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Environment Quarterly



REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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Minister and Deputy Minister table Budget Vote 2023/24



forestry, fisheries
& the environment

Department:
Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment

2023

January

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ENVIRONMENTAL DAYS

02 February	World Wetlands Day	08 June	World Oceans Day
03 March	World Wildlife Day	17 June	Desertification and Drought Day
21 March	International Day of Forests	31 July	World Ranger Day
23 March	World Meteorological Day	September	National Arbor Month
22 April	Earth Day	16 September	Ozone Day
14 May	World Migratory Bird Day	19 September	International Coastal Clean-up Day
22 May	International Day for Biological Diversity	September	South African National Parks Week
05 June	World Environment Day	21 November	World Fisheries Day

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

1 Jan	Sun	New Year's Day	16 Jun	Fri	Youth Day
2 Jan	Mon	New Year Holiday	9 Aug	Wed	National Women's Day
21 Mar	Tue	Human Rights Day	24 Sep	Sun	Heritage Day
7 Apr	Fri	Good Friday	25 Sep	Mon	Heritage Day Holiday
10 Apr	Mon	Family Day	16 Dec	Sat	Day of Reconciliation
27 Apr	Thu	Freedom Day	25 Dec	Mon	Christmas Day
1 May	Mon	Workers' Day	26 Dec	Tue	Day of Goodwill

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Cover story

4 Minister and Deputy Minister delivers Budget Vote 2023/24

Features

- 6 South Africa translocates 12 cheetahs to India
- 8 Good Green Deeds Easter Activation
- 10 Saving wildlife from the sky
- 11 Minister Creecy visits Hluhluwe Imfolozi Park and iSimangaliso Wetland Park
- 15 A Green Vision for Impact, Change and Empowerment
- 16 Biodiversity Stewards: Preserving earth's richness
- 17 DFFE focuses on local government
- 19 Deputy Minister leads seminar on forest and health
- 20 Enviro events



Back cover image: The Blyde River Canyon

The Blyde River Canyon is a 26km long Canyon located in Mpumalanga, South Africa. It is the one of the larger canyons on Earth but much smaller than those of Asia, the Grand Canyon and the Fish River Canyon.

The Name

The canyon is named for the river that runs through it, the Blyde River, now called the Mottlatse River. Blyde means "glad" or "happy" in old Dutch, a name derived from a voortrekkers' expedition. The 'happy river' was thus named in 1844, when Hendrik Potgieter and others returned safely from Delagoa Bay to the rest of their party of trekkers who had considered them dead.

Fauna and flora

The Blyde River Canyon supports large diversity of life, including numerous fish and antelope species as well as hippos and crocodiles, and every primate species that may be seen in South Africa (including both greater and lesser bushbabies, vervet monkeys and Samango monkeys). The diversity of birdlife is similarly high.



To use this QR code conveniently you must have a smartphone equipped with a camera and a QR code reader/scanner application feature.



The Last Letter...



Dear Valued Stakeholder,

It's been an interesting and amazing 14 years in the DEAT/DEA/DEFF/DFFE and like all the good things, my journey has come to an end.

The past years were exciting as we travelled the length and breadth of this Republic to tell the story of our department from the ground, visiting various schools and town halls to ramp up public education and awareness employing various outreach tactics, while also ensuring that our various stakeholders are afforded a reciprocal communication opportunity.

We successfully employed unmediated stakeholder engagement sessions, the deployment of our digital platforms continued to bridge the distance

between Pretoria/ Cape Town and the various villages/town/cities that constitute this beautiful country. The story of the environment was told and will continue to be told. We did all that while at home making sure staff members were all empowered with credible empowering information using various information sessions. We did it.

I have all the faith in you all. The design team did a sterling job in making sure our creatives reflect our work to the citizenry, be it on television or various publications we used. May the creative juices continue to flow.

Our engagements with various communities courtesy of our publications and social media platforms, have ensured that the story of this sector, government and the department is deposited in the hearts and minds of our communities. We did all that because we are alive to the reality that an empowered citizenry is a credible stakeholder in the building of a society that lives in harmony with its environment. Our events had sought to remind our stakeholders and communities that we are here for them. We should continue raising the bar higher and higher. When our stakeholders walk into this building asking for any information that empowers them, I know that we shared that with them and they walked out of the DFFE more empowered.

The work we continue to do in ensuring our improved share of voice in the media continues to locate this organisation as one of the credible government departments. We ensured that all our Ministers were well-positioned in the media while allowing them space and time to communicate the work of the department.

When the macro-reorganization of the state was initiated giving birth to DEA, DEFF, DFFE, we all rose to the occasion to ensure that those affected were embraced while creating new departments aligned with the various administrations our various elections ushered in. Our branding efforts have been yielding dividends over the years. Thanks so much for the publications portfolio that placed our various communities as the front and centre of our communications approach.

We run one of government's more interesting websites that's teeming with so much content and the electronic communications team has ensured that all our programmes are accessible. You have been stars of our digital communications portfolio as we ramped up our video production as part of the improvement of own-media dispensation.

To the administration team allow me to thank you all for making sure that our work programme was always of top quality but also our planning was aligned with the programmes of the department. Thanks to every one of you.

Thanks so much Team! It has been an exciting time. May God bless each and everyone of you.

Ke lebogile go menagane.

Albi Modise

Meet our team

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05 JUNE IS WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY

This World Environment Day join us in the global effort to #BeatPlasticPollution

World Environment Day 2023 is a reminder that people's actions on plastic pollution matters. The steps governments and businesses are taking to tackle plastic pollution are the consequence of this action. It is time to accelerate this action and transition to a circular economy.

#BeatPlasticPollution
#GoodGreenDeeds



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POLLUTION**

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BUDGET VOTE 2023/24

Fisheries key to economic growth

By Zibuse Ndlovu



Above: Users of ocean include individuals, communities, fishers, and the mining sector.

“The fishing sector remains an important contributor to the economy and to the improvement of the lives of coastal communities,” said Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment Ms Barbara Creecy, when delivering the Department’s 2023/2024 Budget Vote in Cape Town, on 19 May 2023.

Minister Creecy said the Department was in the final stretch of completing the 1 213 appeals against the decisions of the delegated authorities in the nine fishing sectors for the 2021/22 Fishing Rights Allocation Process (FRAP). “Appeal decisions in four fisheries sectors have been finalised with finalisation of the squid sector this month. Appeal decisions in the remaining sectors are set for finalisation by 30 October 2023,” said Minister Creecy.

The allocation of small-scale fishing rights for the Western Cape was rerun and the Department is finalising the appeals process. “The aim is to complete the allocation of 15-year fishing rights to small-scale fishing communities in the Western Cape by October 2023. This will enable a further 3 500 declared traditional small-scale fishers to directly benefit and participate in the ocean’s economy,” said Minister Creecy.

The Department is also leading the process of developing Marine Sector Plans as part of the Marine Spatial Planning process. “Users of our oceans include individuals, communities, fishers, and the mining sector,” said Minister Creecy. Ten draft Marine Sector Plans have been published for public comment with the aim of promoting the co-existence of different sectors. “In an effort to manage competing interests in the marine environment, last year I committed to researching the impact of seismic surveys on the marine environment,” said the Minister.

The Department has produced an assessment of international best practice in mitigating impacts of these surveys and are now determining how these can be used on local ocean areas. “We are also working with the Petroleum Agency of SA and the Council for Geo Science to map historic records of seismic surveys to determine if any impact was observed during these previous surveys,” said Minister Creecy.

Biodiversity and Conservation:

Updating the National Assembly on the Department’s biodiversity and conservation efforts, Minister Creecy said the 2023/24 financial year work is directed at domesticating the Kunming Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) adopted at the Convention on Biological Diversity in December 2022. “This will be achieved through the White Paper on Conservation and Sustainable Use of South Africa’s Biodiversity recently adopted by Government,” said Minister Creecy.

An early action grant has been received from the Global Environmental Facility by the Department to assist to develop a widely consulted implementation plan for the White Paper. “Now that the White Paper is completed, the Department will return to processing all the feedback received from the Policy Paper on the High-Level Panel recommendations,” said Minister Creecy.

With regard to the Ministerial Task Team appointed in December 2022, to advise the Minister on voluntary exit from the captive lion breeding industry, significant progress has been made in engaging with all stakeholders in the industry, the relevant issuing authorities and vulnerable workers. In April a public call was gazetted inviting registration by participants who wish to voluntarily exit from the captive lion industry. The period for registration has been extended by a further 60 days.

The Kruger National Park area steps to ensure greater visitor safety have seen the installation of hi-tech surveillance equipment at Numbi Gate by the Tourism Business Council of SA. The Kruger Lowveld Chamber of Business and Tourism is also supporting a community training and development initiative to improve security around this access point.

On the management of the Isimangaliso Wetland Park, the Minister said besides the appointment of specialists and work to clear alien invasive plants along the estuary mouth, a new Estuarine Management Plan is expected to be completed by August this year. A panel of environmental consultants has been appointed to conduct the necessary environmental assessment related to the back-flooding of farmlands. It is estimated that the basic assessment and public consultation will be finalised within 90 days.

Poaching:

"To address corruption and criminality in the Kruger Landscape, the National Integrated Strategy to Combat Wildlife Crime has been adopted by Cabinet. This means all the government role players must now work collectively and hold each other accountable in the fight against this highly sophisticated form of organised crime. The Nat-Joints Priority Committee on Wildlife Trafficking will now identify critical measures that can be expedited over the next six months," Minister Creecy said.

Efforts are being ramped up by the Department to address rhino poaching and related wildlife crimes in the Hluhluwe/iMfolozi game reserve through support to Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife. The Department will also invest R40 million to improve the boundary fencing.

Climate Change and Air Quality:



Above: On the adaptation front, the local government support programme will continue to be rolled out alongside working by the South African Weather Service to automate and modernise its observations infrastructure so that the public are warned timeously of extreme weather events

In light of the 6th Assessment Report of the of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which confirmed the world has already warmed at an unprecedented rate and that Africa is already experiencing widespread losses and damage due to climate change, Minister Creecy said Carbon Budget Regulations are being developed to address the submission and processing of industry climate change mitigation plans.

"Our country's mitigation and adaptation architecture are at an advanced stage: we have developed the Sectoral Emission Targets that outline emission reduction goals for key sectors of the economy. We are now engaging line departments to determine the fair allocations of targets," said Minister Creecy.

With respect to Carbon Budget allocation, Cabinet has approved a methodological framework to determine emissions allocation to industrial sectors for the 2023-2027 mandatory commitment period. Parallel to this process, the Department is also developing Carbon Budget Regulations that will also address the submission and processing of climate change mitigation plans to be submitted by industry.

"On the adaptation front, we continue to roll out our local government support programme. In addition to assisting

44 district municipalities to develop their climate change plans we are now working with 9 provinces to review their existing climate change plans and align with the draft Climate Change Bill that parliament is currently finalising," said Minister Creecy.

Chemicals and Waste Management:



Above: One of the 22 Waste Collection and Landfill Management trucks that are being handed to struggling municipalities. Minister Creecy handed over the truck to Merafong and Rand West Local Municipalities.

Minister Creecy further assured the National Assembly that the Department remain committed to supporting municipalities and residents to improve the cleanliness of the country using innovative, labour intensive, delivery mechanisms that crowd-in private sector technical expertise and funding. "The focus will be on the smaller metropolitan municipalities and provincial capitals. The DFFE is intensifying efforts to improve cleanliness levels in Mafikeng, Mangaung, Bhisho, and the other Provincial capital towns as part of the re-invigorated Presidential Good Green Deeds programme," said Minister Creecy.

The Expanded Public Works Programme supporting the cleaning and greening initiative by assisting in litter picking in prioritised streets; clearing illegal dumps; planting trees and promoting recycling services.

Their efforts are being complimented by the thirty-two (32) waste enterprises that have been supported to increase recycling of construction and demolition waste, plastic, packaging, and other waste streams.

"The Department's Recycling Enterprise Support Programme has, in the past six years, supported 56 start-ups and emerging SMMEs and cooperatives operating within the waste sector providing more than R300 million in financial support, creating 1558 jobs and diverting over 200 000 tonnes of waste from landfills," said Minister Creecy.

The Department is strengthening compliance and enforcement measures especially against free riders that undermine our collective efforts to address waste management challenges.

South Africa translocates 12 cheetahs to India

By Veronica Mahlaba
and Salome Tsoka



Above: In the aircraft - all parties that were involved in this multi-disciplinary international programme to translocate cheetahs from South Africa to India.

Twelve cheetahs were translocated from South Africa to India on 17 February 2023 as part of an initiative to expand the cheetah meta-population. The reintroduction of cheetahs in India follows their local extinction due to over hunting and loss of habitat in the last century.

Governments of South Africa and India signed a Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation on the Re-introduction of Cheetah to India. The MoU facilitates cooperation between the two countries to establish a viable and secure cheetah population in India; promotes conservation and ensures that expertise is shared and exchanged, and capacity built, to promote cheetah conservation. This includes human-wildlife conflict resolution, capture and translocation of wildlife and community participation in conservation in the two countries.

The Department's Deputy Director-General: Biodiversity and Conservation, Ms Flora Mokgohloa expressed her support for the translocation of cheetahs that have been extinct for 40 years in India. "What we hope to achieve

is that India starts to recover and grow their population of cheetahs. They will be able to share knowledge and technical know-how in the conservation of cheetahs. Also the habitat is quite different from here in India, it will offer a lot of opportunities for new research in terms of how cheetahs reestablish and survive within the Indian ecosystem," explained DDG Mokgohloa.

The cheetahs will join eight of the mammals relocated to India's Kuno National Park from Namibia in September 2022.

This multi-disciplinary international programme was coordinated by the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE), the Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO) in collaboration with the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI), South African National Parks (SANParks), The Cheetah Metapopulation Initiative, the Faculty of Veterinary Science of the University of Pretoria and the Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT) in South Africa together with the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change of India, the High Commission of India, the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) and the Wildlife Institute of India (WII) and Madhya Pradesh Forest Department.



About the contributor: Veronica Mahlaba

Ms Veronica Mahlaba is a Senior Communication Officer in the Chief Directorate: Communications and Advocacy at the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment.



Above: South African and Indian representatives at the Rooiberg Veterinary Services ready to carry the darted cheetah.



Above: The cheetahs were hydrated with drips and their collar fittings were checked. DNA samples were also taken for SANBI.



Above: The cheetah loaded in the crate at Rooiberg Veterinary Services and prepared to be transported.



Above: Mr Wiseman Rikhotso and Mr Thulasizwe Ndlovu sealed the crates which indicated all checks and permits have been done and the mammals are ready to be translocated.



Above: Deputy Director-General: Biodiversity and Conservation, Ms Flora Mokgohloa with the Green Scorpions Mr Wiseman Rikhotso and Mr Thulasizwe Ndlovu checking microchips and permit verifications to ensure the translocation of cheetahs is in line with guidelines for reintroductions and in accordance with international veterinary standards and protocols.



Above: High Commissioner of India: HE Mr Jaideep Sarkar together with the Indian delegation at Oliver Tambo International Airport to load the Galaxy Globemaster C17 transport from the Indian Air Force which transported the cheetahs.

Good Green Deeds Easter Activation

To encourage motorists travelling along the country's major national roads to stop littering while travelling and to take care of their environment, the Department had a Good Green Deeds Easter Awareness Activation from 07-10 April 2023. The objective of the Good Green Deeds Programme is a positive drive towards a clean South Africa which is free of litter and illegal dumping.



Above: Learners from Pretoria Boys High School promised to show more enthusiasm and responsibility towards waste management, and keeping their school clean, green and safe for all. **Image by Dimpho Matlanato**



Above: DFFE's Lesego Matsha handing out reusable bags to churchgoers at Cato Ridge's Engen Garage, encouraging them to use the bags when shopping to help reduce the amount of plastic that ends up on our streets. **Image by Makabongwe Ndlovu**



Above: At Shell Pero Port in Bloemfontein, Ms Dineo Ramogale seek to change people's attitudes and behaviours towards responsible management of waste. **Image by Veronica Mahlaba**



Above: Those who were travelling, using the N4 road visited the DFFE Kiosk at Shell in Middelburg and were taught about the importance of keeping the country clean. **Image by Xolelwa Skefile.**



Above: From the Department, Mr Brian Chapole and Mr Lebohng Makhubela were hard at work during the Good Green Deeds Easter Activations at Sasol Zebediela. **Image by Madimejja Mogotlane.**



Above: In Mossel Bay at Shell Voorbaai, Ms Merle Van Diemel ensuring that we all have a role to play in keeping our country litter free. **Image by Earl Saul.**



Above: On Day 2 of the GGD Easter Activations our officials were in George spreading proper waste management message to other government officials. **Image by Sinethemba Gungqa.**



Above: The GGD Programme mobilises every citizen and social partners to act now to conserve and protect our environment. Ms Lucy Nalovu is seen at Shell Samrand. **Image by Gabriel Dlamini.**



Above: Ms Dimakatso Tsutsubi and the team in Kimberley ensuring that motorists keep South Africa clean. **Image by Simphiwe Mnikina.**



Above: Officials at Knysna Shell Petro Port handed over refuse bags to motorists. The aim was to educate motorists about the negative impact of littering along national roads. **Image by Paul Sigutya.**

Saving wildlife from the sky

By Dimpho Matlanato & Salome Tsoka



Above: SANParks Chief Pilot Mr David Simelane. **Image by** Erica Mathye

What type of work do you do at SANParks? Please describe your average day.

I am a SANParks Chief Pilot. This role entails leading an exceptional team of aviators but also being responsible for the well-being of my team. I take that as my priority because let's face it, without the team, there are no air services. With a strong team behind me, I am able to make sure compliance issues under the auspice on the South African Civil Aviation Authority (SACAA) and Department of Transport are up to date and compliant.

Part of this involves making sure we have a full complement of aircraft to service SANParks. This is coupled with a business development aspect regarding looking into new technologies on how we can do things better and cheaper e.g. drones. We have had a very difficult decade due to rhino poaching and my end goal is to make sure that we see an incline in the rhino numbers.

What inspired you to do the work that you do?

I had my first taste of game capture flying whilst at Ultimate Aviation Group, which I co-founded in 2010. That's when I fell in love with this type of flying. And don't get me wrong, this type of flying is not for every pilot due to the risks involved or, for some it might not be their calling. For me, this is a calling.

What role does SANParks play in providing employment to disadvantaged persons?

SANParks plays a pivotal role in not only employing disadvantaged persons, but also in training them. One needs to look at the demographics of the organisation to confirm this. I am a firm believer that we can do more. As a result, I have an obligation to transform my department with the greatest finesse.

Which conservation methods do you employ at the park?

Being in the Air Services department, we are a service provider to the rest of the departments within SANParks that need our services. Our core services are, but not restricted to anti-poaching, rhino orphan rescue, arial patrol, firefighting and spotting, census, animal darting, rhino dehorning and VIP transportation.

Will there be new methods developed in future?

We have embarked on applying for a drone license from the SACAA and its issue is eminent. This will enable us to be more cost effective and give us an edge in the anti-poaching section of what we do at Air Services. It is still in its infancy, but I have no doubt that this will morph into one of Air Services' greatest contributions to SANParks and its conservation mandate.

How helpful have the Bat Hawks been in fighting poaching?

The Bat Hawks are a dream come true for our rangers that use them. Some of the sections are as large as over 100 hectares. It's almost impossible to effectively manage these large farms without air support of this nature. They are cost effective, safe, easy to fly, proudly South African, based in Nelspruit and reliable. Having the Bat Hawks is such a blessing as it enables rangers to get more out of their day after morning arial patrols.

How big is the Kruger National Park (KNP) and how many species live in the park?

To put it into perspective, KNP is 2 million hectares and roughly, that is the size of Israel. This is very challenging to manage with the limited resources we have but we are doing our best. Kruger is home to over 147 species of mammals, 114 reptiles species, 51 snake species, 49 fish species and a ginormous 508 species of birds. This is totally unmatched with anywhere else in South Africa.

How important is it for South Africans to play their role in conservation efforts?

Despite the obvious economic benefits of conservation, the core reason behind conservation efforts is to preserve what God or Mother Nature has blessed humanity with. South Africa by virtue of its geographical position has a moral responsibility to the world to preserve nature. If we don't step up, our conservation efforts, our grandchildren will only see rhinos in zoos. For those that cannot afford to go to zoos, magazines and pictures taken decades prior will suffice, because rhinos will have been extinct by then. A chilling reality at this rate.



About the contributor: Dimpho Matlanato

Dimpho Matlanato is an intern in the Chief Directorate: Communications. She holds a BA Degree in Journalism from the University of Johannesburg.

Minister Creecy visits Hluhluwe Imfolozi Park and iSimangaliso Wetland Park

By Nomvuyo Mlotshwa



Above: Minister Creecy and iSimangaliso CEO Mr Sibusiso Bukhosini meet the field rangers stationed at the Green Field Ranger Camp. **Image by** Lebohang Elton Makhubela.

"It's boots on the ground, with intelligence and a range of tools working together to combat rhino poaching," stated Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, Ms Barbara Creecy, during the exploratory site visit to the Hluhluwe Imfolozi Park (HIP) and iSimangaliso Wetlands Park in Northern KwaZulu-Natal from 8 to 10 March 2023.

As part of this visit, the Minister engaged in an inspection tour to assess the situation on the ground. She viewed the state of the HIP boundary fence, which helps to keep wild animals from escaping the park into the nearby communities, and visited the park's Rhino Poaching Nerve Centre.

The Hluhluwe Imfolozi Park is hit the hardest by the increase in rhino poaching incidents. Minister highlighted that an alarming number of over 200 rhinos were killed in 2022. Minister Creecy, during the stakeholder briefing, said the visit was to share knowledge and experiences. "We have to draw linkages from what has been happening in Kruger and also to find out what is happening at Ezemvelo," she declared.

Minister indicated that it is crucial to improve the fencing in the facility, as it is adjacent to communities. "Through EPWP, the Department will look at how it can support the installation of the smart fence," stated Minister Creecy. It was recommended that the door to discuss dehorning or the relocation of animals, and moving young females to a location where they can breed, must be opened.

Mr Siphesihle Mkhize, the acting CEO of Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife, said, "We are concerned about the situation, and we constantly look for resources that can assist and curb rhino poaching." Ezemvelo has installed state-of-the-art IT technologies and erected about 5 kilometres of the smart fence. "The smart fence detects anyone

that touches it and promptly sends an alert to the Nerve Centre; then marshalls are dispersed to inspect the area for any suspicious actions. It has yielded good results," he stated.

"The fact that Ezemvelo is a smaller facility makes it easier for poachers to target the unit. It is of importance for us to strengthen our relations with neighbouring communities, and we are in engagements with Amakhosi to assist us in trapping poachers as they are accommodated within their communities," continued Mr Mkhize.

Moreover, Minister engaged with stakeholders at St Lucia in the iSimangaliso area who are affected by flooding addressing their various concerns. Minister reassured the distressed community members and stated that the Department continues to play its role in fulfilling its mandate.

"In 2022, the Department spent R340 million upgrading park facilities, which has allowed us to create 500 000 job opportunities in iSimangaliso and allowed us to support a number of small businesses. We will look into the blockage on the Lake St Lucia estuary mouth. We are in the process to bring more than 2000 temporary opportunities which will assist small farmers affected by the floods, including the Nibela community," stated Minister Creecy.

Minister declared that the Department is looking into commercialisation, creating permanent job opportunities, and developing small business opportunities such as game drives and boat rides. In recognition of the financial challenges involved in starting a business, Ithala Bank has been brought on board to provide advice and assistance.



About the contributor: Nomvuyo Mlotshwa

Nomvuyo Mlotshwa is an Assistant Director: Internal Communications in the Directorate: Corporate Communications within the Chief Directorate: Communications and Advocacy.

8 JUNE IS

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OCEANS
DAY 2023**
UNWORLDCEANSDAY.ORG

PLANET OCEAN: TIDES ARE CHANGING.

World Oceans Day is a time to highlight the many ways in which oceans contribute to society. They regulate the global climate, supply essential ecosystem services and provide sustainable livelihoods and safe recreation. World Oceans Day is a chance to acknowledge the considerable challenges we face in helping the oceans to keep on doing their job. As people around the world celebrate the water that links the entire planet together, help to raise awareness for the sea's role as a source of food, oxygen and medicine.

Time to Put the Ocean First.

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#Tidesarechanging

#GoodGreenDeeds

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World Oceans Day

17 June is Desertification and Drought Day

Her Land. Her Rights.

17 JUNE 2023
DESERTIFICATION &
DROUGHT DAY

#HerLandHerRights
#GoodGreenDeeds



Desertification and Drought Day (DDD) promotes public awareness of international efforts and cooperation to combat desertification and the effects of drought. The DDD also encourages community and ecosystem resilience against desertification while improving the human condition, particularly in dry lands. This is a unique occasion to remind everybody that desertification can be effectively tackled and that solutions are possible! Key tools lie in community participation and co-operation at all levels.

The global focus for the 2023 Desertification and Drought Day is on women's land rights— essential for achieving the interconnected global goals on gender equality and land degradation neutrality by 2030 and contributing to the advancement of several other Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).



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United Nations
Convention to Combat
Desertification



ubuwazi?

DID YOU KNOW?



Aloe ferox is a tall single stemmed plant which has a wide distribution, ranging over 1000 km from the south Western Cape through to southern KwaZulu-Natal. It is also found in the south Eastern corner of the Free State and southern Lesotho. *Aloe ferox* is most famous for its medicinal qualities. In parts of South Africa, the bitter yellow juice found just below the skin of aloe has been harvested as a renewable resource for two hundred years. The hard, black, resinous product is known as Cape Aloes or aloe lump and is used mainly for its laxative properties but is also taken for arthritis. "Schwedenbitters" which is found in many pharmacies contains bitter aloe. The gel-like flesh from the inside of the leaves is used in cosmetic products and is reported to have wound healing properties. DFFE has received a large number of bioprospecting permit applications in relation to the utilisation of *Aloe ferox*.

For generations, several cultures around the world, including in South Africa, have used crocodile oil to treat various skin conditions, including acne, eczema, burns, wounds, sunburn and the appearance of scars. Crocodiles, often inflict deep wounds on one another. Despite living in dirty, contaminated water, their wounds heal swiftly and completely and rarely become infected. This is reportedly due to having one of the strongest immune systems in the world. Oil extracted from crocodiles is a rich source of essential fatty acids, including Omega 3, 6 and 9 which are beneficial for the human skin and body. Recent research also suggests that crocodile blood and fat have antibiotic properties towards virulent bacteria, including superbugs which are resistant to antibiotics and cause deadly infections in humans. Scientific research is still on-going to support the various claims being made about the benefits of using crocodile oil.



Pelargonium sidoides is widely distributed in South Africa and Lesotho. In South Africa it occurs in the Eastern Cape, North West, Free State, Western Cape, Mpumalanga and Gauteng. *Pelargonium sidoides* is a plant species extensively used in South Africa and Europe to cure respiratory infections, colds and flu. It is referred to as "Umckaloabo" in Germany.

A Green Vision for Impact, Change and Empowerment



Having started from humble beginnings and big dreams, the Miss Earth South Africa journey has been remarkable. This organisation has scooped several awards and accolades over the years, both nationally and internationally. Catherine Constantinides and Ella Bella Leite have a deep understanding and knowledge of the environment and the challenges that our globe is faced with, and this knowledge is coupled with an unrivalled passion. They have addressed summits across the globe, climate conferences and international gatherings. They have engaged with presidents, ambassadors, and ministers. They have interacted with diplomats, children and communities across the continent. Activists to the core, they have left no stone unturned as they strive to promote the environmental agenda.

The aim has been to develop young environmentalists that can be active and that will become decision makers and leaders, both in South Africa and across the globe. The aim is to inspire and encourage young women around our beautiful country to be involved and to be active citizens, making better decisions and changing mindsets, as we build our nation. They often say; "It starts with us and as women we are the movers and shakers of communities. So it's up to us to shake things up and get people thinking about ways in which they can help Mother Earth. When we look after Mother Earth, she is then able to sustain and look after us. Sustainability must be at the basis of our daily lives, habits and consumer choices."

"Two decades; that's unbelievable. I look over my shoulder at the years gone by, and I can't believe, the long and amazing road that Ella and I have walked. The journey has been filled with the eager faces of young women, eager to learn and to live eco-conscious lives.

This initiative has allowed us to visit every corner of our land and to understand the environmental challenges, which are impacted by socio-economic circumstances while speaking of Climate Change and looking at the challenges affecting communities. We have made a difference; and I say that with humility and gratitude to those that have supported us. We have always recognised and understood the challenges that our people and society are faced with. It has been twenty years that have been filled with memories, actions and change," said Catherine Constantinides; Co-Director of the Miss Earth South Africa Leadership Programme.

The organisation has been a spark of youth activism, volunteerism and stewardship in environmental awareness. The past two decades have seen them bringing together young South Africans of diverse social and cultural backgrounds to contribute their share to saving planet earth. Their contribution through dialogue, action and youth friendly activities have added a voice to the cry for sustainability, and the protection of the environment and conservation, in the wake of the climate emergency that we face. Some of the most recent campaigns have been with a clear and passionate focus on waste, food security, climate change education, urban conservation and ocean and marine protection.

This is a landmark year as the organisation marks two decades, and the search is on for a powerful and capable young woman that will be the part of the cohort of young earth warriors that mark the start of the next decade of environmental impact by the organisation. Young South African women who want to be part of this exciting platform and journey as they learn, grow, connect with their communities and leave lasting footprints of change can log on the Miss Earth South Africa social media platforms for more details: @MissEarth_SA. Join the initiative and help communities to change behaviour and mind-sets for the betterment of the environment and for a more sustainable future for all.

The programme is proudly endorsed by the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, Department of Tourism and Brand SA. The initiatives are run alongside municipalities and corporate partners that are seeking to impact the communities around them, whilst inputting and growing these young women; who work towards a greener, cleaner and more sustainable future.

For more information follow the organisation across social media platforms on twitter and Instagram @missearth_sa, their Facebook page: Miss Earth South Africa or send a whatsapp to 082 5050 664.

For **Media** related queries please contact Georgina on 082 5050 664 or email on safusion@mweb.co.za

Biodiversity Stewards: Preserving earth's richness



By Zibuse Ndlovu

Above: Scores of delegates representing national, provincial and local government departments, community beneficiaries, NGO's and academic institutions showed up for the 3rd National Biodiversity Stewardship Conference to learn, and to share their success stories and their challenges.

With a focus on biodiversity economy, rural livelihoods, protected areas, and conservation, biodiversity stewards are leading the charge towards a sustainable future.

Recently, the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI), the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE), and partners hosted the 3rd National Biodiversity Stewardship Conference at Addo Africanos Country Estate on 04-11 March 2023, in the Eastern Cape Province.

The conference was a celebration of the journey of biodiversity stewardship in South Africa since its commencement in 2003 under the theme: **Celebrating 20 years of Biodiversity Stewardship implementation in South Africa.**

Speaking at the conference the DFFE's Chief Director for Biodiversity Management and Permitting, Ms Skumsa Ntshanga said the Biodiversity Stewardship Programme had evolved from being a conservation tool specifically for achieving protected area expansion; to now actively supporting several other environmental and socio-economic related streams of work.

"Biodiversity Stewardship is an approach to securing land in biodiversity priority areas through entering into agreements with private and communal landowners, guided by specific principles and led by our conservation authorities across the country. It is explicitly evident than ever before that biodiversity conservation is fundamental for achieving the goals of NDP, SDGs and those articulated in the multilateral environmental agreements," said Ms Ntshanga.

Biodiversity Stewardship is recognised as a vehicle for delivering on targets in Presidential Delivery Agreement Outcomes 7 and 10. The project design builds on South Africa's National Biodiversity Economy (NBE) Strategy, which seeks to balance biodiversity and natural resource protection with sustainable use for economic development and equitable distribution of the benefit.

Biodiversity Stewardship facilitates the protection of certain critical ecosystems, and it also greatly contributes to the National Protected Areas Expansion Strategy targets through both government and private sector investment.

The DFFE with key partners have and are currently facilitating various activities to ensure adequate resourcing of biodiversity stewardship capacity and operational costs, not only within provinces but expanding the concept of biodiversity stewardship to similar sectors, such as agricultural and water stewardship. This with the aim of creating a broader community of practice and with that enabling access to resources already available in the existing programmes within these sectors to achieve a common goal.

"As custodians of our natural environment, it is our responsibility to effect the change we want to protect our biodiversity and mitigate the detrimental threats to the resources that underpin our survival that we hold in trust for our children and our children's children," said Ms Ntshanga.



Above: The DFFE's Chief Director for Biodiversity Management and Permitting, Ms Skumsa Ntshanga.

DFFE focuses on local government

By Veronica Mahlaba



Above: To improve the current local government performance and support mechanisms to advance environmental sustainability, delegates were divided into commissions.

Are we doing enough to protect environmental human rights? This is the question posed by the Deputy Minister Makhotso Sotyú at the 2nd Local Government Environment Indaba, which seeks to create a platform of engagement between environmental sector and local government sector. The Indaba was held on 23-24 March 2023 at the Radisson Hotel and Convention Centre, Kempton Park.

The theme for the Indaba was **Working Towards Local Environmental Sustainability** which is in line with the Local Government Support Strategy theme. The discussions revolved around the environmental roles and responsibilities of the municipalities and current best practises in line with the relevant Acts, National Development Plan, the Outcome 10 Service Delivery Agreements, and the Local Government Support Strategy.

Deputy Minister Sotyú highlighted that although the legislative framework is there, the right to an environment that is not harmful to health or well-being is under attack. StatsSA indicates that a quarter of South African households do not have access to refuse removal services provided by Municipalities. "Consequently, illegal dumping is on the increase. Critical waste infrastructure, such as buy-back centres, transfer stations, landfill sites and waste trucks are not safeguarded and are subjected to vandalism and are not maintained," she stated.

She further elaborated that the Local Government Support Strategy recognises that municipalities have been given a mandate to promote a safe and healthy environment in terms of Section 152 (d) of the Constitution. However, municipalities struggle to perform their environmental mandate, and this calls for the National and Provincial spheres of government to support local government.

Objectives of Indaba

- Create a platform of engagement between Environmental Sector and Local Government Sector to showcase environment sector support into local government.
- For dialogue between National, Provincial and Local Government on environmental performance and governance.
- Identify key challenges and gaps that affects municipalities performance about environmental functions (planning and management) and priorities for municipalities in environmental functions.
- Enhance environmental focus in the overall integrated planning among the 3 spheres of government.
- Share the best practise experiences on the various environmental sector priorities.
- Capacitate municipalities on compliance requirements of existing legislation, policies, strategies, and programmes.
- Gather local government inputs into the support and oversight role on national government on programme implementation.

At the end of the Local Government Environment Indaba, Assistant Manager: Solid Waste, Ms Andisiwe Mcaasa from the Nelson Mandela Bay Metropolitan Municipality stated that the overall conference was a success and refreshing as it was the first one after the Covid 19 period. "The Indaba reminded us of where we come from. What are the aims and objectives of the municipalities in terms of environmental management. In terms of climate change and air quality issues, Nelson Mandela Municipality is also affected. Hearing interventions implemented by other municipalities also shows us that there are possible solutions," said Ms Mcaasa.



Above: President of South African Local Government Association, Cllr Bheki Stofile stressed the importance of corporative governance amongst the 3 spheres of government.



WASTE CHARACTERISATION SAMPLING

1

Preparation Stage: You will need the following list:



- Venue (landfill site).
- Weigh pads or scales to weigh waste.
- 20 or more empty refuse bags or buckets or containers to use when measuring the weight of the waste. If using a bucket, a dust bin or a container its weight must be known so that it is subtracted from the weight of the waste being measured.
- Gloves and masks, first aid kit, disinfectant and portable wash water facilities, two spades and two plastic rakes.
- About 20 EPWPs staff or waste pickers or any persons who are willing to assist.
- Identify responsibilities i.e. those separating, weighing, calculating, recording etc.

2

Sampling Stage



Domestic waste is usually sampled from trucks that come into the landfill for disposal on scheduled days from generation sources such as CBD and residential areas.

- Areas have to be chosen according to characteristics of generation sources i.e. CBD, Suburbs and Townships.
- Season has to be average season (not during a festival or big event in community).
- It is desirable that the amount of sample of each generation source is over 200kg.

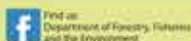
3

Measurement of Unit Generation Amount

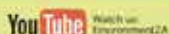
To calculate the unit generation amount, information such as population for area, number of households etc. have to be known.

Season/period. Not to be done during public holidays, events and festivals

Areas. CBD, Suburbs, Townships etc.



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Deputy Minister leads seminar on forest and health

By Paul Sigutya



The vital relationship between trees and forests with health related matters was highlighted during the observation of the International Day of Forests event held on 24 March 2023.

In light of this relationship, the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE) has called upon South Africans to appreciate the contribution of forests in their daily lives and to ensure that they protect them from a multitude of threats.

The United Nations General Assembly proclaimed 21 March, the International Day of Forests in 2012 to celebrate and raise awareness of the importance of all types of forests. In this regard member countries are encouraged to undertake local, national and international efforts to organise activities involving forests and trees, such as tree planting campaigns.

According to the Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations (FAO), several studies confirm that by walking in a forest environment, and in the case of South Africa this would mostly refer to natural forests, there is an effect on lowering of one's blood pressure and pulse rate and reduction of hormones related to stress. These indicate that forests provide that tranquil environment that one can use to relax and ease the mind when necessary.

"These issues point to the fact that as we celebrate the International Day of Forests under the theme: **Forest and Health** we need to do more in bringing our health facilities, such as, community clinics on board regarding

the National Greening Programme, Deputy Minister Makhotso Soty told delegates at the International Day of Forests seminar, held at the Harold Porter National Botanical Gardens, in Betty's Bay.

"Today, as we celebrate the International Day of Forests, we also raise awareness on the importance of trees and the need for every South African to get involved in tree planting activities through the Ten Million Trees Programme," said Soty.

The programme was launched in 2021, with the goal of planting ten million trees over a period of five years. Leading up to this year's seminar, DFFE planted one hundred trees in clinics, public parks and newly built RDP houses. The Department has made a further commitment to planting nine hundred trees. The trees planted in health care facilities could aid in the recovery of patients and medicinal plants derived from forests as they play a vital role in conventional and traditional medicine. Planting the trees will assist South Africa in achieving its goal of planting ten million trees over five years.

The Deputy Minister also announced that as part of the Forest 21 Project, the Department will support 14 forestry students with stipends for their experiential learning from April 2023. Forest 21 is a joint project for strengthening capacity in South African higher education in forestry. The project is implemented in collaboration with five Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in South Africa, which have forestry curricula or will start teaching forestry.



About the contributor: Paul Sigutya

Paul Sigutya is an Assistant Director of Internal and External Communication in the Directorate Communication Services Cape Town in the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment.

Enviro events



Above: Deputy Minister Sotyu led the Forest 21 Stakeholders Engagement held on 24 February 2023 at Ditsela Place, Hatfield, in Pretoria. FOREST21 is a joint project for strengthening capacity in South African higher education in forestry. The project is implemented in collaboration of five Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in South Africa that have forestry curricula or will start teaching forestry. **Zibuse Ndlovu**



Above: Gender Mainstreaming is pivotal for climate change adaptation in Africa. This was the sentiment shared by the delegates gathered at the Climate Change Adaptation and Gender Mainstreaming Dialogue hosted by the Department together with South African National Biodiversity Institute on International Women's Day on 8 – 9 March 2023. Climate change does not only target women but its impacts are felt differently by men and women, often times leaving them more vulnerable. **Salome Tsoka**



Above: Minister Barbara Creecy met Germany's Ambassador to South Africa, Lesotho and Eswatini, H.E. Andreas Peschke at the Launch of the Just Transition to a Decarbonised Economy for South Africa Project in Johannesburg on 14 March 2023. The project prioritizes the inclusiveness of the transition process by working in partnership with stakeholders and ensuring that the transition has a positive impact on the livelihoods of all, especially those who are disadvantaged. **Veronica Mahlaba.**



Above: Waste Management in the North West province has received a much-needed boost after Deputy Minister Ms Makhotso Sotyu, the national champion for the Dr Ruth Segomotsi Mompati District Municipality handed over five waste fleet vehicles on 17 March 2023. These vehicles will help each of the Naledi, Mamusa, Greater Taung, Lekwa-Teemane, Kagisano-Molopo Local Municipalities tackle illegal dumpsites which threaten ground water in the municipalities. **Salome Tsoka**



Above: In conversation with South African National Parks Chairperson of the Board, Ms Pam Yako, Minister Creecy talked about the important relationship between people and nature during the launch of SANParks Vision 2040 on 04 April 2023. Vision 2040 aims to create protected areas and a protected area agency that is healthy, sustainable, and climate resilient; belong to, heal, and inspire all South Africans. **Veronica Mahlaba.**



AQUACULTURE

Kob, or kabeljou

By Tony Jackman

Kob, or kabeljou, is a red-listed fish — when wild-caught. But there is now a green-listed alternative in farmed kob, thanks to an enterprising East London business.

A beautiful big sustainable kabeljou came to me from East London en route to Cape Town, compliments of Kingfish Enterprises — a marine fish farm in the East London Industrial Development Zone. There'd been delays, thanks to expected social unrest on that particular Monday, and some logistics involved, as with so many things when you live in a small town. But Cradock isn't far off the route they normally use to send their produce to Cape Town to go into the larger branches of Woollies, some speciality food shops and certain restaurants.

In the ice-packed box were a real big boy and a much smaller kob which had, on request, been filleted for me. That went on to the menu that very night.

Farmed kob and yellowtail: that's new terrain. Kingfish Enterprises general manager Andre Bok studied marine biology and later ichthyology at Rhodes in the '90s and has worked in the marine aquaculture and large marine aquarium industry. He says his "life ambition has been to farm marine species like kob and yellowtail sustainably" and that it has taken "years and years of trial and error to get to this point, so we are very excited to be sharing this product with the public at long last".

They point out that farmed fish has a higher fat content than wild-caught, so it stays firm and juicy during the cooking process. The whole, larger fish is well suited to the braai and that is coming up soon, so watch this space.

It's now green-listed by the South African Sustainable Seafood Initiative (Sassi), whereas wild-caught kob is red-listed thanks to overfishing.

The firm's marketing material tells us that "one of the key benefits of land-based marine fish farming is its environmental sustainability, and by using sustainable farming practices, the company is able to produce fish without the need for harmful chemicals, hormones, or antibiotics. Furthermore, organic waste from the fish is

effectively removed through the use of living biological filters".

I did not want to mess with the innate flavour of this beautiful fresh fish (and it was as fresh when it reached me as if it had been just caught). So I cooked it very simply with thyme butter which I had allowed to colour a little, a technique which is called "burnt" although it is a mere hint of browning that you want.

(Serves 2)

Ingredients

- 1 small fresh kob/kabeljou, filleted, skin on
- 3 Tbsp butter
- 1 Tbsp canola oil
- 2 or 3 fresh thyme sprigs
- Juice of ½ a lemon
- Salt and black pepper to taste

Method

Rinse the fish fillets and pat dry. Salt them lightly and leave them on a plate in the fridge for half an hour. This helps tighten up the flesh which is good for the frying process.

Melt the butter in a pan on a moderately high heat. You don't want to burn the fat or the fish but you also don't want the fish to "bleed" water, so a balanced heat is key. Let the butter begin to foam and then add the oil and thyme leaves.

When the butter starts to turn just a tinge towards brown, put the fish fillets in, shake the pan quickly, then *leave them alone* until the flesh is cooked halfway through. Give them 10 more seconds, then turn them carefully. Cook the other side for only 2 or 3 minutes.

Ideally, fried fish should be slightly underdone in the middle. More than this and you risk them becoming dry. What a waste of top-class fish that would be.

Season lightly with salt and pepper, squeeze lemon juice over and serve with Granny Betty's air fryer chips. **DM/ TGIFood**

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