

Blaauwberg Nature Reserve's coastline goes 'Green'

South Africa's first Green Coast Status has been awarded to the City of Cape Town's Blaauwberg Nature Reserve in recognition of our commitment to preserving the unique flora and fauna along its coastline.

In light of this achievement, the City's Environmental Management Department and its implementing partner, the Friends of Blaauwberg Conservation Area organisation, will continue to actively monitor, maintain and ensure the accessibility of this coastline while providing opportunities for environmental education, sustainable tourism and the empowerment of local communities.



The City of Cape Town's Blaauwberg Nature Reserve is at the heart of the first Green Coast Status that was awarded to a coastal site in South Africa. The nature reserve is situated in an area that includes approximately 2,000 hectares of pristine coastal landscape, is home to critically endangered vegetation and boasts a 7km coastline.

The Wildlife and Environment Society of South Africa (WESSA), the national implementer for the Green Coast Programme, presented the first official Green Coast Status flag to the City's Environmental Management Department (EMD) and its implementing partner, the Friends of Blaauwberg Conservation Area, during a special ceremony in recognition of their commitment to preserving the unique flora and fauna along the reserve's coastline.

The Green Coast Status complements the International Blue Flag programme as it allows municipalities to sustainably manage coastal sites outside of traditionally developed swimming beaches.

The Green Coast Zone will initially focus on conservation, sustainable tourism and environmental education along the 7km of the coastline. It will thereafter be extended to include the dune field along the R27, which already has an established 4km hiking trail.



More than 200 plant species have been identified and located in this 7km section during extensive studies undertaken by volunteers from Custodians of Rare and Endangered Wildflowers (CREW). The Coastal Walk Flower Guide contains photographs and descriptions of the various flowers that visitors can see when walking the Coastal Dune Trail, depending on the season. The guide is for sale to the public but is available for free to schools for educational purposes.

It's *OUR* responsibility

"As the most biodiverse city in the world, we have a responsibility to conserve and protect this unique biodiversity. But we cannot do it alone. Valuable partnerships with local communities and organisations enable us to sustainably manage our precious fauna and flora while also providing opportunities for environmental education, sustainable tourism and the empowerment of local communities," said Councillor Brett Herron, Mayoral Committee Member for Transport and Urban Development.

WESSA developed the Green Coast award to recognise rural coastal sites that are managed according to standardised criteria and are able to maintain a consistent improvement of conditions at the site. Green Coast sites aim to protect at least one of three main coastal themes, namely: sensitive habitats, sensitive species and cultural heritage.

"The WESSA Green Coast Programme aims to empower local communities through incentivising effective conservation and environmental education initiatives. The Blaauwberg Nature Reserve has shown ongoing commitment to conserving and monitoring its sensitive coastal areas and has maintained the high standard set out by the WESSA Green Coast criteria," said Robert Slater, WESSA's National Coastal co-ordinator.

WESSA will review the status annually.



The Blaauwberg Hill at the nature reserve is one of the few viewpoints in the world from where you can see two proclaimed World Heritage Sites, namely, Table Mountain and Robben Island.

"The Blaauwberg Nature Reserve coastal strip is unique as it contains some of the most diverse fauna and flora. It also embraces the values and aims of a Green Coast site which include cultural heritage value, environmental education and

awareness programmes as well as the promotion of sustainable ecotourism".

"This award has certainly put our beautiful coastline on the tourism map and we are looking forward to welcoming more visitors to our nature reserve who are looking for experiences in adventure, outdoor living and ecotourism along our coastline".

"The City cannot uphold the Green Coast Status on our own. We need the support of our communities and organisations to ensure the success of the Green Coast Programme. We think particularly of our next generation of nature enthusiasts. There are opportunities for our schools to participate in our Green Coast Environmental Education Programme that will be hosted in partnership with the Transport and Urban Development Authority (TDA) Training Academy, which will provide young people with the opportunity to learn about nature and science in a fun and interactive outdoor classroom environment. I encourage our schools to make use of these opportunities".

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