

## Learning about nuclear

Visitors Centre staff participated in the recent Milnerton Library Holiday Programme. Some eager young minds were captivated by how a nuclear power station works, despite the holiday mood.

Surprisingly, the first question they wanted answered was “can Koeberg explode like a nuclear bomb?”. After explaining to them that the fuel being used at Koeberg can never explode like a bomb, their fears were put to rest and they enjoyed the presentation and film clips on offer.



## Penguin rescue

At the beginning of November 2017 conservation staff rescued an African penguin from the slipway at Koeberg Nuclear Power Station.

Juvenile penguins are called ‘Blues’. ‘Blue’ was assessed by Koeberg’s environmental officer, Jurina le Roux. She suspected that it was suffering from bronchitis. ‘Blue’ was then taken to SANCCOB for treatment and rehabilitation, and eventual release into the wild.



**“expected to be extinct within 15 years”**

The African penguin (*Spheniscus demersus*), also known as the jackass penguin or black-footed penguin, only occurs in southern African waters. It was called a “jackass” penguin for its donkey-like call, although several related species of South American penguins produce the same sound.

Around 1910 it was estimated that the African penguin population was nearly 1,5 million strong. Since then, their numbers have declined by 95%. By 2000 the total population had been reduced to around 200 000. In 2010 the number was estimated to be only 55 000. If this decline is not stopped, the African penguin is expected to be extinct within 15 years!

In 2012 it was estimated that around 18 700 pairs breed in South Africa, mostly on St Croix Island in Algoa Bay, and a further 5 000 pairs in Namibia.

Please report any sightings of penguins to Jurina le Roux at [jurina.leroux@eskom.co.za](mailto:jurina.leroux@eskom.co.za).



## Have a happy festive season!





# Creature feature

## Small creature ~ B-E-E-G name!

This small creature will fit in the palm of your hand, but it has one of the longest common names in the reptile kingdom!

The **Bloubergstrand Short-legged Dwarf Burrowing Skink** (*Scelotes montispectus*) is listed as 'threatened' due to its highly restricted distribution in the southwestern Cape. The species was first discovered in 2001 and very little is known about them. Several specimens have been found at the Koeberg Nature Reserve.

They reach a maximum length of around 20cm and their limbs are almost completely reduced. Their bodies are covered in polished, tight fitting scales to allow them to 'swim' through the sand.

There are only 13 species in the group (*Scelotus*). A special characteristic is that they give birth to live young, with litter sizes varying from one to four.



The species was first discovered in 2001

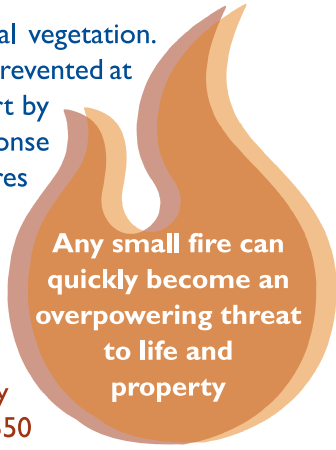
Reduced limbs



## Be aware of fires

Wildfires pose a big risk to Koeberg, its people and the nature reserve. Fires are a natural phenomenon during summer, however too frequent fires may impact biodiversity and ecosystems negatively. With the current limited water resources, situations could easily become dangerous. Fire and rescue services are stretched to a maximum during the fire season when wildfires occur daily. The prevailing south-easterly wind, accompanied by long hot days, dries out natural vegetation and any small fire can quickly become an overpowering threat to life and property.

Koeberg has large areas of natural vegetation. The threat of wildfires need to be prevented at all costs. You can play a crucial part by reporting fires to emergency response services. More than 90% of wildfires are caused by human activities.



### Please take note of the following:

- Report fires at Koeberg immediately to the Emergency Control Centre on 021 550 4222. If not on Koeberg property, report to City of Cape Town Fire & Rescue on 021 480 7700 or 107.
- Never dispose of burning cigarette butts carelessly, report such behaviour to 021 424 7715 (Stompie hotline).
- If living close to a high fire risk zone, maintain necessary firebreaks and make sure visible fire extinguishers are in place and operational.
- Only make fires in designated areas and make sure the fires are completely out before leaving the area

Stompie hotline  
021 4247715

