

# SIMON'S TOWN PENGUIN COLONY

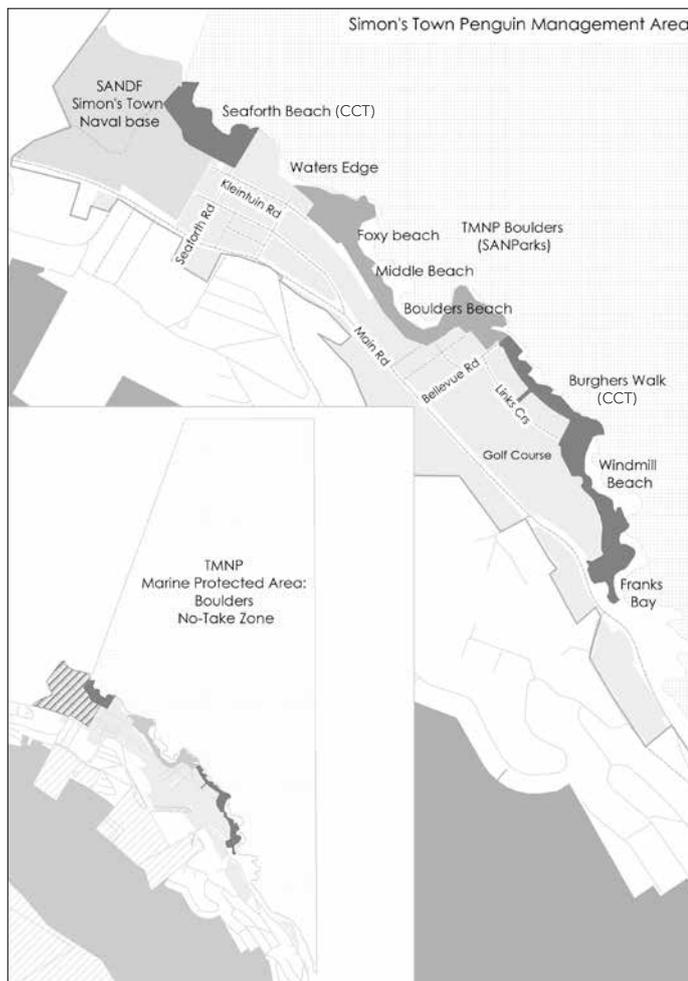
February 2018

## WORKING TOGETHER TO KEEP THE PENGUINS SAFE

One of the things that makes Simon's Town a special place to live in and visit is being close to a thriving colony of penguins. There's a team of dedicated monitors working every day to keep these endangered seabirds safe.

The successful penguin monitoring and management programme is the result of a partnership of a number of organisations. These include the Environmental Management Department, which is part of the City of Cape Town's Transport and Urban Development Authority (TDA), the South African National Parks (SANParks), the South African Foundation for the Conservation of Coastal Birds (SANCCOB), and the Cape Town Environmental Education Trust (CTEET).

The City recently entered into a three-year agreement with SANCCOB to assist with research and penguin monitoring.



This includes the appointment of a coordinator for the Simon's Town penguin area. SANCCOB also funds the penguin-monitoring programme.

The monitors are appointed by CTEET, an environmental education and training not-for-profit organisation. The monitors have either come through the learnership programme or have studied through the Cape Peninsula University of Technology. As part of its work, CTEET encourages children to connect to nature through environmental education programmes, runs training and development programmes for youth in nature-based career paths, and directs funds towards conservation activities in Cape Town.

### Working together to manage the area

The African penguin, *Spheniscus demersus*, is listed as endangered on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species and, as such, the Simon's Town penguin colony is a top conservation priority.

The sections of the Simon's Town penguin colony from Seafarth Beach to Water's Edge Beach, and from Burghers' Walk to Windmill Beach and Franks Bay, are free access areas managed by TDA's Environmental Management Department. The Boulders section is managed by the South African National Parks (SANParks), which charges an access fee.

The marine environment adjacent to the penguin colony is part of the Table Mountain National Park Marine Protected Area (MPA), which stretches from Muizenberg around Cape Point to Green Point.

The Boulders Restricted Zone is one of six "no-take zones" where no fishing is allowed and activities such as diving are regulated. The zone, which is home to several threatened species, including abalone, west coast rock lobster, red steenbras, and bank cormorants, is an important feeding ground for the penguins. Kelp forests provide food and a haven for thousands of species, from colourful sea anemones to endemic cat sharks.

### YOU CAN HELP THE PENGUINS

Make a donation to assist with the penguin programme.  
See back page for details.



# MEET YOUR PENGUIN MONITORS

An enthusiastic team undertakes penguin-related work and assists with penguin monitoring and rescues in the colony.



**Mashudu Mashau, Site Coordinator**

**From:** Venda, Limpopo

**Education:** BSc Honours Degree in Conservation Biology, University of Venda.

**Loves:** Working outdoors in the field rather than being stuck in an office.

**Spare time:** Mashudu enjoys anything that gets him outside, playing soccer and hiking (he has climbed Table Mountain over 10 times).



**Mcoseleli Kidwell Juqu, Penguin Monitor**

**From:** Mount Fletcher, Eastern Cape

**Education:** NQF Level 2 in Nature Conservation from CTEET.

**Loves:** Learning about plants and animals, and using his knowledge of conservation to create positive change for future generations.

**Spare time:** Kidwell is an actor and screenplay writer, and has appeared in Generations and Rhythm City television shows.



**Khanyisa Ndzwaiba, Penguin Monitor**

**From:** Mthatha, Eastern Cape

**Education:** National Diploma in Nature Conservation from CPUT, and is currently doing a BTech in Nature Conservation.

**Loves:** Being involved in the conservation of seabirds and the challenges in managing them.

**Spare time:** Khanyisa enjoys spending time with her family, reading and hiking.



**Adrian Felix, Penguin Monitor**

**From:** Cape Town, Western Cape

**Education:** Environmental Management Level 5 qualification from CTEET.

**Loves:** The daily challenge of rescuing penguins and educating the public about these special birds.

**Spare time:** Adrian loves being outdoors and active, plays soccer and is a lover of music.



**Zukile May, Penguin Supervisor**

**From:** Cape Town, Western Cape

**Education:** Studied Nature Conservation through CPUT.

**Loves:** Discovering new things about African penguins and their environment every day.

**Spare time:** Zukile loves to hike with friends, plays football, and enjoys relaxing and listening to soul music.



**Sheroma Surajnarayan, Marine Biology Intern**

**From:** Durban, KwaZulu-Natal

**Education:** BSc Honours Degree in Environmental Monitoring and Modelling from UNISA.

**Loves:** Working hands-on with penguins every day, having the opportunity to study their behaviour and unique personalities.

**Spare time:** Sheroma is a professional singer who can sing in eight languages and play the drums. She is also a qualified laughter yoga teacher and Zumba fitness instructor.

**"It is a privilege to be part of team helping to preserve this highly endangered species. Every time I save a penguin I feel good about myself."**

Zukile May, Penguin Supervisor

# MANY ASPECTS TO PROTECTING THE PENGUINS

Every day the penguin management team is busy ensuring that these rare seabirds are protected, and co-exist peacefully with residents and visitors in the Simon's Town coastal area.

## Residential sweeps

Three times a week monitors look for penguins breeding outside designated areas and move them to safety. This includes places where they have to cross roads to get to the sea, are vulnerable to attacks by dogs or are on private properties where they are not welcome. Chicks and eggs found during these sweeps are taken to SANCCOB for incubation and hand-rearing.

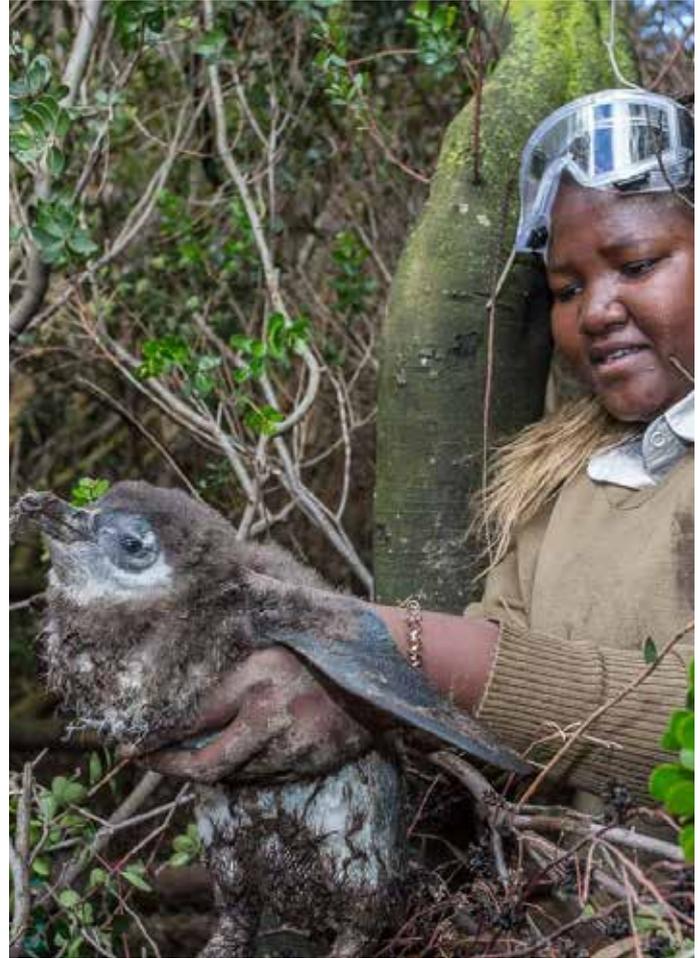
## Microchip monitoring

The penguins used to be marked with flipper bands, but now small microchips implanted under their skin are used. Birds can be identified using a hand-held or ground reader. This greatly reduces stress for the penguins and allows the easy collection of a wealth of data. Ground readers installed at Stony Point and Robben Island also provide important information on survival, movement and site fidelity of penguins. During 2018, a ground reader will be installed in Simon's Town.

## Annual breeding season

African penguins usually breed and moult once a year. During a moult, they replace all their feathers to retain their waterproofing properties. When this happens they are land bound and can't go to sea to feed. The moult starts a few weeks after the chicks have successfully fledged, which gives the adults time to fatten up for their three-week fast.

In some years, birds lose their first clutch of eggs or chicks due to bad weather events such as heat waves or storms, or a shortage of food (small pelagic fish). The birds may try to breed again later in the year. If this coincides with the moulting period, adults abandon their chicks as they can't feed them. The penguin management team comes to the rescue, taking the chicks to SANCCOB for hand-rearing and release once they are old enough to go to sea. The current conservation status is such that every one of these late-season chicks needs to be saved.



## Dealing with pollution

Fortunately, there were no major oil spills or pollution events near the colony in 2017. Nevertheless, penguins and other birds still get oiled and need to be taken to SANCCOB for cleaning and rehabilitation.

In April, three adult penguins were oiled after sitting underneath a car in Gay Road. In August, an adult penguin was found with a plastic ring around its head and beak. Luckily, all these birds were successfully rehabilitated and released.

All residents need to play their part in preventing pollution, on land or sea, to reduce the negative impacts on the marine environment.

## Reducing threats

Historically penguins bred on the offshore islands, safely protected from land-based predators. The destruction of the breeding habitat on the islands, due to guano collection, reduced their ability to breed successfully. However, the land-based colonies that have established themselves in recent times are vulnerable to predators, including caracal, mongoose, seals and even leopards in some areas. Feral and domestic cats and dogs are also responsible for penguin deaths. In 2017, 23 penguins were killed on the roads.

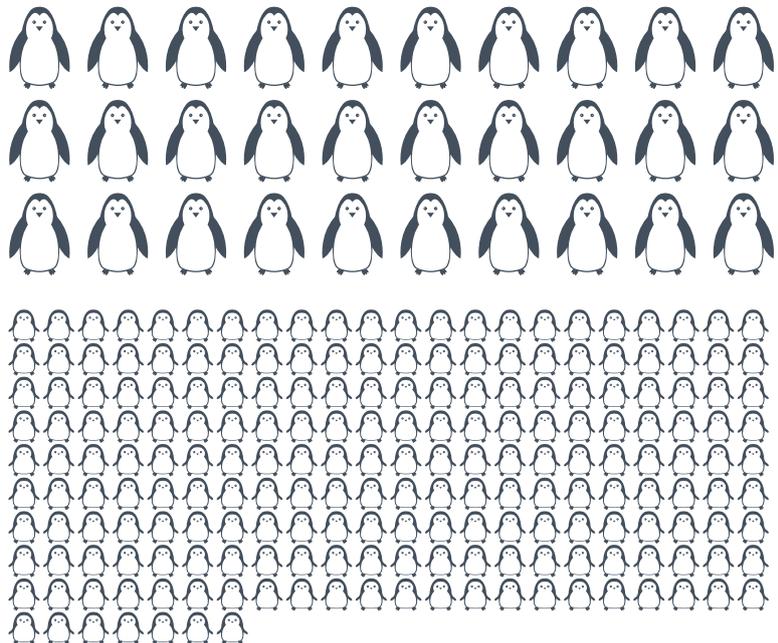


# SIMON'S TOWN PENGUIN FACTS - 2017

**DID YOU KNOW?**



Boulders is home to at least **854** breeding pairs



**30** adults and **205** fledglings were released at Boulders and Seaforth Beach

## PENGUINS ADMITTED TO SANCCOB:

**3**  
oiled birds

**+** **44**  
injured birds

**366**  
chicks rescued

**152**  
eggs saved

## OTHER SPECIES RESCUED AND TAKEN TO SANCCOB

- |                          |                         |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>2</b> Cape gannets    | <b>1</b> Bank cormorant |
| <b>6</b> Cape cormorants | <b>1</b> Swift tern     |
| <b>3</b> Kelp gulls      |                         |

## KEEP PENGUINS SAFE

Residents and visitors are urged to:

- Check under cars before driving off
- Drive slowly in areas where there may be penguins
- Keep dogs on a leash in penguin areas
- Keep dogs out of areas where they are not permitted

### How you can help the penguins

Donations are welcome. Last year a generous guesthouse owner in Simon's Town donated the entire year's proceeds from his guesthouse to the penguin monitoring project. Thank you!

If you would like to contribute, contact: SANCCOB (Southern African Foundation for the Conservation of Coastal Birds), 22 Pentz Drive, Table View. Call **021 557 6155** or **078 638 3731**, email [info@sanccob.co.za](mailto:info@sanccob.co.za) or visit [www.sanccob.co.za](http://www.sanccob.co.za)

### Contact numbers

Report injured or oiled birds in Simon's Town  
Penguin monitors: **076 624 7454**  
TMNP Boulders office: **021 786 2329**

Report emergencies, general law enforcement and marine-related offences, call: **021 480 7700** or

TDA 24/7 call centre: **0800 65 64 63**

