

The Sea
Harbinger of eternity,
Time's time-keeper,
She is, in all her vast diversity,
The reflection of man's soul.
(ANON)

AgulhasNPark eBulletin

VOL 8 • NR 11 • October (hoo)#gais 2018

Marine Week : *Nature knows no waste*

www.sanparks.org



Nature Knows No Waste

Due to the substantial and increasing impact of pollution in South Africa, particularly plastic pollution that affects all terrestrial, coastal and oceanic ecosystems, the very appropriate theme for the National Marine Week 2018 campaign is **Nature Knows No Waste**. The aim is to educate and encourage the general public, particularly the youth, in curbing the problem of pollution. Communication will emphasise countering pollution at the individual level and at the source. Most pollution originates on land before it gets transported to the coastal areas and the oceans through river systems. (Dept of Environmental Affairs)



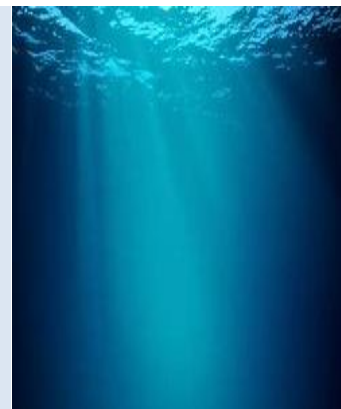
Our oceans are choking on plastic

The trash in ocean and waterway ranks as one of the most serious pollution problems choking our planet. Far more than an eyesore, a rising tide of marine debris threatens human health, wildlife, communities and economies around the world. The ocean faces many challenges, but trash should not be one of them. National Marine Week is a campaign that aims to educate all South Africans about the role oceans play in our daily lives, including recreation and employment. It is celebrated every year during the second week of October. It aims to create awareness on the marine and coastal environment and the promotion of sustainable use and conservation of these resources for all - and both present and future generations. But, today our oceans are choking on plastic. What are you doing about it? For more information go to www.oceanconservancy.org; www.msc.org.



Oceans as empty spaces? Redrafting our knowledge by dropping the colonial lens – Isabel Hofmeyr, Global Distinguished Professor, NYU * Professor of African Literature, University of the Witwatersrand

Rising sea levels require new styles of research. A project at the University of the Witwatersrand "Oceanic Humanities for the Global South" aims to produce new research in the humanities and social sciences. Much existing oceanic research focuses on the surface, tracing movements of people, ideas and objects. The sea is simply a backdrop. This project aims to reinsert the sea, to go below the water line, using art, literature and history to see how the deep ocean has been portrayed. The project also aims to decolonise our understanding of the ocean. Students on the project are researching pre-colonial ideas about the sea, for example as the realm of the ancestors. For more information go to <https://www.oceanichumanities.com/>.



African Black Oystercatcher *Haematopus moquini* : Bird of the Year



Cobus Elstadt

The African Black Oystercatcher (*Haematopus moquini*) was chosen by BirdLife South Africa as the 2018 Bird of the Year. The Two Oceans Aquarium is currently home to the longest-living captive African Black Oystercatcher in the world and has been involved in the first successful breeding of oystercatchers in captivity and reintroduction of these captive-bred birds into the wild. The Two Oceans Aquarium is combining efforts with BirdLife South Africa to conserve this amazing and iconic coastal bird. The African Black Oystercatcher is a pitch black bird with a strong, dagger-like orange beak that it uses to feed on mussels, limpets and worms. It rarely eats oysters. It is endemic to Southern African shores, and is an incredible lesson in coastal conservation with numbers climbing as their habitats are being increasingly protected. With a highly restricted habitat, the African Black Oystercatcher remains dependent on ongoing conservation efforts for its survival. (SOURCE: www.aquarium.co.za; birdlife.org.za)



Pictures: B Temmers



African Penguin, *Spheniscus demersus*

October 10 is African Penguin Awareness Day. The African Penguin has experienced a rapid population decline over the past century. Between the 1920s and mid-1950s penguin eggs were over-exploited as a food source where 48% of all eggs produced were collected for human consumption. Further population declines were caused by habitat modification of penguin nesting sites through the extraction of guano which is a preferred substrate for constructing nesting borrows. The lack of guano deposits led to a decline in breeding because penguins were forced to breed on open ground, surfaces not ideal for breeding where they were exposed to extreme weather elements. The eggs and young chicks suffered which resulted in penguins being listed on the IUCN Red List and also under Appendix II of the CITES (Convention on International Trade of Endangered Species). In South Africa, it is further listed as a protected species under the National Environment Management: Biodiversity Act (No. 10 of 2004). Egg collection and guano extraction have since ceased, but other threats have emerged - such as oil spillages and competition with commercial fishing for food sources, especially sardines and anchovies. Because of their restricted distribution range, oil spills can affect a large proportion of the population, leading to high mortalities and impaired breeding success. The reduction in the abundance of sardines and anchovies, as a result of over-fishing, might lead to the further decline of the African Penguin population. Currently, African penguins feature strongly in ecotourism, education and research activities. Most colonies of African penguins are inaccessible to people. However there are two mainland colonies (Boulders Beach, Simon's Town and Stoney Point, Betty's Bay) along the coast of the Western Cape where the public can observe the African penguins in their natural habitat. (SOURCE: <https://www.sanbi.org/animal-of-the-week/african-penguin/>)



African Penguin colony at De Hoop Nature Reserve needs volunteers

Christina Hagen of BirdLife South Africa and others are trying to establish a new African Penguin colony at De Hoop Nature Reserve. An area will be fenced off to protect the penguins from predators and this needs to be monitored. Volunteers are needed to help with monitoring the site. The intention is to have a duty cycle of eight weeks, if enough volunteers can be found. Anyone interested can contact Christina at christina.hagen@birdlife.org.za.



Pictures: B Temmers

Coastal Clean-up September initiative

On September 15 a group of 42 Southern Tippers took part in a coastal clean-up initiative between Stinkbaai and Suiderstrand on the Cape Agulhas coastline. The amount of especially plastic objects, whether small bits and pieces to bigger objects to lengths of black pipe found and collected, was a frightening experience and reflection of what is happening in our oceans.



Washed ashore on Struisbaai beach early 2018



Giant Oarfish, *Regalecus glesne*

The Giant Oarfish is the longest bony fish alive, growing up to 11 m in length. The common name oarfish is thought to refer to their highly compressed and elongated body. The occasional beaching of oarfish after storms, and their habit of lingering at the surface when sick or dying, make oarfish a probable source of many sea serpent tales. Although the larger species are considered game fish and are fished commercially to a minor extent, oarfish are rarely caught alive. The oarfish is thought to inhabit the epipelagic to mesopelagic ocean layers, ranging from 1,000 meters and is rarely seen on the surface. A few have been found still barely alive, but usually if one floats to the surface, it dies. At the depths the oarfish live, there are little or no currents and so they build little muscle mass and they cannot survive in shallower turbulent water. (Wikipedia)



Honeyguides sharing honey: a myth or what?

Some people believe that it is a myth that Honeyguides will lead you to honey. Recently Mick D'Alton had a unique experience on his farm in the Agulhas Plain. He was in a kloof looking for Victorin's Warbler (Rooiborsruigtesanger, *Cryptillas victorini*) when he heard a strange bird call like a francolin alarm call. He moved forward to try to identify the caller but it seemed to move ahead of him, always just out of sight. After following the elusive caller for a distance it finally appeared in a tree still calling. It was a Greater Honeyguide (Grootheuningwyser, *Indicator indicator*) and directly under where it was sitting was a commercial beehive. So, Mick was called to the beehive by the bird, a first time experience for him. The bird then retreated into the thick vegetation in the kloof and continued calling, probably in annoyance that Mick did not take out the honey and leave some for him. (Information: Mick D'Alton)



Kids in Parks 2018



The Kids in Parks programme for 2018 starts on October 08 until October 24.



(hoo)#gais in Khoe means the veld begins to dry out.



Fish traps on the Cape Agulhas coast

Fish traps are old stone structures along the coast in which fish were caught. The structures consist of low walls built with stone to enclose a portion of a bay or rocky sections on the coast. When the tide rises and floods over the wall, the fish swim into the enclosure getting trapped when at low tide the water recedes. The fish trapped in the shallow water can easily be caught by hand or net. Archaeological research has shown that people have occupied the Cape Agulhas area for well over a million years. Middle Stone Age (MSA) and Early Stone Age (ESA) tools occur locally and Later Stone Age (LSA) sites have been recorded. Sites have been described at Die Walle, Hoek se Baai, Gruis se Baai, Oubaai, Bloubaai, Vlei se Bank, Rasperpunt and Cape Agulhas. Substantial concentrations of shellfish remains (shell middens) are densely clustered inshore of the rocky shoreline. It is here that large quantities of shellfish species were exploited, processed and consumed by LSA hunter-gatherers. Well-preserved tidal fish traps occur at Cape Agulhas, Rasperpunt and Suiderstrand. The tidal fish traps were most likely built by pre-colonial LSA people – possibly the same people responsible for the accumulation of shell middens that occur along the rocky shoreline. New research (PJ Hine, 2008) on fishtraps and shell middens, however, concludes that the origin of most of the fishtraps can be traced to the late 19 and early 20th century. (SOURCE: KAPLAN, Jonathan: A phase 1 archaeological impact assessment of a proposed new tourist rest camp facility and associated infrastructure at Pietie se Punt, Agulhas National Park, Western Cape Province. March 2007)



The world's oldest drawing found

Scientists have found the oldest known drawing by Homo Sapiens: a 73,000-year old sketch in ochre crayon in the Blombos cave near Still Bay in the Western Cape. This is the earliest drawing yet found, and predates those in Europe by about 30,000 years. Since excavation began in 1991, the site has yielded a treasure trove of artefacts and knowledge about the behaviour of our earliest human ancestors. It dates back as far as the Middle Stone Age, between 70,000 and 100,000 years ago. Discoveries at Blombos cave, which is a heritage site, have included a 100,000-year old ochre paint “workshop” and ancient shell beads, which show behavioural characteristics of modern humans. The latest discovery is inscribed on a smooth flake of silcrete rock: a number of lines etched in ochre, which might have been once part of a much larger more complex drawing. The drawing shows that the Blombos inhabitants were drawing symbols on rocks before humans entered Europe. Symbolic thinking is considered characteristic of modern humans. (SOURCE: Sarah Wild , Business Insider SA, Sep 12, 2018)



Taste exceptional cool climate wines from Elim and surrounds

10 November 2018
Black Oystercatcher 10:00 - 17:00
Festival Tickets R140

WINE TASTING | CRAFT BEER & CIDER | LIVE MUSIC
LOCAL CRAFTS & PRODUCE | FOOD STALLS

www.elimwines.co.za tickets

info@elimwines.co.za 028 482 1618

Cool-climate wines, craft beer and a country fair:

Explore the Elim Wine Festival

The Elim Wine Festival is taking place on November 10, 2018 at the Black Oystercatcher Wine Farm situated to the east of the Elim. The Strandveld people believe in connecting with others and therefore the festival captures that openness and availability – where visitors and winemakers come together to talk about the wines and other produce they love to share. Also be aware that all is happening in a World Heritage Site!

