Bontebok National Park.

Marketing and communication

The Kruger National Park successfully held its 110th anniversary celebrations in May and June 2008. The celebrations received extensive reporting across all types of media, which provided valuable publicity. The following major marketing initiatives were undertaken during the financial year:

- Customer demand research was completed.
- A multimedia marketing campaign was flighted on radio, in magazines, in regional and national newspapers and on billboards.
- Six international trade and consumer shows were attended, including participation in SA Tourism's road shows in India and France.
- Participation in the following trade and consumer shows: Tourism Indaba, Soweto Wine Festival, Soweto Show, Gauteng Outdoor Adventure Show, Getaway Show, Cape Adventure Show and The Beeld Holiday Show.
- The Hoenkwaggo Trail promotion was completed.
- A joint marketing agreement was entered into with Bokomo and Hi-Tec.

The annual National Parks Week was celebrated from 22 to 28 September 2008 as part of Heritage Month. This event continues to contribute to raising an awareness of the country's national parks and what they can offer, as well as providing a sense of pride and encouraging communities to visit national parks. In addition to the National Parks Week initiative, SANParks continued to implement a focused marketing drive aimed at black visitors. This led to black visitor numbers growing by 11.3% compared to the previous financial year.

To improve image and one-on-one contact with members of the public, SANParks's sales front office was refurbished. The new-look facility has been well received by walk-in clients.

The internal communication programme saw the introduction of the *News Flash* for dissemination to all staff. The content of the *Go Wild* magazine was reviewed during 2008/09 to communicate organisational strategic matters. An internal communication strategy has also been developed.

Environmental education

A number of projects were undertaken as part of creating environmental and conservation awareness and education. These include the Kids in Parks Project (including the Take Kruger to Kasie Project), all other park-based environmental education programmes (including the school holiday programmes) and the Imbewu Project.

A total of 157 419 learners underwent environmental education programmes in national parks. This good performance can be attributed to improved data collection, good coordination and better marketing and communication of the programme to all targeted stakeholders across national parks. The school holiday programme that formed part of the Kids in Parks Project also contributed to the success of the programme.

SANParks's Junior Honorary Rangers Programme, which is aimed at creating a cadre of young conservationists, continued to be a strategic programme for growing future ambassadors for the national parks system and conservation in general. By the end of the year, there were 601 junior honorary rangers

across all national parks. This represents a 36.8% improvement from the previous financial year and can be attributed to significant contributions made by strategic partnerships with other relevant stakeholders, such as the North West Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Environment, the Environmental Youth Network, various municipalities, the Honorary Rangers and various individuals. The programme's learning resource material is aligned with the national school curriculum and also contributed to increased interest in the programme.

Socio-economic development projects

At the start of the 2008/09 financial year, five projects were identified as flagship socio-economic development projects with a dedicated budget to improve their capacity, increase their income, add value to communities or improve the quality of life of communities adjacent to parks. The income generated by socio-economic development projects has increased substantially to just under R6 million, while temporary employment for 688 persons and full-time employment for 81 persons have resulted from

these projects. The community-based development projects that were implemented during the financial year are as follows:

Kruger National Park arts and crafts, and retail outlets: This intervention aims to provide training, source equipment and make small structural changes in the curio outlets at four of the Kruger National Park's gates to enable these community projects to increase their income by selling snacks, drinks, wood and other provisions from the curio shops.

Kruger National Park Interpretive Enterprise Project: This project aims to generate employment for community guides by offering tourists guided game drives from the gates of the Kruger National Park. The project is in the early stages of development. Advertisements to recruit community guides are being distributed in the communities, guides are being interviewed and office space is being provided.

Golden Gate Thaba Blinds Grass Factory Project: The Golden Gate Highlands National Park has been supporting this project for many years as it creates employment for approximately 500 women in the community on a casual basis. The project involves the harvesting of grass, which is woven into decorative

items for sale, such as blinds for windows, lamp shades, mats and baskets.

Addo Eyethu Hop-on-Guides Project: The Hop-on-Guides have been part of the Addo Elephant National Park's community outreach programme for a number of years. This programme identifies unemployed youths with an interest in conservation and offers them training opportunities to qualify as accredited tour guides. They accompany visitors on game drives, providing an enriching and educational experience for tourists. As they become more experienced, they have the opportunity to move on to permanent appointment elsewhere in the region.

DWAF/SANParks Community Water Efficiency Programme (COWEP) in

Arid Parks: This financial year marked the beginning of the second phase of the COWEP in three sites near the Augrabies, Namaqua and Karoo national parks. SANParks serves as the project implementer, working with a service provider to provide training for youths from the community to take on the project facilitation role in their community. The project has four phases: training, awareness-raising, implementation and permaculture gardening. The achievements and benefits to communities are impressive.



Agulhas in the Western Cape.

Training and development

The SANParks Skills Development Programme had 120 learners on learnerships for 2008/09, while 750 employees participated in the Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) Programme. Other training programmes include the Scientists Career Development Programme, the Junior Scientists Programme and the Tourism Academy Project.

Wellness Day activities were undertaken in all the national parks during the year. Employees were given the opportunity to be tested for a variety of potential health ailments and were provided with information to encourage them to lead a proactive, healthy lifestyle. This programme is crucial to the wellbeing of all employees, and is supported by the e-Care 24-hour counselling service provided to all employees and their families.

Expanded Public Works Programme

SANParks implemented four labour-intensive projects under the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP). These were Working for Water, Working for Wetlands, Working for the Coast and

the last remaining infrastructure projects on the People and Parks programme. The allocations for the Working for Water and Working for Wetlands programmes were increased during the year and another R4.5 million was added to the R90 million that had been spent on implementation.

Three thousand people were employed and 404 000 person days were worked. At least 70% of all temporary jobs created were full-time equivalent (FTE) employment opportunities, with the exception of the construction projects, where work opportunities, in general, are for periods shorter than a full year of employment. An amount of R53.7 million was paid out to 227 small, medium and micro-enterprises (SMMEs) during the year.

This exceeded the planned target by 15%. Some of the deliverables achieved include 126 000 hectares of follow-up alien plant clearing, 14 229 hectares of initial alien plant clearing, the rehabilitation of 28 409m³ of wetlands, and a total of 9 165 kilometres of repeated beach clean-ups.

The Blyde River Canyon in Mpumalanga.





Protecting our national biodiversity

The South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI) strives to champion the exploration, conservation, sustainable use, appreciation and enjoyment of South Africa's exceptionally rich biodiversity for all people.

In terms of the National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act (NEMBA) (Act No 10 of 2004), it is mandated to play a leading role in South Africa's national commitment to protect the country's biodiversity resources through a number of core activities, which include biodiversity research, biodiversity knowledge, policy and network management and conservation management.

The activities of the institute during the financial year were focused, among others, on being a centre of excellence for coordinated research on the composition, value, status, functioning and dynamics of South Africa's biodiversity, establishing a national network of bioregional and ecosystem programmes to implement priority components of the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, effectively mainstreaming biodiversity in development processes, developing and managing a system of national botanical gardens representative of the South African flora, identifying priority

areas for biodiversity conservation monitoring and reporting on the status of biodiversity in South Africa, and implementing rehabilitation programmes that systematically target threatened ecosystems, while supporting the goals of the Expanded Public Works Programme.

Biodiversity research

SANBI has a proud record of research on the indigenous, naturalised and alien flora of South Africa, southern Africa and beyond. Its research covers biosystematics and collections expansion, applied biodiversity science, and climate change and bio-adaptation. The numerous thrusts within these research domains have benefited from close intra-institutional collaboration. A multidisciplinary approach to scientific hypothesis testing is deliberately fostered and supported.

The ongoing development and review of the *ex situ* collections in the national botanical gardens took place during the financial year in an endeavour to



increase the collections to 45% of South Africa's indigenous flora. Additional plant material is regularly sourced from the wild for inclusion in national botanical garden collections. SANBI collaborates with the Millennium Seed Bank and local conservation authorities to integrate its garden-based plant conservation programmes, as well as to initiate reintroduction programmes where plants are cultivated in the gardens and reintroduced into their natural habitats. These integrated conservation efforts form part of the endeavour to expand the *ex situ* collections to 50% of South Africa's threatened plants. A new shade house was completed in the Lowveld National Botanical Gardens for anticipated plant collections. The ongoing addition of accessions to the plant DNA bank continued.

Bird checklists were published for all nine national botanical gardens. Biodiversity checklists for mammals, reptiles, dragonflies and damselflies, butterflies and amphibians are updated and expanded on a regular basis. Publications that were released during the year included *Ferns of Africa* in the Strelitzia series, *Aloes in Southern Africa* and *Plants of Angola*. The publication of the latter was followed by an expedition to Angola to work with the Augustino Neto University to audit Angola's biodiversity. *A Climate for Life*, an

influential, large-format book on climate change and biodiversity with contributions from SANBI staff, was published and launched at the IUCN World Conservation Congress in Barcelona. An illustrated catalogue of Afrotropical lacewings, covering 15 families in the Neuroptera and Megaloptera, was also initiated. As part of the API Medicinal Plants project, a dictionary has been compiled of over 4 000 ailments that can be treated through the medicinal use of southern African plants.

Climate change research formed an important part of the research related to biovulnerability. Key field experiments in the winter rainfall zone are developing an understanding of drought, temperature and fog vulnerabilities for climate change impact projections. Field sampling of population trends in *Aloe dichotoma* was also done in South Africa and Namibia to detect the impact of climate change. Climate change and bird vulnerability projects were initiated in the Table Mountain and West Coast national parks. Specialist input was provided on the impact of climate change on migratory birds and other animals for the national negotiating position for the Convention on Migratory Species. The UNFCCC Second National Communication on Climate Change, led by SANBI, held its inception workshop.

Biodiversity knowledge, policy and network management

SANBI's biodiversity planning and mainstreaming programmes focus on making biodiversity science widely available, and supporting its use in policy, management and decision-making. Key elements of this work are biodiversity knowledge and information management, identifying priority areas for biodiversity conservation through spatial biodiversity planning, assessing and monitoring the status of biodiversity, support to DEAT on policy development and implementation, mainstreaming biodiversity in municipalities and urban areas, and the establishment of multi-partner bioregional and ecosystem programmes.

Positioning itself as the central national resource for knowledge management and information dissemination on biodiversity and its status and trends in South Africa is an important priority for SANBI.

SANBI developed and is implementing a Knowledge and Information Management Strategy to coordinate and manage its information resources. The South African Biodiversity Information Facility (SABIF) portal, which includes a network of data providers, went live to the public. SANBI's Integrated Biodiversity Information System (SIBIS) project, which aims to centralise SANBI's biodiversity information databases and provide a web-based interface to improve access to resources, is currently being prepared for public release. A memorandum of understanding was signed with the International Ocean Institute at the University of the Western Cape to provide a wide range of specialist information-based services related to biodiversity information management.

The Biodiversity Geographic Information Service (BGIS), providing access to spatial biodiversity information, was expanded to provide a national service with new tools (including the species distribution mapping tool) and new data sets (including

provincial spatial biodiversity plans, a new version of the national wetlands inventory, the South African vegetation map and the DWAF indigenous forest layer). The innovative Land-use Decision Support Tool provides land-use decision-making support using a user-friendly, web-based decision support system that assists environmental practitioners to assess the possible impacts of developments or land-use change. A geographic information system (GIS) lab was established in Cape Town, which is becoming a hub for all conservation-related GIS activities.

A reporting application has been developed and deployed in the National Herbarium for scientists to easily extract information from the PRECIS database. The number of specimen records in this database passed the one million mark. A web application, Flora of Angola (FLAN), was developed and launched. SANBI developed the Species Status Database, which provides a centralised storage location for information on the status of South African species.

SANBI supported DEAT in the development of the National Biodiversity Framework (NBF), a blueprint for conservation and development over the next five years. SANBI, together with SANParks, led the development of the technical component of the National Protected Areas Expansion Strategy, which identified focus areas for achieving cost-effective protected area expansion for ecological sustainability and increased resilience to climate change. SANBI led the development of the Guideline for Bioregional Plans, which aims to guide the development of bioregional plans to ensure that biodiversity priorities inform land-use planning and decision-making. SANBI led the process of identifying and listing threatened terrestrial ecosystems and participated in an international task team to develop criteria for the global listing of threatened ecosystems. The first meeting took place of the Scientific Authority, one of SANBI's key mandates in terms of NEMBA.

Comments were submitted on the Land-use Management Bill, the National Environmental Management Laws Amendment Bill, the National Treasury's Revenue Laws Amendment Bill and the EIA Amendment Regulations to support the integration of biodiversity into policy development. A bilateral meeting was held with DEAT to explore better alignment of biodiversity information and environmental impact assessment (EIA) processes.

A series of provincial planning work sessions was coordinated to provide technical support to provinces currently developing provincial biodiversity plans. Further progress was made in developing approaches to mapping land degradation in arid areas. SANBI held a two-day introductory session to biodiversity planning and hosted the 6th annual Biodiversity Planning Forum, providing a knowledge-sharing opportunity for biodiversity planners in South Africa.

SANBI developed the National Municipal Biodiversity Programme, a partnership programme with DEAT and the Department of Provincial and Local Government (DPLG), to ensure that biodiversity and ecosystem services are effectively managed and contribute to sustainable economic growth and human wellbeing in municipalities. SANBI participated in the development of a municipal environmental task team and a bilateral meeting was held with DEAT to explore better alignment of biodiversity and local governance processes. SANBI hosted training workshops to guide the use of the Eastern Cape Biodiversity Conservation Plan in municipal planning processes. SANBI initiated the Land Reform and Biodiversity project and identified pilot projects.

A process was initiated to develop a strategy to support the conservation of threatened species. Red data list assessments were completed for the 20 475 plant species in South Africa. The red data listing of the Proteaceae

was finalised and the global cycad red data list was completed. Red data list assessments were continued for reptiles, butterflies and arachnids. The South African Arachnid Conservation Assessment (SANSA) has identified 11 800 spiders and 4 000 scorpion specimens and the virtual museum includes 882 entries with about 1 700 images. The South African Butterfly Conservation Assessment (SABCA) conducted red list assessments for 674 species and launched a new virtual museum where about 5 300 records have been received. The South African Reptile Conservation Assessment (SARCA) has a total number of 6 100 records in the virtual museum. The accessioning of 2 000 new reptile tissue samples continued.

Excellent progress was made in the Southern African Bird Atlas Project 2, in partnership with the University of Cape Town (UCT) and BirdLife South Africa. This is one of southern Africa's biggest public participation biodiversity monitoring projects. It now has 14% national spatial coverage. By 6 January 2009, 414 active observers had submitted 10 688 atlas reports, totalling over a quarter of a million records from 3 227 grid cells. The Bird Biodiversity Databases Support Project of the Avian Demography Unit of UCT has come to an end. This project delivered the complete digitisation of long-backlogged data on bird-ringing and bird-nesting records for southern Africa. A new project was launched to invigorate the database of the Southern African Bird Ringing Unit (Safring).

In collaboration with TRAFFIC, the wildlife trade monitoring network, SANBI hosted a decision-support tool workshop for law enforcers from provincial environmental departments and conservation agencies. A five-day training session was hosted to determine if the *Pelargonium* species is being overharvested in Lesotho.

Cape Action for People and the Environment (CAPE) continued to support the

conservation of the fynbos biome in the Cape Floristic Region. The Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) awarded consolidation funds totalling \$1.65 million to nine projects in the region that will build on the successes of a prior five-year investment of \$6 million to sustain conservation gains. A draft monitoring and evaluation framework was developed, as well as a management effectiveness tracking tool for protected areas that has been endorsed by all conservation management agencies in the Cape Floristic Region. The programme consolidated and expanded the protected area estate through landscape initiatives and innovative stewardship contracts with landowners, developed fine-scale biodiversity plans for priority areas, and established business and biodiversity initiatives.

The Succulent Karoo Ecosystem Programme (SKEP) produced its five-year assessment report. The impacts of this programme included a significant increase in the amount of land in the conservation estate, improved land management, funding for conservation and livelihood projects, the development of best practice guidelines, and contribution to poverty alleviation and improved livelihoods. The services of the CSIR were secured to conduct the first assessment and valuation of ecosystem services in the Succulent Karoo biome. The first phase of the assessment and valuation research was completed.

The Grasslands Programme was launched on International Biodiversity Day on 22 May 2008. A research strategy has been developed that has identified research priorities in this biome. It will guide the research needs that hinder biodiversity management in the grasslands biome and will link into the National Biodiversity Research Strategy. The programme initiated a number of demonstration projects, including securing stewardship sites in the Wakkerstroom/Lunberg area in Mpumalanga, developing a

biodiversity stewardship programme in Gauteng and securing stewardship sites on forestry-owned land. The forestry sector committed itself to conserving 45 000 hectares of critically important privately owned land. SANBI, SANParks and DEAT identified three potential sites for a grassland national park.

The Freshwater Ecosystem Programme was established as a new ecosystem programme and will incorporate the management of the Working for Wetlands programme. An inception workshop was held in August for a two-year partnership project to identify a network of national freshwater conservation areas and to explore institutional mechanisms for protecting these priority areas. Automation of the National Wetland Classification System is underway and will be incorporated into this project. The National Wetland Inventory Project, the first systematic assessment of the extent of South Africa's wetland resources, was completed. A total of 121 642 individual wetlands were mapped, which accounts for 7.2% of the country's surface area. Working for Wetlands rehabilitated 91 wetlands, employed 1 710 people and provided 28 547 training days.

Marine biodiversity was identified as a research priority for coordinated biodiversity research through a managed network. One of the activities of the Marine Ecosystem Programme during the financial year was the implementation of the Reef Atlas Project. SANBI also engaged with commercial fishing, diamond mining, petroleum and scuba-diving stakeholders to discuss marine biodiversity issues. SANBI published the Guideline for Offshore Marine Protected Areas in South Africa. A threatened marine species and ecosystems workshop was held to determine how threatened marine species and ecosystems could be identified and prioritised.

SANBI aims to establish indigenous gardens in at least 100 schools and at least five community gardens around each school

within a 30 km radius of national botanical gardens and in areas where there are no botanical gardens. At least 41 indigenous gardens were developed during the financial year. Biodiversity education and empowerment programmes have been initiated at Harold Porter and Karoo Desert. Greening initiatives are launched in provinces without botanical gardens or with botanical gardens that do not have education programmes.

The first meeting of SANBI's Human Capital Development task team initiated the development of a human capital development strategy for the entire biodiversity sector. The strategy is set to address transformation and the scarce skills challenges of the sector. A draft outline of the biodiversity sector human capacity development strategy was developed.

Links were established with the Department of Science and Technology and the National Research Foundation to develop an internship programme. SANBI received 120 applications for the annual research internship programme and appointed eight interns. GIS and biodiversity planning internship and student programmes are being established with the University of Limpopo. Initiatives are undertaken to develop capacity in biodiversity science, focusing on designated groups. Postdoctoral fellows strengthen research capacity. A number of PhD and MSc research projects were undertaken and supervised by staff and the mentor programme is ongoing.

Conservation management

South Africa has a network of nine botanical gardens that showcase and contribute to the conservation of the country's rich plant biodiversity. These are Kirstenbosch (Cape Town), the Free State (Bloemfontein), Harold Porter (Betty's Bay), Karoo Desert (Worcester), KwaZulu-Natal (Pietermaritzburg), Lowveld (Nelspruit), Walter Sisulu (Roodepoort), Pretoria and Hantam (Niewoudtville).

Potential sites in the Eastern Cape were reviewed for a national botanical garden to be established in this province. Ongoing negotiations took place with the Overstrand Municipality and local community for the potential transfer of adjacent wetland habitats to the Harold Porter National Botanical Garden.

Over a million people visited SANBI'S gardens to admire their natural beauty, enjoy walks, concerts, exhibitions and take refreshments, or for educational purposes. Biodiversity walks and talks offered to members of the public introduce visitors to the birds, trees, snakes, aloes, insects, frogs, bats, fungi, scorpions and spiders of the country.

Good progress was made with the construction of new tourism facilities in the Harold Porter and KwaZulu-Natal national botanical gardens. A new entrance gate has been constructed at the Lowveld National Botanical Garden, as well as an improved security system for the cycad gene bank. In Kirstenbosch, a new sun shelter was constructed in the Pelargonium kopje as part of the upgrading of this section. A weather station was installed in the Hantam National Botanical Garden, as well as a biodiversity library. A biodiversity garden is being established in the Walter Sisulu National Botanical Garden. A new limestone fynbos demonstration garden was initiated in the Harold Porter National Botanical Garden. Kirstenbosch maintained its unique position as one of the few self-sustainable botanical gardens in the world. *Moraea aristata* was planted at the Royal Observatory in Cape Town as part of a rehabilitation project for this heritage site. SANBI was the first recipient of the Royal Horticultural Society President's Most Creative Award and received its 29th gold medal at the 2008 Chelsea Flower Show. Ongoing communication took place with national and international botanical gardens, Botanic Gardens Conservation International (BGCI) and the Secretariat of the African Botanic Gardens Network (ABGN).



Developing a national treasure

The iSimangaliso Wetland Park was inscribed as South Africa's first World Heritage Site in 1999. It is an area of exceptional cultural and biological diversity, and extends along 220 kilometres of KwaZulu-Natal's coastline from Maphelane in the south to Kosi Bay on the Mozambican border in the north.

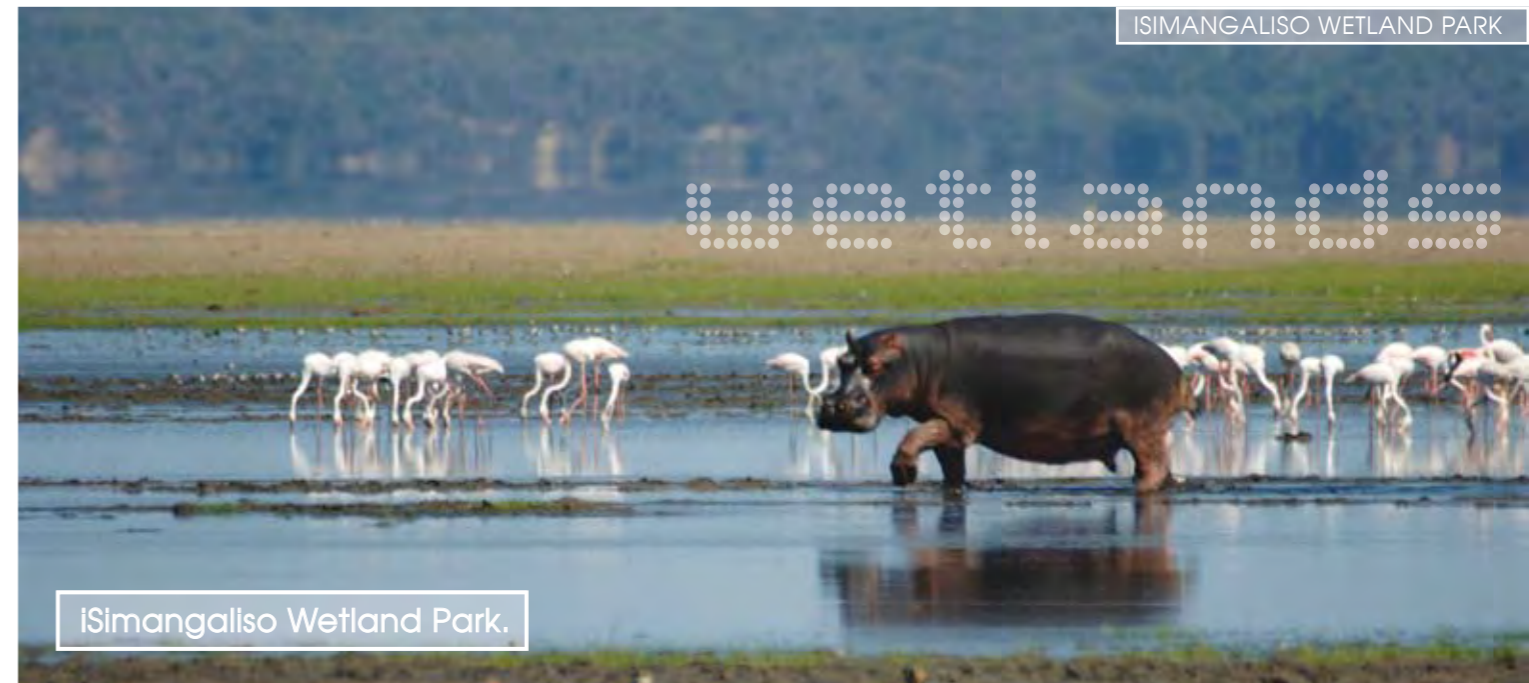
The natural systems that are protected in this 330 000 hectare park range from dunes, swamps and coastal forests to rocky, sandy shores, coral reefs and submarine canyons, mangroves, savanna grassland, thickets and woodlands. The park is managed by the iSimangaliso Wetland Park Authority. The Authority's mandate, as set out in the World Heritage Convention Act and associated regulations, is to conserve the park's world heritage values, ensure local economic development and transformation, and optimise tourism development in such a way that iSimangaliso's ecological and cultural integrity is maintained.

Tourism development

During the financial year, the park launched both a branding strategy and a destination marketing strategy to increase the number of visitors to the park. A baseline market demand study showed an increase in the annual number of visitors to the park.

iSimangaliso was represented at Indaba 2008 and exhibited jointly with Sodwana Bay's scuba diving concessionaires at the Dive Expo in Johannesburg. The park website, which provides detailed information on the activities and accommodation options at iSimangaliso became operational. Media trips were hosted, resulting in valuable feature articles in magazines such as *Getaway* and newspapers such as *Sunday Tribune*. Significant media coverage was received in *The Mercury*, *Getaway*, *Zululand Observer* and *The Witness*. iSimangaliso was host to the South African Tourism: Germany Khaki Fever campaign.

The public relations strategy places particular emphasis on local media, including a local community radio station. The *iSimangaliso News*, a quarterly tabloid-format publication has a distribution of 45 000 copies and electronic newsflashes are also distributed to a target audience of 12 000 people.



iSimangaliso Wetland Park.

Endeavours to improve the park's product base are focused on increasing the variety and types of accommodation in the park. Negotiations are underway to improve the facilities at Cape Vidal and Rocktail Bay. Service level agreements are being negotiated with Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife to improve the quality of visitors' experience at the facilities that they operate at iSimangaliso. Initiatives are also underway to regulate activity operators. This includes the tendering of concessions in line with treasury regulations, a mystery guest programme and audits.

To improve public access, an equitable access policy is being implemented in respect of schools, the aged and claimants, and neighbouring communities. Schools and members of neighbouring communities are offered special programmes in the park. On New Year's Day approximately 60 000 visitors were granted free access to iSimangaliso. During the 2008/09 financial year, approximately 200 schools with 5 800 learners visited the park. In addition, iSimangaliso invited 600 learners from 40 schools to participate in an environmental education programme that included field trips to the park. Wilderness trails and marine education field trips with youths were also undertaken.

The servicing of public facilities is an important component of improving the quality of the park's tourism services. The gate management has been outsourced to Katanga, a 51% BEE-owned company, creating additional permanent jobs for locals. The service, which has been extended to include Sodwana Bay's day visitor areas, is monitored by iSimangaliso staff. Biannual gate audits are undertaken by an independent specialist.

Economic development and transformation

As part of its transformation initiatives, iSimangaliso aims to optimise black economic empowerment (BEE) opportunities in the park's procurement processes, improve the capacity of land claims trusts, support access by community partners to tourism opportunities in and around the park, and support downstream and upstream business opportunities.

An independent review of the park's BEE initiatives found its practices to be groundbreaking and cutting edge. The goal is to incorporate BEE provisions into all tourism accommodation concession contracts for mandatory community partners. A target of 15% BEE has been

established, which is modelled on the Tourism BEE Scorecard, with amendments for mandatory community partners. New lodges have achieved between 20% and 61% community equity.

A further objective of the transformation strategy is to improve the capacity of land claims trusts by developing and implementing training programmes. To support access to tourism opportunities in and around the park, iSimangaliso is securing funding for a tourism training programme. Twelve learners successfully completed the Tourism, Hospitality, Sport Education and Training Authority (THETA) National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Level 4 tourist guiding learnerships. Proposals for additional funding have been submitted to other donors.

A comprehensive set of training materials, which includes information on both the cultural and natural aspects of iSimangaliso, has been developed. Selected community members, including tour operators and Katanga staff, were trained in the use of this material during November 2008. The material has been adapted for use in the schools programme and the environmental education programme.

Orders for products produced as part of iSimangaliso's craft programme were placed by Mr Price Home (nationally), the Grasslands Project (Pretoria), Design Afrika (Cape Town) and the Bat Shop (Durban). Most of these were delivered in December 2008. Export opportunities are also being investigated. A product catalogue will be produced for marketing purposes. Additional funding has been raised from the Media, Advertising, Publishing, Printing and Packaging Sector Education Training Authority (MAPPP SETA) and the Flemish government, which will be used to develop a craft mentoring programme.

A number of fundraising proposals have been submitted by iSimangaliso to support various programmes. The park has been shortlisted for funding of approximately R18 million for arts and crafts programmes. A three-year performing arts programme has received funding of R2.9 million from the MTN SA Foundation. Fifty learners have been selected to participate in this programme and three workshops have been held. Additional funding is being sourced for an SMME development programme. Funding has also been secured for the Flemish Food Security Programme and the Coastcare programme.

Poverty relief funding is being utilised to develop training programmes for the clearing of alien vegetation, land rehabilitation, swamp forest farming and infrastructure development. These projects have been implemented on time and achieved their deliverables.

Environmental management

One of the park's priorities is to reduce the effect of pollution in the area by cleaning up key sites. The clean-up of the dredger harbour in St Lucia has been completed and monitoring of the harbour is ongoing. Discussions with the Mtubatuba local municipality to close down the St Lucia solid waste site and to commission the alternative municipal transfer station that has been built at Khula Village for them by iSimangaliso are ongoing.

A database of all illegal developments in the park has been completed, referenced to aerial photography, and is updated on a regular basis.

Land rehabilitation is another important priority. Objectives for the financial year included the rehabilitation of the former commercial forestry areas of the park and the implementation of alien plant control programmes. All the remaining commercially viable trees have been removed from the Eastern Shores and related rehabilitation for the financial year completed. Rehabilitation work is still underway on the Western Shores. The alien plant invader land rehabilitation grant was extended and 12 new contractors have been appointed and trained. The alien plant control programme of the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry (DWAFF) will continue, as will DEAT's alien plant invader clearing programme.

Another important priority is the effective management of the zone of influence to comply with park requirements,

as well as compliance monitoring to control illegal developments in the park. A system for registering commercial developments in the zone of influence around the park is in place and the park monitors such developments to ensure compliance with relevant legislation.

A database of all illegal developments in the park has been completed, referenced to aerial photography, and is updated on a regular basis. In order to address the challenge of illegal development encroachment, criminal and civil action is being undertaken where necessary. A broader compliance and environmental awareness programme is also being implemented.

A system is in place to conduct environmental management audits in respect of environmental compliance throughout the park. To implement the environmental management inspection system for the park, the gazetting of fines at national level is awaited. iSimangaliso has also trained environmental management inspectors and fishery officers. A process is in place with Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife, the authority's day-to-day conservation manager, to determine and train relevant staff as environmental management inspectors. An integrated management plan has been issued for public consultation. Research priorities have been approved and a research committee is in operation. A total of 96 research programmes were underway during the financial year.

A Global Environment Facility (GEF) project that aims to contribute to the restoration of the Lake St Lucia system and to increase access by local communities to local economic development opportunities is in process.

Infrastructure development

An important priority is to develop and maintain conservation and tourism-

The pristine coastline extends 220 kilometres.

related infrastructure by commissioning new projects according to the approved infrastructure development programme. This includes upgrading existing and building of new roads in iSimangaliso's Western Shores, Eastern Shores and uMkhuze sections. An agreement has been reached with eMandleni Trust regarding fencing the 60 000-hectare Ozabeni section into the greater iSimangaliso Wetland Park. Tenders were also issued to upgrade the Sodwana Bay road and airstrip. The maintenance and improvement of the park infrastructure continued to receive attention. Programmes are in place to implement fence maintenance and water pipeline maintenance, and a tender has been issued for a new water maintenance service provider.

Land claims

The settlement of claims on land that forms part of the iSimangaliso Wetland Park is an important priority for the preservation of the cultural and biological diversity of this world heritage site. A total of nine land claims have already been settled, with only five remaining to be finalised (the Triangle, Coastal Forest Reserve and Western Shores, Dukuduku, and Ngwenya).

The settlement of these claims by the Regional Land Claims Commission (RLCC) is a significant milestone for the park, as it creates stability and outlines a clear way forward in establishing a working relationship with the new landowners. The development of a co-management framework, as well as a formalised

programme of action together with the land claimants, is essential to the successful management of the park. The incorporation of neighbouring land that meets baseline criteria and adds to the conservation value of the park (including the Munyuwana Conservancy and False Bay) has been put on hold until the outstanding land claims on these neighbouring properties have been settled by the RLCC. The resolution of unresolved land claims is an important priority for the park to ensure that conservation and world heritage values are not compromised.

The annual park plan was presented to the land claimants, and the Ncema harvesting took place in May 2008. A meeting was held with all the stakeholders to agree on a harvesting plan for 2009.

Corporate services

A human resource development programme has been initiated for junior land care staff, while computer training has also been conducted. Policy gaps are identified on an ongoing basis and amendments are made to certain human resources policies. To establish effective financial oversight, two audit committee meetings were held and an audit plan was approved. iSimangaliso received an unqualified audit.

It is important to develop effective policy and planning frameworks and systems for management. A monitoring and reporting system is being developed for the park.



Forecasting for economic growth

The South African Weather Service (SAWS) is an agency of the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism. It is the authoritative voice for weather, and the aeronautical meteorological authority and custodian of climate information in South Africa. It performs public good services through the gathering of meteorological, climatological and atmospheric observational data over South Africa and the surrounding oceans to ensure the provision of weather and climate forecasting and warning services.

It has been designated by the state to provide weather services to the aviation industry and to fulfil the international obligations of the government under the Convention of the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO). The organisation also provides maritime weather forecasting services for the vast oceans around southern Africa up to Antarctica.

The SAWS plays an important role in the international meteorological and climate community, including the Southern African Development Community (SADC). At the second annual general meeting of the Meteorological Association of Southern Africa (MASA) in Swaziland in November 2008, South Africa was appointed as the Chair and Secretariat. This strengthens the leadership role that the SAWS plays in the

SADC region, and enhances opportunities for marketing and selling the weather instrumentation manufactured by the SAWS. The agency further represented South Africa on the Council of the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) as an executive member.

An ICAO Africa-Indian Regional Air Navigation (AFI RAN) meeting was held in Durban in November 2008. The focus for 2008 was on safety in the region as it relates to the implementation of the Comprehensive Regional Implementation Plan for Aviation Safety in Africa. The SAWS also hosted the 12th Southern African Regional Climate Outlook Forum (SARCOF) during 2008.

The SAWS is involved in several research initiatives in collaboration with academic



and research institutions locally and internationally. Its research priority areas include early warning systems, numerical weather prediction, climate change, air quality, atmospheric monitoring and research, science and social impact research, and technology development.

During the 2008/09 financial year, the SAWS continued to play a leading role in atmospheric monitoring and it is one of only a few organisations that carries out specialised atmospheric sampling. In order to ensure efficiency, more personnel in air quality modelling and ozone research were appointed, and SAWS scientists and research aircraft were involved in the Queensland Cloud Seeding Research Project. The project aims to investigate the possibility of increasing rainfall in south-east Queensland by cloud seeding in order to alleviate water shortages.

One of the strategic goals of the SAWS is to become a learning organisation. The agency awarded 50 bursaries in the field of weather observation for undergraduate BSc and honours studies, and for the bridging course in meteorology. The SAWS registered meteorology as a scarce and critical skill with the Transport Education and Training Authority (TETA) and applied for accreditation as a training provider to

further the organisation's commitment to continuous development as part of its contribution to national programmes like the Joint Initiative on Priority Skills Acquisition (JIPSA). This will enable the SAWS Meteorological Training Centre to award the National Certificate in Weather Observation to successful students. Memoranda of understanding were signed with several higher education institutions, including the universities of Zululand and Pretoria, in a drive to forge strategic partnerships with these institutions. A plan was developed and is being implemented to address the scarce and critical skills shortage in the SAWS and to increase the critical mass of scientists.

Activities related to research include the acquisition of wind software for generating new wind products and the development and implementation of the Kalman-based temperature forecast system on the Cyclone web page. Furthermore, a multimodel system for long-range forecasting was implemented to provide forecasting products to the Specialised Regional Meteorological Centre and the SAWS website.

The early warning system was reviewed to align it with best practice and international trends. The Severe Weather Forecast Demonstration Project (SWFDP), which was initiated in 2006 to provide

guidance forecasts for use by local weather services, was extended from five SADC countries to the whole of southern Africa. A training workshop took place in collaboration with the WMO to ensure that the national meteorological services of southern Africa can use the guidance and related products of the SWFDP.

The SAWS delivers dedicated services to specific industries. A commercial road hazard system was developed and implemented for the insurance industry, and dedicated two-day commercial forecasts were provided to clients in the mining industry. The SAWS launched a new website, designed to support its commercial venture, which has - to date - proved to be successful. The website itself has 24 000 registered users and will form the basis for marketing web applications to country clubs, mines and other weather-sensitive industries. A new aviation web page was also launched to ensure that the aviation industry is kept up to date on the optimal use of the services provided by the SAWS. The service to Eskom was improved by enhanced location accuracy of lightning information. A new text-to-voice forecasting service that will significantly reduce the workload of the forecasters was also launched in cooperation with MTN.

A clear and concise Policy on SAWS Data Provision to Users and Clients was approved by the board. The board also approved the policies on finance, supply chain management and pricing, corporate social investment (CSI) and sponsorship. A review of the South African Weather Service Act is also in progress. The agency furthermore developed a position paper on climate change. Development work to modify automatic weather stations that meet the software requirements of the owners of small airports was finalised. The first automatic weather station was installed at the Wonderboom Airport in Pretoria.

The South African Air Quality Information System (SAAQIS) is being developed in collaboration with DEAT. The aim of the system is to provide accurate, current, relevant, complete and accessible information for informed decision-making in order to meet national and international information management requirements and commitments. The SAAQIS database was loaded at the SAWS early in 2009. Discussions are underway to recognise the agency's Airborne Research Facility as a national asset with the cooperation of the Department of Science and Technology and higher education institutions.