

HISTORIC FISHING RIGHTS HANDED OVER



Minister Barbara Creecy with the KZN Co-operatives and acting Mayor of Umzumbe Local Municipality Ms Londolo Zungu present one of the KZN fishing rights co-operatives with their certificate.



ROOIBOS BENEFIT SHARING AGREEMENT LAUNCH

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HERO'S WELCOME FOR WOF FIREFIGHTERS

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DECREASING PENGUIN NUMBERS WORRYING

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BY TSHEGO LETSHWITI

The Minister of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries, Ms. Barbara Creecy made history this year when she handed over 15-year fishing rights allocations to seven small-scale fishing co-operatives in KwaZulu-Natal.

Allocation of these rights will provide work opportunities for around 500 people in the Ugu District Municipality with a broader agenda to also promote transformation of the fishing sector.

This follows the department's amended legislation of 2016 which recognised the importance of small-scale fishers, and launched an Expression of Interest process, where a total of 316 communities from the four coastal provinces registered their interest.

Minister Creecy also announced a "basket of species" as well as the rights being granted and support programmes being facilitated by

government to assist with the sustainability of the co-operatives allocated with fishing rights.

Some of the most common harvested resources by small scale fishers include fin-fish, mussels, octopus, rock lobster, sand and mud prawns, limpets, crabs, oysters, seaweed and abalone.

Speaking at the hand-over ceremony, in Hibberdene, Mzumbu Municipality, Minister Creecy expressed her satisfaction with the allocation of the fishing rights.

"The policy for Small Scale Fisheries Sector is aimed at providing a redress and recognition to the rights of Small Scale Fisher Communities in South Africa that were previously marginalised and discriminated against in terms of racially exclusionary laws and policies. This is a milestone in terms of the transformation of the fisheries sector," she added.

In KwaZulu-Natal (KZN), a total of 53 communities expressed interest, however, 48 participated

“
...THIS IS A MILESTONE
IN TERMS OF THE
TRANSFORMATION OF THE
FISHERIES SECTOR

in registration to be recognised as small-scale fishers.

In total, 2 184 small-scale fishers were finally recognised in KZN from 36 declared small-scale fishing communities.

Subsequently, the declared communities have been assisted to register co-operatives and to further apply for 15-year fishing rights for the first time.

The department also assisted by conducting two-day compulsory training workshops with the recognised small-scale fisheries of

the KZN communities in 2018. These were done to help fishers understand the co-operative model in general, including roles and responsibilities and their rights as members of co-operatives.

The department facilitated the registration of the co-operatives with Company Intellectual Property Commission (CIPC) and 36 co-operatives from the declared small-scale communities in KZN.

All registered co-operatives were handed over their co-operative registration documents and all the co-operatives were assisted to apply for the fishing rights in 2019.

Recently cabinet took a decision, to extend the timeframes for dealing with the fishing rights in 12 commercial fishing sectors which will expire on 31 December 2020.

Any fishing rights allocation process is highly contentious and a number of legal and administrative procedures must be followed in order to ensure that a proper, transparent and legally defensible process is

followed. Cabinet's approval for an extension of the timeframes will be in the interest of all South Africans, including both the current right holders and aspirant applicants.

"It is important to re-state that the decision to review the FRAP 2020 process which will see the re-issuing of licenses for 12 of the 22 fisheries.

"This decision has been taken following consultation with the sector and is aimed at ensuring that we follow all regulatory and legislative requirements.

"It is essential that the process is seen to be fair, open and transparent. It must promote the transformation of the sector, and create sustainable livelihoods for the many coastal communities who have no other means of support," explained Minister Creecy.

The department is committed to using the extended timeframes to deliver a credible and transparent Fishing Rights Allocation Process and to reduce the number of appeals and legal reviews.

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The state in its capacity as the public trustee of all coastal public property, has a duty to manage, protect and enhance it in the interest of the whole community, and for the benefit of present and future generations.

In terms of the IMC Act, all people in South Africa have the right of reasonable access to coastal public property and are entitled to use and enjoy coastal public property, provided such use:

- Does not adversely affect the rights of members of the public to use and enjoy the coastal public property.
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Rooibos Agreement to benefit communities



Mr !Aru | Khuisi Berendse, blessed the ceremony by starting a fire with sage and soil from !Khwa Ttu. The Khoi Khoi and San community believe that the burning of fire symbolises the blessing of the ceremony by ancestors.



Minister Barbara Creecy and Deputy Director-General: Biodiversity and Conservation, Mr Shonisani Munzhedzi look at an exhibition of some items used by the Khoi and San people to survive. The items included clothing, hunting tools, accessories, as well as houses built with twigs and sticks for shelter.

BY GAOPALELWE MOROANE

Pride and excitement filled !Kwa Ttu San and Cultural Centre, in Yzerfontein on the morning of 1 November 2019, as the Rooibos and Honeybush Traditional Knowledge Benefit Sharing signing took place.

“The signing of this agreement is not only the first of its kind in the country, but also a first of its kind in the world,” noted Minister of Environment Forestry and Fisheries, Barbara Creecy, addressing the marquee packed to capacity with San and Khoi community members who are to benefit from the agreement.

The signing of this agreements marks the Rooibos industries’ recognition that the Khoi-Khoi and San people are the original founders of the traditional knowledge about the Rooibos plant and that they should thus be included as beneficiaries in the industry.

The agreement, which is a result of nine years of negotiations, was signed by the Minister Barbara Creecy and the chairperson of the National Khoi-san Council, Mr Cecil Le Fleur, the chairperson of the San Council of South Africa, Mr Collin Louw, and the chairperson of the South African Rooibos Council, Mr



Minister Barbara Creecy enjoys her first cup of fresh rooibos and honeybush tea before the signing of the Industry-wide BSA.

Martin Berg under the watchful eye of members of the Cederberg Rooibos Farming Communities.

“The ABS agreement is a mark of South Africa’s commitment to local and international biodiversity and bioprospecting regulations, including the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of the Benefits Arising from their Utilisation, the National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act and its Regulations on Bioprospecting, Access and Benefit Sharing.

How will Khoi and San communities benefit from this Agreement?

The agreement launches one-year pilot project through which the Khoi and San communities will receive 1.5% of the farm gate price from the processors of rooibos in the form of an annual levy, excluding VAT.

This is estimated R12 million per year and will be paid into Trust Accounts opened by the San and Khoi communities.

Benefits also include the creation of jobs, and the upliftment of some 160 small-scale farmers who belong to the Wupperthal co-operative in the Western Cape and the Heiveld co-op in the Northern Cape.

Asked what the signing of the agreement means for her and her community in Niewoudtville, Northern Cape, Heiveld Co-operative’s, Ms Alida Afrika from said: “The signing of this agreement has restored the dignity of my community as it confirms that industry recognises that traditional



Heiveld Co-operative’s Ms Alida Afrika from Niewoudtville is one of the beneficiaries who is looking forward to how the signing of this agreement will benefit her community.

knowledge of Honeybush and Rooibos belongs to us.”

Rooibos Agreement is a victory for the Khoi community

“The signing of the Rooibos and Honeybush Traditional Knowledge Benefit Sharing Agreement between industry and the Khoi and San communities sets the benchmark for future similar agreements, says Environment, Forestry and Fisheries Minister, Ms Barbara Creecy.”



Above: Minister of Environmental Affairs Barbara Creecy and !Aru | Khuisi Berendse, also known as Oom Piet after the signing of the Rooibos and Honeybush Traditional Knowledge Benefit Sharing Agreement. (Image by Esa Alexander)

Above: The agreement was signed by the Minister Barbara Creecy, the chairperson of the National Khoi-san Council, Mr Cecil Le Fleur, the chairperson of the San Council of South Africa, Mr Collin Louw, and the chairperson of the South African Rooibos Council, Mr Martin Berg. (Image by Siziphiwe Maxengana)

Above: To officially open the signing of the Industry-wide Benefit Sharing Agreement for traditional knowledge associated with Rooibos, Mr !Aru | Khuisi Berendse, blessed the ceremony by starting a fire with sage and soil from !Khwa Ttu. The Khoi Khoi and San community believe that the burning of fire symbolises the blessing of the ceremony by ancestors. (Image by Esa Alexander)



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KEEPING OUR ENVIRONMENT CLEAN

To celebrate World Environment Day, the Minister of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries Barbara Creecy, Deputy Minister Maggie Sotyu and former Gauteng MEC for Economic Development, Agriculture and Environment Dr Kgosientso Ramokgopa led a Good Green Deeds clean-up in Nellmapius, Mamelodi East, on June 5.



THE FOUR R'S

Good waste management follows the 4 Rs: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle and Recover, as well as avoiding illegal dumping and littering.

Did you know that the 4 Rs can help us to find better ways to manage our litter?

You can **REDUCE** by cutting down the amount of litter you produce. Try to buy products in bulk that are made from recycled material and use canvas bags instead of plastic packets.

You can **REUSE** by finding ways to use things again that you would normally throw away.

For sure! Old tyres can be used to grow flowers and we can reuse plastic and glass bottles.

The third R is to **RECYCLE!** Recycle rubbish that cannot be reused. Collect all your rubbish, sort it into its different categories like paper, glass, metal and plastic, then put it in recycle bins or take it to a buy-back centre. It can then be used to make new products.

The last R is to **RECOVER.** You can convert waste into resources such as electricity, heat, compost and fuel.

Waste **harms** the environment and human beings.

It is important to ensure that waste is managed in a way that will **minimise** its harmful impacts.

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Section 24 of the South African Constitution states: "Everyone has the right to an environment that is not harmful to their health or well-being."

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At the conference, Barbara Creecy, the Minister of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries assumed the Presidency of AMCEN, taking over from Minister Lee White, Gabon's Minister for Forests, Sea, the Environment and Climate Plan.

Effective mechanisms for sustainable development

In a ministerial declaration issued at the closing of the 17th Ordinary Session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) held in Durban recently, African governments agreed to make the Conference the forum for making regional environment policies with effective mechanisms for implementation.

Held under the theme, "Taking action for Environmental Sustainability and Prosperity in Africa", the Conference was held from 11 to 15 November and focussed on the need for African countries to take practical action, including implementation of policies, relevant regional and global frameworks, in order for the continent to attain environmental sustainability and prosperity and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Africa's Agenda 2063.

"We need to ramp up our efforts to implement the decisions for the benefit of our Continent," Barbara Creecy, President of AMCEN and Minister of Forestry and Fisheries and Environmental Affairs of the Republic of South Africa said.

"As we deliberated on the contribution that the Circular Economy, Blue Economy and biodiversity can make, this is an ideal opportunity to involve our youth and women in a more meaningful way in these, whilst guarding against environmental degradation."

Ministers have also committed to continue taking concrete actions to address environmental challenges and climate actions to unlock inclusive wealth creation that safeguards the socio-economic wellbeing of Africa.

They reiterated their support in aligning AMCEN to global efforts, especially through the United Nations Environment Assembly

(UNEA), the highest global environmental decision-making body.

"At AMCEN we have seen African Ministers of the Environment demonstrate a powerful commitment to environmental protection, sustainable development, and to transforming policy into action. The UN Environment Programme stands ready to support this shared vision of a prosperous Africa which ensures the well-being of both people and the environment on which we are all depend," said Joyce Msuya, Deputy Executive Director of UNEP.

KEY DECISIONS MADE AT THE CONFERENCE INCLUDED:

■ **On taking action for environmental sustainability,** Ministers committed to take measures to evaluate their progress in implementation of their decisions and address emerging issues. They reaffirmed their commitment to use all policy tools at national and regional levels to achieve strong, harmonised, coherent delivery of environmental and sustainable development related programmes to enable the achievement of Agenda 2063 of the African Union and 2030 Agenda.

■ **On circular economy,** Ministers recognised the value of the circular economy and its potential to improve the way in which goods and services are produced and consumed, reduce waste, create jobs and contribute to sustainable development.

They also agreed to raise the political visibility and awareness of the circular economy.

The 17th Ordinary session of AMCEN committed to replicate, scale up and use circular economy approaches as part of Africa's



WE NEED TO RAMP UP OUR EFFORTS TO IMPLEMENT DECISIONS FOR THE BENEFIT OF OUR CONTINENT

transformation efforts as contained in Africa Agenda 2063.

■ **On blue economy,** Ministers committed to raise awareness on blue economy by recognising that oceans and freshwater sources play a critical role in the economic development of the continent. They stressed the need to enhance the development of the Blue Economy of Africa as well as to mitigate the impacts of natural disasters such as floods and cyclones.

■ **On Biodiversity,** a commitment was made to raise the visibility and importance of the contribution of biological resources and their services in sustainable development through promoting the opportunities offered by the biodiversity economy. Ministers committed to address the threats facing biological resources in order to mitigate the impact of the challenges that the continent is facing.

They also committed to provide political direction and momentum to highlight the urgency of action at the highest levels in support of a post-2020 global biodiversity framework. Ministers reaffirmed their pledge to swiftly implement the Pan-African Action Agenda on Ecosystem Restoration for Increased Resilience as part of Africa's commitment to



implementing the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021–2030.

■ **On land degradation,** desertification and drought, Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to provide adequate resources to address the drivers of migration related to desertification, land degradation and drought. They also reaffirmed their commitment to the 2018–2030 Strategic Framework of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and recognized the value of the land degradation neutrality and its potential to improve development and prosperity of Africa.

■ **On climate change,** Ministers acknowledged the recent findings of the international scientific community regarding climate change, including the three recent special reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC); the Report on Global Warming of 1.5 degrees Celsius, Climate Change and Land Report, and Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate, which reflect the specific circumstances of Africa

and linkage between its vulnerability to climate change and urgent development challenges.

They reaffirmed the commitment of the African countries to the full implementation of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and its Paris Agreement in line with the principles and provisions of the Convention.

Ministers emphasized the importance of the implementation of their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).

■ **On Plastic Pollution,** Ministers committed to supporting global action to address plastic pollution, and which will need further work to engage more effectively on global governance issues on plastic pollution, including reinforcing existing agreements.

■ **On strengthening informed decision-making,** Ministers welcomed the proposal for a science-policy-business forum to contribute to the provision of information to policymakers for informed decision-making on environmental issues.

FOCUS ON BIODIVERSITY IN SA

BY ZIMKITA MAVUMENGWANA

On 3 October 2019 Minister of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries Ms Barbara Creecy launched the National Biodiversity Assessment (NBA) in a celebratory event that was held at the Pretoria National Botanical Garden.

The launch proved to be highly engaging and allowed for deeper discussions between NBA leads and stakeholders, attracting up to over 140 people representing research institutes, government departments and media.

The NBA is the primary tool for reporting on the state of biodiversity in South Africa. It is used to inform policies, strategies and activities for managing and conserving biodiversity more effectively. During the NBA launch Minister Creecy said: "The assessment allows the government to evaluate progress and shortcomings in conservation and ecosystem management on both land and sea."

The NBA was led by the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI) as part of their mandate to monitor the status of South Africa's biodiversity and was undertaken between 2015 and 2019. It involved extensive collaboration from over 470 individuals representing about 90 institutions. Ninety young people contributed to the NBA as SANBI prides itself on growing young people's skills and capacity.

SANBI Board Chair Ms Beryl Ferguson noted that "South Africa is one of the few countries in the world where young people can participate in such an important product".

South African biodiversity is extraordinary – we are one of the 17 megadiverse nations in the world and in the top three when it comes to plant and marine species found nowhere else on Earth.

Dr Andrew Skowno, lead scientist of the NBA, alongside Ms Dewidine van der Colff, who is one of SANBI's young scientists, presented the key findings and messages of the NBA at the event.

The findings revealed that almost half of all South Africa's 1 021 ecosystem types are threatened with ecological collapse and one in seven of the 23 312 indigenous species that were assessed are considered threatened with extinction.

Nonetheless efforts to protect our biodiversity are showing promising outcomes, as over two-thirds of ecosystem types and 63% of species assessed are represented in protected areas.

The study found that major pressures on South Africa's biodiversity are habitat loss, changes to freshwater flow, overuse

of some species, pollution, climate change and invasive alien species.

Freshwater fishes are the most threatened species group assessed in South Africa – which is a reflection of the generally poor ecological condition of many of our rivers. Approximately 99% of estuarine area and 88% of wetland area is threatened, and less than 2% of their extent is in the Well Protected category. The restoration and protection of these small ecosystems is a priority to secure the essential benefits that they provide to people and species.

Protected areas have expanded in the ocean and on land and are a source of pride for South Africans. Continued expansion will help to ensure biodiversity conservation, ecological sustainability and even more social and economic benefits from biodiversity to society.

Protected areas now cover nearly 9% of South Africa's mainland area and 75% of terrestrial ecosystem types have some form of representation. The 20 new Marine Protected Areas declared in 2019 ensure that 5% of the country's mainland marine territory and 87% of marine ecosystem types have some protection.

South Africa has an incredibly wealth of plant species, with 20 401 plant species found within our borders. These have all been assessed and a high number (2 804 species) are threatened with extinction. This is due to many indigenous plants having extremely limit ranges that coincide with areas that have been extensively developed or degraded.

South Africa has the second highest number of documented plant extinctions of any country in the world, with 36 species confirmed extinct and a further 70 possibly extinct. All mammal, bird, reptile, amphibian, freshwater fish, butterfly and dragonfly species were assessed, together with selected marine and estuarine fishes and invertebrates. Of the 2 911 animals assessed, a total of 12% are categorised as threatened with extinction.

South Africa's economy is highly dependent on its biodiversity – for example: biodiversity-related employment is estimated at 418 000 jobs; biodiversity tourism generates a direct spend of R31 billion annually; and our approximately 2 000 medicinal plant species contribute to the African Traditional Medicine sector worth R18 billion per year.

The full set of NBA products, which include a synthesis report, seven technical reports, datasets, maps, supplementary materials and popular products, is accessible via <http://nba.sanbi.org.za/>



Minister of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries, Ms Barbara Creecy and the High Commissioner of Canada in South Africa, HE Sandra McCardell welcomed back the firefighters at OR Tambo International Airport.

WoF firefighters received a hero's welcome from Canada

BY VERONICA MAHLABA

The Minister of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries, Ms Barbara Creecy and the High Commissioner of Canada in South Africa, HE Sandra McCardell welcomed back the Department's Working on Fire firefighters (WoF) with jubilation to South Africa on 30 July 2019.

The 45-member team were based at the Province of Alberta in Western Canada assisting in combating the huge Chuckegg fire which burnt over 340,000 ha by the time they returned home. The WoF fire fighters formed part of teams of fire fighters from all over Alberta, Saskatchewan, British Columbia, New Brunswick, Ontario, Manitoba, Yukon, North West Territories, Mexico and USA in combatting the fire which started on the 12 May 2019.

Minister Creecy congratulated and thanked the firefighters for honouring the country and their profession.

"What is most heartening to hear, is that because of your efforts, the boundary line remained unbreached by the fire. You stood with 1180 firefighters from all over Canada, Mexico and the USA and said: 'This far and no further'."

"This achievement is a great testament your skills, discipline, fitness, knowledge and insight."

The South African Department of Environment, Fisheries and Forestry has a Memorandum of Understanding with the Canadian Department of Natural Resources, in terms of which either country may request urgent support from the other with regards to wildfire management.

The deployment of the WoF firefighters in Canada further deepens the relations between



Some of the WoF firefighters that arrived early from Canada.

Canada and South Africa on integrated fire management capacities.

High Commissioner of Canada in South Africa, HE Sandra McCardell also thanked the WoF firefighters on behalf of Canada and her hometown Albertan for their hard work and coming to their assistance in times of great need.

"This programme is particularly special to me. This programme hits most important things that both Canada and South Africa is trying to achieve."

"When I met the team at Working on Fire in 2016, I was impressed by the goals of creating skills and employment for young people."

That's something that all countries are working on. The opportunities to travel across the world, I know that for some of you it was the first time having a passport, first plane ride and visa to Canada and those are special experiences this programme can provide.

"There are other things that are more meaningful, that partnership and that working together to address the effect of climate that is the effort that the entire world has to work on and you are part in that global intervention," said HE McCardell.

Speaking to one of the firefighters, Mr Tonic Mahlare from Rooiberg Base in Limpopo said that it was a great privilege for him to be part of the team that went to Canada.

"The day I received a call that I was going I never slept that night. It actually boosted my confidence that my team trusts me that much and I wanted to make sure that I make them proud."

"When we got there, it was an underground fire and we used different equipment to fight the fire. It was hard work and the times we worked were different from what we work in South Africa. I am proud of my team, we worked very well together and also with the teams from the other countries."



Minister Creecy with the Board of South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI) at the launch.

Plan to help curb decreasing numbers of African Penguins

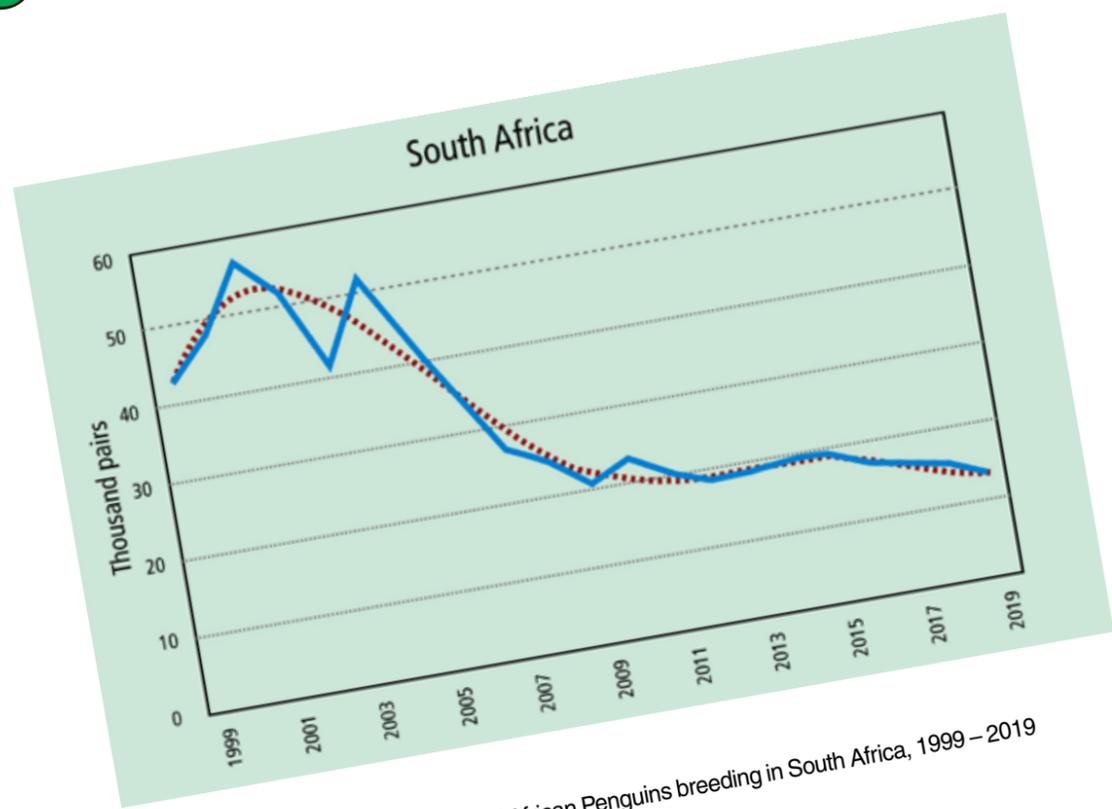


Figure 1: Trends in numbers of African Penguins breeding in South Africa, 1999–2019

BYTSHEGO LETSHWITI

Concerns have risen after the department's research findings into the population numbers of the African Penguin (*Spheniscus demersus*) indicated a downward trend in South Africa.

The African Penguin is Africa's only extant penguin and endemic to South Africa and Namibia. It was once South Africa's most abundant seabird with perhaps one million or more pairs in the 1920s, which decreased to less than 19 000 pairs in 2012.

This led to the classification of the species to Endangered in 2010, in terms of the criteria of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). The species has declined by over 60% in the last 30 years and by over 50% in its three most recent generations.

Unfortunately, decreases continue and the population is now sitting at its lowest ever recorded level in South Africa of ~13 000 pairs (Figure 1).

It is clear that off western South Africa, the former stronghold of the species, food scarcity was the primary driver of the recent decrease.

A study on the African Penguin population at Robben Island found that the population there was strongly driven by food availability, particularly around the island during their nesting and breeding season, but also throughout their foraging range farther afield for the rest of the year.

Further threats to a lesser degree, include oil pollution and at-sea predation by seals. It is estimated that by improving food availability and mitigating the impact of any oiling on the penguins, it would have the highest beneficial impacts on the population.

Food scarcity has resulted from an altered distribution of prey and competition with fisheries.

As a result, the department recently

released for public comment the Draft Biodiversity Management Plan for the African Penguin that was published in Government Gazette No. 42775 (Notice No. 1328) by the Minister of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries, Ms Barbara Creecy, on 18 October 2019 to help find solutions.

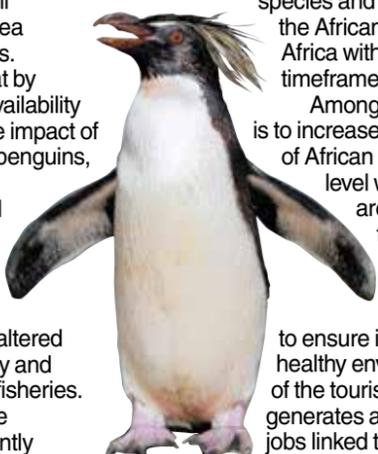
The Draft Biodiversity Management Plan (BMP) aims to update and continue the work initiated in the initial Plan published in 2013 on account of the rapid decrease of the species.

DEFF along with the Management Authorities (CapeNature, SANParks, City of Cape Town and Robben Island Museum) and various other stakeholders, which include academia, research institutions and Non-Government Organisations (NGOs), have worked together to improve the status of the African Penguin and safeguard its long-term survival in the wild.

The threats that were addressed in the last six years range from the improvement of the legislative framework, mitigation measures for anthropogenic impacts such as fishing and disturbance, addressing natural threats such as reducing seal predation, development of response plans in the case of catastrophic events, development of research projects to improve knowledge in cases where there were insufficient information and the development of education and awareness programmes.

The updated BMP proposes new actions to conserve the species and halt the decline of the African Penguin in South Africa within its 5-year timeframe.

Among its proposals is to increase the population of African Penguins to a level where the birds are down listed by the International Union for Conservation of Nature and to ensure its survival in a healthy environment in light of the tourism revenue it generates and the number of jobs linked to the species.



African Penguins

Fun facts

They're fluffy, cute and wear tuxedos. These flightless birds are a marvel to behold and simply incredible creatures. The world celebrates these beautiful creatures annually on 25 April. There are 18 recognized Penguin species in the world and most of them can be found in the Southern Hemisphere in places like Antarctica, Southern Africa, Chile, Peru, Galapagos Islands, New Zealand, Australia and a number of sub-Antarctic islands.

All about South Africa's most beloved penguin, the African Penguin:

- They are the only penguin species in Africa and are endemic to the southern-Africa (Namibia and South Africa):
- The number of African Penguins declined between 1920 and the mid-1950's mainly due to the overexploitation of eggs. The species has declined by over 60% in the last 30 years and by over 50% in the three most recent generations, with the declines continuing;
- They are currently listed as Endangered according to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List of Threatened Species and Birdlife;
- Once South Africa's most abundant seabird, the African Penguin population has decreased from more than 1 million in the 1910s to less than 25 000 breeding pairs recorded globally. Currently in South Africa, there are approximately 15 400 breeding pairs recorded in 2018.

Breeding

They breed only in South Africa and Namibia;

They breed between four and six years of age;

They usually lay two eggs;

Nests are built by both sexes in either burrows, guano, clefts between rocks or on the surface and vegetation as well as artificial nest boxes. Their nest material includes seaweed, pieces of vegetation, rocks, shells, bones and feathers;

Penguins rely on their feathers for warmth and waterproofing. Once a year, will need to shed them, a penguin will eat a lot to stock up on body fat. It will then spend up to three weeks on land losing all its feathers and growing new ones;

Penguins generally go through a process called Moulting, a technique that allows them to remain waterproof and insulated when foraging in cold water;

African Penguins are good swimmers and may dive up to 130 m but usually forage at depths <80 m;

The Department is addressing the impacts affecting the decline of African Penguins through the African Penguin Biodiversity Management Plan.

Why are penguins important in the ecosystem?

Penguins are highly adapted to the environment in which they live;

They are sensitive to ecosystem changes and are vulnerable to threats of and around their breeding colonies;

This makes them very useful as ecosystem indicators to help provide relevant information regarding the health of marine ecosystem.

Source: <https://www.environment.gov.za/mediarelease/worldpenguinday2017>

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CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACTS COULD BE DISASTROUS FOR FOOD & WATER SECURITY



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