JANUARY 2026

Hi BBC Members

A warm welcome to new BBC members: Rob Geugis, Werner Zybrands, Skip Krige, Heidi Wolfaardt and Attie van Schalkwyk. Thank you for joining the BBC.

The holiday season is over.

Betty's Bay was full and bustling with residents and their visitors, part-time residents here for the holiday season, and many holidaymakers! The hospitality industry did well.

How did our wildlife fare?

In a section of this newsletter, we look back at some wildlife incidents that occurred during these holidays.

The nice, the sad and the very bad.

Speeding on the R44 remains a devastating threat to the wildlife.

We urgently need to address this, beyond the recent 60 km zone by Penguin Place and Coffee, on Clarence. Some motorists and bikers seem to think the section through Sunny Seas on the way to Kleinmond is an invitation to accelerate or throttle up to high speeds. This is not the only section of the R44 through the villages where this speeding happens. We need to find proactive solutions to reduce this speeding to save the lives of people and wildlife.

Looking ahead in February there are a number of interesting conservation events:

- Wednesday 18th: Information evening about the proposed Bantamsklip nuclear development
- Monday 23rd : Turtle rescue team at Coffee, on Clarence
- Saturday 21st : Screening of Oceans at the monthly BotSoc meeting
- Saturday 28th : The BBC4thSaturday event features a movie on the Oystercatchers produced by Betty's Bay residents, Van As and Jacques Jordaan

Next month we will look at Betty's Bay within the Kogelberg Bisophere. How can we live now as custodians of the amazing legacy and "baton" that we received from prior generations? What will we pass onto the next generation?

Best wishes

Carol, Anne, Barbara, Galia, Tony, Herman, Jan, Pete and Johan

1. EVENTS DURING JANUARY 2026

- **BBC4thSATURDAY: JANUARY 25**

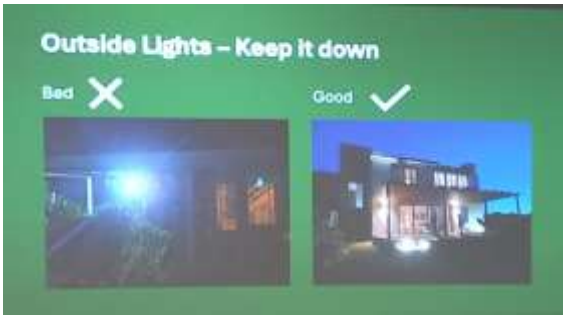
Elements influencing the character of the built enviroment

Raymond Smith, a Betty's Bay resident for 22 years, a Built Environment Specialist, an Accredited Heritage Practitioner and a Registered Architectural Professional, took us on an interesting and fun video journey of the "The good, the bad and the ugly" of the built environment in Betty's Bay.

What a variety of housing designs there are in Betty's Bay!

He then looked at some elements of design, illustrating the concepts with good and "not so good" examples of houses in Betty's Bay:

- Boundary walls – keep them permeable for wildlife movement
- Security – keep it invisible
- Waste pipes – keep them out of sight
- Driveway treatment – keep it impervious
- Scale – keep it realistic and break it into volumes
- Proportions and fenestrations – keep it sensible
- Form – keep the geometry simple and refrain from exotic styles
- Exterior rendering and colours – keep blending in
- Landscaping and vegetation – keep it indigenous
- Outside lights – keep it down
- Contextual relationships - keep in touch



As you drive around Betty's Bay there are many houses that have been built in a "biosphere friendly" manner. These houses blend in so well with the enviroment and take their neighbours and the flora and fauna into consideration. On the other hand, there are lots of examples of houses that are very "out of context" for the Kogelberg Biosphere. Some of these are a mix of huge and out of scale houses, very bright and excessive outside lights, solid boundary walls, electric fencing, gardens devoid of indigenous vegetation and hardened or impermeable driveways and paved gardens.

Thanks Raymond for a very enlightening presentation. We look at houses with new eyes!

- **PENGUIN RELEASE AT STONY POINT**

SANCCOB saves seabirds made use of the great weather conditions on 14 January to release 18 African Penguins and a cormorant at Stony Point.

Some of the birds were adults that SANCCOB rehabilitated who were now ready for release. Others were younger birds who had been raised at SANCCOB.

Well done to SANCCOB and **CapeNature** for all their work to support the critically endangered African Penguin.

Use this link to watch the first 15 penguins exiting their travel boxes and heading for the sea. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MbjndeYhelI

- **WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE A BBC PENGUIN-PAL VOLUNTEER?**

It is a great opportunity to help the African Penguins at Stony Point!

In February 2024, we put out a call for residents to join the BBC Penguin-Pals to assist CapeNature and SANCCOB in their work with the critically endangered African Penguin at Stony Point.

An enthusiastic group of volunteers underwent a short SANCCOB “Drivers” training at Stony Point. Most of them also chose to complete some additional training at SANCCOB in TableView to become First Responders.

Since then, these enthusiastic BBC Penguin-Pals have been amazing in their passion and willingness to respond to callouts from Stony Point staff when they have located injured or sick birds.

Once the staff have secured the birds in SANCCOB transport boxes, our volunteers drive to Somerset West to the meeting point with a SANCCOB driver, who then transports the birds to the SANCCOB centre.

The BBC Penguin-Pals have completed about 100 trips – transporting adults, juveniles, chicks, eggs or carcasses. Each trip gives the injured or sick birds, or eggs that have required removal, a chance of treatment and survival. This is vital to help the declining numbers of the African Penguin. Every penguin counts!

During last year, some of our Penguin-Pals relocated from Betty’s Bay, **so we are opening up another opportunity for additional volunteers.**

You could volunteer to be a “Driver” or you can join a new BBC Penguin-Pals initiative to help educate visitors at Stony Point, and keep a watchful eye for unsuitable behavior that may stress the penguins. Volunteers will have basic training and wear identification vests or T-shirts so the public is aware that they are BBC Penguin-Pals working with CapeNature.

We also have volunteers who help load hacked material and transport it to the colony for nesting material, and who help "bundle" this material to make it easier for the staff to carry into the colony.

Are you interested in helping?

Please email bettysbayconservancy@gmail.com or WhatsApp 079 7530166 and tell us how you would like to be involved with the BBC Penguin-Pals.

Carol Clark

2. WHAT HAPPENED TO SOME OF THE WILDLIFE DURING THE HOLIDAY SEASON?

- ### DAPPAT VISITS BETTY'S BAY

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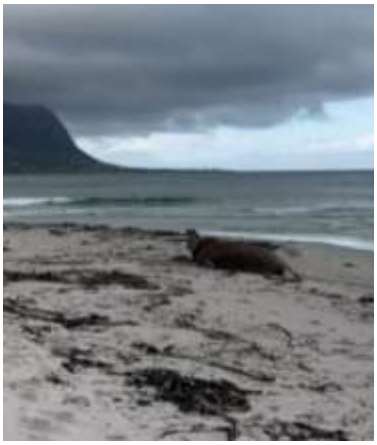
After Bakkies recently spent a lengthy stay in Betty's Bay while he underwent his molt, we had a brief visit from another elephant seal called Dappat. He had a tag from a previous visit to Dappat se Gat.



Thanks to Reneè and Johan for keeping an eye on Dappat to ensure his safety and that of the people walking past him.

- ### UPDATE ON THE OYSTERCATCHER CHICKS AT MAIN BEACH

30 JANUARY: Our two chicks have survived after a hectic holiday season, which coincides with the breeding season. This puts the Oystercatchers under additional threat as humans and dogs invade their space.

The chicks are now 38 days old and are starting to resemble their parents. Chicks usually fly (fledge) when they reach two-thirds of the adult mass and when they are 40 - 45 days old. They are still vulnerable until they are able to fly.

Chicks are dependent on their parents for food for many months while they learn to forage. It takes up to six months after fledging for chicks to leave the parent's territory for nursery areas.

As Oystercatchers are territorial, they will remain and defend their area for the rest of their lives, up to 20 years. This means that we can expect the same pair to breed on Main beach next summer! Last season this pair successfully raised one chick on Main beach.

An added bonus was spotting a White-fronted Plover chick in the same area on Main beach.

A huge thank you to the many caring people who have observed the signs and kept their dogs leashed. People helped in many ways and showed an interest in saving our shorebirds. We appreciate your help and concern.

Watch the parent feeding their chick:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oR0aKuWZ7UI

3 FEBRUARY: Sadly, the breeding pair have now lost one of their chicks. The chick was 42 days old and close to fledging. There is no evidence available to understand or explain what may have caused the disappearance. It could be drowning due to the recent high tides, (although chicks can swim), natural predation, or even an attack by a dog off leash.

On a more positive note, the remaining chick is now 52 days old and able to fly which makes it less vulnerable. This chick will remain with its parents for another 2 - 4 months. It relies on the parents for feeding until its beak strengthens enabling it to pry open mussels and limpets independently. The chick will then fly to nursery areas along the coast of Namibia or Angola and remain there for 2 - 3 years until it returns to its birthplace.

Lenore and Duncan Watermeyer, Betty's Bay Oystercatcher Monitors

3. SPEEDING ON THE R44

- **ANOTHER WILDLIFE FATALITY ON CLARENCE DRIVE**

A LACTATING PORCUPINE … some upsetting pictures

This morning I went for my walk just after 5: 30am. The air was clean, the sea noisy, and dampness everywhere after the wonderful rain.

When I had set out on my walk, I had noticed something lying on the pavement. I initially thought it was a black bag or something. However, on getting closer, I started seeing the quills. Then I realised what it was.

I stopped to look, feeling miserable, with sadness and a lot muttering. I then continued on my way, seeing that the porcupine was stone dead. On my return, I was not going to stop to look more, as who really wants to have to see that torn up body again, but I wanted to pick up some quills as a reminder, and also to see where she was hit.

I stopped again at the very distressing site, that I had seen on the way out, and THAT was when the horror came - the nauseating, frightful, miserable realisation that there was a baby there. It was just big enough to hold in one hand.

And not just a baby but a tiny porcupette frantically nudging at its mothers teats trying to get her to give milk! It was butting its head repeatedly on its mother so that it could get at the milk. The porcupette was damp, shivering and clearly hungry. It persisted and eventually it found a nipple and latched on. Squirming, the little one kept sucking away. I am not sure if it got any milk.

Video of the porcupette trying to drink: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mYy8w5epD2s

The porcupette was not there on the way out, so it must have been hiding in the bushes and in hunger and desperation came out later.

The problem was that the mother, lying mostly on her chest, was torn apart after being hit by a vehicle. She was dead. Her intestines werestrung across the road in a big loop. The ribs on her back were visible, some seemingly missing, because her back skin, muscles and quills had been torn off by the impact. There were quills all over the road. Her little offspring, the porcupette, being so small, was not injured.

From the blood, quills and bits of flesh, it looked like the mother was hit in the middle of the road! Had the driver tried to swerve to miss and unfortunately turned the same way as she ran? Or maybe, as some “low life” people do, purposefully aimed for her and hit her. Who knows, only that driver. Maybe the driver did not even see it! However, they will find chunks of porcupine across the car, as there was a lot of flesh and quills missing. Will it make them think about what they did? Maybe, maybe not.

Our righteous indignation kicks in ...

Maybe the driver is a nature lover who was just travelling too fast to avoid the mother porcupine. How many of US drive too fast at times, on Clarence, and other roads, to be able to miss wildlife? How many birds, tortoises, rabbits, mongoose, genets, frogs, lizards etc. have we all hit?

This must make us pause and think - Me!

What am I doing? How am I harming the nature around me? From wheeled killing machines, to invasive plants, chemicals, unnecessary plant clearing, wasting water and on and on. It is easy to be indignant and point fingers at others, but are we striving to be better ourselves?

The Wildlife Rescue Centre has the porcupette. Support and help them! Help the poor animals who have ended up there because of US!

David, concerned Betty’s Bay resident

- **SLOW DOWN FOR LIFE ON THE R44**

Yesterday, we collected the body of a guinea fowl from the side of the R44.

He had been hand-raised at the **Kogelberg Biosphere Wildlife Rescue and Training Center**, carefully nurtured over weeks until he was strong enough to return to the wild. We released him onto our property only days ago and he quickly earned the nickname “Cheeky” for wandering into our kitchen to steal birdseed. Like all our released birds, he wore a small SAFRING band on his leg for identification. He was killed right outside our gate.

Sadly, this is not an isolated tragedy. He is part of a growing and deeply troubling pattern along this stretch of the R44 between Betty’s Bay and Pringle Bay that involves all species.

A Road through a Living Landscape

Since we began operating in 2024, our centre has become acutely aware of the number of wild animals injured or killed along this road. Our data shows a constant increase in the list of species found on the section of the R44 between Rooiels and Bettys Bay. We see approximately two to three cases of road kill per week on our section of the R44, including mongoose, porcupines, Grysbok, and many more. The data we have collected points to an unsustainable situation. It is a priority to address this for the sake of the biodiversity of the Kogelberg.

The R44 cuts through the heart of the **Kogelberg Biosphere**, a national heritage site recognized for its extraordinary biodiversity. This is not an ordinary road. It passes through one of the most ecologically sensitive regions in the country — a place where wildlife must move freely to survive.

According to the **Endangered Wildlife Trust**, road deaths are not simply the result of reckless driving. They are the consequence of roads fragmenting once-connected habitats. Animals are forced to cross in search of food, mates, or refuge from fires and seasonal changes. Add high speeds and limited visibility at night and survival becomes a gamble.

Left: A spotted Eagle owl : it was the third owl to be killed in the same area in four days

Right: Klipspinger hit on the R44

Small to medium-sized mammals — genets, Cape clawless otters, honey badgers and antelopes are among the most frequent victims. Reptiles such as tortoises and snakes suffer heavy losses. Birds of prey are hit while hunting near road verges. We may wince as we pass a body on the tar, but too often, we drive on.

The Human Risk

This stretch of the R44 carries a 100 km/h speed limit. From Rooiels through to Betty's Bay, vehicles accelerate through blind bends and narrow sections of road. There have already been human fatalities along this corridor.

Our rescue centre's entrance lies along this very stretch. Previously this entrance gate was used infrequently, but now it is in daily use by staff, veterinarians, volunteers, contractors and members of the public who respond to wildlife emergencies. The entrance is not clearly visible. Vehicles turning in or out must navigate fast-moving traffic on a partially blind rise, and we have already experienced near misses.

The uncomfortable question is this: how many human lives — or animal lives — must be lost before speed management is reconsidered on this section of the road?

Michelle Watson, Kogelberg Biosphere Wildlife Rescue and Training Center

- **CONCERN ABOUT THE STATE OF BABOON MANAGEMENT**

On 31 January, a peaceful protest took place in Betty's Bay regarding the current state of the baboon management.

On 29 January, a Memorandum was sent to the Municipal Manager of the Overstrand Municipality detailing the reasons for the protest. These included changes in the monitoring style e.g. monitors heading up to baboon sleep sites early in the morning that leads to splintering the troop, poorly trained monitors and lack of transport (vehicles out of commission) that compromises the monitoring. The scattered troop results in the monitoring, the use of vuvezelas, the early warning WhatsApp group and R44 traffic warnings being less effective.

It also called for changes such as:

- A programme that is cognizant of the Biosphere and the water and foraging needs of the Chacma baboon
- A return to the previously agreed monitoring style
- Well trained monitors
- Fixing broken vehicles
- Enforcing the bylaw and law regarding residents without baboon-proof bins and residents who fire weapons in an urban area with the intent to try to harm or kill the baboons.

The Betty's Bay Baboon Action Group (BBBAG) agrees with well-disciplined 'monitoring' using the 'shepherd not shoot' method. Also the use of vuvuzelas to warn residents of the baboons whereabouts, and flagging to warn motorists on the busy R44 of the presence of baboons near or on the roads.

Credit: BBBAG post on BBC Facebook

BBBAG says it is important to understand that eliminating aggression leads to:

- Calmer baboons,
- Less hungry, thirsty/desperate baboons if they expend less energy from not being chased.
- A more cohesive troop, allowing for the proper functioning of the vuvuzela system.
- No trespassing on private property by monitors, causing less outrage from residents.
- A return to the situation where community division was diminishing.

- **UNSIGHTLY RUBBISH BINS ON THE SCENIC CLARENCE DRIVE, R44**

The Rooiels Conservancy (REC) has taken up the issue of the messy and broken bins on Clarence Drive. Over the past months, the bins were not been emptied regularly and the overflowing waste is blown into the vegetation and the sea. The bins also attract the baboons, which puts them at danger on the R44.

Recently, the REC Chairperson, Ralph Pina, was interviewed on Lunch with Pippa Hudson on CapeTalk to highlight this problem. His suggestion was to remove the bins and make this a bin-free zone so that the public take their waste with them to dispose of it in a suitable manner.

The City of Cape Town implemented a bin-free policy on the peninsula at tourism hotspots. Their rationale is that the bins are removed to prevent baboons from foraging, reduce illegal dumping, minimize waste that attracts wildlife, and protect scenic, environmentally sensitive landscapes.

The BBC thanks REC for their initiative in this and supports them.

4. BBC SIGNS, T-SHIRTS AND YOUTUBE

- **BBC SIGNS**

For members who might not be aware, we have members "Biosphere living" signs that you can purchase to place at your house. If you have a plot that you do not intend to build on, we have a plot sign that you can purchase: "Plot purchased for the preservation of biodiversity".

- **OUR BBC T-SHIRTS**

BBC "Every day do one small act for biodiversity" T-Shirts

We have a few small and medium BBC T-shirts left. If you would like to buy one at R260, please let me know via WhatsApp on 079 7530166 or email bettysbayconservancy@gmail.com.

- **BBC YOUTUBE CHANNEL**

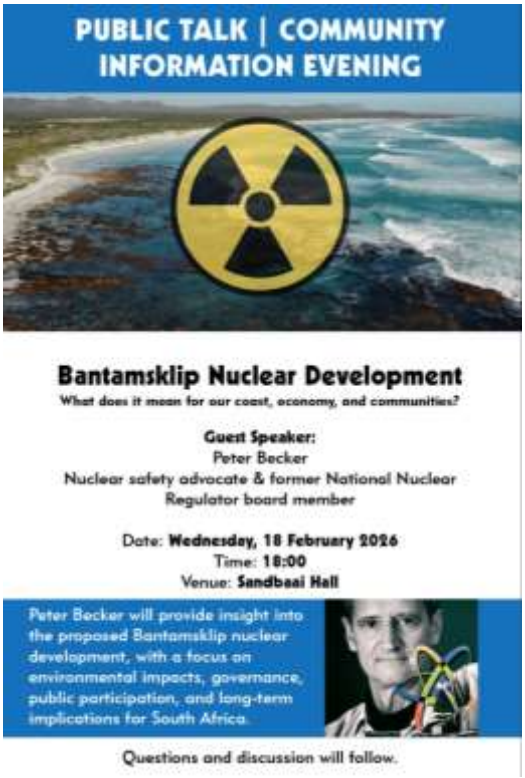
The BBC has created a YouTube account via its Gmail account.

Our first few videos are loaded and the links are in the above articles. If you have some lovely video clips related to the biodiversity and beauty in Betty's Bay, please WhatsApp Johan on 073 5439065. He will arrange to get them from you and add them to our YouTube channel.

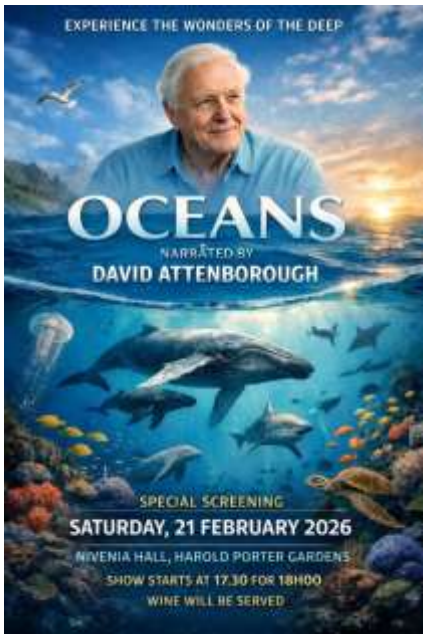
5. CONSERVATION EVENTS IN FEBRUARY

In February, there are a number of interesting events focussed on various aspects of our environment: potential nuclear development, turtle rescue, oceans and oystercatchers.

- **WEDNESDAY 18: INFORMATION EVENING ON THE BANTAMSKLIP NUCLEAR DEVELOPMENT, HOSTED BY OVERSTRAND ENVIRONMENTAL ASSOCIATION**



SATURDAY 21 FEBRUARY: SPECIAL SCREENING OF OCEANS AT BOTSOC MEETING



Ruben Els will present a compelling film on our still largely unexplored oceans - a world of astonishing beauty and fragile balance. The film will reveal how human behavior has damaged marine life, from pollution to overexploitation. Yet it is not a message of despair - small, conscience changes in our daily lives can help protect the seas and allow ecosystems recovery. It promises to be an eye-opening and inspiring presentation. Find more details on the poster - see you there!

Please RSVP via WhatsApp to 079 657 2385 or email: hpbookrsvp@gmail.com

- **MONDAY 23 FEBRUARY : TURTLE RESCUE ROAD TRIP OF 2026 COMES TO BETTY'S BAY :**

The Two Oceans Aquarium Foundation Turtle Rescue Team is embarking shortly on their 9th road trip, and Betty's Bay is on their itinerary!

They are coming to share what has been happening lately, to chat, catch up, sell merchandise, and answer all your questions.

10:00-12:00
Monday 23rd February
Coffee, On Clarence

- **SATURDAY 28 FEBRUARY BBC4thSATURDAY: OYSTERCATCHER FILM**

Van As and Jacques Jordaan will show the film they made of the Oystercatchers in Betty's Bay.
Join us at 2 pm in the EcoVenue at Stony Point.