



Hi BBC members

Nature's season of "winter rest" is bowing out to the season of "new life springing up" and is displaying fresh growth and beautiful colours.



**The BBC is also moving into a new season of growth.**

After the 2024 AGM, we said thanks and goodbye to Elsa Jacobs and Warren McClelland who were unable to continue on the BBC Team due to their work commitments. Six new BBC member were voted on and our **current BBC Team** now has 11 members. Jan Briers, Tony Bush, Carol Clark, Barbara Jenman and Pete Oxford continued on the Team and Ann Bradshaw, Louise du Preez, Michael Henshaw, Herman Mynhardt, Galia Mincom and Harry Teifel were voted on. This means more skills, resources and capacity for new projects to support conservation in Betty's Bay and the Kogelberg Biosphere

**We welcome new members** who have joined recently the BBC: Louise Du Preez Jane MacKenzie-Hoskyn; Alan and Riekie Reid; Desire Scott; Jon Minster and Jessica Blumenthal ; Ken Eales; Michael Hoffmann, Anli Theron, Sue and Neil Brown and Bryan Bradley.

Thanks to all those members who have **renewed their R120 annual fees** to continue to support the BBC for 2024/5 and to those who have donated extra above the R120 for the work of the BBC. To those those members who have not yet renewed, we would really value your continued support.

We are busy compiling the information from the International Coastal Clean-up on 21 September. Currently Overstrand is in third place as the results from participating cities for the Great Southern Bioblitz continue to be submitted. Thanks to Warren McClelland for leading a birding walk to Rooisand for the BB4th Saturday in September. We will give feedback on these events in the next monthly update.

Keep an eye out for the nesting shorebirds on our beaches to allow them a safe breeding season!

Best wishes

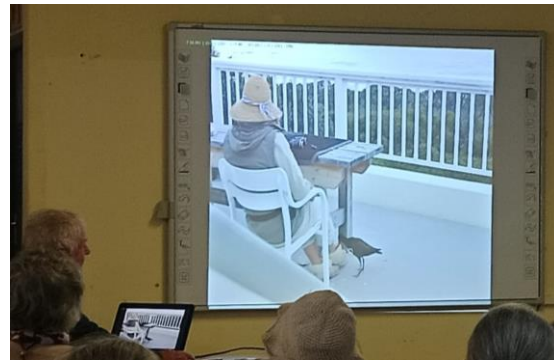
The BBC Team



## THE NESTING SHOREBIRDS in BETTY'S BAY

The BBC4thSaturday event, held on the 24<sup>th</sup> August in the Stony Point Eco Venue, was a tribute to the late Sara Starke on the anniversary of her passing. Sara was a natural pioneer “oystercatcher monitor” in Betty’s Bay and a super example of how “one person CAN make a difference”.

Richard, Sara’s husband, treated us to a beautiful and fun slide presentation that documented some of the many aspects of Sara’s work including raising orphaned oystercatcher chicks in a beach habitat she created, providing food for them and gradually introducing them to life in their normal habitat until at around 110 days they left to become independent.



He also highlighted some of the challenges that the parents and chicks face on the beaches from people, dogs and natural predators. Richard had special photo sequences and video clips of parents interacting with chicks as they raise them, feed them, try to protect them and teach them to swim – precious insights into the life of the oystercatchers!

Sara has passed her “pioneer baton” on to a group of concerned residents who now monitor different sections of the beaches: Judy New, Colin and Myrna Cook, Wendy and Mark Lucas, Lenore and Duncan Watermeyer and Colin and Sue Brown. They keep a watch on the oystercatchers and note the number of breeding pairs, eggs laid, chicks raised and the overall breeding success. Watch out for the signage they put up on the beaches and help protect our nesting shorebirds by keeping your distance and your family dogs away from the demarcated nesting sites.



Expert bird photographer Keith Hamilton shared his stunning slide presentation of some of the shore and marine birds in and around Betty's Bay.

At the Shorebirds event, the BBC launched a new info leaflet on the Shorebirds that nest in Betty's Bay. This leaflet was a joint initiative between the BBC and the Betty's Bay Oystercatcher Monitors. Thank to Myrna and Colin Cook for their input and help with this leaflet, to Keith Hamilton for the use of his beautiful photographs and to our designer for the layout.

## BETTY'S BAY'S NESTING SHOREBIRDS

**African Oystercatchers and White-fronted Plovers nest and breed on the coastline. Kelp harvesting, people and dogs are some of the factors that influence the success of their breeding and negatively impact their populations for future generations to enjoy.**



**AFRICAN OYSTERCATCHERS**

African Oystercatchers (*Haematopus moquini*) are black, about 45 cm tall with pink legs and feet, a long orange-red bill and red eyes with an orange eye ring. The chicks have a greyish plumage which ensures good camouflage in the kelp or next to rocks. They live on rocky and sandy shores along the Southern African coastline and use their bills to pry open mussels and limpets on the rocks and to probe in the sand for worms.



**WHITE-FRONTED PLOVERS**



White-fronted Plovers (*Charadrius marginatus*) are small birds that are sandy coloured on the back and white below. Their populations are decreasing. They live in groups or in solitary pairs along sandy coastlines. They eat small insects and crustaceans, and forage by running, stopping suddenly and then running again.




Breeding takes place throughout the year, peaking between September and November. The nests are simple scrapes in the sand above the high-water mark and the eggs are often covered with sand when the parent leaves the nest. There are usually one to two eggs which are incubated for about 27 to 30 days. The chicks fledge after about 35 days. Parents distract threats away from the eggs or chicks by acting as if they have a broken wing.




Breeding takes place between October and April, peaking in December and January. Their nests are simple shallow scrapes in the sand near the high-water mark. The females lay one to two eggs (sometimes three) and the eggs are incubated for about 28 to 32 days. The chicks fledge after about 35 days.





**KITTLITZ'S PLOVERS**

The Kittlitz's Plover (*Charadrius pecuarius*) is the same size as the White-fronted Plover, but it has darker markings and a more buff colour. It is less common along Betty's Bay beaches as they prefer estuaries such as the Rooisand Nature Reserve where they can be found in abundance. Nonetheless, every year there will be a few breeding pairs found along the beaches and rocky areas. As they prefer to nest in gravel and kelp patches just above the high tide mark, this unfortunately means that our foot paths are the perfect spot for them. Similar to the White-fronted Plover, the adults have egg burying habits and can put on a "broken wing" act when danger approaches.




**THREATS TO THESE NESTING BIRDS**

- **Natural predators in Betty's Bay**  
These include ravens, crows, jackal buzzards, kelp gulls, mongooses, caracals and snakes.
- **Humans and dogs**  
As these birds breed in the hot summer months, the parents incubate their eggs to keep them cool. When parent birds are scared off their nests by dogs or people (children or adults), the eggs are exposed to high temperatures which can be fatal within five minutes. The more times this happens, the less chance the eggs have of hatching. Disturbing the nest can also make eggs and chicks more vulnerable to trampling and predators.
- **Kelp harvesting**  
Harvesting of kelp undoubtedly negatively impacts on the birds' breeding success. Both the process of harvesting, when the birds are likely to be disturbed and their scrapes and eggs destroyed, and the aftermath of beaches denuded of kelp, are likely to be contributory. Removing kelp from the beaches disturbs the delicate ecological balance on the beaches. Our shore birds are just some of the casualties of that harvesting. The kelp that is washed up on our beaches provides important protection for the young vulnerable chicks, who are adept at hunkering down in the kelp when their parents give the signal. Limiting the kelp harvesting permits to the months when the oystercatchers are not breeding, will not protect the breeding plovers during those periods. In addition, the kelp provides an important year round food source for birds with an abundance of sand hopper and kelp flies.

**WHAT CAN WE DO TO HELP PROTECT OUR SHOREBIRDS?**

- **Be aware of the signs and stick markers indicating nesting areas.**



- **In the case of the oystercatcher, listen for their "alarm call" indicating the proximity of chicks.**
- **Give nests plenty of space in order not to scare parent birds off their eggs.**
- **Watch where you step to avoid standing on eggs or chicks. Ideally, walk along the wet sand close to the water's edge.**
- **Keep dogs leashed when walking on the beach as per the Bylaw.**

**By following these simple guidelines, we can all help our nesting shorebirds to breed successfully.**

Sections 6(2) and (3) of the Overstrand Municipality's bylaw on dogs and cats is clear both in context and literal interpretation: "No person may allow or cause to allow any dog to be in a public place unless it is kept on a leash." Note that public places include any beach, road, path, bridge, footpath or garden, and any other place under the control of the municipality.

Photos: Keith Hamilton



Learn about the main nesting shorebirds and the threats the Oystercatchers face during their breeding season which coincides during the summer months when the beaches are full of people and dogs. See the simple steps you can take to give the parents and chicks the space and reduced interruptions they need for successful breeding in the hot summer months.

Please pass this leaflet on to your friends, family, “clients” and “renters” if you sell houses, rent out your house, have a B&B or run an air B&B. Help teach a fellow beachgoer if you see them or their children or dogs too close to the nesting sites and disturbing the birds. Let’s work together to give these birds the support they need to raise their chicks successfully on our beaches. This can be one of your *“Every day do one small act for biodiversity”*.

The leaflet can be downloaded from the BBC website: <https://bettysbayconservancy.co.za/bettys-bays-nesting.../>. Kim at Fussfree Design and Print (FFDP) also the PDF file so you can go to FFDP if you want to print copies of the leaflet.

## UPDATED LEAFLET FOR THE BUTTERFLY EFFECT

In last months BBC article on the Throwaway Society, we included a leaflet on the large variety of items that that the Butterfly Effect repurpose and reuse. As there was no Afrikaans version of that leaflet the Butterfly Effect has kindly produced a one page poster in Afrikaans and English.

**The Butterfly Effect SA**  
Animals | Environment | People  
PBO 930067965 232-560 NPO

**The Butterfly Effect** is a dedicated group engaged in community and animal welfare and can repurpose a host of things from your household that you might otherwise throw in the trash

**Wood & sheeting**  
Wood, roof sheeting and off-cuts are used to build kennels for distribution to those who need it most.

**Hardware & building materials**  
Windows, frames, build-in cupboards, security gates, doors, half tins of paint, tiles, sinks, etc. are used to help people upgrade or repair their homes.

**Scrap metal & appliances**  
Working or not, it can be repaired to sell or recycled.

**Outside gates, poles & fencing**  
Help unchain dogs in townships and improve their living conditions.

**Furniture**  
Transport can be arranged.

**Stationery**  
Donated to schools.

**Toiletries**  
Even half-used.

**Recycling**

- breadbags are used to package dry dog & cat food for distribution
- bread tags are sent to Elsie's River for a church project called "Bread Tags for Wheelchairs"
- plastic bottle tops are forwarded to the NG church and Kleinmond Primary School for their initiatives
- small plastic sauce containers are used for cat pate
- yoghurt, margarine and ice cream containers are used for cooked dog stew

**Food scraps**  
Food scraps are used to make stew for dogs and pate for cats. This can include unused vegetables, peels, frost bitten meat, or even bones and left overs from the braai, as well as left over foods like stew, rice, pasta, etc. Raw and cooked food needs to be separated, please, and unfortunately can't include potato peels, onions or garlic as these are not healthy for dogs.

**Bric-a-brac**  
Unwanted household items like linen, curtains, material, knitting & crafting stuff, bric-a-brac, pots, pans, clothing, books, tools, gardening equipment, etc. are sold to fund vet bills and sterilisation days.

**Pet food, etc.**  
Leashes, collars, harnesses, bowls, blankets, food, carriers, beds, kennels, etc. are mostly distributed to responsible pet owners and the meds are taken to our vet and animal sanctuaries for welfare treatments.

**Feeding scheme**  
Most expired foods can still be used for dogs and very little is actually thrown away. A few human feeding schemes are supported by distributing sealed jars, packets, canned foods, sauces, etc.

**Feel free to contact Natalie at 082 883 0580 or Sandra at 073 169 8400**

Carol Clark

BBC Chiar