



Date: 2 October 2026

RE: OBJECTION TO PROPOSED REPLACEMENT OF WILDLIFE AWARENESS SIGNS WITH W339 "WILDLIFE" SIGNAGE

Dear Mr Fraser,

The Betty's Bay Conservancy (BBC) acknowledges recent engagement with the Betty's Bay Ratepayers Association (BBRA) and others regarding the BBRA's proposed wildlife-awareness signage for Betty's Bay. This matter was discussed in a meeting held on September 16, 2026, attended by Theresa Els, Amund Beneke, Rudi Fraser, and Xin Titus

The concern raised at this meeting refers (taken directly from the notes):

If (i.e.) an accident happens because of our proposed signage, the Municipality can be sued.

The BBC has verified that there is no precedent in South African case law of municipalities being sued due to road accidents resulting from animal road signs. Municipalities have, however, been sued in Magistrate Courts and the Supreme Court of Appeal in South Africa for accidents caused by:

- Inappropriately/incorrectly installed signage
- Signage not clearly visible
- Damaged signage
- Missing signage
- Back-to-back signage on the same pole

Some examples of this in Betty's Bay:



The proposed animal signs, designed by the BBRA with input from the BBC, conform to South African road-system standards.

The road signs were developed specifically as a wildlife-awareness initiative, with the objective of alerting motorists that they are travelling through a biodiverse conservation region in which wildlife is present and vulnerable to mortality from vehicles.

The BBC is not asking the Traffic Services to disregard the South African road-sign system; we are appealing for a practical compromise. The signs were designed to create awareness of animals found in and around the Kogelberg Biosphere villages that are increasingly being killed by road users. The purpose of the signage is therefore to encourage motorists to become more conscious of the animals that share the landscape they have come to visit. This differs greatly from a conventional warning that an unspecified animal hazard may be encountered (Sign W339).

We support the community's desire to showcase a unique and characterful village, in the belief that the signage will not only provide awareness of our fauna at risk of traffic accidents but also express the sentiment that Betty's Bay has an overwhelming collective consciousness towards the importance of biodiversity and faunal well-being. Sign W339 is generic and 'sterile'; it does not achieve this secondary goal.

We respectfully submit that the proposal to replace the animal awareness signs with a W339 General Warning sign, comprising the exclamation mark accompanied by the word "Wildlife," will remove much of the meaning and impact of the initiative.

The UNESCO Kogelberg Biosphere

This initiative must also be considered in its particular geographical and conservation context.

The Kogelberg Biosphere is South Africa's first biosphere, designated by UNESCO in 1998. UNESCO describes the region as an area of exceptional terrestrial and marine biodiversity of the world.

The road environment around Betty's Bay is therefore not a suburban environment in which wildlife happens occasionally; it is an eco-tourism route showcasing our magnificent biosphere.

In such an environment, wildlife-awareness signage plays an important role.

Critically Endangered African Penguin

We read with dismay and distress in the notes circulated by the BBRA that the penguin signs installed at Stony Point Reserve are to be considered for removal. The African Penguin is only found in the southern waters and islands of South Africa and Namibia.

The African Penguin is now classified as Critically Endangered:

A critically endangered species is a plant or animal that the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) classifies as facing an extremely high risk of extinction in the

wild. **It is the highest level of conservation threat before a species is labelled Extinct in the Wild.**

To receive this status on the IUCN Red List, an organism must meet specific quantitative thresholds under one or more of several criteria, including:

- Population Decline: A drop of 80% to 90% or more in population over the past 10 years or three generations.
- Extinction Probability: A quantitative analysis showing a 50% or higher chance of extinction in the wild within 10 years or three generations.
- Very Small Population: Fewer than 250 mature individuals remaining alive.
- Extreme Restriction: A very small geographic range or area of occupancy (such as less than 10 square kilometres)

Currently, a collaborative, multi-pronged approach is being discussed with concerned stakeholders such as CapeNature, SANCCOB, BirdLife South Africa and the BBC to minimise and reverse the further decline of the species.

No road accident events are recorded at Stony Point, making it a travesty to remove these signs, especially as the Overstrand Municipality (OM) has endorsed penguin signs.. To follow the spirit of the law rather than stick to the letter of the law is urgently required to save this species.

We strongly object to the removal of these signs, especially as they were endorsed and approved by OM.

Signs Found in Betty's Bay

The images below already exist in Betty's Bay.



The system therefore already recognises the principle that an image of an animal can communicate a meaningful road warning. No accidents have been reported as a result of these signs.

The question before the Traffic Services is therefore not whether animal imagery can be used.

The question is:

Why should appropriate wildlife imagery not be incorporated as an effective and legally compliant wildlife-awareness programme for the region?

The Proposed Signs



Rationalise the Proposed Signs

We propose to rationalise the number of animal signs used based on roadkill numbers and conservation status.

For example, consideration could be given to:

- documented wildlife road mortality;
- species occurring in the area;
- species particularly vulnerable to vehicles;
- conservation significance

The BBC looks forward to working with Traffic Services and the relevant conservation bodies to identify a smaller and more focused selection of road signs.

Roadside Advertising and Other Signs

Motorists are already exposed to a variety of roadside signs and visual information, including:

- large real-estate advertising boards;
- large property-development and sales boards;
- small real-estate directional boards placed at various locations;
- neighbourhood-watch signs;
- temporary notices

These signs are considerably larger and visually more prominent than the proposed wildlife-awareness signs.

We are not suggesting that these signs are unlawful, nor are we asserting, without supporting accident data, that they have caused accidents.

Our point is narrower and relates to consistency.

If the concern is that an image-based wildlife sign might distract a motorist or compete for driver attention, then the same road-safety principle should logically apply to the broader roadside visual environment.

The South African Road Traffic Signs Manual (SARTSM) recognises that outdoor advertising can compete with road-traffic signs for motorists' attention and that advertising is likely to distract drivers in a manner that could contribute to unsafe driving conditions and should be avoided.

Request for Reconsideration

The Betty's Bay Conservancy respectfully requests that Traffic Services reconsider the proposal to replace the BBRA's animal imagery with **W339 + "Wildlife"** as the sole form of wildlife-awareness signage.

We ask instead that a joint process be undertaken to:

1. Consider the purpose and objectives of the initiative;
2. Examine available wildlife road-mortality information;
3. Rationalise the twelve species to a negotiated number;
4. Identify suitable locations;
5. Apply consistent road-safety principles to the proposed signs and the wider roadside visual environment.

Yours sincerely,

The Betty's Bay Conservancy