



Fynbos

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Kleinmond
Natuurbevestigingsvereniging
Nature Conservation Society

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BIRD OF THE YEAR 2026: BLACK HARRIER

– Carin Malan and Thea Brink

BirdLife South Africa asked the public to participate, more than 10 000 people cast their votes, and the Black Harrier was selected to be Bird of the Year 2026.

Good news for us, as it lives on our doorstep.

The Black Harrier (witkruisvleivalk) is categorised as “near-endemic” as 70% of its population occurs within South Africa. In summer these magnificent birds migrate from their core ranges in the Western Cape to Lesotho and the Free State.

It is a beautiful, eye-catching bird with its black feathers, white rump and black-and-white striped tail. It has yellow legs, eyes and cere. When perched, the bird appears to be all black. Male and female plumages are similar, females being slightly larger.

Black Harriers breed mostly in the montane fynbos, Renosterveld and Strandveld habitats of the Western Cape. Breeding success depends on the rainfall. More rain equals more available food equals larger clutches. Inland harriers have a small window to breed; however, the more benign coastal weather conditions allow the birds to produce more young over a longer period.

They breed close to damp areas such as vleis and streams and build their nests of dry stems, grass, reeds and weeds on the ground. They usually lay three to five eggs which are incubated for about a month. In winter rainfall areas egg-laying takes place between June and November, with peaks in July and September.

They feed mostly on small rodents and other small animals.

Black Harriers (*Circus maurus*) are southern Africa’s rarest endemic raptor and the most threatened near-endemic raptor in South Africa. Their numbers are declining and their conservation status is Endangered.

The main threats that they face include loss of favoured breeding habitats in the Fynbos, Karoo and Grassland biomes because of agricultural and urban expansion. Climate change is also predicted to contribute to their decline, as warming climates force them out of their habitats and into limited fragments of suitable coastal areas.

Birdlife SouthAfrica and its partners on the Black Harrier Task Force are implementing plans to secure the future of these magnificent birds. Their plans include research, surveys in underexplored areas, conservation action at important harrier breeding and foraging sites, and creating more awareness of the bird’s tenuous status. Let us wish them every success.



A Black Harrier descending to its nest in the Overstrand area. (Image: Carin Malan)



Golf day @ Arabella

Can you contribute to the success of our fundraising golf day?

Contact Klara: 061 248 9735

Our second fundraising golf day will be held at Arabella on 11 June 2026. We're building on the success of last year's event, with proceeds again going towards our alien vegetation clearing efforts. Bookings are going very well, but we need your support to ensure the day is a big success. We're looking for contributions of **hamper items** or **prizes** for the golfers, or **auction items** to be sold on the day. Your business can also **sponsor a hole**.

THE SAD HISTORY OF *ERICA PILLANSII*

– Thea Brink

In April people come from far and wide to see our “own” endemic *Erica pillansii* on the plateau above Fairy Glen. This beautiful scarlet Erica used to grow in dense populations on the lower slopes of the Kogelberg between Pringle Bay and Kleinmond.

Words used to describe the sight include “magnificent”, “breathtaking” and “spectacular”.

This *Erica* has a rather lovely story. It had long been sold at the Cape Town Grand Parade by one family of flower sellers who jealously guarded the secret of its habitat. Neville Pillans, a botanist and assistant curator of the Bolus Herbarium at UCT, who saw the flowers for the first time in 1909, could not get the secret from them, try as he might.

Erica pillansii was only described in its natural habitat years later, when a botanist happened to be hiking there in April during its flowering season.

This *Erica* continued to appear in the Cape Town Parade flower market, but in the 1970s and 1980s its harvesting became unsustainable and the plant was declared a protected species. Harvesting stopped for a time, allowing the population to regenerate.

Unfortunately, illegal harvesting was resumed in the 21st century. Oliver and Oliver wrote in 2005: “Recent field observations confirms that illegal harvesting is ongoing in the mountain behind Kleinmond. This may affect seed production and dispersal” (Oliver, E.G.H. and Oliver, I.M. 2005. The genus *Erica* (*Ericaceae*) in southern Africa: Taxonomic notes 2. *Bothalia* 35(2):121-148).

This eventually led to the plant being declared Endangered on SANBI's Red List of SA Plants.

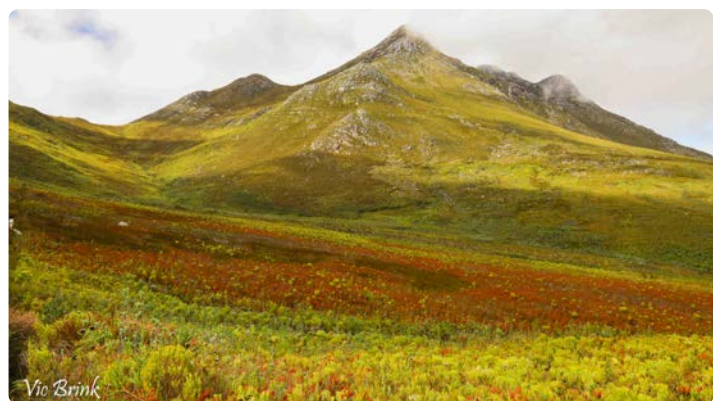
KNCS as well as members of the public have been notifying CapeNature of the presence of illegal harvesters for a number of years. In the beginning of 2026 Christa van Schalkwyk, representing Kleinmond Nature Conservation Society, submitted a detailed

report about the matter to CapeNature's Senior Manager for Marine and Coastal Operations. He undertook to give attention to the matter.

At the writing of this article reports from hikers indicated that they were seeing clear signs of illegal harvesting.



The beautiful but threatened *Erica pillansii*.



A large colony of *Erica Pillansii* on the plateau south of Perdeberg five years ago. Illegal harvesting has depleted this colony to a shadow of its former glory.

(Images: Vic Brink)

BESOEKER UIT DIE KOUE SUIDE

– Carin Malan



Dit is nie elke dag dat ons hierdie kordate pikkewyn op ons strand sien nie.
(Foto: Carin Malan)

Ons jongste besoeker uit Antarktiese streke was 'n macaroni-pikkewyn (*Eudyptes chrysolophus*) wat veral die voëlykers diep gelukkig gemaak het.

Dit is die pikkewyntjie met die kenmerkende helder

geel kuif. Die res van sy lyf is swart en wit. Hulle word so 70 cm lank en weeg tussen 5 en 6 kg, 'n bietjie groter as ons brilpikkewyn. (Hy kon natuurlik 'n wyfie gewees het, want die twee geslagte lyk eners.) Ons sal maar bly by "hom" ter wille van maklike lees.)

Hulle bly in baie groot kolonies wat vry is van roofdiere, en is baie sosiaal en nuuskierig. Hulle het skynbaar geen vrees vir mense nie.

Die pikkewyn het vir hom 'n sitplek in die bosse bokant die Hoofstrand uitgesoek, en die eerste taak van die natuurmense was om sy veiligheid te verseker. Kogelberg Biosfeer se Corli Hugo saam met OM-personeel het hom na 'n veiliger plek geskuif. Hy het 'n kort rukkie daar gerus en is toe vort.

Macaroni-pikkewyne is volop en daar word bereken dat daar miljoene van hulle is. Tog is hulle getalle besig om vinnig te daal, en daarom word hulle bewaring-status as Kwesbaar gelys. Hulle kom veral voor in die verre suide van Suid-Amerika, die Suidpool-gebied en die Suidpool-Skiereiland. Hulle is tuis in die koue water rondom die Suidpool maar word tog van tyd tot tyd in lande soos Nieu-Seeland en Suid-Afrika waargeneem.

Hulle dieet bestaan uit skaaldiertjies, veral kril, en klein vissies en inkvissies.

Hulle verveer een keer per jaar, waarvoor hulle 3 tot 4 weke aan land bly. In die broeikolonies langs die kus ding duisende pikkewyne om spasie mee, maar na die broeityd vertrek almal vir ses maande lank see toe.

En as jy kleinkinders het, het jy sekerlik al een van hulle in fliëks soos *Happy Feet* raakgehoop!

A huge thank you to members who donated to the Slingsby/Walters fund!

At the moment funds are used to support the work CREW does in our region.

The Custodians of Rare and Endangered Wildflowers (CREW) programme involves citizen scientists (all volunteers) in monitoring and protecting threatened plant species within the Cape Floristic Region, among other areas in South Africa. They survey rare plants, map important plant areas, and submit data to SANBI's Plant Red List to support biodiversity stewardship and land-use decisions. Their enthusiasm and dedication is something to behold!



Crew members observing and recording to help protect our most endangered species.
(Image: Heather Hodgson)

MIMETES PARK UPGRADE

– Vic Brink

Mimetes Park recently had a nice upgrade when its old and dilapidated fencing along the various paths were replaced by neat treated timber posts and rails.

Magdaleen Brits hired the BBB Garden Services team for the day with donations she received. They dug the holes and volunteers then planted the poles and fixed the rails. And while the boys (and some girls) provided know-how and brawn, the girls made sure that they kept their strength up by providing the necessary refreshments. (Image: Vic Brink).



KUSRESERVAAT VIER SY 50STE VERJAARDAG

– Thea Brink

Kleinmonders het 'n kusreservaat op hulle drumpel. Toegang is gratis. Elkeen kan dit geniet net wanneer hy of sy wil – en op baie maniere.

As jy weer daar is, kan jy gerus 'n oomblik stilstaan en dink aan ons voorgangers wat dit vir ons moontlik gemaak het.

Aanvanklik was dit mense van KNBV en die destydse munisipaliteit. Daarna was dit vrywilligers en amptenare van die munisipaliteit wat gesorg het dat die reservaat bestuur, verbeter, onderhou en uitgebrei is.

Die grond tussen Kusweg en die see is in 1977 as die Kleinmond Kusreservaat geproklameer en die gebied weerskante van die Palmietrivier tot by Feetjiebos is in 1978 hierby ingelyf.

Een van die eerste take van die Adviesraad wat die munisipaliteit aangestel het om die gebied te bestuur, was om indringers te verwyder. Peter Slingsby het hieraan 'n leeu-aandeel gehad. Deur sy toedoen is daar ook inheemse bome langs die rivier geplant – daardie einste ou bome wat die rivieroewer so 'n lushof maak.

Die eerste wandelpad, die Laura Wesselsvoetslaanpad aan die oostekant van die reservaat, is in Desember 1979 ingewy. Ander wandelpaaie het kort daarna gevolg.

En nou is die kusreservaat mooitjies volgende jaar 50 jaar oud.



'n Mens voel sommer lus om jou stapskoene aan te trek en die kusreservaat te gaan verken. (Foto: Vic Brink)

Kleinmonders stap graag in die reservaat en daar is veel om te geniet: see en rotse, vars lug en vrede, voëlsang en kinderstemme, unieke en skaars kusplantegroei. Vissermanne vang vis en jonk en oud swem in die swempoele. Party drentel en party stoom verbete voort. En party sit.

Jy kan tot by hawe loop en, koffie of roomys in die hand, 'n bietjie rus. Dan kan jy deur die Palmietwoongebied en al met die plankiespad langs stap tot by Palmietstrand, na die voëls by die riviermonding gaan kyk en dan op die rotse gaan sit en iemand bel om jou te kom haal. Of die hele pad terug stap.

En oral langs die pad is daar vriendelike mede-stappers wat glad nie omgee om 'n bietjie te gesels oor die mooi natuur of die mooi dag (of koue wind) voordat elkeen weer sy of haar gang gaan nie.

Elke inham, rots en swem- of visgat het natuurlik 'n storie en 'n naam, maar dit is 'n lang storie vir 'n ander dag.



Massas rommel het na die vorige groot reënstorm in die natuurreservaat beland. (Foto: Botha Maree)

Stormwaterkanale stuur reënwater na die see toe, maar ongelukkig neem die water ook groot hoeveelhede rommel saam. Om te keer dat laasgenoemde ook in die see beland, het KNBV en die munisipaliteit onder leiding van Botha Maree nette aangebring waar die stormwaterkanale langs die kus uitloop. Dit is 'n konstante werk om te verseker dat die rommel tydig verwyder word om verstoppings en skade te voorkom, maar Botha hou 'n valkoog daaroor.

Die onlangse oorstromings het groot skade aangerig en verskeie nette wat in die stormwaterkanale aangebring is om rommel op te vang, het in die slag gebly. Verder was daar ongelukkig ook vandalisme aan die nette onderkant Overhills wat veroorsaak het dat die deel van die Kleinmond Natuurreservaat suid van die R44 bestrooi is met rommel.

Botha is wel ontmoedig, maar nog glad nie gereed om handdoek in te gooi nie.

TWEE RIVIERMONDINGS EN DIE LAMLOCH-VLEI

– Peter H. Müller

Oor baie jare heen was daar hope argumente oor die Botrivier se “regte” uitloop. Is dit die een by Hawston of die een by Kleinmond?



'n Satellietfoto van die Bot- en Kleinrivier se strandmeerstelsel. (Foto: Google Earth)

Albei mondings se klipbanke is meestal onder seesand toegespoel. Die klipbank by Kleinmond is egter ongeveer 'n meter laer as die een by Hawston. Dit kan met toepaslike meetmetodes bewys word.

Die twis se oorsprong lê ver terug in die Tweede Wêreldoorlog. As teenvoeter vir die Duitse duikbote langs die Suid-Afrikaanse kus het Brittanje amfibiese Viscount-vliegtuie ingespan. Die vliegtuie se basis was die Botvlei en om die watervlak hoog genoeg te hou vir die swaar vliegtuie is 'n keerwal gebou. Dit kan nog naby die voëluitkyk-hut gesien word.

Die bemanning van die vliegtuie is enige tyd van die dag of nag uitgeroep en hulle het telkens genoeg geraas gemaak om die ander inwoners daar naby te steur en wakker te maak – en dit is waar die naam Onrus vandaan kom.

Na die oorlog is 'n opening in die wal gemaak om die normale vloei van die rivier na die Kleinmond-monding deur te laat. Die opening was te klein vir voldoende watervloei, maar pogings om die opening te vergroot kon nie die nodige goedkeuring kry nie. Die inwoners van Hawston het sedert die einde van die oorlog die Botriviermeer gebruik vir visvangdoeleindes en was gekant teen die vergroting van die opening.

Die beleid oor die twee riviermondings is tans dat die natuur toegelaat word om sy gang te gaan en dat die mondings nie kunsmatig oopgemaak mag word nie. Die Kleinmond-monding het gelukkig die afgelope paar jaar gereeld in die winter van nature oopgegaan, tot groot blydskap van Kleinmonders.

Dit bring my by die Lamloch-vlei en sy riete. Toe ons hier kom aftree het, was daar min, indien enige, riete. Sedertdien het fluitjiesriet (*Phragmites australis*), 'n inheemse riet, begin oorneem.

Sommige mense dink die riete moet verwyder word. Ander glo dat Arabella riool in die vlei stort en sodoende die riete se verspreiding aanmoedig. Arabella het egter sy eie klein maar doeltreffende rioolaanleg en hulle gebruik die skoon water wat daarmee verkry word om hul grasperke te besproei.

Vir vakansiegangers en inwoners is die grootste nadeel van die riete waarskynlik die feit dat dit nou onmoontlik is om met kano's of roeibootjies tot by die Botriviermeer te roei. Grondeienaars het intussen versperrings aangebring wat ook mense se bewegings beperk.

En steeds bly die toekoms van die strandmeer en sy riete 'n heerlike bron van diep gesprekke en hewige meningsverskille.

PALMIET PLANKIESPAD

Die plankiespad is ook nie meer wat hy was nie! Groot dele daarvan is vervang met meer duursame en diefbestande sementblokke.

Tog is daar dele wat in die winter deurweek en selfs onder water is, en daardie dele word met nuwe plankiesbruggies gebou.

Wat oorblywende plankies betref, is die vandale en diewe steeds besig. Nadat ongeveer 80 meter ou, stukkende plankies onlangs vervang is, is 6 meter daarvan vinnig en effektief verwyder.

Vir die afsienbare toekoms sal die flukse plankiespad-werkers van Kleinmond (afgetredenes sowel as 'n paar werkendes) beslis nie tyd hê om rustig oud te word nie.



Groot dele van die plankiespad is vervang met betonblokke. (Foto: Vic Brink)

WORLD WATER DAY 22 MARCH 2026: THE STORY OF THE STONEFLY NYMPH

– Christa van Schalkwyk

World Water Day has been celebrated since 1993 and is an annual United Nations Observance Day focusing on the importance of fresh water.

The Kleinmond Nature Conservation Society and the Eco Youth Ministry invited Louine Boothway from Stonefly Environmental Education to present a programme on aquatic life in our streams to local primary school pupils.

They learnt that the tiny Stonefly nymph is an indicator of good quality water, because it can only survive in very clean water where conditions are perfect. Then they went off to find out whether there were any stoneflies in the Middelrivier. Those who could find them (no mean task) then had to catch them and put them in little bottles so that everybody could look at them through Louine's field microscope.

The children turned out to be good scientists – in addition to the stoneflies they also caught tiny mayfly nymphs, caddisflies, water beetles and water spiders. However, their best catches were the stonefly nymphs. In real life they were little specks in the water, but through the microscope they could see its legs, tail, body, head and even their eyes. Who would have thought? Afterwards these tiny, perfect little creatures were released back into the river.

What could the children report after the activity? The quality of the water in the Middelrivier is excellent because of the presence of the Stonefly nymph and other small aquatic creatures.



Bo: Die Strandlopers het met groot entoesiasme aan die program deelgeneem.

Regs: Louine le Roux van Stonefly vertel hoe ons kan agterkom hoe gesond 'n rivier is deur die klein kreatuurtjies daarin te ondersoek. (Foto's: Vic Brink)

PLECOPTERA (STONEFLIES, KLIPVLIEGIES)



Stonefly nymph

Image by Friedrich Böhringer, [CC BY-SA 2.5](#)
via Wikimedia Commons

- An order of flying insects with at least 3,500 species.
- Found worldwide, but not in Antarctica.
- A female stonefly lays up to one thousand eggs.
- She flies over the stream or hangs on to a rock or branch to drop her eggs into the water.
- The eggs are sticky and adhere to rocks under the water.
- Eggs usually hatch after 2 to 3 weeks.
- The nymphs stay in the water for one to four years, depending on the species.
- They undergo from 12 to 36 molts.
- They then emerge from the water, attach to a fixed surface and molt for the last time.
- Adult stoneflies emerge from the last molt.
- They stay in the area and survive for a few weeks only.
- Some species do not feed at all, while others feed on plant material.





Carefully keeping record.



Rivierklippe word noukeurig ondersoek vir tekens van lewe.

DIE GEWRAAKE RIETE IN DIE KLEINMONDSTRANDMEER

– Botha Maree



Foto: Vic Brink

Meningsverskille oor die rietgroei in die Kleinmondstrandmeer bestaan al vir ten minste twee dekades, en KNBV is ook van tyd tot tyd hierby betrokke.

Die saak is al by formele vergaderings van o.a. die plaaslike wykskomitee en BREF (Bot River Estuary Forum) aangeroen en by die Kleinmond Natuurbewaringsvereniging se algemene jaarvergaderings bespreek. Sterk menings word in die Overstrand Herald en op sosiale media gelug. Daar was ook al 'n nagraadse studie oor die moontlike ekonomiese impak van die riete se verspreiding.

Intussen het 'n span van OM in Julie 2020 die riete op die noordoewer platgesny. Vyf maande daarna was die riete terug, ten spyte van die invloei van seewater wat veronderstel was om rietgroei te beperk (Paul Coetzee in Fynbos no 165).

KNBV se kaggroep het in 2020 riete op die wes-oewer van die strandmeer uitgegrawe, maar dit het ook nie 'n permanente oplossing gebied nie.

During a BREF meeting in 2021 Pierre de Villiers, representing CapeNature, said:

“ As the managing agent, we are managing the estuary according to the objectives of the Estuary Management Plan, which means an ecologically functional estuary, and we are advised by specialists in the field. The issue around the reeds was raised 4 years ago, where we were advised by the specialist that the reeds provide an ecological function.

Specialist Dr Lara van Niekerk declared at a BREF meeting in 2023:

“ People should stop the war on reeds because they are incredibly good filters for many of the lake systems. If you remove those reeds, you are removing one of nature's most effective filters. The estuary is actually dependent on the reeds to remove nutrients from the water so that everything else can live in the open water area. Reeds are in many cases the last frontier against the nutrient loads in the estuaries at the moment.

Competing interests are at play here, and in future residents of Kleinmond will probably have to take responsibility for the lagoon themselves and see what they can do to keep at least in the area between the foot bridges to the beach free from aggressive reed growth.



The group of volunteers who cleaned the main beach on World Wetlands Day.
(Images supplied by Gawie Winterbach)



Die Strandlopers het, soos altyd, hulle kant gebring by die strandskoonmaak.

Kleinmond celebrated World Wetlands Day on 7 February by cleaning the main beach and the lagoon area. As always, the people of Kleinmond showed that they show up where it matters and they quickly collected 15 bags (53 kg) of recyclable rubbish and 10 bags (48 kg) of non-recyclable rubbish. Thank you to all who participated in this somewhat messy but otherwise cheerful activity! As always, the Strandlopers in their green T-shirts were there to add to the general fun by being their busy selves – all over the place.

***Fynbos* is die nuusbrieff van die Kleinmond Natuurbewaringsvereniging**

Saamgestel deur die redaksionele komitee.

Artikels, behalwe herdrukke uit ander bronne, mag sonder verlof herdruk of aangehaal word, mits die bron, *Fynbos*, erken word. Die menings van die artikelskrywers is nie noodwendig die opinie van KNBV nie.

***Fynbos* is the newsletter of the Kleinmond Nature Conservation Society**

Compiled by the editorial committee.

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