

Saving water where we can!

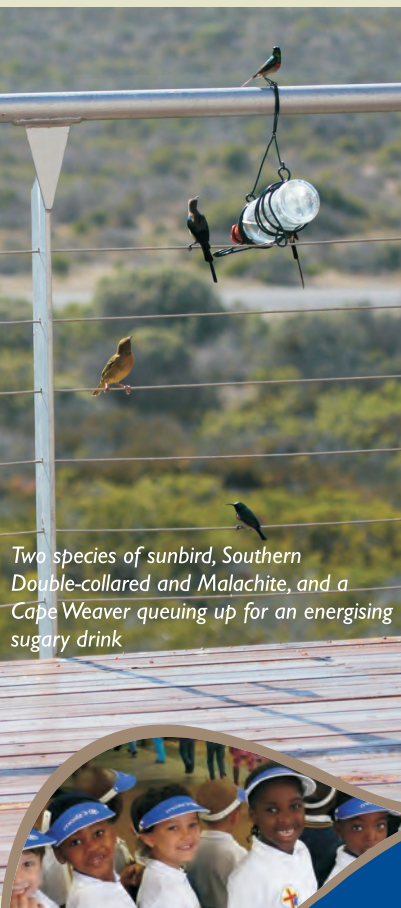
The drought conditions in the Western Cape are tough on everyone, not just humans, but animals as well. The Visitors Centre is surrounded by dense duneveld shrubbery and a variety of animals and birds are seen around the centre daily.

The staff at the Visitors Centre have come up with some very clever ways to help out the many creatures with whom they share the space.

Several water points have been created and a bird feeder with sugar water has proven very popular.

The water from the centre's airconditioning system outlet is also collected in a bucket for animals to quench their thirst.

The Visitors Centre staff challenges others to do the same!



Two species of sunbird, Southern Double-collared and Malachite, and a Cape Weaver queuing up for an energising sugary drink



Glodene Smith and Melvyn Miles collecting water from the aircon runoff for wildlife

False killer whale strandings

On 3 February 2018 the carcass of a beached false killer whale (*Seudorca crassidens*) was found on Koeberg's beach. The following day another carcass was found south of plant's intake basin. A necropsy (animal autopsy) was performed by the Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) and will hopefully provide more clarity. Koeberg Nature Reserve staff were on hand to offer assistance.

Both animals had bruises and lacerations across their bodies, most likely from being struck by a boat.



According to a DEA media release, visitors to the reserve tried to refloat one of the animals on 2 February, but were unsuccessful. Three adults and a calf beached at Milnerton and were successfully refloatated by members of the public. These animals form strong social bonds and will not easily give up on a pod member. The stranding of one animal can often lead to a group stranding.

The group was seen circling in the harbour at the V & A Waterfront for several days and were eventually guided out by a team from Two Oceans Aquarium, City of Cape Town, NSRI and Dyer Island Conservation Trust.

What should you do if you discover a beached marine animal?

Contact one of the following organizations:

Two Oceans Aquarium - 021 418 3823

DEA - 083 462 5345

City of Cape Town - 083 940 8143

NSRI - 082 380 3800

Article by Sabirah Gallie



Fired up!



Fire ant (*Solenopsis Westwood*)

This fiery little creature belongs to the Solenopsidini family of ants (*Solenopsis westwood*) and are known as 'fire ants' for two reasons: Firstly, most are reddish-yellow in colour and occur in large, vigorously biting swarms that resemble restless flames. Secondly they have a painful sting, which they are not shy to dish out repeatedly. And worst of all, it burns like crazy!

Some people may be allergic to their venom, and as with many allergies, may experience anaphylaxis, which requires emergency treatment. The site of the sting swells into a painful and irritating bump.

What should I do if I get stung by a fire ant?

- Ice the sting off and on (15 min on, 15 min off)
- Use an ice pack, or put the ice in a towel.
- Do not use heat
- Raise the stung body part to reduce swelling
- Take antihistamine and use hydrocortisone cream to relieve itching



The 'Rooisuikerblom' (*Tylecodon grandiflorus*) can be seen flowering all over the West Coast and also in the Koeberg Nature Reserve.

They are endemic to the South-Western Cape and are toxic, so don't be tempted to pick them!



Proactively removing alien grass

In the early 1980's Eskom introduced Marram grass (*Ammophila arenaria*) to the nature reserve in an attempt to stabilize the mobile dune system north of the power station.

It was done in response to an assessment which warned that the moving sand could pose a threat to the power station. Research on the use of Marram grass to stabilise dunes were done at the De Mond Nature Reserve.

Originally the introduced plants were sterile, with a lifespan of seven years. However some remnants of the grass is still present in the dune systems at Koeberg. Four patches were found, showing varying stages of recolonisation.

On 16 February 2018 the 'National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act 2004 (act No. 10 Of 2004) Draft Amendments To The Alien And Invasive Species Lists' was published for review.

In this draft document Marram grass is listed as a Category 2 invasive species in the Western Cape, meaning that Koeberg will need to a permit for any Marram grass in the reserve. A proactive decision was taken to remove the small patches of this invasive grass instead.

Marram grass being removed in the reserve



Please prevent veld fires



Cape Peninsula Fire Protection Association

24 Hour Emergency Number

☎ 021 480 7700 ☎ 107