

**Relocation of gas turbine units at Acacia power station (near Goodwood)
to the existing Ankerlig Power station site in Atlantis industria:
Terrestrial Fauna Environmental Impact Assessment Report**

Prepared by

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Submitted to

Savannah Environmental (PTY) Ltd
On behalf of

Eskom

August 2008

Background and brief

Eskom commissioned Savannah Environmental (Pty) Ltd to assess the relocation of gas turbines from the Acacia Power Station (located in Goodwood) to the Ankerlig Power Station site. In order to connect these turbines to the power grid, Eskom proposed the construction of a short 132 kV line (approximately 1 km in length). Three options for the line were put forward by Eskom. From the scoping study which was undertaken on the basis of existing information (Savannah Environmental 2008), Option 3 has been excluded as this option will have a higher impact on the surrounding area. P. le F. N. Mouton was commissioned to provide a short write up regarding which of the remaining two options would be preferred in terms of terrestrial fauna.

Discussion

Originally the Atlantis Industrial area would have been vegetated by Cape Flats Dune Strandveld (on the Witsand formation sands) and marginally also Atlantis Sand Fynbos (on the Springfontyn formation sands (Mucina & Rutherford 2006). The remaining vegetation patches on the area has, however, been severely degraded and transformed due to human disturbance. Large areas are now dominated by alien plants.

From a faunal perspective, the Cape Flats Dune Strandveld is probably the most sensitive habitat in the Atlantis study area. The recently described Blouberg Dwarf Burrowing Skink (*Scelotes montispectus*) is associated with this habitat, as well as several other species of conservation concern (Dickson's Strandveld Copper, Gronovi's Dwarf Burrowing Skink, Kasner's Dwarf Burrowing Skink, Cape Sand Snake, Large-scaled Girdled Lizard, Silvery Dwarf Burrowing Skink, Cuvier's Blind Legless Skink, and Austen's Thick-toed Gecko) (Mouton 2008). None of these essentially coastal species have yet been recorded to the east of the West Coast Road (R27) and it is highly unlikely that any of them will be present Atlantis Industrial area. Even if present, the erection of a power line will not significantly add to the environmental stress already being experienced by terrestrial fauna in the affected areas. It is furthermore concluded that the two options will not differ in any significant way as far as potential impact on terrestrial fauna is concerned. Previous surveys in the same area revealed dense populations of the Cape gerbil (*Tatera afra*) in areas invaded by Port Jackson (Mouton 2008). This is not a threatened species and construction of a power line will only have short term local effects on the species, if any.

In summary, as far as terrestrial fauna is concerned, there do not appear to be any obvious risks associated with the construction of a power line on the Ankerlig Power Station site. Although a number of Red Data reptile and frog species may potentially occur in the affected areas, their presence remains unconfirmed. Because of the severely degraded nature of the habitat associated with each of the route options, no argument can be presented in favour of or against any of the two options regarding their potential impact on terrestrial fauna.

References

- MOUTON, P.LE F.N. 2008. Proposed Ankerlig to Omega Transmission Power Line: Terrestrial Fauna EIA Report. Savannah Environmental (PTY) Ltd.
- MUCINA, L. & RUTHERFORD, M.C. (eds). 2006. The vegetation of South Africa, Lesotho and Swaziland. *Strelitzia* 19. South African National Biodiversity Institute, Pretoria.
- SAVANNAH ENVIRONMENTAL. 2008. Draft Scoping Report: Proposed Decommissioning and relocation of the three gas turbine units at Acacia Power station (Near Goodwood, Western Cape) and one gas turbine unit at Port Rex Power Station (Near East London, Eastern Cape) to the existing Ankerlig Power Station in Atlantis Industria, Western Cape.