



APRIL 2026

Dear BBC Members

Winter stormed in!

We hope that your homes escaped damage from the storm, flying roof sheets and other windborne projectiles. In Sunny Seas, there was serious damage to a recently completed house facing its first winter. It lost a large part of its roof, solar panels, and some brickwork was badly damaged. These morphed into dangerous missiles that were flung around the area. Homes in other areas of the village also suffered serious damage.

Winter can be a very harsh "Welcome to Betty's Bay". It is a reminder of the need to use architects, other professionals and builders who are familiar with the local and very severe winter weather, and who design and build appropriately.

As often happens with the storms, services were disrupted and some areas lost power and water. As of last night, nine days after the storm, some Betty's Bay residents were still without power. Today, all the villages lost power again! Another reminder to have a 'Plan B' in place to, at least, be able to do the basics under these conditions.

We hope that 'normality' will soon be restored, especially for those with house repairs ahead of them, and that residents can relax and 'breathe' again in this beautiful village.

A warm welcome to our newest BBC members: Lorraine, Danie, Andrea, Bryan, Sabrina, Sam, Linda and Jim who joined the BBC at our recent event on owls, and to Katta and Ashleigh. Thanks so much for joining and supporting the BBC.



Some BBC bits

Would you like to:

- Be added to the **BBC Info and Alert WhatsApp group**. Some of our earlier members are not yet part of this group.
- Order a **BBC T-shirt** (unisex sizes) or
- Buy a **BBC members sign for your house or plot?**

Please WhatsApp 079 7530166 or email bettybayconservancy@gmail.com

Best wishes from the BBC Team

Carol, Ann, Barbara, Galia, Tony, Pete, Herman, Jan and Johan.

- **BBC4thSATURDAY: 25 APRIL**
'GIVING A hOOT ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENT'



Mike Amira, the Owl Box Man, gave us a passionate, humorous and informative talk on his work of rescuing owls in various predicaments and building owl boxes, bat boxes and catios.

Mike's rescuing escapades have involved climbing chimneys and roofs as well as lying on the ground grinding holes through solid fireplaces to access stuck birds.



Spotted Eagle owls prefer open spaces and Eagle owl boxes are open structures placed in trees.

Barn owls like enclosed spaces and create homes in chimneys and parapets. Their boxes are more enclosed and secured against a structure.

Mike has given residents a special discount for group orders of owl and bat boxes. Please WhatsApp 079 7530166 if you would like to order one. See the advert at the end of this article.



We need owls! They are an important part of the ecosystem and are good at pest control. When we poison rodents in our houses or on our properties, there is a devastating knock-on effect on the owls - they die from secondary poisoning after eating the rodent.



A better option is to use a humane trap to trap and relocate the rodents. The BBC has some humane traps available for sale. There are two per box and the price is R130.



We want to write out clear instructions for safe usage before we make them available.

Owls are also at risk from various “innocent” man-induced factors e.g. helium balloons, balloons from gender reveals and other parties, bread tags, human hair, fish line and toxins like Slugger.

Catios are one alternative to prevent cats injuring and catching birds and he showed us some of his amazing catio creations.

The breeding season of owls is July/August. At two weeks old, the owlets look like snowballs and at about five weeks, they are peeking out and looking at the world around them.

Owls’ poop is white and calcium-rich, so look out for these deposits under trees when you walk around – they are clues that there is an owl above. They regurgitate pellets inside the nests or boxes and these contain evidence of what they eat.



Let’s reconsider any poison that we use that may affect these amazing birds and any other animals that could suffer from secondary poisoning.

We are aware that the Overstrand Municipality still uses Roundup and we want to address this with them to stop the unnecessary use of poison in the Biosphere. This poison is being banned or restricted in various countries primarily due to glyphosate, the active ingredient, being classified as a "probable human carcinogen".



Ref: OBM26176

MIKE THE OWL BOX MAN

Installations of owl and bat boxes

Discount for group orders in Betty's Bay

PRICES ARE FOR SUPPLY & INSTALLATION

3 or more EAGLE OWL BOXES R1200 each

3 or more BARN OWL BOXES R1350 each

3 or more BAT BOXES:

single chamber R1200 each

double chamber R1400 each

Please WhatsApp 079 7530166 or email
bettysbayconservancy@gmail.com
by 12 May to include your order for the
group discount for the area.



- **BEACH WALK WITH PETE: 25 APRIL**

A BBC event for the City Nature Challenge (CNC)

Big thanks to Pete Oxford of BBC for such an informative walk on 25 April.

We set off from Sea Way Drive but we didn't get very far. There were so many shells, to see and identify in just a short distance on the beach. Pete has spent the past year researching to identify the many species, and suitably impressed us with their formal Latin names.



Scattered shells take on a new meaning when you learn something about the names, anatomy and physiology of their previous inhabitants.

We encouraged Pete to do another walk and we will advertise when there is an opportunity. Pete thanks for sharing your knowledge with us and for highlighting the importance of protecting our small MPA.

Photo: Pete Oxford. Keyhole limpets.

Follow Pete's Beachcomber column in the Overstrand Herald



Carol Clark

• WHILE ON THE SUBJECT OF SHELLS ...

Many people have had the privilege of finding a Nautilus shell on the beach. Have you wondered about their story? Below is a lovely infographic from WildnFree.



NATURE CONNECTION ♥ CONSERVATION ♥ COMMUNITY

ECO TIP OF THE DAY

Nautilus Shells

ON OUR BEACHES

This time of year, beautiful spiral shells often wash up along the Overstrand coastline.

Many people call them "nautilus shells," but they're actually often from the **Paper Nautilus (Argonaut)** - a special type of octopus, not a true nautilus!



Beauty from the ocean

AMAZING FACTS



Not a true nautilus

The Argonaut is actually an octopus species, while the true nautilus is a distant relative with many tentacles and a permanent shell.



Females make the shell

Only female argonauts create these delicate white shells. They use them to protect their eggs and help with buoyancy.



Ocean drifters

They live in open ocean waters and are often brought closer to shore by currents, storms and seasonal winds.



Common on Overstrand beaches

During certain seasons, especially after rough seas, these shells can wash up on beaches around Hermanus, Gansbaai and Kleinmond.



Nature's reminder

Even empty shells play a role in the ecosystem and remind us of the incredible life hidden beneath the waves.

Eco Tip

ADMIRE, PHOTOGRAPH & LEAVE SHELLS WHERE YOU FIND THEM.

Every shell tells a story of ocean life and belongs to the natural coastal system.



ARGONAUT (PAPER NAUTILUS) vs TRUE NAUTILUS

ARGONAUT (OCTOPUS)

- ♥ Creates a thin, paper-like shell for egg protection & buoyancy
- ♥ Has 8 arms
- ♥ Drifts in open ocean
- ♥ Shell is delicate and not meant to live in forever



TRUE NAUTILUS (NAUTILOIDEA)

- ♥ Has a strong, chambered shell it grows into
- ♥ Has 90+ tentacles (without suckers)
- ♥ Lives in deeper waters
- ♥ A "living fossil" - unchanged for over 500 million years!



YOU CAN HELP



Take only memories, leave only footprints.



Leave shells for nature - they belong on the beach.



Support a clean coast - pick up litter, not shells.

Our Coast. Our Home. Our Future.

Let's protect the beauty and balance of our beaches for generations to come.



CONNECT ♥ RESPECT ♥ PROTECT | #WildnFree #EcoTipOfTheDay #Overstrand #MarineConservation

- **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SURVEY: STONY POINT NATURE RESERVE**

In the last update, we gave you information on some of the potential changes at Stony Point. **CapeNature is conducting a community engagement survey on the Stony Point Nature Reserve.** They have asked the BBC to help distribute the link to the Betty's Bay community.

They appreciate your feedback, so please complete the short survey. 🐧

[Stony Point Nature Reserve: CapeNature Community Engagement survey – Fill out form](#)



They plan to hold public meetings in June where they will explain more about the issues at Stony Point.

- **A FIELD GUIDE TO LOCAL DOG-WALKING HABITS**

An observational study conducted in the wilds of Betty's Bay

Living in Betty's Bay, one is constantly reminded to do one's bit for the biosphere — ideally without becoming too officious about it. With that in mind, I offer a small public service announcement on behalf of those who *don't* own dogs and visitors/weekenders entering our environs. Dog owners, as we know, fall into five distinct categories, where Category 1 is the least considerate and Category 5 is the gold standard.



Category 1

These owners stroll along without a bag, a plan, or a care. Their mutts stop, squat, and deliver — and the owners don't even bother with the furtive "is anyone watching?" glance. One suspects they believe they're enriching the biosphere. *

Category 2

Also bag-less, but at least capable of embarrassment. If their hound performs its ablutions near a clearly occupied house (not a shuttered holiday home), they'll attempt a cover-up: a stick-flick here, a sand-shuffle there. Out in the fynbos, however, they revert to Category 1 behaviour, confident that no one behind a curtain is watching.

Category 3

These owners set out with bags and good intentions. If the dog goes on the coast path or out of sight, they leave it. If it happens in a residential area, they bag it. Progress, of a sort.

A brief aside: there exists a special sub-species who do bag it — and then lob the bag into the bushes. These individuals do not fit into any of the five categories. They require a different kind of intervention altogether. Without sounding judgemental, who does that?



Category 4

The diligent majority. They leave home with bags, pick up after their dogs, and walk to the nearest public bin — beach entrances, penguin parking, and so on. They may hold the biodegradable bag at arm's length for the hundred-metre walk, but they get the job done.

Category 5

The paragons. These owners would never dream of leaving anything behind. They depart with a Woolies bag containing a paper bag, collect their pooch's "visiting card", tuck it neatly inside, and take the whole lot home. No fuss, no shame, no public bins required.

I recently read that in New York, if you behave like a Category 1–3 owner, the offending evidence can be sent for DNA testing. Your dog is identified, you are traced, and you receive a fine. Imagine that system in Betty's Bay.



So, to our Category 1–3 friends: please be more considerate. It is deeply unpleasant to walk with eyes glued to the ground for fear of stepping in something that isn't your own dog's contribution — especially when one should be looking up and enjoying the beauty around us. Betty's Bay attracts visitors, and it's simply not acceptable for our paths and verges to be dotted with dog waste. Let's keep our walks wild, our views unobstructed, and our shoes clean.

**You'll notice I haven't mentioned leashes. Having your dog off-leash is a finable offence, and you run the risk of being named and shamed on Facebook. Many off-leash walkers, unsurprisingly, fall squarely into Category 1.*

By Patrick Boltler

BBC: Photo credits from various signs from the internet

DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES ON BIOSPHERE LIVING

• WHAT NOBODY TELLS YOU BEFORE YOU MOVE INTO A BIOSPHERE RESERVE

We see it happen so often. New residents arrive with an unenlightened idea of what living in the Kogelberg Biosphere is all about. Houses pop up that make us groan in dismay at how inappropriate they are and how they have destroyed the fynbos. New owners face challenges when they realise that they need to adjust to and live in a different "biosphere friendly" way.

This Overstrand Herald recently published this simple, informative and fun infographic. Sam Kimmel of Pringle Bay wrote the text and Deon Brits of the Overstrand Herald developed the layout and graphics. This is version One. Sam says that there are some edits to do and we are discussing the option of having a version with Betty's Bay on the signboard. The BBC hopes to include this is the "Welcome to Biosphere Living" booklet that they are developing.



- **DO WE LOVE NATURE TO DEATH?**

This may sound like a daft question, but it is worth considering. Humankind is the only creature on earth that can and has destroyed swathes of nature and large-scale ecosystems.



We may have been nature lovers in big cities where environments were heavily modified by urban landscaping and individual gardening efforts. Sometimes successful ecosystems were created with plants, trees, bird feeders, nesting boxes and ponds. We were able to revel in nature in our area: colourful birds, a cacophony of joyful tweeting and screeching, pretty flowers, insects in the undergrowth and excited birds with bulging bellies. Joy, peace, satisfaction, and the marvel of so much life!

Many of us, who now have the privilege of living within the shadows of the Kogelberg, are attuned to nature. We moved here to an almost pristine environment on our doorstep. We love the plants, proteas, pincushions, polygalas, pelargoniums, the beasties, birds, bugs, buntings and buck. We roll up our sleeves, and get gardening: We plant plants, feed, nurture and 'nip and tuck' our gardens into our vision of paradise. We put up seed and nectar feeders for the birds. We dig a pond -- line it, fill it, put plants around it and the frogs and toads arrive with their croaks, clicks and the odd thundering belch. We plant trees for the owls we hear hooting in the night.



We may find a porcupine quill next to the scattered remnants of our Arum Lilies and realise there is nightlife here. We observe the mongoose scampering along, the spurfowl chattering busily to each other, the crows and ravens flying overhead, the Familiar Chat, sometimes being a wee bit of an Over-Familiar Chat, twitching around the house. Sometimes, we see a buck and, very rarely, some are lucky enough to see a caracal. We leave the braai chops and roast chicken remnants for the mongoose, we put out pap or potatoes for the porcupine, and leave fat offcuts for the crows, ravens, and occasional kelp gull. We fill up the bird feeders each day. Later we relax, watch the bird feeders, listen to the frog choir, hope to see a porcupine sometime, and gently scold kitty who is stalking a bird.



Our pets enjoy the nature too – for our dogs there so many smells, muddy furrows and channels to gallop through, and vleis and rivers for swims. For the cats, sadly, there are myriads of wildlife to stalk, chase and catch.

How do some of our activities affect Nature?

Let's define Nature as the *natural*, original environment around us and use this as the reference point. The natural, unaffected by humans, are the self-sustaining, self-regulating ecosystems in the area, from the fine scale through to the entire village footprint.

Gardening: By its very activity, is a disruption of nature - we pull things out, put plants in, cut, trim, water, fertilise, mow, and disrupt nature. Perhaps not a huge impact, but there is an impact - we remove things we do not like, add too much water out of seasonal rainfall, plant species where they shouldn't be, bring in invaders – even if they are endemic to South Africa and to the Fynbos, they may not be endemic to Betty's Bay . When we remove undergrowth and dead matter, we dramatically affect that particular ecosystem e.g. the bacteria, nematodes, worms, insects, fungi, birds, and seedlings that depend on that ecosystem.



The bird feeders: This artificial supply of seed could have a knock-on effect. Too much food may result in more nestlings surviving, leading to a population explosion of predators who then kill more birds. If they run out of birds to eat, the predators might eat rodents or frogs -- potential unnatural prey items. Should these frogs be the single remaining group of an endangered frog in the area e.g. the micro frog, kogelberg moss frog or cape platanna, this would be a devastating loss.

Birds congregate unnaturally around a bird feeder and if one is sick, this facilitates the spread of disease. This supply of seed may affect the dispersal of natural plant species through the spreading of seeds. Foreign grain species might establish and dominate. Other impacts could be reduction of natural plant populations and the pollinators that service these plants. Bird feeders attract rats and mice. If poison is used, ravens, crows, jackal buzzards and owls may die from secondary poisoning.

Supplementary feeding: The feeding of porcupine, mongoose, and other species can be detrimental to their health as it is not their natural diet and leads to habituation and unwanted behaviours.

Frog ponds: Artificial water sources remain long after the natural environment has begun drying out and may cause unnatural congregating of frogs, instead of a natural dispersal. Congregation exposes them to disease, predators and pesticides. A water snake or two, or a crab may move into your pond and then you wonder where the tadpoles have gone. The tadpole cohort of a population of frogs in your garden are dead and gone before they had a chance.



Pets: Worldwide, studies have revealed how domestic cats slaughter the wildlife. Cats are superb hunters and expert killers. Of the total cat kills (revealed by kitty cams), we are generally aware of only 10-20% of what our pussycats kill. For every 10 "gifts" they bring in, there are about 80 - 90 that they have eaten or killed. There are caracals in the villages and residents in Betty's Bay have seen their cats killed by caracals

Are dogs better? They don't kill like cats but they get ticks and fleas and we dose them with tick and flea protection. Most of these are pyrethroid based poisons. When Mutt jumps in your pond, dashes into Bass Lake, or wallows in a drainage channel to cool off on a hot walk, the pyrethroids are like atomic bombs in the aquatic environment. Most of the aquatic life in that area dies. Recent studies have shown that this still transfers to and poisons the water for up to six months after dosing Mutt with anti-flea treatment -- from the dogs entry point all through that water system.

Do we inadvertently love the nature around us to death?

We build homes here. We try to enhance, adjust and improve our experience of nature from *our* perspective, and may inadvertently cause the death and destruction of the very nature we love. Humans are not part of the natural ecosystem. We are an invader and nature has limited capability to fend off and recover from our destructive force. We need to tread lightly. Be careful before undertaking activities to 'fiddle' with Nature. Unnecessary feeding of wild birds and animals in the Kogelberg can be environmentally harmful and harm the very birds and animals we love.

William Davids

ATTENTION BETTY'S BAY RESIDENTS!



PETITION TO THE WESTERN CAPE PROVINCIAL PARLIAMENT

End the lawless speeding on the R44 through Betty's Bay

- 70km/h restriction other than 60km/h at the "HUB"
- Mini roundabout at Disa Circle to slow traffic in the CBD
- 2 speed humps at the "HUB" and removal of some parking bays to provide safe crossing by pedestrians
- Removal of parking bays in Sunny Seas at Seaview Link turnoff to widen road for safe overtaking
- Dual-lane cameras at E and W entrances to Betty's Bay
- Regular OM Traffic Department presence in Betty's Bay
- Reflective "Wildlife Crossing" signage between Rooi Els and Betty's Bay

The R44 highway has tragically transformed into a racetrack, endangering lives, destroying wildlife and undermining the safety and character of our community. The Kogelberg Biosphere's status is dependent on active environmental protection.

INFORMATION: 079 230 8257 / 083 222 1109

ALERT! SECOND UPDATE

We are happy to report that having petitioned the Western Cape Provincial Parliament (WCPP) on 27 March 2026, our petition has successfully progressed to the 4th stage of the petition framework process. ONE stage remains before the decision on the implementation of our proposed solutions is made! We are optimistic of the outcome and will keep you updated on further progress.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

Feedback from the Petition Team

We hope this petition continues to progress successfully with positive "on the ground" results.

Sea hares, naked gills and lemon gumdrops

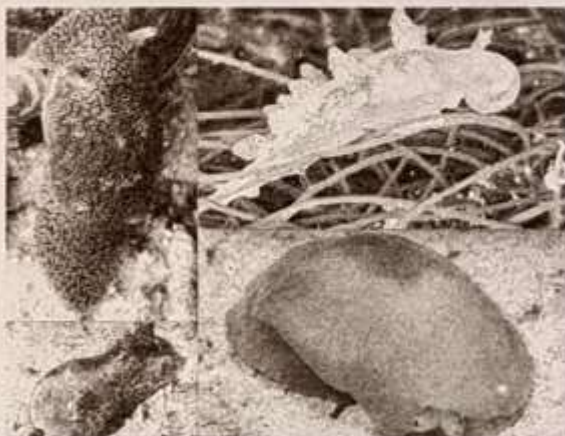
Walking the beach in the Marine Protected Area, I spotted a large gelatinous 'blob' on the sand. I nudged it with my toe and suddenly realised what it was. It was a Sea Hare! Genus *Aplysia*. I have seen them in many places around the world while diving or snorkeling, even as far away as the UK and Indonesia, the genus being fairly widespread. NEVER have I seen one so large however, it simply dwarfs all others I have found before, even though I thought that they were big at the time. They can get even bigger!

Sea hares are members of the sea slug family but they can actually swim using those big fleshy wings or *parapodia* you can see at its sides. The animal shown (next to a R1 coin for scale) was indicating the bare signs of life so I put it back in the water. Somewhat moribund it might not be easy to make out properly. The *rhinophores*, however, like little rabbit ears (hence the sea hare name), are quite visible on the head at the left of the frame. These are chemosensory receptors to sense, by smell and taste, what is in their immediate environment. It turns out that the *Aplysia* genus has been very well studied by neuroscientists, as the animal has only 20 000 neurons. Eric Kandel in fact won a Nobel prize for his work with sea hares helping to understand human memory and learning!

Who'd have thought?

Sea Hares are grazers, they are gastropod molluscs and therefore have the rasping tongue (*radula*) common to the group. They are also hermaphrodites, having both male and female reproductive organs and can mate as either sex.

The MPA has several species of sea slugs in the



Clockwise from top left: Warty Pleurobranch, Cowl Nudibranch, Lemon Gumdrops, Green Bubble Snail



rock pools and shallow waters, including the Cowl Nudibranch (*Melibe rosea*). Nudibranchs have 'naked gills' (which is how their name translates) exposed to the water column, rather than being tucked away protectively in the mantle somewhere. There are a vast number of nudibranch species around the world. They are internationally 'famous' and revered by divers for their absolutely crazy designs, patterns and colors. So sought after, nudibranchs even help drive the dive tourism industry with macro photographers all flocking to exotic locations to photograph them. Some even photosynthesise, by first eating algae and then sequestering the little organs the algae use for photosynthesis, equivalent to stealing their own solar panels to provide themselves with energy.

Other sea slugs we have here include the Warty Pleurobranch (*Pleurobranchaea bubala*) and Lemon Gumdrops (*Berthellina granulate*) which are both so-called side-gilled slugs. I have also found Green Bubble Snails (*Haminoea alfredensis*), which, although still generically sea slugs are in a separate family.

If you check out this piece on the digital version of *The Overstrand Herald* the images might look better in colour and easier to discern.

Pete Oxford



Sea Hare, *Aplysia* and a R1 coin.