



WESSA KZN Newsletter February 2025

IN THIS ISSUE

HEADING INTO 2025

- Pg 01 Environmental Challenges & Action
- Pg 02 07 Mar Just Transitions Webinar 13h30–14h45
- Pg 02 Special Awareness Days

EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

- Pg 02 09 Oct Educators Workshop at uShaka Marine
- Pg 03 18 Oct Adams School Grade 7 Career Day
- Pg 03 24 Oct Art For the Earth Workshop
- Pg 04 05 Nov Weed Buster Week
- Pg 04 09 Nov InjaYethu Environmental Career Expo
- Pg 05 30 Nov KZN Volunteers' Hike in Giba Gorge
- Pg 05 02 Dec Treasure Beach Action Learning
- Pg 06 07 Dec Year-end Social
- Pg 07 15 Feb Beachwood Cleanup & Induction

NEWS FROM THE BRANCHES

Sani Wildlife Branch

- Pg 08 Schools' Essay winners at Umgeni Valley

Pg 10 Sani Wildlife Flower Walk

Pg 11 **Southern KZN Branch**

WESSA KZN PROJECTS

- Pg 12 Havaan Forest Project: Visit by Prof Eugene Moll
- Pg 13 uMbogavango Environmental Education Project

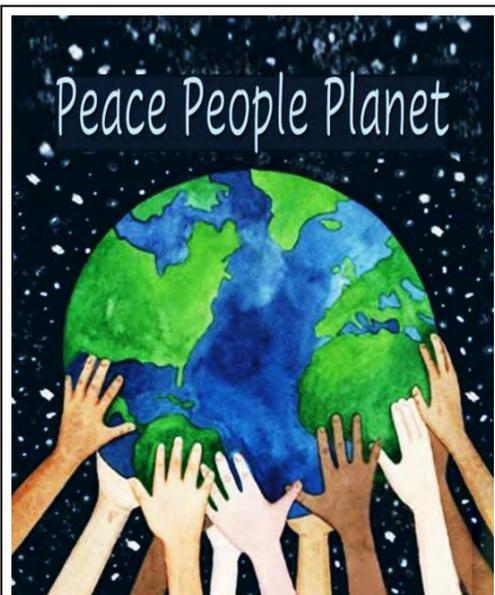
NEWS FROM THE NETWORK

- Pg 14 Save African Penguins from Extinction
- Pg 15 NJSA Artivism for African Penguins
- Pg 15 EEPAN Webinars
- Pg 16 CJCM Terra Madre Day
- Pg 16 ACM-TDC The People's Plan for the Right to Housing in the Age of Climate Change

KZN REGION GENERAL INFORMATION

Jenny Duvenage: Editing; Research; Layout & Design; Content unless otherwise stated.

EDUCATE. ADVOCATE. ACT



Heading into 2025 | Environmental Challenges & Action

Climate Change ♦ Biodiversity Loss ♦ Pollution

As we head into 2025, we all know the Earth is being subjected to ever-increasing environmental destruction resulting in [intensifying extreme weather](#), [biodiversity loss](#), and mounting levels of [human-generated waste](#) and [pollution](#) — all of which are threatening ecosystems, economies and human well-being.

We are a quarter of a century into the new millennium and time is not on our side. A lack of [risk-informed urban planning](#), [blocked waterways](#), [invasive alien vegetation](#) ... and many other factors are all worsening the impacts of extreme weather, hence the [need for urgent action](#) has never been greater. As the biggest contributor to climate change in Africa, South Africa must [take the lead](#) in [reducing greenhouse gas emissions](#) and increasing resilience, with individuals, communities, civil society, business and government working together

It is vital that people rise up, pull together and lead the way towards making meaningful progress in: renewable energy roll-out; strengthening of efforts to protect natural habitats and endangered species; practicing a [circular economy](#); controlling and eliminating waste and pollution; and creating climate jobs through the implementation of a [deep Just Transition](#). 2025 must be the year we act decisively and collaboratively to build a sustainable, resilient future for our children and generations to come.

Join EEPAN's Monthly Webinar

We're just a day away from our monthly webinar!
Please join us this Friday, 7th March 13h30–14h45
for an insightful discussion on 'Just Transitions'



Join us for our March Webinar

**JUST TRANSITIONS: Innovation and
action learning for sustainable futures.**

A dialogue and discussion with Dr Jim Taylor, associate researcher at CWRR (UKZN) and Rhodes scholar and citizen science advocate, Ms Nkosi Sithole.

Friday 7th March 13h30 - 14h45

JUST TRANSITIONS

Innovation & Action Learning for Sustainable Futures – a dialogue and discussion with Dr Jim Taylor and Ms Nkosi Sithole

Jim Taylor is a research associate at the Centre for Water Resources Research at UKZN. He worked for WESSA for 35 years and was director of Environmental Education. Social change for sustainability, Citizen Science and artificial intelligence innovations are his current interest areas.

Nkosi Sithole is passionate about citizen science in support of community mobilization for sustainability. Her Master's degree, through Rhodes University, was awarded cum laude and focused on the role of community-based water quality management in addressing water quality issues in the uMngeni catchment.

Zoom Link

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85767076875?pwd=HqRsF5Xzd6vQbIXT9PLHTWUVm6OVLJ.1>

Meeting ID: 857 6707 6875 | Passcode: 612127

Further info: Luci Coelho luci@realconsulting.co.za
or Margaret Burger margaret@burgerip.co.za

2025 SPECIAL AWARENESS DAYS

January

19 International Flower Day
20 Penguin Awareness Day
26 World Environmental Education Day
28 World Reducing CO² Emissions Day
31 International Zebra Day

February

02 World Wetlands Day
10 World Pulses Day
14 World Bonobo Day
15 World Hippopotamus Day
15 World Pangolin Day
16 World Whale Day
20 World Day of Social Justice
27 World Polar Bear Day

March

03 World Wildlife Day
06 World Energy Efficiency Day
08 International Women's Day
14 International Day of Action for Rivers
15 Digital Cleanup Day
18 Global Recycling Day
20 World Meat Out Day
20 World Frog Day
21 Human Rights Day (SA)
21 International Day of Forests
21 World Poetry Day
22 World Water Day
22 Earth Hour
23 World Meteorological Day
20-26 National Water Week
30 International Day of Zero Waste

EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

09 October | Educators Workshop at uShaka Marine

By Siziwe Hlongwa | Photo credits: S. Hlongwa, S. Ndlozi and SAAMBR staff

uMbogavango education guides, Siziwe Hlongwa, Sibusi Chonco and Sipiwe Ndlozi attended the eighth uShaka Sea World Education Teachers' Workshop at [uShaka Sea World Education Centre](#).



This second to last workshop focused on the theme, '*Inspiring lesson plans: Alternative approaches to sustain learner and educator interest*'. It was facilitated by Gail, one of the uShaka Sea World educators

Left (L-R)

1. Siziwe Hlongwa, Sibusi Chonco, Sipiwe Ndlozi and Sea-World Educator, Gail after the workshop session.
2. Gail showing the internal mouth parts of a fish during dissection.
3. Sipiwe leading a fish dissection in his group, followed by Sibusi and Siziwe.

18 October | Adams School Grade 7 Career Day

By Siphwe Ndlozi | Photo credits: B. Chisale



On October 18th, Adams Senior Primary School hosted a Grade 7 Career Day. The event was held in the assembly area of the school. The objective was to expose Grade 7s to a variety of career choices and guide learners on subject choices when they go to high school.

A prayer was followed by introductions and presentations from learners and guest speakers. WESSA began the proceedings. We first introduced ourselves and thereafter, Bongani introduced WESSA and Silungile introduced careers within the environmental field with additional input from Bongani.

The Durban Natural Science Museum presented on careers with the museum followed by a sister from the Department of Health, a firefighter and lastly, an entrepreneur. Finally, the headmaster delivered a vote of thanks. After the program we were served with food and beverages.

24 October | Art for the Earth Workshop

By Sibusi Chonco | Photo credits: S. Hlongwa and M. Burger

On October 24th, a group of WESSA volunteers travelled to Galago Farm in Pietermaritzburg for an art workshop led by Pandora Schep. As part of her 'Art for the Earth' series, Pandora introduced various watercolour techniques aimed at capturing landscapes in new and creative ways. Among those attending were the WESSA team, including Margaret, Siziwe, Bernard, and Sibusi, as well as Rosemary and a guest from Hilton. Pandora's approach focuses on the use of unconventional tools and everyday items like toothbrushes, paper towels and sponges, enabling different textures and effects. The workshop also demonstrated the versatility of watercolours and letting the colours naturally flow on to the canvas. This hands-on experience left us inspired and more confident in experimenting with watercolours in our own ways. Guided by Pandora, we learned to see the world through colour, texture, and light, discovering new ways to express our shared love for the earth.



Left: Creativity and connection at Galago Farm **Right:** Proudly displaying the finished creations

05 November | Weedbuster Workshop

By Siphwe Ndlozi



On November 5th, [National Weedbuster Week](#) was hosted by eThekweni Municipality's Biodiversity Management Department. The event was held at the Durban ICC with the objective of educating on ways to control and monitor invasive alien plants (IAPs) and ecological restoration.

After tea and registration, Bheka Nxele welcomed the audience and gave an overview of the programme.

Topics covered were:

Keynote address by Prof Mlungu Nsikani on the eight principles underpinning ecological restoration; Palm species;

[Msinsi Holdings](#): control of aquatic weeds and invasive alien plants; Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE); and WildTrust on the [Buffelsdraai Restoration Project](#). This was followed by Q&As and tea. The event resumed with six speakers, notably Bheka Memela on the three waves of Biodiversity Stewardship; Dr Daniel Egli on the biological control of invasive alien plants; and Dr Sebataolo Rahlaolo on marine invasive species. The last speaker talked about the seven golden rules for holistic invasive species management.

09 November | uMhlanga Lagoon Enviro Education with Inja Yethu Celebrating Children's Day

By Zuzile Mpanza | Photo credits: T. Tsotetsi and M. Burger

On November 9th, WESSA KZN hosted a guided walk for Inja Yethu at uMhlanga Lagoon Nature Reserve. The purpose of the day included raising awareness about nature conservation and exposing kids to environmental careers. Thirteen children and four adults from InjaYethu attended.



30 November | KZN Volunteers' Hike in Giba Gorge

By Sibusi Chonco | Photo credits S. Hlongwa, S. Maphumulo and S. Chonco



The WESSA KZN Youth Hike, held on 30th November at Giba Gorge, was a remarkable opportunity for volunteers to come together and celebrate our shared passion for the environment. The objective of the event was to be a team-building exercise, strengthening bonds within the team while enjoying the outdoors.

Although attendance was modest, with ten participants, the small group dynamic allowed for meaningful interaction, ensuring everyone felt included and connected.

The 8km trail, though challenging for some, offered a perfect blend of adventure and tranquillity. The trail led us to two stunning waterfalls, which became focal points for admiration and photo opportunities.

The journey was not just about physical activity but also about sharing stories, laughter, and ideas. Participants enjoyed the opportunity to learn more about one another, deepening relationships that will undoubtedly enhance future WESSA initiatives.

The hike was a resounding success in achieving its goals of team building and fostering a sense of unity among volunteers. It reminded us of the importance of connecting with nature as a source of renewal and inspiration for our environmental efforts. The hike underscored the value of coming together as a team to celebrate our shared commitment to protecting and appreciating the natural world.

02 December | Treasure Beach Action Learning

By Silungile Maphumulo



Pinetown Senior Primary School arrived at the Treasure Beach Education Centre at 09h00 and were given an introduction to WESSA and the Centre.

Thereafter, we had an ice-breaker guessing what the WESSA acronym stood for. Fun, interactive ice-breakers followed and we briefed the teachers and students on the rules and dress attire suitable for the rocky shores.



After the introductions, we packed first aid bags, species identification boards, and water for the short hike to Treasure Beach. On arrival, we split the learners into two groups for species identification. Sithe supervised one group, while Ncamisile and Silungile supervised the second. It was a fun activity and we were able to spot [sponges](#), [zoanths](#), and countless crabs. After an hour on the Beach, we went back to the Education Centre for lunch. This was followed by active team building games with ropes and cones in the braai area. The final team-building game was 'Catchment to Coast' in which each student was given pictures illustrating different sustainable and unsustainable practices. As the game proceeded and the pictures were correctly allocated, a puzzle was completed showing learners land use along the rivers from 'Source to Sea'. It also showed negative impacts due to human development. At day end, the teachers completed evaluation forms and the bus came to take everyone home.

07 December | Year-end Social at Mount Argus

The year-end WESSA KZN Youth Social was great fun and a wonderful way to round out the year. It was held at Mount Argus, always the perfect venue with its cool, spacious verandah and wild, indigenous garden. ❤️





15 February | Beachwood Cleanup & Induction

By Sibusi Chonco | Photo credits S. Hlongwa and S. Maphumulo

On the 15th of February 2025, WESSA KZN Youth took part in a beach cleanup at the Beachwood Mangroves Nature Reserve. The cleanup was organized by [Adopt-a-River](#) in partnership with [Ezemvelo Honorary Officers](#) as part of the ongoing monthly Beach Cleanup initiative, which takes place every third Saturday of the month.

Despite unfavourable weather conditions, 15 dedicated WESSA participants braved the rain to carry out the cleanup. Though the turnout was modest, the volunteers remained committed to their mission, picking up litter for nearly an hour before seeking shelter from the downpour.

Following the cleanup, a volunteer induction session was led by Siziwe Hlongwa. She provided an overview of volunteerism, explained WESSA's role and activities, and shared insights on upcoming plans for the next few months. Originally, the planning committee had organized a full program, including introductions, an icebreaker, and a nature journaling session. However, due to the persistent rain, these activities had to be postponed.

A highlight of the day was Margaret Burger's thoughtful gesture of bringing banana bread and hot coffee for the group. Cold and drenched from the rain, everyone huddled together, enjoying the refreshments, which lifted spirits and fostered a warm sense of comradeship.



NEWS FROM THE BRANCHES

Sani Wildlife Branch

12-16 December | Sani Branch Essay winners at uMngeni Valley & UNICEF WASH Programme

By Siziwe Hlongwa | Photo credits: S. Hlongwa, S. Chonco, B. Gcumisa, Z. Mpanza and B. Chisale

Sani Wildlife Branch continues to promote environmental conservation and sustainability through an ongoing Waste Management Essay Writing Competition that runs every year. The aim of the competition is to encourage environmental advocacy and action for Grade 10 learners from local schools. Winners are given a prize of participating in a 5-day Environmental Programme at [uMngeni Valley Nature Reserve](#).



The programme aims at exposing and connecting learners to nature where they have an opportunity to explore the biodiversity of Umngeni Valley while engaging in activities that advance their understanding and knowledge of conservation and biodiversity protection

Out of the numerous entries received only 14 essays made it and the winners had the opportunity to be part of this amazing programme, which runs from 12th to 16th December. Four WESSA KZN Youth Leaders – Siziwe Hlongwa, Zuzile Mpanza, Sibusi Chonco, Bongani Chisale, and WESSA Midlands Youth Leader, Bhekisisa Gcumisa – joined to assist the uMngeni Valley team and as part of co-learning. The whole 5-day, activity-packed programme consisted of presentations and activities with different themes.

On the first day after settling in, learners engaged in various team-building activities. These were painting, a presentation of their flags, and a nature scavenger hunt. After lunch, due to challenging weather, there was an indoor ecosystem lesson and activity. Before bedtime learners were taken through a Birds of Prey presentation and interactive activity.

On Friday morning, WESSA staff from Brand Road (Nomfundo Ndaba, Iphendule Xhakata and Kim Ngcobo) arrived to do a [miniSASS](#) presentation and facilitate the Youth Leading in Water Resilience Project. WESSA has partnered with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) as part of the Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) programme, which empowers young people in South Africa to tackle one of the nation's most urgent challenges: water security. Thereafter, everyone headed to the river for a practical, miniSASS demonstration.



Lessons and activities that followed through to Saturday were: a lesson on plastic pollution; designing an Enviro Restaurant activity; a star gazing presentation and star hunting quiz. WESSA KZN youth leaders Siziwe, Zuzile and Sibusi also did a presentation on sharks, sharing their shark diving experience at Aliwal Shoal during Shark Week in July. Bongani concluded with the importance of marine conservation and sharks' conservation status followed by a game called 'pin the shark'. The day ended with an Endangered Auction presentation and an activity aimed at making learners understand the human-wildlife conflict and the superstitions that put animals on the endangered species list

On Sunday, learners engaged in various outdoor team-building activities and went on an interpretive hike leading to the [Cascades and Shelter Falls](#) where they enthusiastically swam and played on the bum slide. After all the activities, learners were then given an opportunity to relax, explore and prepare for their Camp Concert Night, which began at 19h00. Everyone gathered around the fire and took turns performing art, music and poetry. The night ended on a high note with the handing out of certificates of participation to all the learners and facilitators. Monday morning began with a hike to Howick Falls before departures at 11h00. Being part of such a wonderful programme, which connects learners to the natural world and instils a passion for conservation, was one of the most awe-inspiring experiences we have had as WESSA KZN Youth Leaders.



WESSA and UNICEF unite to drive youth-led water resilience across South Africa

As South Africa faces increasing water shortages and water quality challenges, WESSA has partnered with the [United Nations Children's Fund \(UNICEF\)](#) on the *Youth Leading in Water Resilience Project*. This initiative empowers young people in South Africa to tackle one of the nation's most urgent challenges: water security.

The programme is running from October 2024 to March 2025 and has engaged 29,000 learners between the ages of 5 and 19 across 30 schools in Gauteng, the Northern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal,

and the Free State. Over 4,000 unemployed youth – mainly from rural and peri-urban areas – are being trained to lead water resilience efforts. This extensive outreach is designed to create a ripple effect, deepening community engagement in tackling South Africa's urgent water challenges. The involvement of community members, including government officials, further amplifies its impact. By training both local leaders and government representatives, the project aims to embed sustainable water practices within the structures that oversee the country's water systems, fostering collaboration and action across sectors to ensure that water monitoring becomes a shared responsibility.

28 January | Sani Wildlife Flower Walk

By Siziwe Hlongwa | Photo credits: S. Hlongwa, Skhumbuzo, M. Burger, S. Chonco, N. Mkhize



Above L-R: Frederike Liasides, Margaret Burger, Bernard Chatikobo, Siziwe Hlongwa, Rosemary Harrison, Sibusi Chonco
Below: Registration at Giant's Cup Café

Every year in January, when Berg flowers are in bloom, the Sani Wildlife Branch of WESSA organises the Sani Pass Wildflower Walk, This January, WESSA KZN Chair Margaret Burger, KZN Youth volunteers and other WESSA members joined this special event led by renowned botanist Elsa Pooley. Funds raised go towards Sani Branch's environmental education projects.

"This was an uplifting and awe-inspiring experience, which not only gave us the opportunity to explore South Africa's breathtaking flora but also enabled us to gain valuable knowledge from experts and engage with like-minded individuals." – Siziwe Hlongwa



Above: Natal Tree Frog (*Leptopelis natalensis*) and Nile Monitor Lizard (*Varanus niloticus*) See **'Monitor Lizards'** by Nick Evans

Southern KZN Branch

By Paddy Norman | Branch Chair

The Southern KZN Branch organises and takes part in a wide range of activities from a [Penguin Waddle](#), to monitoring a landfill site to advocacy and a workshop on 'Working with Parliament'. The last few months have been busy with regular walks organised at a variety of nature reserves.

These have included Impenjati, Ivungu and Umtamvuna. Unfortunately, the weather recently has discouraged a number of people from attending,

We also support our local conservancies and their activities. These have included talks on frogs, mushrooms, and fossils, several AGMs and some great walks. There have also been several public participation meetings regarding EIA applications and new legislation.

The Branch continues to monitor the local municipality's landfill site and other proposed developments. Currently, we are very concerned about a proposal to clear a large area of indigenous forest and grassland for a solar power plant in an area zoned for conservation. Two proposals by the district municipality to manipulate major estuaries as a quick fix for poorly planned infrastructure have been opposed because the significant long term degradation cannot be justified by short term benefits.



Above L-R: Photos & captions by Paddy Norman

1. WESSA walkers in the Ivungu River Reserve
2. It has been a good season for fungi!
3. Baboon look-out ... walking in Umtamvuna, we aroused local interest.
4. The last few weeks it has been very wet but at least the flowers are happy.
5. The Samango Falls in Oribi Gorge were one of our destinations in February.

WESSA KZN PROJECTS

Hawaan Forest Project



Environmental giants meet in the Hawaan Forest, uMhlanga

The Botanical Society (KZN Coastal Branch) arranged to host Prof. Eugene Moll for the weekend of 6 October 2024. Several WESSA KZN members are also BotSoc members and both organisations have a long history of working together. In this instance, with Prof. Moll's research on the Hawaan going back decades, BotSoc arranged a meet-up as an opportunity for the Prof. to guide us through the forest.

L-R Above: 1. Dave Henry (WESSA & BotSoc) and Paddy Norman (WESSA) 2. Bongani Chisale & Paddy Norman 3. Pat Goss (HHOA), Bernard Chatikobo (WESSA Hawaan) and Prof. Eugene Moll.

Left: WESSA Trail sign showing route of WESSA's Wednesday Walks.

The Hawaan Estate is managed by the Hawaan Home Owners Association (HHOA) while WESSA uMhlanga Branch's historical involvement is represented by WESSA KZN's continuing support. This is made possible through the JB Law Trust which, together with the Hawaan Trust, fund Bernard Chatikobo's work. Phoebe Carnegie was not present on the day, but her invaluable contribution over many years as uMhlanga Branch – together with the late Alistair Carnegie, Bill Duthie, Richard Boon and Dave Henry – is fully recognised and appreciated.

The Hawaan Revisited after 50 Years: Prof. Eugene Moll undertook the first botanical survey of the Hawaan in 1968. In September 2012, he revisited the forest again. As the author of an original scientific study, this was a rare opportunity to re-evaluate his research half a century later. To mark this historic occasion, WESSA Durban Branch partnered with BotSoc (KZN Coastal Branch) to organise a talk by Prof. Moll giving background and report back on the current condition of the forest. The event was hosted by Breakers Resort and the Umhlanga Urban Improvement Precinct (UIP) who sponsor and manage guided walks in the Hawaan.

About the Hawaan: Situated near Umhlanga and bounded by the Ohlanga River and the sea, this beautiful forest is the largest remnant of climax dry coastal dune forest in the region and grows on a dune that dates back 18 000 years. The name 'Hawaan' most likely originates from ceremonies performed in the forest by the indentured Indian labourers that worked on the sugar plantations in the area. A Havan is a sacred fire ritual that involves the use of a ceramic oven called an Ôhavan kund. The forest was probably the source of the wood, fruits and honey which were burned to honour the spirits.

The Hawaan is home to a wide diversity of plant, animal and birdlife, as well as over one hundred indigenous tree species, of which a number are rare. The total forested area is 80 ha. with approximately 40 ha. being virgin forest. It was originally owned by the Campbell family, who settled nearby in 1859. It has been protected since 1860 when Sir Marshall Campbell had it set aside as a private reserve and it is now largely owned by Tongaat-Hulett's Developments.

“Some years ago, 31 hectares were sold to Hawaan Investments amid great controversy. Due largely to protests from members of WESSA and other environmentalists, Hawaan Investments agreed to preserve the forest and a portion of the adjacent coastal grassland as a nature reserve. The remaining forested area belongs to Tongaat Hulett Limited and is maintained as a private conservation area.” – Jocelyn Sutherland [Hawaan Forest](#) | Mar 2015

With its close proximity to Durban, and being an extreme rarity in these modern times, the Hawaan Forest is of great scientific and educational importance to scientists, students and the general public alike. It is therefore vital that it continues to be protected and conserved.

uMbogavango Environmental Education & Resource Centre

By Siziwe Hlongwa | Photo credits: S. Hlongwa and S. Chonco

The Umbogavango Environmental Education & Resource Centre is funded by AECI. During 2024, 3 304 learners from 12 schools visited the centre, and the Centre received a library to mark AECI’s 100-year commemoration in March.

Term Four began with great enthusiasm. A total of 588 learners, from five local primary schools, were beneficiaries of the project: Qhakaza Pre-primary; Siyathokoza; eZimbokodweni; KwaGwegwe; and Josephine Makhanya. The programme ran on weekdays from 4th to 28th of October and 1st of November from 09h00 to 13h00, and catering for a maximum of 42 learners per session with two educators.



Left (L-R)

1. Learning about living forest organisms during a morning guided walk with Josephine Makhanya Primary
2. Guided forest walk with Sibusi Chonco and Gr 6s from Kwa Gwegwe Primary.
3. 'Pin the Fin' Marine Conservation activity with Gr 7s from Kwagegwe Primary.
4. Tree-planting with Qhakaza Pre-primary, led by Sipiwe Ndlozi

Lessons begin with an ice breaker followed by a guided walk. This serves as an introduction to the forest ecosystem to help learners understand important conservation concepts including threats to biodiversity and indigenous vs exotic trees, both of which occur in the 36 hectare uMbogavango Forest. Interactive talks and discussions during the guided walk help make the topics relatable to each group’s level and integrate with the CAPS curriculum term-4 theme ‘Earth and Beyond’ for foundation and intermediate phases.

After lunch, learners are taken through a one-hour practical activity. National Marine Week (7th to 13th October) was also introduced with fun activities such as ‘Pin the Fin’ in which learners are blindfolded and have to ‘pin the fin’ on an image of a shark. In addition, Sibusi and Siziwe share their Black Mermaid [diving experience at Aliwal Shoal](#) during Shark Week in July.



Left: Participating in Amanzimtoti Primary School's Sustainability Programme, 19 October 2024

Before heading into the forest, a wetland study is conducted to help learners understand the crucial role played by wetland ecosystems. Thereafter, pine tree stumps form seating in an outdoor classroom learning about the variety of species that make up the forest community.

In order to develop a better understanding and deeper connection with nature, the forest walk encourages the learners to talk less and feel more. For pre-primary schools, the pine tree area is used for nature storytelling sessions, with Sibusi and Siziwe using puppets to introduce the issues such as climate change, how this is affecting the trees, and ways to reduce the impacts.

In every respect, October was a busy, successful and fulfilling month at Umbogavango! Some of the highlights were: tree planting with Qhakaza Dado Creche; attending a teachers' workshop at uShaka Marine, which helped broaden our understanding of marine conservation and provide practical activities to integrate into uMbogavango's Sustainability Programme (see page 2); and a Sustainability Morning at Amanzimtoti Primary where – together with our mentor Margaret Burger who introduced the learners to Nature Journaling – we were invited to participate and do a presentation on our shark diving experience in July. In summary, our goals were to reach our target number of beneficiaries and continue inspiring environmental passion and sustainability through an exciting, inspiring and fun programme to **Educate, Advocate and Act** on behalf of our natural heritage.

Save African Penguins from Extinction

We must act now before it's too late

Click link to support [this petition](#)



with SANCCOB, BirdLife South Africa and Blue Marine Foundation

The African Penguin is at risk of going extinct in the wild within the next 10 years. Recent studies show that current conservation measures are not enough to ensure their future. These endangered birds – among the smallest of all penguin species – are struggling to survive due to a shortage of their primary food sources. Sardines and anchovy stocks are dwindling as a result of climate change and commercial purse-seine fishing. Food deprivation and starvation is contributing to a dramatic decline in African Penguin numbers.

We call on the South African government to:

Establish effective no-take zones around the six key African Penguin colonies, where commercial purse-seine fishing for anchovy and sardine occurs, to help ensure that there is enough prey to sustain the species.

Adequately enforce existing marine pollution regulations and close legal loopholes that currently enable pollution, including noise pollution, to interfere with penguin breeding.

By protecting African Penguins, we're also protecting our planet.

Why the survival of this species is crucial

To protect our ocean: African Penguins are key indicators of healthy marine ecosystems. They play a pivotal role in the marine food web, and their disappearance signals fish stocks falling below critical thresholds.

To support livelihoods and public education: Protecting African Penguins not only supports South African ecotourism and the livelihoods of local communities but also helps raise awareness of the importance of conservation.

For global ocean advocacy: Defending African Penguins goes beyond saving a single species — it's about taking a stand for ecologically sustainable fishing practices and ocean conservation worldwide.

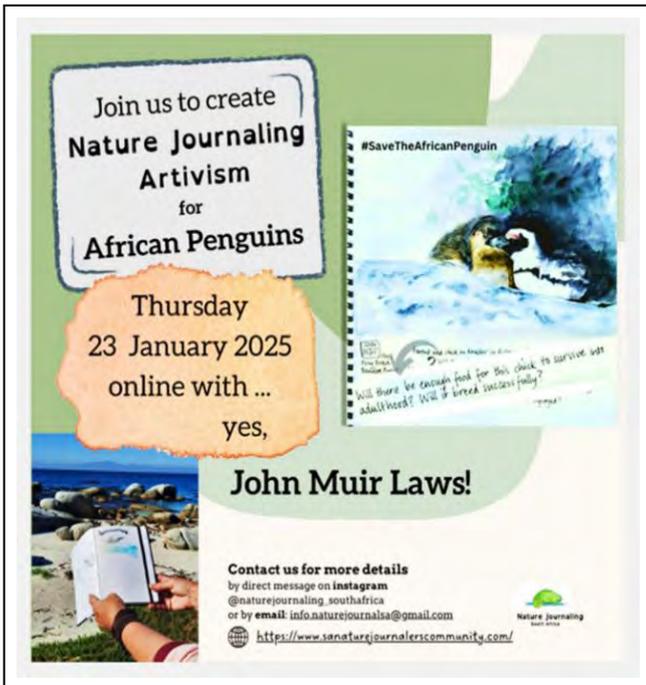
Protecting African Penguins

The [Biodiversity Law Centre](#) is working with BirdLife South Africa and SANCCOB to address the most urgent threats to African Penguins. In 2024, the Centre launched landmark litigation against the Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment

For more information [click here](#)



NEWS FROM THE NETWORK



23 January | Artivism for African Penguins

In *Artivism for African Penguins*, [John Muir Laws](#), [Nature Journaling South Africa](#) (NJSa), and Dr. Katta Ludynia, Research Manager at [SANCCOB](#) (Southern African Foundation for the Conservation of Coastal Birds) joined forces to draw attention to the plight of African Penguins and how to use nature journaling as an [artivism](#) tool for their conservation.

African penguins are one step away from effective extinction in the wild – predicted by 2035 – if nothing is done to improve their situation! Nature journaling can be an effective activist tool for understanding what needs to be done and to develop emotional and social connections with African penguins, their ecosystems and guardians while encouraging others – including those in authority – to take the necessary action.

To view video of the event, [click here](#).

EEPAN Webinars: [EEPAN](#) (Environmental Education & Public Awareness Network) is an environmental network engaged in a variety of eco-activities to create public awareness and encourage local, grassroots engagement around environmental issues. Regular monthly webinars on a diverse range of topics have become a popular method of outreach and participation.



1. **Fri 1st Nov: Sustainable Waste Management | Part 2:** This was a screening of the groundWork documentary [‘People at the Heart of Change’](#) which tells the story of a partnership project on Zero-Waste and Environmental Justice in the city of Durban. This short film shows the power of small but impactful local solutions developed with people. It offers hope for what is possible when we find ways to come together to create social and economic relations that work towards a kinder and less harmful world.
2. **Fri 7th Feb: Building Environmental Education & Public Awareness in our Communities:**
 - a) Pandora Long on the Art of Environmental Education.
 - b) Cati Vawda on Nature Journaling Artivism: A tool to turn the tide for critically endangered African Penguins.
 - c) Siziwe Hlongwa and Sibusi Chonco on Connecting Learners to Nature.
3. **Fri 7th Mar: Just Transitions** Innovation & Action Learning for Sustainable Futures – a dialogue and discussion with Dr Jim Taylor and Ms. Nkosi Sithole. **(See page 2 for more information.)**

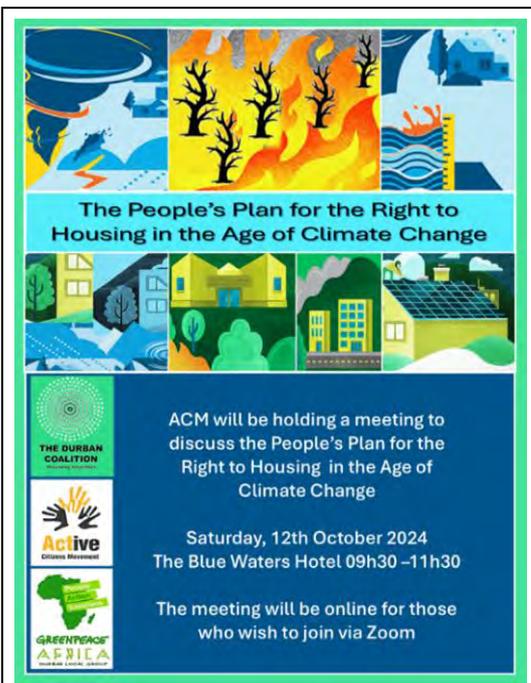


14th December | Terra Madre Day
 To celebrate Slow Food’s **Terra Madre Day**, CJCM-KZN held a film screening at the Kingfisher Resource Centre in **Springside Nature Reserve**. This was followed by a walk and talk learning about **edible weeds**, and a bring and share picnic.

The theme for Terra Madre Day 2024 was ‘*Connecting with Food, Nature and Communities*’. This was a call to: recognise the vital connection between nature and our food systems; for our global community to embrace **agroecology** and **food sovereignty**; to unite around sustainable farming methods to provide good, healthy, fair food for all while protecting biodiversity and ecosystems.

The screening of the **Cultures of Resistance** documentary ‘*Unite for Bissau (Nô Kumpu Guiné) Agroecology & Feminism in Guinea Bissau*’ was followed by a group discussion. ‘*Unite for Bissau*’ is an inspiring film about local women in Guinea Bissau challenging patriarchy by building institutions that promote self-sufficiency through agroecology.

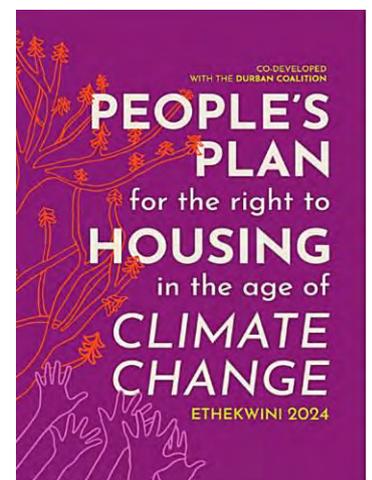
The People’s Plan for the Right to Housing in the Age of Climate Change



In October, **EEPAN** and **The Active Citizens Movement (ACM)** both held meetings to present and discuss The Durban Coalition’s ‘*People’s Plan for the Right to Housing in the Age of Climate Change*’

A **Just Transition** in South Africa must include participatory resilience planning premised on environmental justice principles that address historical imbalances, marginalisation and inequality in the city. It is against this backdrop that The Durban Coalition, a civil society coalition, was formed in May 2022.

The People’s Plan is the culmination of a ground-up process – developed through an 18-month participatory methodology – to co-develop what kinds of governance arrangements and programmes people are asking for to protect their right to housing in an age of climate change. The plan offers an alternative and comparative implementation guide for the municipality and activist partners.



The *People’s Plan to the Right to Housing in the Age of Climate Change* was launched on 28th November at the Durban Botanic Gardens. The event was hosted by Mr Bongumusa, Chief Strategy Officer of eThekwin Municipality, and the Durban Coalition.

For more info, links to the booklet and contacts, go to groundWork:
Launch of the People’s Plan to the Right to Housing in an Age of Climate Change



WESSA is a membership-based organisation and, throughout South Africa, our members initiate environmental projects and organise educational events and activities in their local communities.

WESSA members work to:

- Protect and conserve natural habitats and biodiversity
- Engage with individuals and communities to promote sustainable livelihoods
- Create opportunities for social and economic upliftment through environmental education
- Collaborate and network with groups and organisations with similar objectives
- Raise awareness and promote public participation around key environmental issues

WESSA KZN Members, Supporters and Active Volunteers

WESSA KZN membership is made up of paying members (*different options are available*) and non-paying supporters. Both may wish to become active volunteers. Generally, our supporters are youth and although they may not be able to afford to pay an annual subscription, many sign up as active volunteers and thereby make a valuable contribution to the work we do. To become an active volunteer, members and supporters submit a Green Matchmaking Profile and participate in an Induction Course.



KZN REGION

Regional Committee	Branches Nodes	Affiliate Members	Business Members
Chair: Margaret Burger Vice-Chair: Paddy Norman ** Regional Rep: Pieter Burger Coordinator: Jenny Duvenage Treasurer: Indira Maharaj Youth Chair: Siziwe Hlongwa ** and Enviro Governance Committee	Durban Youth Node Midlands Youth Node Southern KZN Sani Wildlife Upper South Coast & Kingsburgh	Adopt a River Eco Solutions Durban North Conservancy Enviro Fixers Durban North Friends of Pigeon Valley Mqatsheni Hiking Club Pennington Conservancy Westville Conservancy	South African Sugar Association (SASA) S&V Publications
General information			
Info & Inquiries: membership@wessalife.org.za Apply online: WESSA LIFE membership Donate: WESSA LIFE donations Join us on Facebook: WESSA KwaZulu-Natal Region		Banking Details Name: WESSA Membership Bank: FNB Branch: Howick Branch Code: 22-07-25 Account No: 62 219 969 732	
Contact details			
Margaret Burger (KZN Chair) kzn.chair@wessalife.org.za Jenny Duvenage (KZN Coordinator) membership@wessalife.org.za			