

Barbara Creecy hands over historic fishing rights

Minister hands over certificates of rights to small-scale fishing co-operatives

By **Tshego Letshwiti**

The minister of environment, forestry and fisheries Barbara Creecy made history this year when she handed over 15-year fishing rights to seven small-scale fishing co-operatives in KwaZulu-Natal.

The allocation of these rights will provide work opportunities for about 500 people in the Ugu district municipality with a broader agenda to promote transformation in the fishing sector.

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

Creecy also announced a "basket of species" as well as the rights being granted and support programmes being facilitated by the 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 handover ceremony in Hibberdene, Umzumbe municipality, Creecy expressed her satisfaction with the allocation of the fishing rights.

"The policy for the small-scale fisheries sector is aimed at providing redress and recognition of



Barbara Creecy, the environment, forestry and fisheries minister, addressed the audience about the fishing rights allocations to small-scale fishing co-operatives.



Environment minister Barbara Creecy and Umzumbe's acting mayor Londolo Zungu.



Environment minister Barbara Creecy with the KwaZulu-Natal co-operatives and Umzumbe municipality's acting mayor Londolo Zungu.

the rights of small-scale fisher communities in SA which 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 53 communities expressed their interest, and 48 participated in the registration process to be recognised as small-scale fishers.

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

Since then, the environment, forestry and fisheries department has helped the declared communities register co-operatives and to further apply for 15-year fishing rights for the first time.

The department also conduct-

ed two-day compulsory training workshops in 2018 with the recognised small-scale KwaZulu-Natal fisheries.

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

The department facilitated the registration of the co-operatives

This is a milestone for transformation of the fisheries sector

with the Company Intellectual Property Commission (CIPC).

All registered co-operatives were given their registration documents and 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 December 31 2020.

Any fishing rights allocation process is highly contentious and a number of legal and administrative procedures must be followed to ensure that a 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 rights holders and aspirant applicants.

"It is important to re-state the

decision to review the 2020 FRAP (fishing rights allocation process) which will see the re-issuing of licences 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 Creecy.

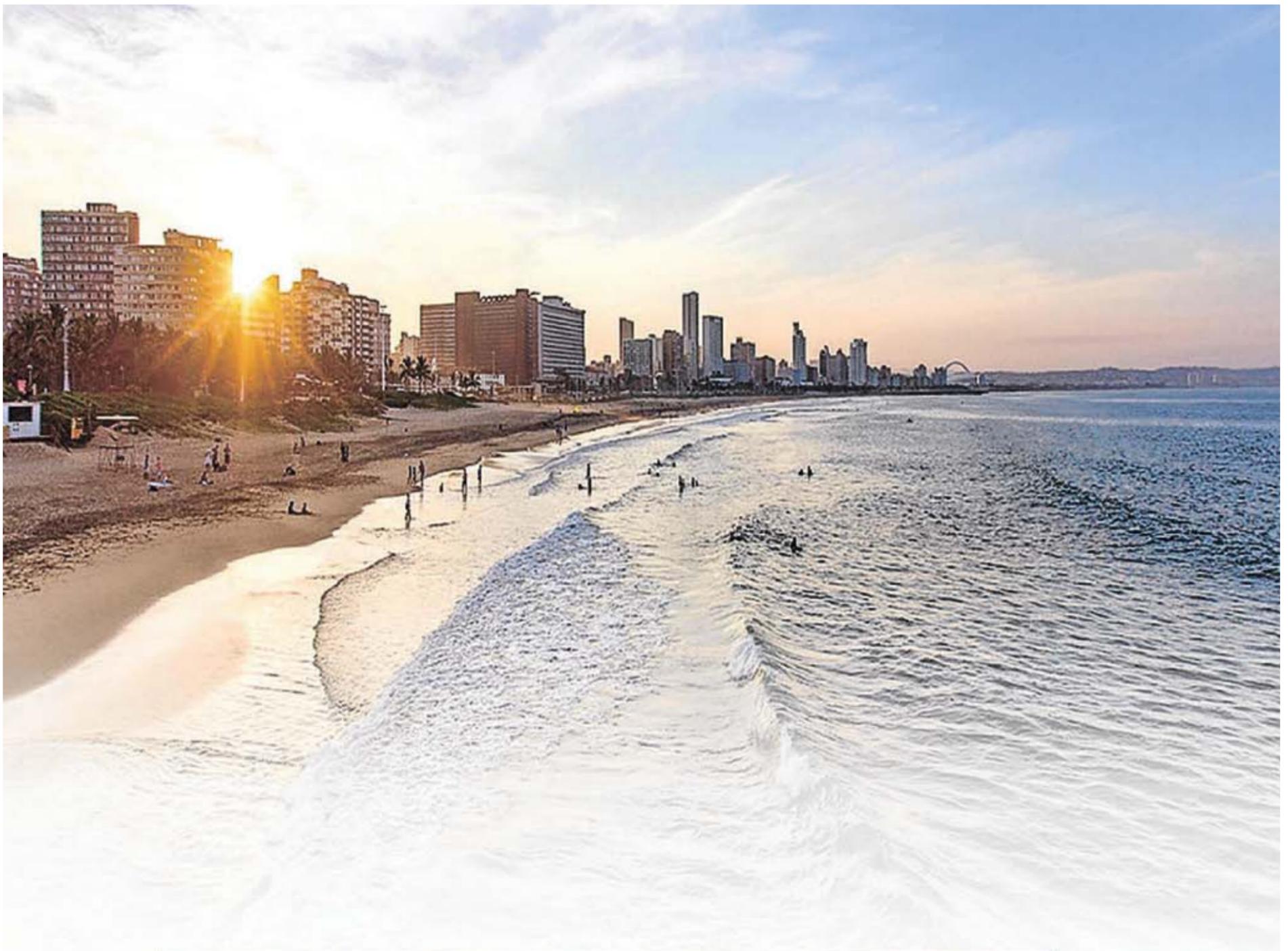
The department is committed to using the extended timeframes to deliver a credible and transparent fishing rights allocation process and to reduce the number of appeals and legal reviews.



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According to the National Environmental Management Integrated Coastal Management (ICM) Act of 2008, everyone has the right to equitable access to the South African beaches and its public amenities.

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.
- Does not hinder the State in the performance of its duty to protect the environment.
- Does not cause an adverse effect to the environment.

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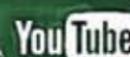
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Minister of environment, forestry and fisheries Barbara Creecy enjoys a cup of rooibos tea before signing the Benefit-Sharing Agreement.



Minister of environment, forestry and fisheries Barbara Creecy and deputy director-general of biodiversity and conservation, Shonisani Munzhedzi, look at an exhibition of tools used by the Khoi and San people to hunt, clothe themselves and build shelters.



Heiveld Cooperative's Alida Afrika from Niewoudtville, Northern Cape, is one of the beneficiaries looking forward to seeing how the signing of this agreement will benefit her community.



Deputy director-general of biodiversity and conservation, Shonisani Munzhedzi, delivers a speech at the Rooibos Access Benefit-Sharing Agreement.

Rooibos Agreement is a victory for the Khoi community

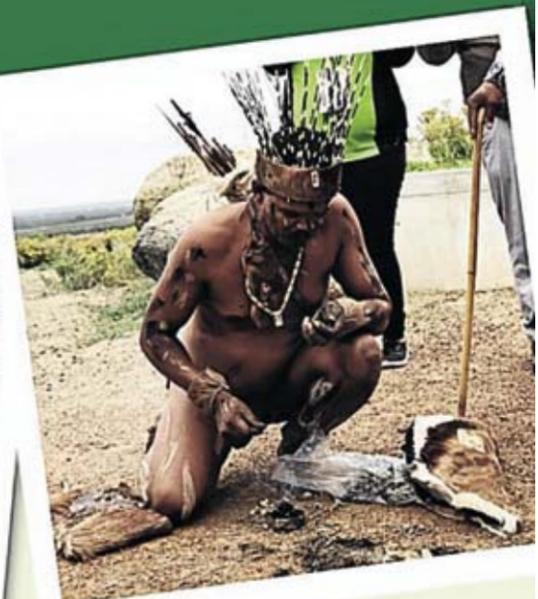
“ The signing of the Rooibos and Honeybush Traditional Knowledge Benefit Sharing Agreement between industry and the Khoi and San communities sets the benchmark for future similar agreements, says Environment, Forestry and Fisheries Minister, Ms Barbara Creecy. ”



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 !Kwa 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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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.

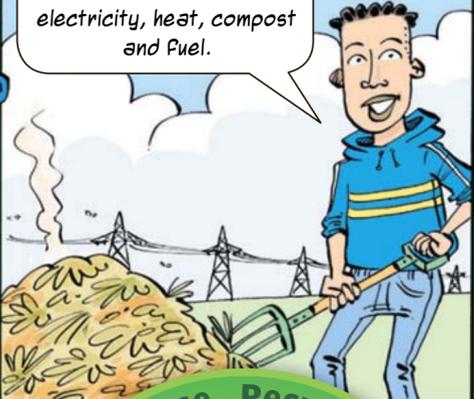
For sure! Old tyres can be used to grow flowers and we can reuse plastic and glass bottles.



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.



Reduce . Reuse . Recycle . Recover

Are you making a difference?

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."



Minister of environment, forestry and fisheries Barbara Creecy held a community clean up in Port St Johns.



Minister of environment, forestry and fisheries Barbara Creecy, deputy minister Maggie Sotyu, and the former Gauteng MEC for economic development, agriculture and environment, Kgosi Ramokgopa, joined the Nellmapius community to celebrate World Environment Day.



Barbara Creecy and Maggie Sotyu.



Minister of environment, forestry and fisheries Barbara Creecy and deputy minister Maggie Sotyu put up a sign to stop illegal dumping in open spaces.



Minister of environment, forestry and fisheries Barbara Creecy and residents clean up the community's public spaces.



Barbara Creecy at the Good Green Deeds clean-up day.

Barbara Creecy calls on Africa to act now

We meet at a significant time for our continent and our people. In 2017, the African Development Bank reported Africa to be the world's second-fastest growing economy, with average growth rates approaching 4% per annum.

Growth has been present throughout the continent, with over one third of African countries posting 6% or higher growth rates, and another 40% growing between 4% to 6% per year. Several international business observers have also named Africa as the future economic growth engine of the world.

Africa has approximately 30% of the Earth's remaining mineral resources. Africa is the second-most populated continent with about 1.1 billion people or 16% of the world's population. Over 50% of Africans are under the age of 25, giving the continent a significant youth dividend in years to come.

Recent research suggests that with current growth rates, the continent's population will more than double to 2.3 billion by 2050 by which time half the continent's population will have achieved middle-income status. Our rich resource base and human capital endowments coupled with the significant entrepreneurial spirit of our people, mean our continent has the potential to achieve the African Union's Agenda 2063 of "a high standard of living, quality of life and wellbeing for all citizens".

In addition to Africa's rich resource and human capital endowments, the continent also has significant biodiversity resources. Eight of Conservation International's 34 biodiversity hotspots are in Africa. Megafauna like giraffe, zebra, gorilla, hippopotamus, chimpanzee and wildebeest

are unique to the continent. Lake Malawi has more fish species than any other freshwater system on earth. Africa also boasts over 25% of the world's bird species.

We have over 3,000 protected areas in Africa. These include 198 marine protected areas, 50 biosphere reserves, 129 Unesco World Heritage sites, and 80 Ramsar "Wetlands of International Importance".

While we celebrate our rich biodiversity and our significant environmental heritage, we know that the combined effects of environmental degradation and climate change are already taking a toll on our natural resources.

Accordingly, this conference organised under the theme "Taking Action for Environmental Sustainability and Prosperity in Africa", could not have come at a better time.

While dire warnings of loss of biodiversity and environmental degradation are cause for concern, it is not too late to act.

For the first time, the world has agreed on a set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that have turned the often misused term of "sustainable development" into a real and practical vision for the future.

This practical vision is clearly reflected in the African Union's Agenda 2063 and the collective commitment we have made as a continent to implement the SDGs.

Now is the best time for us to take stock and consider how we will build environmentally sustainable and climate resilient economies and communities on our continent. The main objectives of this 17th session are therefore to facilitate discussions on priority sub-themes derived from previous ordinary sessions. We will focus on turning envi-



Minister of environment, forestry and fisheries Barbara Creecy welcomes delegates at the AMCEN meeting.



Barbara Creecy

ronmental policies into action and investing in innovative solutions to accelerate implementation of the SDGs.

The sub-themes include: Promoting a Circular Economy in Africa; the Biodiversity Economy and Natural Capital Accounting; Advancing the Blue/Ocean Economy; and Implementation of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.

This AMCEN session takes place on the eve of the 25th Climate Change Conference of Parties (COP25) scheduled to take place in Madrid, Spain. We all know that Africa is regarded as

the continent most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. In preparation for COP25, this



Barbara Creecy outside the conference held in eThekweni.

forum must therefore deliver a common and coherent approach to the negotiations.

Africa also faces a massive financial shortfall in meeting the SDGs. In a context of declining levels of official development assistance, this poses another significant challenge for the continent. Our people are looking to this forum to implement concrete programmes and projects that will provide answers to the challenges we face.

They want inclusive solutions and meaningful action at the grassroots level. Our people want action now.

To achieve this we must nurture a vision of a prosperous and equitable Africa living in harmony with its natural resources. We must have the courage to discard the destructive practices of the past and to chart a new sustainable path that will make this truly "the African Century".

We must take advantage of the opportunities presented to us by our enviable renewable resources, including our vast, largely untapped, solar, wind and hydro energy sources.

In doing this we must realise the potential of our youthful populations who are desperate to get working. We must use our entrepreneurial spirit and creativity to find new solutions.

This is how we will make our contribution to the realisation of the African Union Vision for Africa contained in Agenda 2063: The Future We Want. This document speaks of "...an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, an Africa driven and managed by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the international arena".

We have no time to waste. Let us start building the future we all want now!

NBA launched to protect SA's rich biodiversity

Almost half of our ecosystems types are under threat

By **Zimkita Mavumengwana**

Minister of environment, forestry and fisheries Barbara Creecy launched the National Biodiversity Assessment (NBA) in a celebratory event that was held at the Pretoria National Botanical Garden on October 3.

The launch allowed for deeper discussions between NBA leaders and stakeholders, attracting more than 140 people representing research institutes, government departments and media.

The NBA is the primary tool for reporting on biodiversity in SA and is used to inform policies, strategies and activities for managing and conserving biodiversity more effectively.

"The assessment allows the government to evaluate progress and shortcomings in conservation and ecosystem management on both land and sea," Creecy said at the launch.

The NBA was led by the SA National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI) as part of their mandate to monitor the status of SA's biodiversity, and was undertaken between 2015 and 2019. It involved extensive collaboration from over 470 people representing about 90 institutions. Ninety young people contributed to the NBA.

SANBI board chair Beryl Ferguson said: "SA is one of the few countries in the world where young people can participate in such an important product".

SA 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. Megadiverse nations are countries that together contain

more than two thirds of the world's biodiversity.

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

The findings revealed that almost half of all SA's 1,021 ecosystem types are threatened with ecological collapse and one in seven of the 23,312 indigenous species 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 the biggest pressures on SA's biodiversity are habitat loss, changes to freshwater flow, overuse of some species, pollution, climate change and invasive alien species. Freshwater fish are the most threatened species group assessed in SA – which is a re-

flection of the poor ecological condition of many of our rivers.

About 99% of estuarine area and 88% of wetland area is threatened, and less than 2% of their extent is in the well protected category.

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

Protected areas now cover nearly 9% of SA'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.

SA has an incredible wealth of plant species, with 20,401 plant species found. These have all been assessed and 2,804 species



SANBI acting CEO Carmel Mbizvo, minister of environment, forestry and fisheries Barbara Creecy, SANBI board chair Beryl Ferguson, National Biodiversity Assessment lead Dr Andrew Skowno. / SANBI

are found to be threatened with extinction. SA 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.

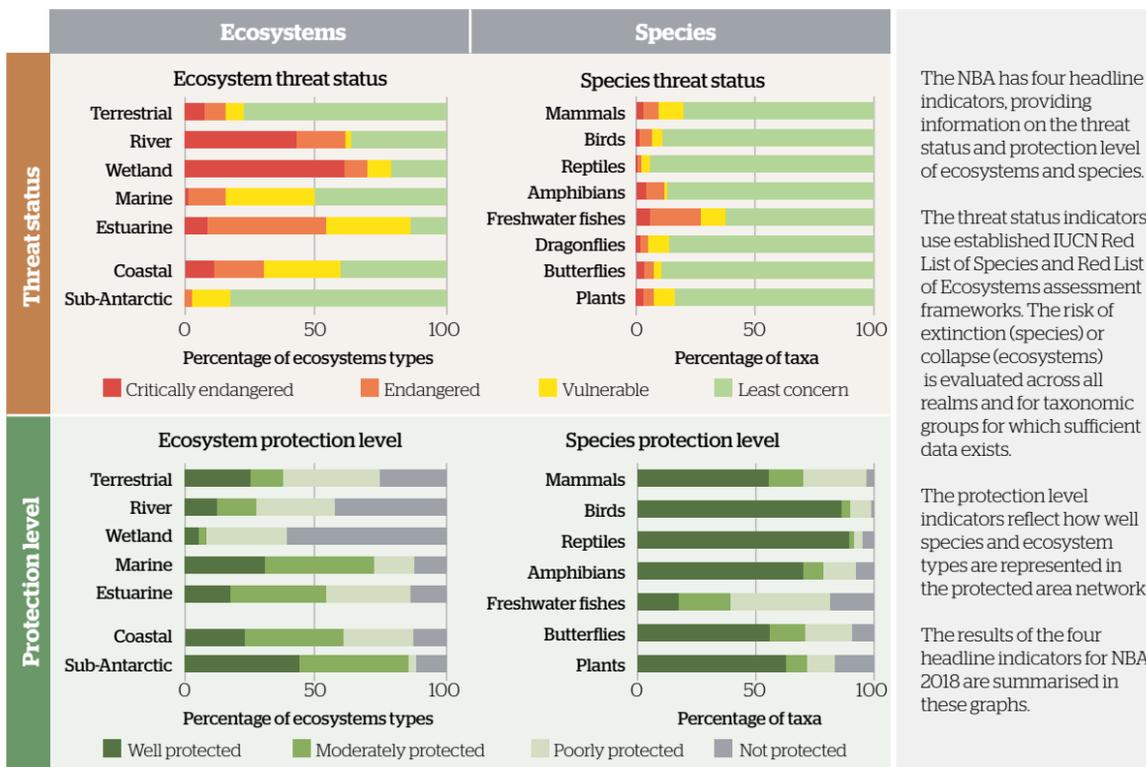
All mammal, bird, reptile, amphibian, freshwater fish, butterfly and dragonfly species were assessed, together with selected marine and estuarine fishes and invertebrates. Of the 2,911 animals assessed, a total of 12% are

categorised as threatened with extinction.

This biodiversity wealth gives people benefits like food, water, medicine and materials; it supports agricultural and fisheries production and helps protect us from natural hazards like floods and droughts; and it provides the basis of a vibrant tourism industry while offering natural spaces for recreational activities.

SA's economy is highly dependent on its biodiversity: biodiversity-related employment is estimated at 418,000 jobs; biodiversity tourism generates a direct spend of R31bn annually; and our estimated 2,000 medicinal plant species contribute to the African traditional medicine sector worth R18bn a year.

According to Creecy: "Biodiversity is central to SA's national objectives of addressing poverty, inequality and unemployment, and supports increased economic growth and improved service delivery for all its citizens. Every decision taken, whether by governments or individuals, affects the future of biodiversity."



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/>

SA firefighters receive a hero's welcome after combating Canadian fire

WoF thanked for their hard work

By **Veronica Mahlaba**

The minister of environment, forestry and fisheries Barbara Creecy and the high commissioner of Canada in SA, Her Excellency Sandra McCardell, welcomed back to SA the department's Working on Fire firefighters (WoF) with jubilation on July 30 2019.

The 45-member team was based at Alberta in Western Canada assisting in combating the huge Chuckegg fire which burned over 340,000ha by the time they returned home.

The WoF firefighters joined forces with teams of firefighters

from Alberta, Saskatchewan, British Columbia, New Brunswick, Ontario, Manitoba, Yukon, North West Territories, Mexico and the US in combating the fire which started on May 12 2019.

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 1,180 firefighters from all over Canada, Mexico and the US and said: 'this far and no further'. This achievement is a great testament to your skills, discipline fitness, knowledge and insight."

The SA department of environment, fisheries and forestry has a memorandum of under-



Minister of environment, forestry and fisheries Barbara Creecy and the high commissioner of Canada in SA Sandra McCardell welcome back the country's brave Working on Fire firefighters.

standing 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 Canada and SA on integrated fire-management capacities.

McCardell also thanked the WoF firefighters on behalf of Canada and her hometown

Alberta for their hard work and help in a time of great need.

"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," said McCardell.

Tonic Mahlare, a firefighter from Rooiberg Base in Limpopo, said that it was a great privilege to be part of the team that went to Canada.

"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 SA. I am proud of my team, we worked very well together and also with the teams from the other countries," said Mahlare.

Biodiversity Management Plan aims to stop rapid decline of African penguin population

Food scarcity and oil pollution threaten species

By **Tshego Letshwiti**

The environment, forestry and fisheries department's research findings into the diminishing population of the African penguin (*Spheniscus demersus*) in SA have raised concerns.

The African penguin is Africa's only extant penguin and is endemic to SA and Namibia.

It was once SA's most abundant seabird with about one million or more pairs in the 1920s, decreasing to less than 19,000 pairs in 2012, and 15,4000 in 2018. This led to the species being classified as endangered by the International Union for Conservation for Nature (IUCN) in 2010.

The species has declined by over 60% in the last 30 years and by over 50% in its three most recent generations.

Unfortunately the decrease continues and the population is now sitting at its lowest-ever recorded level in SA of 13,000 pairs.

Food scarcity has been the primary driver of the recent decrease off western SA, the former stronghold of the species.

A study found that the African penguin population numbers at Robben Island were 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, but to a lesser degree, are oil pollution and at-sea predation by seals.

Improving food availability and mitigating the impact of oil pollution on the penguins are the two factors expected to have the highest beneficial impact on the population.

Competition from commercial fishing as well as changes in the distribution of its prey have affected the African penguin's food sources.

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 environment, forestry and fisheries minister Barbara Creecy on October 18 2019 to help find solutions.

The draft Biodiversity Management Plan (BMP) aims to update and continue the work started in the initial plan published in 2013 to stop the rapid decrease of the species.

The environment, forestry and fishing department, along with management authorities (Cape Nature, SANParks, City of Cape Town and Robben Island Museum) and various other stakeholders, including academia, re-

search institutions and non-governmental organisations, 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 include: the improvement of the legislative framework; mitiga-

tion 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 was insufficient information;

and the development of education and awareness programmes. The updated Biodiversity Management Plan proposes new actions to conserve the species and stop its declining numbers in SA within a five-year timeframe.

One of its main proposals is to increase the population of

African penguins to a level where the birds are downlisted by the International Union for Conservation for Nature (IUCN).

Another is to ensure the survival of the African penguin in a healthy environment in light of the tourism revenue it generates and the number of jobs linked to the survival of the species.



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 for 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 goes through a process called Moulting, a technique that allows them to remain waterproof and insulated when foraging in cold waters;
- 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 at 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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