

NOVEMBER 2021

24-hour Emergency Fire Brigade	028 313 8000/8111 028 312 2400
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Bulletin

Official newsletter of the Overstrand Municipality

BEACH CLEAN-UP EXPOSES RECKLESS DISCARDING OF FISHING GEAR AS A MAJOR THREAT TO COASTAL INTEGRITY



In support of International Beach Clean-up Day, Overstrand Municipality and several collaborators tackled the beach and dune areas near De Kelders on Thursday, 16 September 2021.

Beach stewards and interns from WESSA (Wildlife and Environment Society of South Africa) assigned to the Hermanus Tourism Bureau and Old Harbour Museum in Hermanus joined hands with the Environmental Management team and two marine biology students to clear an area measuring approximately four kilometres.

In the process, twenty-seven bags of litter were collected. Surprisingly, though, single-use plastics no longer seem to be the major threat.

Instead, Field Ranger Marco Cornelius said that discarded fishing nets, net cuttings, crayfish traps, broken camping chairs, 20-litre plastic buckets and rope accounted for the bulk of the debris collected.

Overstrand Municipality urges the fishing community to not discard their equipment irresponsibly. It is a known fact that marine animals often get entangled in abandoned fishing nets and lines and suffocate as a result.

A big thank you to all the volunteers who willingly made a positive contribution towards preserving the environmental integrity of our beaches: 2021 will indeed go down in history as a remarkable year. Well done!



REASONS FOR DEMISE AND POOR CONDITION OF CAPE FUR SEALS

As of late, regular beach walkers have reported increased sightings of skinny Cape fur seals or dead seal pups on Overstrand beaches.

Tarron Dry, Overstrand Municipality's Biodiversity Conservation Manager, said these sightings are not uncommon this time of year.

"Cape fur seal pups are born between mid-November and late December. Their moms only nurse them for around seven to eight months where after the pups must look after themselves since mom is readying herself for her next pup due in November.

"If the pups learn to find food in the big ocean, they can fend for themselves. If they don't, they end up on our beaches because their fat reserves are depleted and they are too cold to go to sea to hunt, meaning they die of starvation," he explained.

If you see a baby seal by itself and it appears unharmed, please leave it alone and do not touch it. (It has a nasty bite.) Also, do not try to return it to the water.

If you notice any obvious injuries and if the seal is retching or coughing, is entangled or seems very thin, please call the Environmental Management



Section on 028 316 3724 during office hours or call the 24-hour control room on 028 313 8000/8111 after hours. Alternatively, contact the African Penguin and Seabird Sanctuary in Gansbaai on 072 598 7117.

Taking a picture or video and forwarding it to the environmental team will be helpful since this will enable them to make an informed decision regarding the urgency of the response required.

HOUSING PROJECT IN GANSBAAI BACK ON TRACK AFTER MANY CHALLENGES



In mid-September, the Provincial Minister of Human Settlements, Tertius Simmers, attended a ceremonial sod-turning event signifying the restart of the new housing development project in Blompark, Gansbaai.

The Blompark Housing Development, which has a budget allocation of just over R78 million, will deliver 539 top structures. If all goes according to plan, it is expected to be concluded by the end of March 2023.

The development forms part of the Integrated Residential Development Programme. This effectively means that it will not only be a mixed development, consisting of houses for various income groups, but will also include commercial and recreational spaces.

On addressing those present, a clearly thrilled Riana de Coning, Ward Councillor for Blompark, said she and the community of Blompark have been dreaming about this day for years.

Looking back on the development's somewhat troubled history, she recalled the initial excitement when the bulldozers moved onto the terrain in 2017 – only to come to a grinding halt when the contractor went insolvent.

"Despite the disappointment and after many public meetings, the community members were still hopeful and had a deep belief that the project will continue, which it did when civil services recommenced in 2019.

"Then came 2020 with everything forced to a stand-still yet again due to COVID-19.

"Fortunately, by that time, we were well on our way to the completion of the first phase, and the potential beneficiaries again understood the challenges and remained patient.

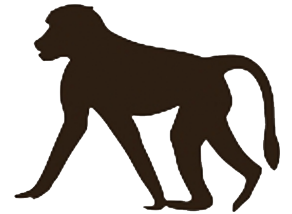
"So here we are today for the ceremonial sod turning to kick-off – or rather jump-start – the second phase in order to realise this community's dreams. For us, it is indeed a wonderful, joyful and happy day," she stated.

In his keynote address, Minister Simmers said: "This is not only the start of a new human settlement development, but also the continuation of how the provincial and local spheres of government are working together for the people. This project will not only improve the living conditions of the people in Blompark, but it will make a significant difference to the other areas as well."

He went on to say that "as much as we've progressed with this process, I'd like to call on these communities to ensure that the sites are not invaded and to work hand-in-hand with their various Project Steering Committees and local municipality to identify and finalise the beneficiary lists so that when the actual units are completed, the correct residents can benefit."

In closing, the Minister said it is critical that the potential beneficiaries are registered on the Housing Demand Database, and that they are the most vulnerable in these communities – in other words, the elderly aged 60-plus, those medically certified as disabled and those who have been on the waiting list for 15 years or longer, as well as backyard dwellers.

THE DEMISE OF SCARFACE UNFORTUNATE, BUT UNAVOIDABLE



The Overstrand Baboon Management Joint Task Team (BMJTT) was established in 2019 as the joint decision-making structure to maintain oversight over the persons tasked with implementing the Strategic Baboon Management (SBMP) in Overstrand, as well as to deal on a consensual basis with contentious or sensitive matters that may arise.

Early in August 2021, the BMJTT met to discuss the recorded incidents and case history of the baboon BBM1, also known as Scarface, belonging to the Betty's Bay/Kleinmond troop.

At this meeting, it was decided to wait for a report commissioned by the municipality from an independent assessor, Dr D Gaynor, on the management of this troop.

Accordingly, the BMJTT yet again convened on 1 September 2021 to consider the report and the case history of BBM1 for the period 19 April to 31 July 2021.

During this period, BBM1 was involved in 94 incidents of which 21 involved raiding of occupied houses, 11 the displaying of threatening behaviour and 35 breaking into, entering and damaging property. This baboon also charged and challenged the staff appointed to manage baboons on numerous occasions.

In accordance with the Provincial Baboon Management Guidelines, the BMJTT had no option but to classify BBM1 as a DCB Category 3 baboon, in other words one that will:

- ❖ approach and take food from people,
- ❖ enter an occupied car/room,
- ❖ break into a car/building,
- ❖ and solicit other troop members to form a temporary raiding group, or more permanent splinter group.

Given the above and with due consideration for the interest, safety and welfare of the Betty's Bay/Kleinmond troop as a whole; the safety of local residents; and the risk of BBM1 being injured or killed through inhumane methods, the BMJTT reached a decision that BBM1 should be removed from the troop.

At this point, various options were discussed and weighed against the probability of viable outcomes. These options included relocating BBM1 to a wilderness/remote rural area or rehabilitation centre. The team also considered fitting the baboon with a shock collar to keep his behaviour in check.

After due consideration, and given the objective of the baboon management programme (i.e. to preserve the species in the wild and not to keep individual baboons alive in captive environments), none of these options proved viable.

Consequently, and with the consent of CapeNature, a unanimous decision was reached that the most humane solution would be to euthanize BBM1.

The operation to capture BBM1 commenced on 17 September 2021 but was derailed due to inclement weather. By this time, several external parties have joined in attempts to locate and capture BBM1, resulting in the baboon being captured by a private organisation around noon the following day.

Unfortunately, the organisation in question did not have the required authorisation and necessary permits to collect and translocate the baboon and the operation they proposed could not be realised at that time.

Cape Nature and Overstrand Municipality agreed that it would not be humane to keep BBM1 sedated and caged for an undisclosed period of time. Therefore, a final decision was reached to euthanase the baboon, a procedure that was performed by an independent veterinarian surgeon.

All parties involved reluctantly sanctioned the euthanasia of this individual baboon, but there was no alternative since all other options had been exhausted. They do, however, firmly believe that this action will contribute towards the sustainable conservation of the the Betty's Bay/Kleinmond baboon troop in the long run.

AMNESTY NOTICE TO ALL INDIGENT SUBSIDY HOUSEHOLDS

Overstrand residents currently receiving or who may qualify to receive an indigent grant are called upon to verify their information before 31 December 2021. As we are aware that current subsidy holders may have received the subsidy in contravention of the approved Indigent Policy, we want to create an opportunity where subsidy holders can come forward and voluntarily declare this without being penalised.

One of the conditions of the policy is that residents who are owners of more than one property, or who do not reside on the property for which the subsidy has been approved, may have to repay the subsidy received to the municipality.

Do not despair; all is not lost:

The Overstrand Municipality offers indigent residents an opportunity for amnesty. Residents who have not occupied, or who are not occupying the property as his/her primary residence, or those who were, or who are, the registered owner of more than one property can make use of the window period

(1 July 2021 to 31 December 2021) to report any transgressions, in writing, to the municipality.

The municipality is also implementing a retrospective exemption from the recovery of any indigent subsidy payment to a customer prior to 30 June 2021 in conflict with the following requirements in terms of this policy:

- occupation of the property by the recipient of an indigent benefit as primary residence;
- the recipient of an indigent benefit in terms of this policy may not be the registered owner of more than one property.

Share this message with loved ones and please contact the municipality urgently before 31 December 2021 to avoid the reversal and collection of the previously awarded subsidy.

Email enquiries@overstrand.gov.za or call 028 313 8912 / 028 313 8027 / 028 313 8933 / 028 313 5060 / 028 313 8042.