



**SANCCOB™**  
saves seabirds

REHABILITATION      CHICK REARING  
OILED WILDLIFE RESPONSE  
EDUCATION      TRAINING      RESEARCH



## SUCCESS STORIES 2013



## 1.1. SANCCOB responds to *Kiani Satu* oil spill



On 8 August 2013, The *Kiani Satu*, a stricken bulk carrier, ran aground between Buffels Bay and Sedgefield in the Goukamma Marine Protected Area. SANCCOB commissioned a response team from our Cape Town facility to our newly acquired centre in Cape St. Francis to assist the rehabilitation of the oiled seabirds. SANCCOB's seabird rescue operations in the Eastern Cape were assisted by SANParks Marine Section Rangers, CapeNature and stabilisation units at Tenikwa and SA Marine Rehabilitation and Education Centre (SAMREC).

SANCCOB admitted 277 oiled African penguins, Cape Gannets and Cormorants for rehabilitation at its centre in Cape St. Francis. 262 birds were subsequently released back into the wild at a release rate of 95%.

The oiled seabirds admitted came from areas ranging from Mossel Bay, Port Elizabeth, Wildernis, Still Bay and as far as Bird Island and St. Croix. The German bulk carrier was eventually re-floated and towed out to sea where it sank on 21 August 2013 in deep sea.

A team of approximately 30 SANCCOB staff, SANParks Rangers (Addo Elephant National Park and Table Mountain National Park), Tenikwa staff, SAMREC staff and volunteers, and local volunteers worked tirelessly in August and September hydrating, strengthening and washing the 277 oiled seabirds. The birds were partitioned into groups according to their percentage oiling and strength which made it easier to manage the rehabilitation process. The birds' hydration were restored by giving them electrolyte fluids and their strength improved by feeding them pilchards twice daily.

From 17-30 August 2013 all the oiled seabirds admitted were washed. SANCCOB's veterinary team evaluated the blood values, weight and feather condition of each bird to ensure that they are fit and healthy for release back into the wild. The first release happened on 2 September and included 47 Cape gannets after undergoing nearly four weeks of rehabilitation at the centre. More than 400 members of the public and media attended the release at the Cape St. Francis lighthouse. The last birds were released mid-September.

The oil spill caused by the *Kiani Satu* bulk carrier near Knysna and the eventual oiling of 275 seabirds reaffirmed the need for a dedicated oiled wildlife response unit at SANCCOB that can mobilise in a prompt and efficient manner. Acquiring the new centre in Cape St. Francis proved to be strategically crucial to the efficient flow of the seabird rescue operations.

## 1.2. Chick season at SANCCOB

Chick season has started at SANCCOB (the Southern African Foundation for the Conservation of Coastal Birds) as 400 abandoned African penguin chicks have been admitted to their Table View and Cape St. Francis rehabilitation centres. Every year from October to February, SANCCOB admits approximately 300-400 abandoned African penguin chicks from Stony Point, Boulders Beach, Robben Island and Dyer Island in the Western Cape and Bird Island in the Eastern Cape.



Numerous penguin chicks historically become abandoned at the end of the breeding season just before the parents start their annual moulting cycle. During this time the parents replace their feathers with a brand new set of waterproof feathers and are unable to hunt for fish and feed their young during the three to four week moulting process. As a result, the chicks that have yet to fledge are abandoned and face starvation unless conservation managers intervene with SANCCOB's help.



Working together with the SANParks (Table Mountain National Park and Marine Rangers section of Addo Elephant National Park), Overstrand Municipality and CapeNature, underweight and ill chicks are identified in the colonies and brought to SANCCOB for rehabilitation on a weekly basis.

On 19 November, SANCCOB sent out a rescue team to collect abandoned chicks from Robben Island. Dr Nola Parsons, SANCCOB Researcher, said *"Very few chicks are left in the Robben Island colony as it is the end of the breeding season. We measured the head size and weight of 21 chicks; nine of these were under the required measurements and therefore brought to SANCCOB for rehabilitation. Our team will be doing another sweep of the colony in the next few weeks to check for additional weak and abandoned chicks and admit them to our centre."* SANCCOB are also sending out staff twice weekly to assist CapeNature with the collection of chicks at Stony Point in Betty's Bay.



Once at the centres, the chicks undergo a structured rehabilitation regime by SANCCOB's dedicated staff and volunteers who work round the clock to ensure that they get released back into the wild. Rehabilitation of these chicks varies from 6 to 12 weeks depending on their size and condition. Once they are at a fledging age, the correct weight, healthy and their feathers are waterproof, they receive the final nod of approval from SANCCOB's veterinary team and get released back into the wild.

Research has proven that hand-reared chicks fare as well as naturally-reared chicks in the wild. With less than 18 000 breeding pairs left in the wild in South Africa, African penguins are an endangered species and it remains critical to save every individual possible to bolster the numbers in the wild. The Chick Bolstering Project and the hand-rearing of abandoned chicks are seen as an essential and successful component of bolstering the wild population.

### 1.3. SANCCOB Benefit Auction 2013 a waddling success



On 30 October, SANCCOB partnered with SANParks - Table Mountain National Park, ARG Design and the Commodore Hotel to host the 11th annual SANCCOB Benefit Auction. Held at the prestigious Clipper Restaurant at The Commodore Hotel (V&A Waterfront, Cape Town), the event was proudly hosted by South African comedian and master of ceremonies, Nik Rabinowitz, together with special guests, Michelle and Riaan Garforth-Venter. Leading the exciting auction proceedings was Matthew Theron from Theron Auctioneers.

Attended by 120 guests, the event successfully raised R311 110 through the auction and ticket sales. The proceeds will be used towards supporting the rehabilitation of the 2 500 ill, injured, oiled and abandoned seabirds that are treated at our facilities; the proceeds from the 'green' roof auction item will go towards the 'green' roof of the new SANCCOB facility designed by ARG Design; and a substantial portion of the funding will go towards employing key staff members, known as Penguin Monitors, at Boulders Beach (Simon's Town) and Stoney Point (Betty's Bay) to manage the African penguin colonies in these areas together with our partners SANParks, City of Cape Town and CapeNature. The gala event was a fitting climax to SANCCOB's Penguin Month and African Penguin Awareness Day celebrated in October 2013.

### 1.3. African Penguin Awareness Day and the annual Penguin Festival



Hosted by SANCCOB saves seabirds and and SANParks - Table Mountain National Park, the annual Penguin Festival began with the beach release of 47 rescued African penguins at Seaforth Beach, Simon's Town. The moving event was streamed live to the V&A Waterfront Amphitheatre where viewers also got to meet Rocky, one of SANCCOB's ambassador penguins.

One of the highlights of the The Penguin Festival was the SASSI Celebrity Chef challenge by the Ultimate Braai Master sponsored by Pick n Pay. Teams Rust n Dust - Ultimate Braai Master Team and Smoke, Sweat & Tears had to cook a SASSI approved, sustainable seafood dish on a very limited budget. The crowd then had to vote for their favourite dish to crown the winner of the challenge.

The fun-filled day also included environmental exhibition stalls, snake and raptor shows, games for the family, raffles, food stalls, and a penguin encounter with Kia, one of SANCCOB's ambassador penguins.

### 1.4. SANCCOB education centre celebrates penguin month



October saw SANCCOB celebrate Penguin month. SANCCOB's Wild About Exploration...Environmental Education Centre hosted a number of exciting educational programmes during this time to teach learners more about penguins and our marine environment. SANCCOB welcomed the Grade 1 learners of Kenridge Primary School for the duration of the month. Learners had the opportunity to learn more about penguins (in the programme Wild About...Penguins) and also about the Treasure oil spill (Wild About...The Big Spill). They also learned how to walk, swim, catch fish and even dance like penguins.

During National Marine Week (7-11 October), SANCCOB held a two-day joint programme with the City of Cape Town's Blaauwberg Nature Reserve. Learners from Belhar Islamic Primary visited Blaauwberg Nature Reserve in the morning and after lunch they came to SANCCOB where they did a lesson on empathy towards seabirds. This lesson involved a story about 'Beakie the Penguin' and her

recovery after being involved in a hit-and-run accident. Learners had to explain how they thought Beakie felt at different sections of the story and also how the story made them feel. They then had to use their feeling about the story to make a special emotion mask. At the end of the lesson, learners got to meet one of SANCCOB's ambassador penguins.

Another programme that ran at SANCCOB during Penguin month was EduXperience. SANCCOB hosted learners from Eindhoven Primary School for a week to learn about identifying birds using bird guides. Learners first had to identify a bird along with the SANCCOB educator and then, while working in groups, they had to identify four different kinds of seabirds.

SANCCOB also partnered with the West Coast Fossil Park in Langebaan on a collaborative lesson about penguins of the past and present. Learners were shown what penguins looked like in the past and SANCCOB demonstrated what they currently look like with the help of one of their ambassador penguins. Learners also enjoyed doing a mock dig where they could dig up some bones of their own.

### 1.5. Staff Accolades

In September and October 2013, two of SANCCOB's key staff members were acknowledged for their hard-work and dedication in the conservation and environment industry.



Congratulations to Margaret Roestorf (Executive Director) for winning the Eco-Angel Award at the Eco Logic Awards on 26 September. The award is given to an individual whose actions have conserved, nurtured or restored the Earth's life forms, eco-systems or natural resources. The prestigious event was held yesterday at the Cradle of Humankind in Maropeng and attended by delegates from across the environmental, corporate and academic spectrum. She shares the award with her colleagues

across the globe who support SANCCOB and who labour to raise consciousness and to change behaviour to save our oceans and the creatures that depend on them.

Congratulations to Venessa Strauss (Conservation Director) for being awarded the Green Globe Award at this year's Miss Earth South Africa Gala celebration. The Green Globe Awards honour people in the environmental industry that have given love, expertise, passion and unconditional time and energy to the cause of Mother Earth. Venessa, who has been a dedicated staff member of SANCCOB for the past 11 years, proudly accepted this award on behalf of our seabird-saving team.



Warm regards

Margaret Roestorf (Executive Director)

*SANCCOB is a non-profit organization (Section 21 Registration No. 2001/026273/08, Non-profit Number: 003-134 NPO). 0305*

