

Conservation Corner

By Simonne Sables

The Symphony Way Conservation Area (SWCA) is approximately 100 hectares in size and managed by the City of Cape Town's Biodiversity Management Branch. The Cape Bird Club's Gerhard Bothma undertakes quarterly bird counts at SWCA together with reserve staff and other volunteers, as well as monthly bird counts at nearby Edith Stephens Nature Reserve which is part of the same management cluster.

Located adjacent to Delft and Belhar, and the Cape Town International Airport, SWCA plays an important role in conserving Endangered Cape Flats Dune Strandveld; this has benefits for the local community and provides stepping stones linking other nature reserves.

Since active management began in late 2018, staff have diligently conducted alien clearing activities, as the area was heavily infested with the alien Port Jackson (*Acacia saligna*) and Rooikrans (*Acacia cyclops*). Ninety-five per cent of the initial clearing has now been completed.



Alien Port Jackson being cleared from a heavily infested dune slack

Photo: Simonne Sables



A "new" wetland in the north-eastern corner re-established itself, following alien clearing, as this led to less water being used by the alien vegetation

Photo: Ricardo Downes

The area has become a new refuge for various amphibian species. During baseline assessments in 2019, only 2 individuals of the frog species Flat Caco were heard calling. Now it is impossible to identify numbers as there is such a cacophony!



The endemic Flat Caco (*Cacosternum platys*)

Photo: Mike Buckham

There is also now an abundance of birds on site, including species that are new to the site from the start of the management period. These species include (but are not limited to): African Stonechat, Black-crowned Night heron, Malachite Kingfisher and Booted Eagle.



Continual maintenance of the site showcases how a healthy environment naturally attracts wildlife
Photo: Ricardo Downes

As Reserve Supervisor for the SWCA I am extremely grateful to the hard-working staff who have dedicated themselves to the protection and conservation of our beautiful natural heritage, the impacts of which can be seen by our fairly regular recordings of new species on site.

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