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Friends of the Agulhas Park: www.agulhas.org.za



www.wildcard.co.za

South African
NATIONAL PARKS



AUGUST eBULLETIN

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Soetansyberg

Soetansyberg or Soetansy Mountain, is one of Agulhas National Park's most iconic spots of interest and an important botanical site which makes it an important node for fynbos conservation. It derives its name from the Anysboegoe, *Agathosma cerefolium* which grows abundantly on the mountain and its foothills.



Described as a steep coastal mountain, it reaches an elevation of 260m above sea level, is the highest point in the eastern section of the Park and lies ± 16km NW of the Southernmost tip. It consists of sandstone and quartzite of the Table Mountain Group. Soils derived from these rocks are acidic and highly infertile. Soetansyberg is part of the Hagelkraal land system with shallow well drained grey calcareous sands. The Soetansyberg area as a botanical site is approximately 100km² and supports seven different fynbos types. Four of these – Agulhas Limestone fynbos (restricted to limestone substrata), Elim Ferricrete fynbos (unique to the Agulhas Plains), (Wet) Restioid fynbos (closely associated with vleis and drainage systems) and Agulhas Sandstone fynbos, a neutral sand proteoid fynbos (critically endangered) are all threatened in the Cape Floristic Region. Together with, Heuningrug, Elim (24 x 28 km) and Soetansyberg have more than 60 Red Data Book plant species, of which at least 15 are threatened.

Soetansyberg features one of the Strandveld's most unique and secret cultural historical structures namely the stonewalls. These stonewalls were most probably packed between 1780 and 1820. It is about one metre high and very visible on the mountain. It was the borders between the different farms, but also was meant to keep the different Van Breda merino sheep flocks from each other. Most of the land belonged to the Zoetendals Vallei Van Breda family in the 18th century. It is not known who packed these walls.

The eastern side of the mountain was cultivated extensively for fynbos planting in the seventies and eighties. The disturbance of the natural seedbed could clearly be seen after the big 2009 fire. The re-growth in these areas differs dramatically from the neighbouring natural veld and will take time, and restorative management, to recover.

Soetansyberg provides the most extraordinary views over the ocean to the south and the Agulhas Plains to the north.



FLORA

INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF FORESTS



Celebrate Forests in 2011!!

The United Nations General Assembly has declared 2011 as the International Year of Forests to raise awareness on sustainable management, conservation and development of all types of forests.

Tree of the Month

Sea Guarrie *Euclea racemosa*

Family: EBENACEAE

The sea guarrie is a small tree of up to six metres in height. It occurs in coastal dune scrub and low coastal forest. Their small bell-like, white flowers are borne in summer and are popular with honey bees. The flowers are followed by juicy, purple fruits that are much sought after by birds. The foliage of this tree is dark green and leathery, and their dark gray trunks are slender with a rough textured bark.



The timber of the sea guarrie is fine-grained and heavy with a beautiful red to purple hue.

They are hardy, attractive plants that can be used as a screening for boundary walls as well as making good hedges. They are especially suited to coastal gardens.





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The common name, sea guarrie, is a Khoisan word, meaning "bush-like" tree. At Platbos they are found mostly on the forest margin and their sweet flowers are much loved by the forest's honey bees.

Sea guarries can be seen on Rhenosterkop *werf* and along the Struisbaai-Elim road on the western side of Soutbosch. Identified by Melissa Krige, Platbos Forest, www.platbos.co.za

Vegetation types in Agulhas National Park

Agulhas Sand Fynbos

Agulhas Sand Fynbos consists of either restioid or proteoid fynbos containing species such as *Agathosma collina* and *Thamnochortus insignis* occurring on neutral to acid sands over limestone of the Bredasdorp Formation. It is distributed in fragmented patches from the flats west of Soetanyberg, east of Elim, to the largest patch northwest of Struisbaai and south of Bredasdorp. Vulnerable with a conservation target of 32% with 7% statutorily conserved in Agulhas National Park. About 27% transformed by cultivation, but alien plants caused a much larger transformed area. Specific species in this vegetation type are *Agathosma collina*: Dekriet, Thatching grass, *Thamnochortus insignis*; Stinkblaar protea, Stink-leaf sugarbush, *Protea susannae*; Geelbos, Rooitolbos, Dune cone-bush, *Leucadendron coniferum*.

(MUCINA & RUTHERFORD (eds). 2006. *The vegetation of South Africa, Lesotho and Swaziland*. *Strelitzia* 19. SANBI, Pretoria

Plants used for Food, Medicine and Other

Wildegansie, Kankerbos, Cancer bush, *Lessertia frutescens*



Shrub up to 900 mm with greyish leaves and scarlet flowers; large inflated translucent fruit pods; common in dune fields and disturbed areas like roadsides; used as treatment for cancer and various other ailments; flowers from June to December.

Suurvy, Sour fig, *Carpobrotus acinaciformis*



Succulent with trailing stems; large rose-purple flowers; fleshy fruit; occurs in coastal sands between the Cape Peninsula and Port Elizabeth; leaves used for medicinal purposes; fruit is edible and the well-known *suurvykonfyf* is made from the fruit.

Fluitjiesriet, *Phragmites australis*



Tall perennial bamboo-like plant up to four metres; solitary stems with brown and white spikelets; occurs in most of southern Africa; forms dense stands in river beds and wetlands; rhizomes were used as a traditional source of starch; hollow reeds used as tobacco pipe-stems and musical instruments; also a favourite building material.

(MUSTART, COWLING, ALBERTYN: *Southern Overberg SA Wild flower guide* 8, 2003; SCHWEGLER, M: *Medicinal and other uses of Southern Overberg Fynbos plants*, 2003.)

Agulhas Park investigates sustainable harvesting Heather D'Alton, Flower Valley Conservation Trust

The Agulhas National Park (ANP) and Flower Valley Conservation Trust are working together to investigate sustainable harvesting in the Park. Flower Valley is a member of the Park's work group on community projects and sustainable harvesting. Through this forum, the Park and the trust are now looking to implement the Sustainable Harvesting Programme on the reserve. Through the programme, fynbos is picked according to a Code of Best Practice, which prevents overharvesting and protects vulnerable species. Already two pack sheds, Fynsa and Bergflora, have signed up to the programme. The Denel Overberg Test Range has also recently joined the programme. ANP, through the People & Conservation Department, also serves on the Sustainable Harvesting Steering Committee with other stakeholders to take the sustainable harvesting principles forward. In this regard the Cape Research Centre will fulfill a guiding role regarding resource use in ANP.

FAUNA

Colourful birds in Agulhas National Park

Bokmakierie, *Telophorus zeylonus*

Bright yellow underparts and throat; broad black breast band; striking melodious call between pairs; endemic to fynbos and a familiar garden bird; also called *Kokkewiet* in the southern Cape; children believed that the *Kokkewiet* cut your toe underneath when walking in wet grass barefoot.



Photography by Anton Odendal





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Most Popular Southern Coast Angling Species

Witsteenbras, White Steenbras, *Lithognathus lithognathus*

Spawning season: July to August

Length at 50% sexual maturity

(geslagsrypheid): 65 cm TL

Age at 50% sexual maturity (geslagsrypheid): 6 years

Maximum age (lebensverwagtinge): 25-30 years

Length at first capture: 60 cm TL

Status: Protected species

SASSI status: Red (Not for sale)

Origin of name: Referral to white colouring and distortion of the Dutch word *steenbrasem*, a reference to a similar European fresh water fish

To check the status of any fish, text its name to 079 499 8795. (SASSI Consumer Seafood Pocket Guide, September 2010)



Heritage Month, September 2011

Programme

Oral history project, 5 – 9 September 2011, Exhibition of material collected plus a compilation of the stories collected.

Venue: Struisbaai Library, Struisbaai-Noord

Food, Medicine and other Useful plants from the Veld / Kos, Medisyne en ander Gebruike uit die Veld, 19 – 24 September 2011

Braai4Heritage/Braai vir Erfenis, 24 September 2011, Spitbraai, R70,00 pp, Bring own drinks & camping chairs

Other activities: Birding, Hiking, Canoeing

Venue: Agulhas National Park: Soutbosch werf, Struisbaai-Elim road, Time: 10:00 – 16:00

For more information: Emmerentia De Kock, 028-4356078 (8:00-16:00), Alliston Appel, 028-4356216 (8:00-16:00)

HERITAGE

Agulhas People

50th Berg River Canoe Marathon

Giel De Kock from SANParks has recently completed his 11th Berg River Canoe Marathon.



The Berg River Canoe Marathon has been contested since 1961. It is an extremely tough challenge, taking place over four days and covering 227 kilometres, making it the longest race in South Africa.



ERFENISMAAND HERITAGE MONTH

Food, Medicine and other Useful plants from the Veld
Kos, Medisyne en ander gebruike uit die Veld
19 – 24 September 2011

Braai4Heritage Braai vir Erfenis
Spitbraai
24 September 2011
Venue/Plek: Soutbosch Agulhas National Park

Hotagterklip and Fisher cultural history
5-9 September 2011
Venue: Struisbaai Library

For more information contact/Vir meer inligting kontak:
Emmerentia De Kock • 028-4356078 (8:00-16:00) • emme.dekock@sanparks.org

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Art in Agulhas by Strijdom van der Merwe



As a landscape artist, Strijdom uses the material provided by the chosen site; *Art in Agulhas* is being showcased in Nedbank offices.

www.strijdom.co.za



The Secret Season

The secret season (June to September) the Overberg agricultural landscape is a patchwork of different shades of green and yellow making your drive to the Agulhas National Park a trip to remember.

Events Calendar

August	
Whales returning to the Southern Tip of Africa!	
September	
Heritage & Tourism month	
1 - 7	National Harbour week
7 - 30	Kids in the Park Program
12 - 17	National Clean-up Week
14 - 16	Agri Mega Week
16	International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer National Recycling Day
17	International Coastal Clean-up Day
19 - 24	Plant week, Agulhas NP
24	National Heritage day
27	World Tourism day

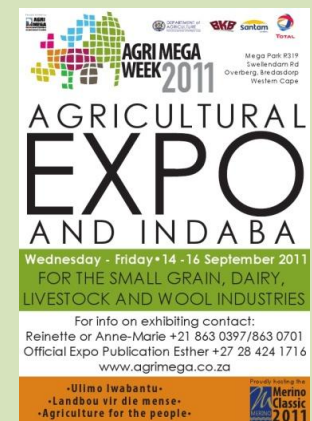
EARTH Platinum, the biggest book in the world



EARTH Platinum is a 1.8m x 1.4m atlas and a showcase of the craftsmanship of more than 100 international cartographers, geographers and photographers. The book will be printed and hand-bound in Italy at a price tag of US\$100 000. This exquisite book is unsurpassed in size, quality and detail.

Esna Swart (responsible for the layout of the Agulhas eBulletin and Honorary Ranger of the Agulhas Region) together with her team consisting of Bevin Ahrends, Charles Newman, Egan Farao, Fabiola Bilham, Fernando Bilham and Nigelle Erasmus has been selected to work on this amazing project.

<http://www.millenniumhouse.com.au/title-earth-plat.html>



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