



AUGUST 2026

Dear BBC Members

'Biodiversity' and 'ecosystems' are frequently raised in conversations about Betty's Bay and the Kogelberg coastal villages within the Kogelberg Biosphere. The opportunity to live within such a beautiful natural environment draws many people to make this area their home. They live as biosphere-living custodians on their erf.

The Kogelberg Biosphere is one of ten UNESCO-declared biospheres in South Africa. This definition of biodiversity is taken from the UNESCO website:

Biodiversity refers to the variety of life forms within a specific ecosystem, region, or on the planet as a whole. It encompasses the diversity of species, genetic variations, and ecological processes that sustain these organisms.

The idea of biodiversity also encompasses the range of ecological communities that species form. A common approach to quantifying this type of diversity is to record the variety of ecological communities an area may contain.

The Cambridge Dictionary defines an *ecosystem* as *"all the living things in an area and the way they affect each other and the environment; any complicated system consisting of many different people, processes, activities, etc., especially relating to technology, and the way that they affect each other."*

Not everyone who moves to Betty's Bay embraces being a 'biosphere-living' custodian of their erf and neighbourhood. Residents are also diverse species within this ecosystem.

On Saturday morning, many Betty's Bay residents, and some young people, participated in the International Coastal Clean-up (ICC). They picked up litter from beaches, rocky areas and verges along the Betty's Bay coast.



Also on Saturday morning, a firearm was discharged from a property in a residential area in Betty's Bay at an adult male baboon from the Betty's Bay troop, Thunder. Thunder died a very painful death on Bass Road.



Same morning, same village:

Some residents chose life and removed litter from the coast to protect marine life.

One resident chose death, and a mature baboon was shot, negatively affecting the social dynamics of the Betty's Bay troop.

Photos above: Patrick Boltler and Clea Witte

*UNESCO website: Biodiversity is the living fabric of our planet. It underpins human wellbeing in the present and in the future, and its rapid decline threatens nature and people alike. **It is vital to transform people's roles, actions and relationships with biodiversity** to halt and reverse its decline.*

How do we transform people's roles, actions and relationships with the rich biodiversity in Betty's Bay, so they choose life?

We welcome your ideas.

A very warm welcome to our newest BBC members: Xena, Claire, Sandy and Rina. Thanks for joining the BBC.

Best wishes from the BBC Team.

Carol, Ann, Barbara, Nina, Patrick, Pete, Jan and Tony

Thank you to everyone who contributed articles for the BBC section.

Compiled by Carol Clark and proofread by Patrick Boltler.



EAST TO WEST – the fish don't rest

Mike Markovina has lived his whole life in Betty's Bay. He was introduced as an unsung hero within our community, one of us.

He is a brilliant marine scientist and was integral to the Betty's Bay (and beyond) Baited Underwater Remote Video (BRUV) studies that looked at biodiversity and biomass in the Marine Protected Area (MPA). These studies provide scientists with the critical baseline data they need for comparative studies. He is also a superb boat captain and a core member of the Kleinmond Branch of the NSRI, where he is a training officer.

It was a full house as Mike took us on a journey, telling a story of hard, dangerous, and real marine conservation — no fluff. One attendee remarked, "It's like being in a Jason Bourne movie." From previous conversations with Mike, I know we were only told the PG-13 version!

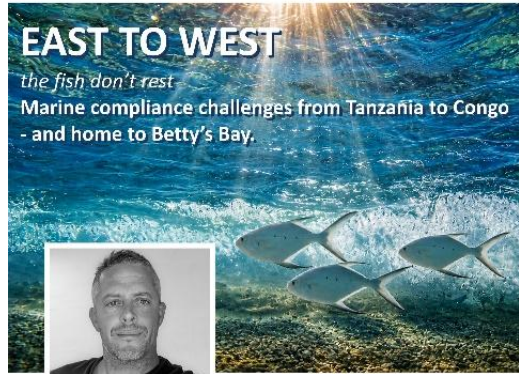
His journey began in Gabon in 2007, stationed where the pristine rainforest meets the ocean — a privileged location where forest elephants shared the same beach and chimps called from within the forest. He was tasked by the Wildlife Conservation Society to undertake joint fisheries patrols with the government to tackle the scourge of "Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated" (IUU) fishing in the Mayumba Marine National Park.

With that experience under his belt, he was called to Tanzania — initially to conduct Monitoring, Control and Surveillance missions and training, but that required a deep focus on blast fishing.

Dynamite fishing was the issue. Daily, up to 150 homemade 'dynamite' bombs were blasting the reef along the coastline. The effect was catastrophic, levelling the reef to two-dimensional rubble with no chance of recovery. The reef structure is the pillar of biomass and biodiversity; the bombing was entirely non-selective, killing everything, causing huge ecological destruction and socio-economic pain.



BBC 4th Saturday



Presenter: Mike Markovina — a life-long resident of Betty's Bay and a fisheries biologist.

Date: 29 August

Venue: Stony Point Eco Venue

Time: 2:00 – 3:30 pm

ALL WELCOME

Please RSVP to:-

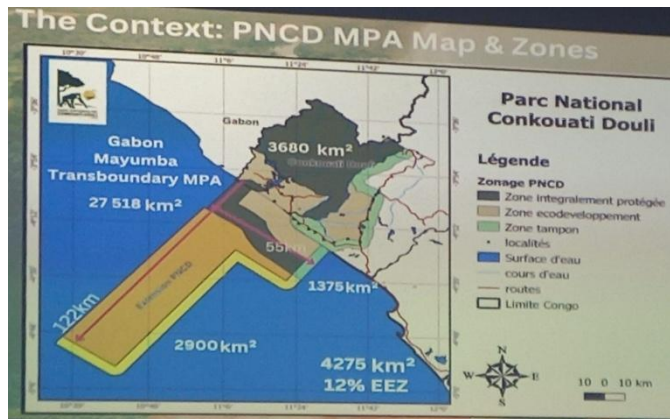
bettybayconservancy@gmail.com

or WhatsApp 079 7530166

No charge; donations to support the BBC are welcomed



Together with his multi-disciplinary team, from the highest levels of government and law enforcement, they dived into the underworld to cut the head off the snake and drastically reduce the supply of explosives to the illegal fishing community. Their efforts are estimated to have led to a 90% decline in dynamite fishing! And to the establishment of the Multi-Agency Task Team (MATT) for fishing, fisheries, and wildlife crime in Tanzania. This was ratified by the government in 2015.



After those six years, he gathered a team to develop a marine anti-poaching force in a remote location in Congo. Scraping together basic hardware while intelligently applying the latest technology, a team was trained and, against all odds, became a major success story. The Congo's Konkouati-Douli National Park now has an effective marine protection unit!

Back home, Mike is currently co-developing similar technology for the Kogelberg Biosphere Reserve. The applications could have far-reaching effects on local conservation, both in the marine and terrestrial environments. The planned structure is to ensure that the community and public can be harnessed in an observational capacity through an application linking observation to real-time management decisions. The hope is to provide authorities with relevant information while providing oversight of official response.

Mike's talk spoke loudly to 'The Power of One' and building a story around the problem in order to identify solutions.



Pete Oxford

Photos: Carol Clark

STONY POINT NATURE RESERVE

THE CRITICALLY ENDANGERED AFRICAN PENGUIN Third community meeting hosted by CapeNature

On Friday, 28 August, CapeNature hosted a community meeting at the Harold Porter National Botanical Garden to discuss the proposed predator-deterrent fence and the immediate threats facing the critically endangered African Penguin colony at Stony Point.

The meeting drew a large turnout, reflecting how deeply residents care about the penguins and the broader natural environment. Upon arrival, attendees noted a small display of hand-made signs expressing opposition to the fence, along with a petition for those who wished to sign. This illustrated the strong feelings within the community, but once the meeting began, the atmosphere settled into a constructive and respectful discussion.

CapeNature opened with an important update: Phases 2 and 3 of the proposed fence have been paused, and only Phase 1 — an upgrade to the existing fence line — is currently planned. This announcement helped to ease concerns and allowed the meeting to proceed in a far more positive and orderly manner than previous engagements.

The session was well facilitated by Edith Henn. Pierre de Villiers, Farha Ally, Faroeshka Rodgers, Portia Chake, Cairestine Lottering and Anda Rweqana of CapeNature were present. Edith ensured that community members could ask questions and share their views in a structured way. The CapeNature team provided clear explanations and engaged openly with the audience. Their commitment to the penguins' protection and their willingness to address difficult questions were evident throughout.

A volunteer sign-up sheet circulated during the meeting, offering residents the opportunity to become part of the monitoring and education efforts at Stony Point. This practical step was welcomed, as it allows community members to contribute directly to the penguins' safety and to visitor awareness. BBC Penguin-Pals are also making constructive headway in assisting with the conservation of our penguins and have done so for many years.

Several useful insights emerged from the discussion. Our very own Pete Oxford contributed substantial knowledge on the effects of fencing penguins in. He has written a comprehensive review titled "*Penguin Fence Update*", published in the *Overstrand Herald* and shared on the BBC Facebook page on 4 September. A zoology student noted that international studies have shown predator-deterrent fencing to be effective for ground-nesting birds in many contexts, although the Stony Point situation differs from these models. Another key point clarified by CapeNature was that the recent predation appears to be the work of one or two individual caracals, rather than a larger group — a detail that helped correct a common misconception. Suggestions from the floor included tracking or tagging caracals, though CapeNature noted that such measures are prohibitively expensive and that conservation funding remains a significant challenge.



What came through strongly is that Betty's Bay residents care deeply about the penguins and the preservation of this unique colony. The BBC extends sincere thanks to the CapeNature team for their ongoing efforts, transparency, and dedication. Your work is vital, and we recognise the complexity of the challenges you face.

The Conservancy remains committed to supporting all organisations working to safeguard the African Penguin. We appreciate the continued collaboration and the shared determination to ensure the survival of this very special species.

Patrick Bolttler

Photos: Carol Clark



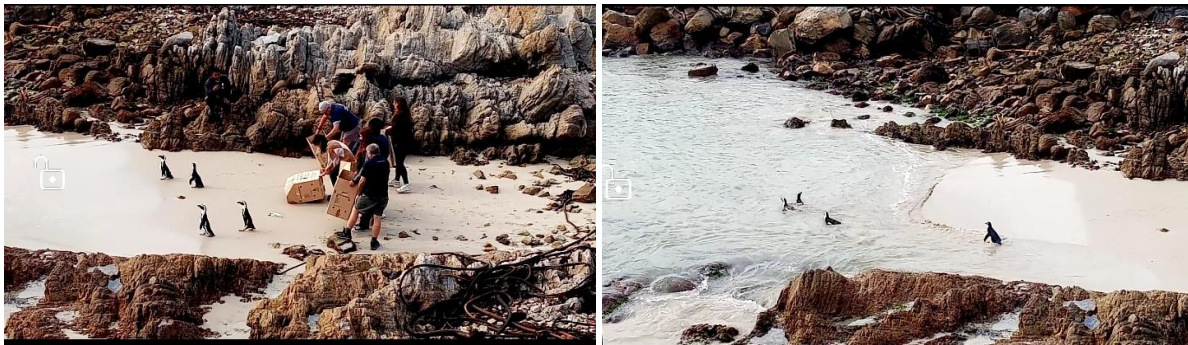
TOUR GUIDE WORKSHOP

On 25 and 26 August, CapeNature hosted two workshops for Tour Guides in the Ecovenue at Stony Point. As BBC Penguin-Pals volunteers plan to help with visitor awareness at the colony, five of us were able to join the workshops. Nina and Brian attended on Wednesday, and Liz, Jenni and I joined the Thursday group.



The programme included background information on Stony Point by Steve Gildenhuys (formerly of CapeNature), the status of the African Penguin by Michelle van der Merwe of SANCCOB and insight into the other animals found in the colony by Vatiswa of WWF. Natanya of CapeNature facilitated some fun role-plays and the rangers conducted a walk along the boardwalk. Participants enjoyed lunch at On the Edge restaurant.

The weather on Thursday, compared to a windy Wednesday, was favourable for a penguin release. This group of tour guides also had the privilege of watching the release of five penguins, recently rehabilitated at SANCCOB.



The tour guides gained more insight into the critically endangered status of the penguins, and how to educate their groups to visit the colony in a calm manner to reduce stress on the penguins.

Tourists have been observed doing many inappropriate things that stress and compromise the penguins: blocking their pathways to and from the sea and their nests, crowding the birds, standing too close, trying to take close selfies, walking into the vegetation, climbing over barriers, and looking into nests.

On Thursday, we discussed how guides could educate tour groups before they arrive. I suggested that guides could use the BBC sign with the QR code that links to the BBC Visitor Guidelines. This will be included in the post-workshop information from CapeNature. We hope that guides will share this with their clients to inform them before they arrive about how to visit Stony Point in a manner that reduces stress on the penguins.

Carol Clark

Group photos: CapeNature

NIGHT PATROLS TO DETER CARACALS

A group of BBC Penguin-Pals volunteers is assisting CapeNature with night and early-morning patrols in specific areas around the colony. One of the aims of the patrols is to spread human scent in the area where caracals are known to predate to deter them from entering that area. Patrollers work in pairs for safety purposes, and under the direction of CapeNature staff. Patrollers take care not to disturb the penguins.

Camera traps are positioned in the area, along with a caracal trap. The staff review the camera footage for caracal activity and adjust the patrols as required.



NEW SIGNAGE IN THE COLONY



CapeNature has installed new signage in various places in the Stony Point colony. This sign is adapted from the Visitor Information leaflet that the BBC developed last year. The QR code links visitors to the leaflet on the BBC website.



The new signage will be used in conjunction with the proposed new visitor-flow arrangements.

PERSPECTIVES ON BIOSPHERE LIVING

PORTER DRIVE CLEAN-UP ON 11 AUGUST

On Tuesday, 11 August, community members braved a fierce gale to take part in the Porter Drive Clean-up between 16:00 and 18:00. Despite the challenging weather, around fifteen volunteers turned out, and approximately twenty-five bags of litter were collected. Much of it consisted of plastic cups, tins, and general waste likely discarded from passing vehicles. Several pieces of plastic sheeting and signage were also retrieved, possibly remnants from the severe storm of 12 May.

A few residents sensibly waited for the wind to ease before heading out the following day, and although we didn't manage to capture photos of them, their contribution is sincerely appreciated.

One thing about us Betty's Bay locals is that we love walking in our scenic neighbourhood. Rain or shine, the walkers are out, and it's really cool to see how many of them routinely pick up bits of litter along the way. Craig Foster's reminder to *"do one small act for biodiversity every day"* resonates strongly here; collecting rubbish on a walk is one of the simplest ways to live that out. The same applies to our beaches, where hooks, sinkers, condoms and fishing gut often wash up among the kelp. While we hope to see less of this in the future, our community's willingness to clean up makes a meaningful difference.



Wayne Jackson shared a message on the Stony Point Watch group thanking everyone involved, and we include it here to encourage future cleanups:

I would like to sincerely thank the members of our community who dedicated their time this afternoon to assist with cleaning a section of Porter Drive. Your commitment exemplifies a strong sense of community responsibility and pride in maintaining our neighbourhood's appearance. Your efforts contribute to making Betty's Bay a cleaner and more welcoming place for everyone. Once again, thank you for your initiative, and I hope your actions inspire others to take similar steps in caring for our streets and surrounding areas.

Thank you to Barbara Jenman for supplying the waste bags and bibs, to all community members who assisted on the day, and to those who actively clean up daily. We also extend our appreciation to the Overstrand Municipality and their staff for their ongoing support in waste collection. Your friendly service and willingness to go the extra mile do not go unnoticed.

Patrick Bolttler

ERF 2648, 97 CLARENCE DRIVE, BETTYS BAY: APPLICATION FOR SIGNAGE DEPARTURE

MOTIVATION FOR A PROPOSED BILLBOARD WITHIN A HERITAGE OVERLAY ZONE ALONG A ROUTE OF REGIONAL SCENIC SIGNIFICANCE AND BYLAW DEPARTURE

After hearing from residents and local organisations on this application, it is clear they do not support a billboard of this size and level of intrusion on Clarence Drive. We await feedback from the Overstrand Municipality on these objections as part of the public participation process.



Carol Clark

WILDLIFE

UPDATE ON THE CAPTURE OF FREE-RANGE DOGS ON THE MOUNTAINS ADJACENT TO KLEINMOND AND PALMIET

On the mountains adjacent to Kleinmond and Palmiet, free-ranging dogs hunt wildlife to survive.

At the end of July 2026, when foreign nationals were required to leave the country, many of them had to abandon their dogs. Not all of these dogs had been used specifically for hunting purposes, but this situation exacerbated an existing problem — the uncontrolled hunting of wildlife with dogs by organised criminals for bushmeat, muti and gambling. These hunting dogs are also victims - they are starved before a hunt, kept in inhumane conditions, and are abandoned when they are injured or cannot hunt effectively.

The abandoned strays have now formed packs alongside the hunting dogs. KAWS was able to identify fifteen dogs on the neighbouring mountains. These dogs are starving and hunt simply to survive. Fortunately, the decision to employ a professional hunter to shoot the dogs was set aside and KAWS has been working with the Overstrand Environmental Department, Law Enforcement and CapeNature to capture the dogs. To date, seven dogs have been captured and handed over to KAWS to evaluate on an individual basis; currently, two are suitable for rehoming. The toll on these dogs has been enormous, and, for some, humane euthanasia may be the only option.

The illegal hunting of wildlife remains a serious concern. The authorities will continue to patrol the Kleinmond Nature Reserve and Kasteelkop at different times during the week and over weekends to deter illegal activities, respond to reported incidents and capture any remaining dogs. The public has been asked to notify them of any illegal hunting, roaming dogs and, where possible, reports should include location, date, time and photographs or videos taken from a distance. These reports can be channelled via the Overstrand Municipality Citizen App, the Municipal Contact Centre on 028 313 8111 or Law Enforcement on 028 313 8996.

Addressing this problem will require community education, including responsible pet ownership and ensuring that animals are properly cared for. Initiatives such as these could also prevent youngsters from being lured into criminal activities by adults involved in wildlife hunting.



Dorienne Maes

SPEEDING ON THE R44

PRESENTATION TO THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON MOBILITY

As part of the petition, the Steering Committee requested a site visit to Betty's Bay with the relevant authorities. As the petition progressed through the required steps, we did not anticipate an invitation to present the petition to the Standing Committee for Mobility of the Western Cape Provincial Parliament and other stakeholders. It felt quite daunting!

WESTERN CAPE PROVINCIAL PARLIAMENT

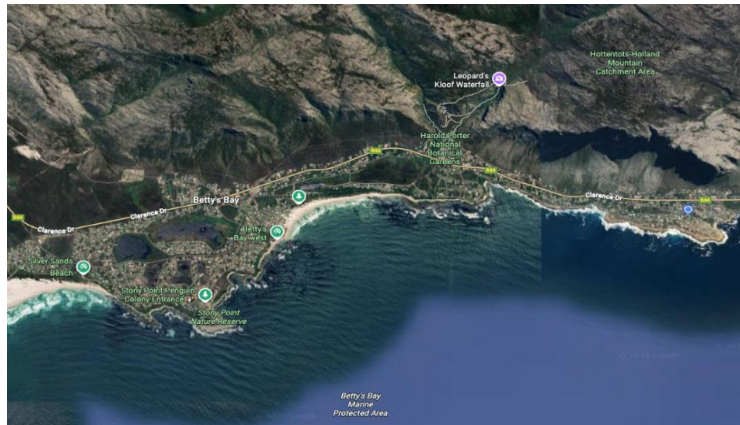
URGENT CALL FOR SPEED RESTRICTIONS ON THE R44 THROUGH BETTY'S BAY

Addressing Lawless Speeding, Human Safety Hazards, and Wildlife Fatalities through Betty's Bay within the UNESCO declared Kogelberg Biosphere)

Each member of the Steering Committee focused on a particular site or issue on the R44 through Betty's Bay and sourced striking visual material to highlight the problem and the proposed solutions. These were compiled into a PowerPoint presentation. On the day of the meeting, each member presented their own section. To view the presentation on the BBC website: <https://bettysbayconservancy.co.za/urgent-call-for-speed-restrictions-on-the-r44-through-bettys-bay/>

Carol Clark

UPDATE ON THE R44 PETITION



UPDATE FIVE

We are happy to report that, having petitioned the Western Cape Provincial Parliament (WCPP) on 27 March 2026, our petition successfully progressed to the final stage of the petition framework process. The Petition Steering Committee was invited to deliver a presentation on 25 August 2026 to brief the Standing Committee on Mobility and the relevant authorities. This was followed by inclusive discussions with the Departments of Mobility and Infrastructure and the Overstrand Municipality.

The discussions were generally amicable, with the Department of Mobility (DOM) and Overstrand Municipality (OM) clearly more attuned to the concerns of the residents of Betty's Bay than the Department of Infrastructure (DOI).

The DOM and DOI are to provide feedback to the Standing Committee on Mobility by the end of January 2027. The by-elections and the Opening of Parliament are to be considered, but the petition process was never going to be expeditious! All outstanding issues will be dealt with at a site meeting in Betty's Bay during February/March 2027. The Standing Committee is required to revert to the Speaker's Office in Parliament once the process is concluded.

However, a positive outcome of the briefing resulted in the mobilisation of Provincial Traffic Services at the request of the DOM. This would involve the use of manual cameras in the interim, to demonstrate a commitment by the DOM to take the concerns of the residents in Betty's Bay seriously, "failing which, in six months we shall all be back dealing with the same issues once again". During this interim period, an evaluation and determination will be made as to the appropriate locations for stationary cameras to be positioned at a later stage. In the meantime, OM is to start the statutory application process for these stationary cameras.



Within days, Provincial Traffic Services were operational along the R44 through Betty's Bay, and fines were issued. OM traffic enforcement patrols were also observed in the area. If 230 erven and 37 intersections have direct access to the R44, this route should function as a "Class 2 Urban Arterial."

The Petition Steering Committee will challenge the authorities should they resist the following requests:

- 70km/h throughout Betty's Bay, excluding the 60km/h in the HUB area (Class 2 Urban Arterial).
- Mini roundabout at Disa Circle to slow down traffic in the CBD (Class 2 Urban Arterial).
- Two humps at the HUB to protect pedestrians crossing and vehicles accessing the R44 in the vicinity (Class 2 Urban Arterial).

The authorities agreed to discuss the following:

- Removal of parking bays to facilitate overtaking at the turnoff to Seaview Link to avoid collisions.
- Removal of parking bays to provide a clear view of oncoming traffic at the HUB.
- DOI "Wildlife Crossing" signage between Rooiels and Betty's Bay.
- Location of stationary cameras (2) to be dependent on the outcome of the interim use of manual cameras.

Dorienne Maes

Photos: Carol

UPDATE ON THE PROPOSED WILDLIFE SIGNS FOR BETTY'S BAY



In the last BBC newsletter, we helped the BBRA promote awareness of the signs (above left) that residents could sponsor for Betty's Bay. Since then, we were made aware that these 12 signs are not in accordance with the National Road Traffic Act, National Road Traffic Regulations and SADC/SA Road Traffic Signs Manual prescribed for public roads. The Overstrand Municipality is apparently concerned that if there are accidents because of these other signs, they could be sued. Therefore, the OM Traffic Service has proposed another sign. This sign (above right) features an exclamation mark with "Wildlife" below it.

For those residents who enthusiastically sponsored specific signs for the village, the alternative official sign is disappointing. Sponsors can request a refund.

Even more disappointing for the BBC is that it was indirectly made aware that, due to concerns about accidents and being sued, the OM intends to remove the penguin crossing that was installed about two years ago. This is at a time when the penguins are fighting for survival as a critically endangered species. Numerous organisations are working together to support and protect them from multiple threats, including being hit by cars on the roads adjacent to Stony Point. The penguin-crossing increases awareness of this risk and encourages motorists to drive carefully near the colony. To remove it seems mean-spirited and counterproductive to the concerted efforts of other organisations to protect the penguins.

Carol Clark

BBC4thSATURDAY EVENTS

On 24 October, Anton Mauve will be presenting on the fascinating topic of Cowrie shells.

More details to follow.

