



Environment

The overarching vision of the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism is a prosperous and equitable society living in harmony with its natural resources. The department manages the development and implementation of policies governing three interrelated components of South Africa's socio-economic development: tourism, the fishing industry and environmental management.

Government leads protection of the environment by example. National and provincial departments must compile environmental implementation and management plans.

South Africa has taken several concrete steps to implement the United Nations' (UN) Agenda 21 on sustainable development. These include reforming environmental policies, ratifying international agreements, and participating in many global and regional sustainable-development initiatives.

Environmental heritage

South Africa enjoys the third-highest level of biodiversity in the world.

South Africa won a gold medal at the 2005 Chelsea Flower Show – the 27th gold that the team from Kirstenbosch has won in 30 years of competing at the prestigious show.

The show – an annual event since 1826 – ran from 24 to 28 May at the Royal Hospital in Chelsea, London.

fact

Some remarkable aspects of the abundance of life in this country include:

- over 3 700 endemic marine species
- some 18 000 vascular plant species, 80% of which occur nowhere else
- there are more plant species in the Cape Peninsula National Park than the whole of the British Isles
- South Africa has 5,8% of the world's mammal species, 8% of bird species and 4,6% of reptile species
- in terms of the mammal, bird, reptile and amphibian species, South Africa is the 24th-richest country in the world and the fifth-richest in Africa
- one third of the world's succulent species are found in South Africa.

South Africa is one of only six countries with an entire plant kingdom within its national confines. South Africa is ranked first in the world for its floral kingdom.

The Cape Floral Kingdom has the highest recorded species diversity for any similar-sized temperate or tropical region in the world. It is a World Heritage Site.

Biomes

There are eight major terrestrial biomes, or habitat types, in South Africa. These biomes can, in turn, be divided into 70 veld types. The biomes are savanna, Nama-Karoo, succulent Karoo, grassland, fynbos, forest, thicket and desert. The fynbos biome is one of only six floral kingdoms worldwide.



fact

The National Spatial Biodiversity Assessment was launched in April 2005 – the first-ever comprehensive spatial evaluation of biodiversity throughout the country. It deals with terrestrial, freshwater, estuarine and marine environments. This assessment will inform the National Biodiversity Framework.

Biodiversity values by province

Province	Number of species				
	Plant	Mammal	Bird	Amphibian	Reptile
Eastern Cape	6 383	156	384	51	57
Free State	3 001	93	334	29	47
Gauteng	2 826	125	326	25	53
KwaZulu-Natal	5 515	177	462	68	86
Limpopo	4 239	239	479	44	89
Mpumalanga	4 593	160	464	48	82
Northern Cape	4 916	139	302	29	53
North West	2 483	138	384	27	59
Western Cape	9 489	153	305	39	52

Source: Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism

Conservation victories

- The population of southern white rhinoceros in South Africa has risen from less than 20 in 1910 to 8 000 today.
- By mid-2002, more than 200 000 seedlings of endangered cycad species had been sold to the public, reducing the threat to wild populations.
- Many cheetah are bred in captivity and relocated to protected areas.

Conservation areas

Some 34% of South Africa's 440 terrestrial ecosystems are threatened. Of these, 5% are critically endangered (mostly

In April 2005, the United Nations (UN) Environment Programme recognised President Thabo Mbeki and the people of South Africa for outstanding achievements in the field of the environment.

The Champion of the Earth Award was presented during the meeting of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development held in New York in the United States of America.

South Africa was recognised for its commitment to cultural and environmental diversity, as well as its strong leadership role in Africa through the environmental component of the New Partnership for Africa's Development.

in the fynbos and forest biomes), 13% are endangered (mostly in the grassland and savanna biomes), and 16% are vulnerable (mostly in the fynbos and grassland biomes).

The total percentage of the country's land area in protected areas is nearly 6%. However, the percentage of well-protected ecosystems is higher, at 15%. Most of these well-protected ecosystems are in the fynbos mountains and the savanna biome, while the most severely underprotected ecosystems tend to be in the succulent Karoo, the grasslands, and the fynbos lowlands.

The Threatened Species Programme (TSP) aims to facilitate the conservation of South Africa's rare and endangered species. The project currently focuses on plant biodiversity, but will soon address the full spectrum of biodiversity.

By mid-2005, the TSP was in the process of producing an updated and comprehensive national *Red List of South African Plant Species*, which was expected to be available in printed and electronic form by March 2006.

Scientific reserves

These are sensitive, undisturbed areas managed for research, monitoring and the maintenance of genetic sources. Access is limited. Examples are Marion Island and the Prince Edward islands near Antarctica.

Wilderness areas

These areas are extensive in size, uninhabited, underdeveloped, and access is strictly controlled. Examples are the Cedarberg Wilderness Area and Dassen Island in the Western Cape.



fact

In South Africa, there are 180 000 indigenous vascular plant species of which 80% do not occur anywhere else in the world.

National parks and equivalent reserves

South African National Parks (SANParks) manages a vast system of national parks. Commercial and tourism-conservation development, as well as the involvement of local communities, are performance indicators.

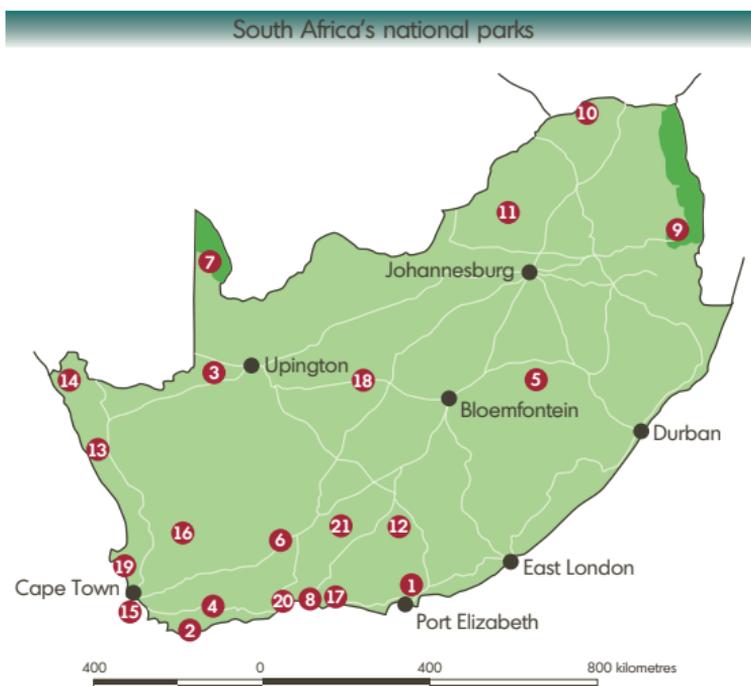
There are currently six transfrontier conservation areas (TFCAs) along borders with neighbouring countries. The proposed 38 600 km² Greater Limpopo Transfrontier Park includes South Africa's Kruger National Park and parks in Mozambique and Zimbabwe. It will be bigger than the Yellowstone National Park in the United States of America.

Other TFCAs include the Ais-Ais/Richtersveld, Kgalagadi, Lubombo, Maloti-Drakensberg and Limpopo-Shashe.

South African national parks

Park	Date proclaimed	Size (ha)
Addo Elephant	1931	74 339
Agulhas	1999	5 690
Augrabies Falls	1966	41 676
Bontebok	1931	2 786
Camdeboo	2005	14 500
Golden Gate Highlands	1963	11 633
Kgalagadi	1931	959 103
Karoo	1979	77 094
Kruger	1926	1 962 362
Marakele	1993	50 726
Mapungubwe	1989	5 356
Mountain Zebra	1937	24 663
Namaqua	2001	60 000
Richtersveld	1991	162 445
Table Mountain	1998	24 310
Tankwa-Karoo	1986	43 899
Tsitsikamma	1964	63 942
Vaalbos	1986	22 697
West Coast	1985	36 273
Wilderness	1985	10 600

Source: SANParks



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|--|----------------------------------|
| 1. Addo Elephant National Park | 11. Marakele National Park |
| 2. Agulhas National Park | 12. Mountain Zebra National Park |
| 3. Augrabies Falls National Park | 13. Namaqua National Park |
| 4. Bontebok National Park | 14. Richtersveld National Park |
| 5. Golden Gate Highlands National Park | 15. Table Mountain National Park |
| 6. Karoo National Park | 16. Tankwa Karoo National Park |
| 7. Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park | 17. Tsitsikamma National Park |
| 8. Knysna National Park | 18. Vaalbos National Park |
| 9. Kruger National Park | 19. West Coast National Park |
| 10. Mapungubwe National Park | 20. Wilderness National Park |
| | 21. Camdeboo National Park |

The transfrontier conservation initiative originated in Africa, and by mid-2005 there were 169 such areas involving 113 countries and 667 protected areas.

TFCAs offer southern Africa important vehicles to ensure that South Africa's hosting of the 2010 Soccer World Cup brings real benefits to neighbouring states as well.

In addition to the R159 million invested in TFCA projects during 2004/05, a further R193 million is expected to be invested in new projects, including more than R25 million in Limpopo/Shashe, more than R50 million in

Climate of provincial capitals

Province	Capital	Average temperature (°C)	
		January	July
Eastern Cape	Bisho	22,1	13,8
Free State	Bloemfontein	23,0	7,7
Gauteng	Johannesburg	20,1	10,4
KwaZulu-Natal	Pietermaritzburg	22,9	12,9
Mpumalanga	Nelspruit	24,0	14,8
Northern Cape	Kimberley	25,3	10,8
Limpopo	Polokwane	22,6	12,2
North West	Mafikeng	24,1	12,0
Western Cape	Cape Town	20,9	12,2

Source: Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, South African Weather Service

Greater Limpopo, and more than R60 million in Maloti-Drakensberg.

The Giriyondo Border Post between the Kruger National Park and the Limpopo National Park in Mozambique was officially opened in December 2005.

National and cultural monuments

These are natural or cultural features, or both, and may include botanical gardens, zoological gardens, natural heritage sites and sites of conservation significance.

In December 1999, Robben Island, the Greater St Lucia Wetlands Park and the Cradle of Humankind were proclaimed World Heritage Sites by the United Nations Educational, Science and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO).

The Ukhahlamba-Drakensberg Park was nominated as a mixed site. In July 2003, the site of the Mapungubwe civilisation became the fifth heritage site. The Cape Floral Region also became a World Heritage Site at the end of June 2004.

The Vredefort Dome in the Free State was declared as South Africa's seventh World Heritage Site at the 29th session of the UNESCO World Heritage Conference held in

The Kruger National Park

More than a million people visit Kruger National Park every year. Comprising almost two million hectares, the park has over 500 bird, 336 tree and 147 mammal species. It also has 49 species of fish.

Durban in July 2005. It was the first time the body met in sub-Saharan Africa.

Makapans Valley in Limpopo and the Taung Cave in North West were declared extensions of the Cradle of Humankind.

Habitat and wildlife management areas

These areas include conservancies; provincial, regional or private reserves created for the conservation of species, habitats or biotic communities; marshes; lakes; and nesting and feeding areas.

Sustainable-use areas

These areas emphasise the utilisation of products on a sustainable basis in protected areas such as the Kosi Bay Lake system in KwaZulu-Natal.

Wetlands

Wetlands include a wide range of inland and coastal habitats – from mountain bogs and fens and midland marshes to swamp forests and estuaries, linked by green corridors of streambank wetlands.

Botanical gardens

There are eight botanical gardens in five provinces. The



The top 50 air-polluting industries in South Africa will be targeted in a bid to improve South Africa's air quality. The Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism will train and employ at least 30 air-quality licensing officers in each of the nine provinces.

largest is Kirstenbosch in Cape Town. It houses 5 300 indigenous plant species, and was voted one of the top seven botanical gardens in the world in 2000.

The Pretoria National Botanical Garden houses the National Herbarium of South Africa, the largest in the southern hemisphere.

The botanical gardens collectively attract over a million visitors per year. All the gardens are signatories to the International Agenda for Botanic Gardens in Conservation and are founding members of the African Botanic Gardens Network.

Zoos

The 80-ha National Zoological Gardens (NZG) of South Africa in Pretoria is one of the world's 10 best. It attracted more than 550 000 visitors in 2004. The national zoo is responsible for two breeding centres in Lichtenburg and Mokopane and the satellite zoo and animal park at the Emerald Animal World complex in Vanderbijlpark.

The NZG was declared a national research facility, subject to the provisions of the National Research Foundation, in March 2004. The declaration of the zoo as a national research facility presents a remarkable opportunity for the zoo to reposition itself as one of the world leaders in breeding and researching endangered species.

The zoo houses more than 10 000 animals.

There are a number of zoological gardens in South Africa

Marine protected areas (MPAs)

The Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, Mr Marthinus van Schalkwyk, officially announced four new MPAs in June 2004.

The MPAs are modelled on the success of the Greater St Lucia Wetlands Park – with strict zoning of both marine and coastal protected areas. The four MPAs are Aliwal Shoal on the south coast of KwaZulu-Natal, the coastal and marine environment next to Pondoland in the Eastern

Cape, Bird Island at Algoa Bay, and the Cape Peninsula in the Western Cape. Negotiations are underway for the creation of an MPA off Namaqualand.

Some of the protection measures to be implemented in the MPAs are restrictions for people who want to fish, as well as restrictions for stowing fishing gear when fishing from a vessel.

Spear fishers will not be allowed entry to these areas and scuba divers will be required to obtain permits.

Marine resources

The sustainable exploitation of marine resources on the one hand and the demand for fish products from local and foreign consumers on the other, pose a growing challenge globally, and South Africa is no exception. South Africa's coastline covers some 3 000 km.

The Marine Living Resources Act, 1998 sets out the broad objectives of fishery management and access rights. It also sets empowerment and broad transformation objectives for the fishing industry.

South Africa's fisheries are among the best-managed in the world.

In February 2003, the first Environmental Court in South Africa was opened in the southern coastal town of Hermanus, in the Western Cape. It had an immediate impact on poaching.

The second Environmental Court was launched in Port Elizabeth in February 2004.

The department's precautionary policy on managing the country's marine resources has resulted in pilchard and anchovy populations reaching record highs.

On 30 May 2005, South Africa launched the final set of 19 fishery-specific policies and one general policy that will guide the allocation of long-term commercial fishing rights for periods between eight and 15 years. This industry is estimated to be worth about R70 billion.



In September 2005, South Africa took delivery of the last of four environmental protection vessels, the *Victoria Mxenge*.

The other three vessels, *Lilian Ngoyi*, *Sarah Baartman* and *Ruth First*, were received in September 2004, January 2005 and May 2005, respectively.

The patrol vessels – all named after women who showed courage, dedication and commitment to the struggle for freedom – are used in assisting with high-speed disaster relief, search and rescue, evacuations, fire-fighting, pollution control, towing and other emergency operations.

In 2005/06, South Africa had 34 beaches participating in the *Blue Flag* Campaign.

South Africa's coastal management policy is one of the best in the world, with the country being the first outside Europe to gain Blue Flag status for coastal management.

Some of the most popular beaches in South Africa are:

- Camps Bay, Western Cape
- Clifton, Western Cape
- Llandudno, Western Cape
- Muizenburg, Western Cape
- Hobie Beach, Eastern Cape
- Humewood Beach, Eastern Cape
- Margate, KwaZulu-Natal
- Umhlanga Rocks, KwaZulu-Natal
- Grotto Beach, Western Cape
- Marina South Coast, KwaZulu-Natal.

The Working for the Coast Programme was launched in October 2000. It has succeeded in upgrading the environment and improving the lives of many people living along the coast.

More than 55 teams of workers have been formed along South Africa's coast to upgrade the environment, with many of them having started their own small businesses.