



MARCH 2026

Dear BBC Members

After a long hot summer, it seems that winter has arrived!

This weekend has a “double feature”.

1. It is Bioblitz time! A reminder of the **City Nature Challenge** from 24 – 27 April. Sign up on iNaturalist to join the Overstrand project: <https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/city-nature-challenge-2026-overstrand>



2. At our BBC4thSATURDAY event on 25 April, we are hosting ‘Mike the Owl Box man’. Join us to learn more about these amazing birds and the work that Mike does.



Some BBC bits

Please WhatsApp 079 7530166 or email bettybayconservancy@gmail.com if you would 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**. These are “unisex sizes”.
- Buy a **BBC members sign for your house or plot**.

Welcome to our newest BBC members: Alison Newby and Sanet Myburg-Lipp. Thanks so much for joining and supporting the BBC.

Best wishes from the BBC Team

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

- **BBC4thSATURDAY: 28 MARCH**

UPDATE ON STONY POINT

Thanks to Faroeshka Rodgers, the Conservation Manager (On-site) for the Kogelberg Nature Reserve Complex, for updating us on aspects of CapeNature's work at Stony Point. She previously worked for SANParks at Boulders Beach, so she has many years of experience working at an African Penguin colony.

She explained some of the ongoing work they do at Stony Point such as 'quack counts', moult counts and checking on the condition of the penguins during their moult. Birds that are in distress or in arrested moult are transported to SANCCOB for rehabilitation. They also rescue eggs and chicks when needed and send these to SANCCOB for rearing. In a land colony, the penguins are at risk from predation on land and at sea. One of the happy and rewarding experiences at the colony is a penguin release - when SANCCOB brings rehabilitated birds to the colony to set them free again.



Compliance monitoring and enforcement with other organisations, biodiversity status, education and awareness for students, and staff training are some of the other important activities.

Two new Field Rangers are due to be employed in the Kogelberg Nature Reserve Complex. One ranger will work in the Kogelberg Reserve and the other at Stony Point.

This year there are plans for some exciting infrastructure and tourism changes:

- **A new boardwalk and education material**
The planned construction will have a phased approach with minimal noise and disturbance to the penguins in this sensitive colony. Work will only take place at appropriate times during the lifecycle of the penguins. The boardwalk is due for completion in 2027.
- **Repairs to the main gate.**
Currently the exit gate remains open after hours and lots of tourist and private vehicles enter the reserve when there are no staff present. Their behaviour often disturbs the penguins. Consultation will take place with stakeholders such as Heritage Western Cape. On the Edge Restaurant and the Boat Club.
- **Visitor Access and Flow**
After years of lower numbers of visitors due to Covid, boardwalk repairs and problems with the sewage tanks at Stony Point, the visitors have increased. Currently the only pay point is at the boardwalk, and if visitors do not walk beyond that kiosk, they do not pay to visit the colony. This is a loss of income for CapeNature.



There are plans to improve the flow of visitors and to move the pay point. There will be a trial period with temporary measures in place to monitor the success of the proposed plan.



There will also be some new signage in the colony.



We hope that these changes will help to improve the visitor experience at Stony Point, so that they leave with a clear understanding of the critically endangered status of the African Penguin. It will also help to manage visitor access and flow and reduce the stress on the penguins. This is vital to help reduce the pressure on the birds at this crucial time in the survival of this species.

Carol Clark

• OYSTERCATCHER BREEDING SEASON: FINAL UPDATE



Our Oystercatchers have finished breeding for the season and we would like to share some interesting statistics.

We monitored the stretch of coastline from Main Beach, including Malkopsvlei (Bass River) outflow, Dawidskraal and the Bird sanctuary to Disa River (Harold Porter) outflow.

Our results were as follows:

- We had 11 breeding pairs, with 22 attempts to breed (seven pairs had second attempts, and four pairs had third attempts). We lost a total of 37 eggs and only four eggs hatched. We lost two chicks and only two chicks have survived.
- Our chick on Main beach has fledged (four months old). One chick at Bass River is now close to six weeks and is ready to fledge.
- One chick at Bass River outflow disappeared after only a few days. The other chick on Main Beach area disappeared after four weeks.



From the above it is evident that we have had a poor season. Unfortunately, many eggs washed away due to our rough seas and high tides. We also have no evidence as to what predation may have taken place. Without camera traps it is difficult to assess whether the poor results are due to natural predation, e.g. otters, mongoose, kelp gulls or ravens, or human disturbance.



Unfortunately, breeding season coincides with the heavy human activity during the peak holiday season.

Results from the other stretches of our coastline are equally poor.

- In Jocks Bay area: only one egg hatched and no chicks survived.
- From Main beach to Stony Point: four eggs hatched but only one chick has survived and fledged.

From the 66 eggs laid in total for the areas under discussion, we only have three surviving chicks!



Even though the African Oystercatcher (*Haematopus moquini*) holds a Least Concern status on the IUCN list, findings suggest that the species needs to be monitored as a potential concern in our region. They remain at risk from human activity, coastal development, and climate change.

Finally, thank you to our monitors Colin and Myrna Cook, Wendy and Mark Lucas and Sue and Neil Brown for your effort and concern in trying to protect and save our Oystercatchers. A special thank you to Carin Malan for her interest and concern and to Birdlife Overstrand for supplying our warning signs.

A huge thank you to all those who adhered to the signs and kept your dogs leashed, especially when approaching the nesting areas.

Lenore and Duncan Watermeyer

Thanks from the BBC to all the Oystercatcher monitors.

We know you spend long hours on the beach to watch and keep track of each pair, their eggs and chicks. These statistics are not a reflection of a lack of care and monitoring on your behalf, nor of the dedication of parents in caring for their eggs and chicks. Van As and Jacque Jordaan depicted this dedication so well in their movie of the oystercatchers.

- **SEEING OUR TOWN THE WAY TRAVELLERS DO**

In the midst of local tensions, a simple visit with travellers offered a reminder of what is worth protecting.

When a German couple, Tom and Andrea Bauernfeind, recently overnighted with us in Betty's Bay, I was reminded how easy it is to take for granted the beauty of the place we call home. Tom had been an intern at a school where I taught twenty years ago; he is now a vice-principal in Dortmund, and they have travelled widely. When he wrote to say they were keen to see Betty's Bay, we invited them to stay and I set about planning a whistle-stop tour of our favourite spots.

They arrived to a champagne-bright day, the kind of weather that fills locals with pride — warm, windless, and golden.

First stop was the Harold Porter Garden. We wandered up to Disa Kloof Falls along the Dawidskraal River, the mountains rising around us, the gardens lush and generous, the sea view flashing through the trees. Fresh from a trip to Costa Rica, they kept comparing the falls to that unspoilt biosphere, which made me see our own landscape with fresh eyes.



From the Garden, they set off along Rod's Trail, sunhats and water in hand, while I doubled back, first picking up a few plants from the Harold Porter nursery for our Stony Point garden and then fetching the dog. I met them an hour and a half later on the far side of Rods Trail, both glowing. The trail really does offer a perfect sense of the town's layout — mountains, fynbos, sea, all in one sweep.

Next was a swim at Bass Lake. Floating there, looking up at the Kogelberg, you feel as though you've slipped into a pocket of paradise. Back home for lunch, from the upstairs balcony we spotted a grysbok browsing in the wetland-property bordering Crassula, a turtle dove calling in the heat telling us to 'work harder', and hundreds of swallows gathering on the old telephone wires, practising their aerial manoeuvres before the long journey north.

A short stroll took our friends to the penguins, which left them utterly enthralled. Dinner was at Waaygat where they were delighted by the sophisticated ambience, the fine dining, and the easy banter with the owners.

The next morning, they swam at Main Beach, lingered over tea and cake, and then it was time for goodbyes. Andrea's genuinely emotionally-charged parting words stayed with me: "Thank you — we will always have this special experience in our hearts."

Betty's Bay, you beauty. Thank you for showing up so magnificently.

And here's the thing: in the midst of the current conservation-versus-development tensions, and all the politics that swirl around them, it's worth pausing to see this place through the eyes of well-travelled visitors who fall in love with it instantly. Their wonder reminded me — and perhaps reminds all of us — that we are extraordinarily lucky to live here. Sometimes we just need to step back and look again.

Patrick Bolttler

- **THE OVERSTRAND ECO INDABA**

The Overstrand ECO INDABA was 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.

On 28 March 2026, 45 representatives from about 24 different environmental entities met at The Book Club in Pringle Bay to move from fragmentation toward a unified, powerful voice for our region.



The event was a resounding success, marked by several key achievements:

- **Unity over Fragmentation:** We successfully launched a conservation alliance that bridges the gap between the various NGOs from Pearly Beach to Rooiels, ensuring environmental advocacy is no longer diluted in local and provincial decision-making.
- **Expert Inspiration:** Prof. Mark Swilling, the keynote speaker from the University of Stellenbosch, was inspiring. His insights into sustainability transitions set the perfect tone for our collective mission.
- **Strategic Mapping:** We completed a comprehensive mapping exercise, creating a physical "conservation action overlay" of the Overstrand to identify and coordinate our geographical and thematic strengths.
- **Governance and Growth:** The group reached a consensus on the tenets of a constitution and appointed an interim steering committee. We are now on a clear path toward our first AGM within the next three months.



Some of the participants at the Overstrand Eco Indaba at The Book Club.

The event helped establish a **significant repository of skills and expertise** that will now hold authorities accountable and advocate for the safeguarding of our unique ecosystems and UNESCO Biosphere Reserve. By supporting the Indaba, you have directly contributed to the protection of the Overstrand's "sense of place" and the natural environment that sustains our local tourism economy.

The BBC was one of the organisations that contributed funding towards the event.

Text adapted from an email from a thank you email from the EcolIndaba team



- **BBC4thSATURDAY: 25 APRIL**





BBC 4th Saturday

GIVING A ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENT

'Mike, the Owl Box man' will present on the fascinating work he does in owl rescue, rehab and installing owl boxes.

Presenter: Mike Amira
Date: 25 April
Venue: Stony Point EcoVenue
Time: 2:00 pm – 3:30 pm
All Welcome
Please RSVP to:-
bettybayconservancy@gmail.com
or WhatsApp **079 7530166**

No charge, donations to support the BBC are welcomed



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

FIRST UPDATE !

We are happy to report that we petitioned the Western Cape Provincial Parliament (WCPP) on 27 March 2026. The petition met the required WCPP legal and administrative criterion and has progressed to the preliminary investigation stage. We will keep you updated on further progress.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

Feedback from the Petition Team

Introducing Pete Oxford

Pete Oxford is a familiar figure in Betty's Bay, often seen on his e-bike heading to conservation missions, guarding moulting elephant seals, or speaking passionately at community meetings. A resident for more than a decade, he is deeply woven into the fabric of the village and serves as an executive member of the Betty's Bay Conservancy, championing local environmental causes while connecting them to global issues. With a BSc (Hons) in Zoology/Marine Zoology, Pete has lived and worked in four UNESCO Biosphere Reserves and co-authored 15 conservation-focused books, with forewords by King Charles III, Prince Philip, presidents of Guyana and Ecuador, and luminaries such as E.O. Wilson, Trudie Styler, and Sting. His photography and writing have appeared in National Geographic, BBC Wildlife, Time, Smithsonian, The Economist, and many others. He has been featured ten times in the BBC Wildlife Photographer of the Year Awards and was named among the world's 40 most influential nature photographers by Outdoor Photography. Pete's career has taken him to every continent, including 15 expeditions to Antarctica. He was the first to professionally photograph species such as the Iberian lynx and black jaguar. A Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society and Founder Fellow of the International League of Conservation Photographers, he now works with his wife, Renee Bish, on global and local conservation projects, bringing to *The Overstrand Herald* a rare breadth of experience and perspective.



likely a better chance of survival than inevitably washing up on the beach.

The edge of the shell at the ends is curved, it is a highly evolved specialist. Those curved edges fit exactly to the roundness of the kelp stipe.

Pete Oxford

The Kelp Limpet

When I first came to Betty's Bay I was intrigued by the long, large and flattish limpets strewn all over the beach. I had never seen anything like them before and in fact it was because of them that I started getting 'really into' limpets in general. It turns out that our shoreline has the highest limpet diversity in the world! I have now found over 20 species of limpets and limpet allies (false limpets and slipper limpets etc.) in a roughly 500 meter stretch of beach!

Limpets are gastropod molluscs, related to slugs, snails and nudibranchs. This limpet, the kelp limpet (*Cymbula compressa*), is totally dependent on the kelp forest, is endemic to our region and lives entirely on the stipes (stalks) of the giant kelp or sea bamboo (*Ecklonia maxima*). It does not eat the kelp but mostly the mats of bryozoans that grow on the stipes. If a storm comes through and the limpet detects that the kelp has been uprooted from its anchorage then the limpet quickly releases and sinks down to the bottom. Here of course it becomes highly vulnerable to predatory fish. Although probably not too many survive this strategy there is

Quick facts about the Kelp Limpet

- **Habitat:** They are endemic to Southern Africa and live exclusively on the stipes (stalks) of sea bamboo (kelp), specifically *Ecklonia maxima*.
- **Diet & Behavior:** Kelp limpets feed on the kelp they live on. Their shells are specifically shaped (concave) to fit the cylindrical stems of the kelp.
- **Afrikaans Name:** The term perdevoetjie (literally "little horse foot") refers to the strong, thick, often horseshoe-shaped shell of many South African limpet species.
- **Role:** They are part of the complex ecosystem of the Great African Seaforest.