



FEBRUARY 2026

Dear BBC members

This newsletter is arriving in your email box a bit later in March than was intended.

We hope you read these monthly updates and find the articles and information interesting.

Please let us know on bettysbayconservancy@gmail.com if you have articles that you would like to contribute. Many BBC members are avid nature lovers and photographers who have fascinating observations, fun stories and stunning photographs to share from our village.

This newsletter features articles on issues such as:

- The beautiful Oystercatcher documentary
- The Kogelberg Biosphere: how we live here and what we will pass onto the next generation
- Speeding on Clarence Drive
- The bins on the Clarence Drive
- The Overstrand Eco Indaba



Photo: Niel van der Watt

Welcome to our newest BBC members: Skip Krige, Rob Geugis, Heidi Wolfaardt, Terry Lucas and Clea Witte. Thanks for joining and supporting the BBC.

At our **BBC4thSATURDAY on 28 March**, we will be hosting Faroeschka Rodgers from CapeNature. She will update us on the various exciting changes due to take place at Stony Point.



Best wishes from the BBC Team: Carol, Ann, Barbara, Galia, Tony, Pete, Herman, Jan and Johan.

Johan is currently on a solo bike tour through the Overberg. He has posted stunning photos on his Facebook page.



It also good to see towns wanting to keep their waste in bins.

- **BC4thSATURDAY: 28 FEBRUARY**

OYSTERCATCHERS IN BETTY'S BAY

What a beautiful documentary! It gives insight into these remarkable birds - and what they endure during a breeding season.

Van As and Jacques Jordaan, oupa en kleinkind, treated us to a screening of their incredible documentary on the Black Oystercatchers, or Tobies, in Betty's Bay.

Filmed on the beaches of Betty's Bay during 2025, they traced various breeding pairs through the tragedies and triumphs of their efforts to lay eggs, hatch chicks and raise them to fledglings.

Their passion and dedication for these Tobies shines through the movie as they share in the highs and lows of the breeding pairs. Their brilliant footage captures the dedication and hard work of parents trying to keep their eggs and chicks safe, feed them, and protect them from the heat and the storms, predators and people. Part of their breeding season coincides with the peak holiday season in Betty's Bay – increasing the disturbance at their nest sites from people and dogs. It gives us a better understanding of the implications of each disturbance on the survival of the eggs and chicks.



Their superb photography, the heartfelt and humorous scenes and narration, and their love and knowledge of the Tobies in Betty's Bay has produced this incredible legacy on the "Tobies".

I hope that once people have seen it, they will have more respect and concern for the Oystercatchers they see on the beaches. We need to take care to give them the space and peace they require during the breeding season.

Thank you Van As and Jacques for all your hours of work! This is a remarkable documentary. May your movie increase the awareness of the Tobies in Betty's Bay and promote future successful breeding seasons.

THE TREASURES AND LEGACY OF BETTY'S BAY AND THE BIOSPHERE

• PASSING ON THE BATON OF BETTY'S BAY TO THE NEXT GENERATION

During my time of editing articles from contributors and proofreading for *Betty's Bay: Between Mountain and Sea*, one of the many things that stood out for me in the stories from the earlier days of Betty's Bay was the freedom, fun and delight the kids had playing between the mountain and sea.

Here are a few quotes:

- **Carl Vogts:** Apart from receiving a good education, we also roamed the mountains and the sea, harvesting alikreukal, perlemoen and catching kilpvissies like the Gerald Durrell's of Betty's Bay. Pg. 464
- **Annelise Willems:** There was an unspoken magic in these childhood summers. The rush of a gust in the sails, the laughter ringing out across the waters the quiet determination of young sailors bent on doing better, faster, smarter. And though time has carried us forward, those moments remain etched in the spray and wind of Betty's Bay, where the dabchicks once danced across the water and young dreamers chased the wind. Pg. 478
- **Brian and Lorna Edwards:** Childhood holidays at Betty's were days of blissful, safe fun. We sometimes crept out of the house at 6 am to go swimming with friends, thinking our parents did not hear us on the creaky stairs.

The quiet roads of Betty's Bay were a safe place for young children to learn to drive. Lorna was 11 years old when she learned to drive UGY the old Morris Minor on the gravel road through the empty Sunny Seas. Pg. 244

- **Ian and Carrol Farlam:** Our children aptly dubbed our Betty's Bay home "the holiday paradise" And truly it has been just that – a place of peace, play and deep connection to the land we love. Pg. 461



Betty's Bay was and is a special place for adults too:

- **Ian and Carrol Farham:** Back then, the area was teeming with wildlife. Grysbok roamed freely and we were fortunate to have a few of them visit our plot. It felt like a privilege to share space with the tortoise, mongoose, baboons and the occasional porcupine. The natural rhythms of the place – its quiet dignity and untamed beauty were part of everyday life. Pg. 461
- **Friedel Meisenholl:** Silver Sands is now part of our DNA. We say thank you for every day we have together, live in nature and can be content with life. Pg. 522

- **Lazyways visitors book:** Bitten by the bug of Betty's Bay. We know this disease has come to stay. Pg. 241
- **Cecelia Gardener:** Betty's Bay remains, as it always has been, a place of peace, joy and shared memories – a sanctuary where the simple pleasures of life are treasured and where the spirit is forever renewed. We must continue to do all that we can to preserve this unspoiled loveliness of this most beautiful place and conserve our marvellous heritage for the future generation to enjoy. Pg. 240/1



Another aspect that stood out for me was that those who went before us have passed a valuable baton onto us.

We can be very grateful for those passionate people who had a vision and left legacies that have protected areas of this special village and area.

- Harold Porter and the Porter family for the beautiful **Harold Porter Gardens** that they bequeathed to the South African National Botanical Institute (SANBI).
- The people who worked to have the **Betty's Bay Marine Protected Area (MPA)** recognized
- The people who compiled all the documents and research to apply to UNESCO to have the **Kogelberg Biosphere** declared in 1998
- Allen Heydorn and the group of people who worked so hard to buy the strategic pieces of land to create the **Brody Link**
- The initiators of the Hack (Battle of Betty's Bay) and the Betty's Bay Wildflower Society – the forerunners to the **Kogelberg Branch of the Botanical Society**
- The residents of Betty's Bay that applied to register Betty's Bay as a conservancy, the **Betty's Bay Conservancy**
- This one is not due to humans, but the African Penguins who arrived to start nesting in 1982 and created a land-based **penguin colony at Stony Point**. So many people in Betty's Bay and neighbouring villages benefit economically from the visitors to Stony Point.

We now have this baton. What are we going to do with it?

- To help protect and enlarge the MPA
- To embrace what it means to live in the Kogelberg Biosphere – “biosphere living”
- To live lightly as individuals and families on our erfs and as a community in our village
- What legacy will we leave behind, for future generations and the flora and fauna who call this home? Sadly, we seem very good at destroying the habitat, shelter and food sources.
- How will we support the critically endangered African Penguin?



Currently, there are various organizations involved in protecting this “conservation” baton:

- The Kogelberg Branch of the Botanical Society
- The Betty’s Bay Conservancy (BBC) and the Penguin-Pals
- Betty’s Bay Oystercatcher Monitors
- Betty’s Bay Baboon Action Group (BBBAG)
- The new Kogelberg Biosphere Wildlife Rescue and Training Centre under the auspices of Kogelberg Biosphere
- The recent seal watchers who kept watch over Bakkies, the visiting elephant seal who was molting

These organisations are comprised of ordinary people and they need more “ordinary people” to assist them. I encourage you to join and give your support and get involved.

May 2026 be a year where we embrace Biosphere Living on our erfs and in our village as we:

- Deal with our light pollution
- Handle our waste wisely
- Restore habitat from paved/grassed areas on our erfs
- Create ponds for habitat
- Create wildlife corridors
- Preserve vital wetlands
- Preserve marine and terrestrial wildlife
- Drive slowly, reduce speeding on R44 in the village
- Live lightly within nature
- Build lightly and not denude our erfs of indigenous vegetation
- Remove alien invasive vegetation
- Educate our visitors, tenants and guests to do the same
- Inspire the youth
- Secure nature areas as nature reserves for the next generation



Running with the baton

I hope this book inspires each of you to help preserve this amazing place and its natural heritage, situated between mountain and sea

Carol Clark, Presentation at the launch of the Betty's Bay book on 20 December

Photo credits: Ella Fourie (photos 5 and 7) and Niel van der Watt (photos 2,3,4 and 6)

• A PERSONAL REFLECTION ON THE KOGELBERG

Few places on earth possess the rare ability to shape not only ecosystems, but also the very contours of a human life. For me, the Kogelberg Biosphere is such a place.

Having had the privilege of serving for many years as Chairperson of the UNESCO-designated Kogelberg Biosphere Reserve, I came to understand that this landscape is far more than a conservation success story. It is a living testament to what becomes possible when vision, stewardship, and community converge in service of something greater than they are individually.

Yet beyond the professional honour lies a deeply personal connection.



It was here, amidst the ancient mountains and the timeless rhythm of falling water, that I asked my wife to marry me, standing above the quiet power of the Disakloof waterfall. In that moment, surrounded by a wilderness that has endured for millennia, I was reminded that the most meaningful human commitments often find their natural home in places of profound beauty.

Over the years, the Kogelberg has also been the backdrop to treasured memories with my children. We explored its valleys, breathed its salt-tinged air where mountain meets ocean, and learned together that nature is not something separate from us, but something we belong to.

As a botanist and environmentalist, I have walked many remarkable landscapes across our country and beyond. Yet the Kogelberg remains singular. Often referred to as the “heart of the Cape Floral Kingdom,” it is one of the richest reservoirs of plant biodiversity



anywhere on the planet, but statistics alone cannot capture its essence.

To witness the first emergence of fynbos after fire...

To see mist drifting slowly through sandstone ridges...

To hear the quiet industry of pollinators at work...

These are reminders that resilience is written into the very fabric of this place.



What makes the Kogelberg truly extraordinary, however, is not only its ecological value, but also the legacy of the people who chose to protect it. Visionaries who understood, long before it became fashionable, that conservation is ultimately an act of faith in the future.

We are not owners of this landscape.

We are its temporary guardians. Each generation receives the baton, not as a trophy, but as a responsibility.

Today, as pressures on natural systems intensify across the globe, biospheres like the Kogelberg stand as quiet proof that coexistence is achievable. Here, conservation and community are not opposing forces but partners in a shared narrative.

My hope is that those who live in and visit this remarkable region will continue to walk gently, build thoughtfully, and act with the humility that such a rare environment deserves.

Because places like the Kogelberg do more than sustain biodiversity.

They sustain the human spirit.

And if we listen carefully, the mountains still ask only one thing of us: that we leave this inheritance richer than we found it.

For me, the Kogelberg will always be more than a biosphere reserve. It is a place of promise, of memory, and of enduring belonging.

Johan West

Former Chairperson
UNESCO Kogelberg Biosphere Reserve

*Written on 20 December, after the launch of the
Betty's Bay book*



- **THE UNDERWATER WORLD OF BETTY'S BAY**

The first time I snorkelled at Betty's Bay, I went looking for *kreef* and *alikleukel*, while my father-in-law was spearfishing. While immersed in the kelp, the sunrays filtered through the *bamboes*, dappled the rocks at the bottom, and it resembled a forest floor. I instantly understood why it is called a *kelp forest*. Taking hold of a piece of kelp and climbing down to the *bottom*, I gently scoped around. A curious Klipvis swam up and stared right at me, unafraid, until I waved *hello* and he jolted away. I like to think he was welcoming me into his world. Crayfish and Alikreukel quickly escaped my attention, and it was the small things that would continue to invite me back into these waters.

I grew up in Guadalajara, Mexico, a city four hours away from the coast. There, on the few occasions I visited the ocean, I would see sandy bottoms stretching endlessly underwater. I would be lucky to spot anything interesting without effort. The waters at Betty's Bay were entirely the opposite. Everywhere I looked was beaming with life. I saw a myriad of fish, algae, crustaceans, anemones, corals, and sponges composing magnificent views.

That curious Klipvis from my first dive also made *me* very curious. As a marine biologist who loves to identify all the animals I see, I needed to know more about Klipvis. I was surprised to find that there are 48 species of them endemic to South Africa! I became fascinated with Klipvis. Little did I know they were commonly caught by kids, and were a source of annoyance for fishers. I have now seen and photographed 11 species of Klipvis.

An exciting find was the Betty's Bay Klipvis (*Clinus exasperatus*, below). Only discovered in 2012 by a Stellenbosch University professor, it was named *exasperatus* after the many exasperated attempts to find additional specimens.



Hanging in the water, keeping my body as still as I could, I spotted a fish merely 5 cm in length. Some species are masters of disguise, like this little Bluespot Klipvis (below). Since he relies on his colours and patterns to blend in with the algae, a diver can easily miss him. Other species like the Super and Autumn Klipvis, will swim right past you as you snorkel.



The diversity of marine life and beautiful seascapes of Betty's Bay thoroughly amazes me. Whether I dive at Dawidskraal, Jock's Bay, De Wets Bay, Bakboord, or explore the tide pools at Easter Beach and along Dolphin drive, I know I will be in the presence of a truly unique environment. I find it unbelievable how these spots, though close by, can be so different. At De Wets Bay, I saw hundreds of ctenophores (comb jellies) floating in the water. At Jock's Bay, I saw odd behaviors from Klipvis. I quickly recognized these as mating rituals. As a biologist, I was very excited about this rare event, since most fish fertilize their eggs externally as they float away. It turns out to be less rare than I thought! Klipvis mate constantly, and females can have multiple broods from different fathers at the same time.

I have only explored a small section of this coastline - unassuming from above, but an entirely different world under the surface. Fully exploring this small portion of coast will take a lifetime, which I look forward to very much. As I get out of the water at the end of every dive, I am welcomed back to the dry reality on the rocks. I leave the underwater world knowing it will be there in all its beauty, for the next dive.

Diederik Boonman

• OUR PLANTS AND WILDLIFE UNDER THREAT

During an iNaturalist vegetation assessment that CREW conducted for a new owner on a recently purchased plot, we uncovered several old animal traps hidden beneath thick undergrowth. The discovery is a cause for concern as our wildlife in the Kogelberg Biosphere are facing more and more threats.

The traps seem to be very old, but they can still pose a safety hazard and remind us of the fact that people still trap animals today. This discovery highlights the importance of regular plot inspections, especially on land that has been unmanaged for long periods.

Another aspect that is important to notice on vacant land is the appearance of alien invasive plants. If invasive plants are discovered early enough, it is easier to remove them as they can often be pulled out easily when they are still small. The invasive plants often spread from adjacent plots. Have

a look around the gardens in your area and if you see that your neighbours have invasive plants in their garden, please try to negotiate with them to get the plants removed.

There is currently a huge problem with invasive bottlebrush in the field between Pringle Bay and Rooiels. It is of the Melaleuca family from Australia. These plants were grown in the area for a nursery and have started spreading in the last few years. They are now a big problem and very difficult to remove.



If you want those red spikey flowers in your garden, plant a *Greyia sutherlandii*, shown here on the left. It is an indigenous tree and not invasive. It is from the northern and eastern provinces from South Africa but makes a lovely garden tree. Birds, bees and the insects love it. It will even do well in a pot.

This is why it is important to follow the guidelines found in *Your place in the Kogelberg* by Tim Attwell. It is available from the Harold Porter bookshop. There is also information in the articles shared by the Kogelberg Garden Circle about laying out your new garden or managing your old garden.

We have to take our responsibility seriously and consider what we plant. If you need help and advice, please ask.

Adele Scheepers, CREW

Custodians of Rare and Endangered Wildflowers

• CULTURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT.

Culture... mention the word and one thinks either of yoghurt or traditional dress (or for some of us, whipping out the charcoal for a braai). However, much of one's culture is rooted and embedded in what you value. The visible expressions of a culture such as clothes, architecture etc. are secondary. This brings us to culture and the environment - and us.

'Us' being primarily westernised people living in the villages at the foot of the Kogelberg Mountains, in the Kogelberg Biosphere Reserve. We are typically goal orientated, materialistic and well educated and might be of British, Dutch, German or other historical lineage. Realistically, outside of language and some behaviours we do not have a visible culture.



We live here or regularly visit, because we enjoy it here. Why do we like this area and how much do we VALUE it? If it was taken away from us tomorrow, e.g. we moved away or a tsunami swept away

the villages, how much would the loss of the plants, animals, views, mountains and streams affect us? Would we mourn the loss?

We need to look into the values that we currently hold. We can change them to those we WANT to value. And change our thinking, actions and decisions, both daily and long-term, to come in line with our values.

The first steps are getting to know and understand the environment more. Spend time in it: observe, learn, show and be in awe and wonder about what is here. Here is an experience I had while I was thinking about the concept of value and culture:



After a long day in the office, I sat on the garden bench, leaning on my knees and just staring with the "1000 yard stare" that comes naturally after a long Monday. After a while, I noticed something moving in the sand. There was a tiny, about 5mm or so, clump of grass moving around erratically. Not due to the wind as it was too erratic. Not an ant, as all I could see were grass bits. I looked longer, harder. I then noticed the ants scurrying around. Getting down on your hands and knees to watch some ants "anting along" can be interesting.

This led me to look at some TINY flowers. Complete flowers, but only around 3-4mm in length. Amazing! Then I saw a wasp dancing along inspecting every nook, cranny and hole in the sand.



Sitting back, my view got a bit larger. I noticed some of the fynbos plants, some claw marks in the sand, an antlion trap. Looking up, there were the starlings mobbing and bombing one of the ravens. That was so worth watching! These agile birds harrying and tormenting the lumbering raven. I sat back on the bench. Wow! So much to see and it was right there all around me.



I live here because I WANT to see all that. I value it. But, is it part of my identity, my culture, the things that shape and define what I do and how I think? Yes, a bit, but. I need to place more importance on this treasure - and protect my treasure!

As villagers, do we value and treasure what we have here? Because only when we truly do, will we adapt our behaviour. Can I really say I value the wildlife if I do not get angry, heartbroken, and miserable when I stumble across the torn up body of a road-killed porcupine. Or not be horrified and traumatised by the sight of the porcupette butting its dead mother trying desperately to get milk?

If we value all that Betty's Bay is, we should learn, experience, enjoy, teach, and share. To want to pick up the piece of litter we see. To want to protect the environment even though it may cost us money, time, and effort.

Then visitors will look at us and say "Their CULTURE is to love, protect, enjoy and experience this wonderful place of the Kogelberg"



David, Betty's Bay resident

- **THE DEBATE ON REDUCING SPEEDING ON CLARENCE DRIVE**

Speeding motorists on the R44 come from different groups: Permanent residents, property owners, holidaymakers, tenants, visitors, tourists, business owners, builders, contractors, delivery services, service providers, individual bikers and club riders, commuters driving through to their destination etc.

They come in a variety of sizes of cars, bakkies, trucks, sewage tankers, removal vans and on large superbikes and small motorbikes. I even had a 60/60 deliveryman on his motorbike pass me, riding at over 80km on the Sunny Seas stretch on his way back to Kleinmond!

Many road users race through at speeds well above the current 80km/h, especially along the Sunny Sea stretch on their way to the 100km zone towards Kleinmond. A biker is said to claim that he reached over 300km/h there! With the speed comes the noise, and the increased risk of accidents.

The BBC supports the concept of reducing the speed limit on the R44 (Clarence Drive) throughout the length of the Betty's Bay.

- Betty's Bay is within the UNESCO designated Kogelberg Biosphere and as such requires a calmer traffic flow through the reserve to help protect the native fauna from being killed by speeding vehicles.
- It is a tourist destination and they tend to drive slower to admire the scenic beauty.
- The density of housing in Betty's Bay has increased dramatically in recent years and so has the resulting local traffic.
- The two commercial centres on the R44 in Betty's Bay have a high volume of traffic and pedestrians
- There are many T-junctions of village roads onto the R44 and in excess of 200 household driveways enter/exit the R44. Motorists need to enter/exit the R44 at all these points and are at risk from speeding vehicles, and place these speeding vehicles at risk too.

Unintentionally, two independent petitions went public in the past two weeks asking for signatures of support.

1. One petition requests hard copy signatures and proposes 70km/h speed with suggested calming measures:



PLEASE ADD YOUR VOICE TO PETITION THE WESTERN CAPE PROVINCIAL PARLIAMENT

The R44 highway has tragically been 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.

End the lawless speeding on the R44 through Betty's Bay by these proposed speed reduction and calming measures:

- The 'Coffee, on Clarence/Penguin Place' area retains its current 60 km/h limit; and a 70 km/h limit for the rest of Betty's Bay.
- Zebra crossings at the "CBD" and "Coffee, on Clarence/Penguin Place" Centres
- Two speed humps at "Coffee, on Clarence/Penguin Place"
- Dual-lane cameras at the East and West entrances to Betty's Bay
- Regular presence of the Overstrand Municipality Traffic Department in Betty's Bay
- Reflective "Wildlife Crossing" signs

If the petition were successful, experienced traffic engineers would decide on the appropriate measures.

It has been interesting to hear the spectrum of responses from residents over the past days:

- It should stay 80km/h
- The current speed limit is fine – it just needs enforcing
- 70 km/h is better than 60km/h
- It should be 60 km/h
- 60 km/h is too slow

Additional responses regarding calming measure were:

- Zebra crossing aren't safe – motorists will ignore them

- Add traffic circles at e.g. Porter/Clarence intersection
- Remove some parking bays at Coffee on Clarence/Penguin Place sites to improve visibility

2. The other petition is an online petition that calls for one speed of 60km/hr on Clarence Drive throughout Betty's Bay. Here is the link.

<https://www.thepetitionsite.com/.../3-three-minutes.../..>

Some points given by residents in favour of 60 km/h include:

- Most towns in South Africa have a 60km/h speed limit for traffic passing through. Betty's Bay should be treated the same.
- The Overstrand Municipality has Betty's Bay designated as an urban area.
- Although the R44 is a major route through a town, when it passes through Kleinmond it has a 60km/h speed limit.

Some people think that the current speed limits are fine and will not sign either of them. Some have written angry responses on neighbourhood groups and the BBC Facebook page to the idea of having speeds limits reduced below 80 km/h – strongly criticizing and belittling CAM vehicles who chose to drive below the 80 km/h! This is the scope of the opinions on the matter.

Suggestion: You can sign both or whichever one you support.

We hope the joint outcome is a reduction of speed and appropriate calming or enforcement measures to reduce the race and the noise through Betty's Bay, and decrease the risk of accidents for people and wildlife.

• **DYSFUNCTIONAL RUBBISH BINS ON CLARENCE DRIVE**



Would you like to contribute to a "citizen science" project to map the dysfunctional bins on Clarence Drive?

Rooiels Conservancy is trying to collect photos to motivate to have these bins removed. They want to show the impacts of these bins on the Bay, the Biosphere and its wildlife. Perhaps the authorities would listen to facts when properly presented. However, they need data and photos are good data.

This is the photo album for the Clarence Drive bins <https://photos.app.goo.gl/gEgyKFNC4kduZRg38>. Bookmark it or make an icon on your home screen.

Anyone can upload. All photo metadata is also stored there such as time and date, and if you enable geotagging on your cell phone camera, the location is recorded.

Please note that WhatsApp strips out some photo metadata, so upload directly please.

- **THE OVERSTRAND ECO INDABA**

The Overstrand ECO INDABA is a collaborative event uniting public and private conservation organizations, local communities, advocacy groups, and educational entities to ensure environmental stewardship of the Kogelberg Biosphere and its environs.

Delegates will create a strategic, united alliance - working together to guarantee that sustainable environmental management is mandatory for the preservation, conservation, and protection of the Kogelberg Biosphere and surrounding towns and villages for future generations.

The intention is also not to create an umbrella hierarchical entity, but a strictly voluntary, joint advocacy alliance of equals.

Joining forces will ensure that a single, authoritative voice for conservation can influence decision-making and environmental compliance at all levels of government within our sphere of interest. The alliance will also serve as a consultative forum to identify environmental priorities, while supporting the work and affirming the autonomy of individual members.

The Eco Indaba for the representatives of organisations is taking place on Saturday, 28 March 2026, in Pringle Bay.

We will update you in a future newsletter.



Photo: Ella Fourie