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## **START**

### ***Kiani Satu* seabird rescue update**

To date, SANCCOB has admitted 31 penguins and 98 Cape gannets for rehabilitation to their facility in Cape St. Francis in the Eastern Cape following the *Kiani Satu* oil spill. The *Kiani Satu*, a stricken bulk carrier, ran aground last week Thursday between Buffels Bay and Sedgefield in the Goukamma Marine Protected Area.

A turn of events yesterday resulted in the rescue of 97 oiled Cape gannets from Bird Island, west of Port Elizabeth, Eastern Cape. SANParks Rangers stationed on the island discovered oiled birds on the island two days ago and capture and rescue teams from SANParks and SANCCOB were dispatched yesterday.

Key personnel from the Marine Rangers Section from SANParks and SANCCOB were flown to the island by a helicopter at 08h00 on Thursday morning. The team proceeded to carefully move through the colony of Cape gannets to identify and capture oiled individuals. The Cape gannet colony on Bird Island is estimated to consist of 110 000 breeding pairs and is the largest Cape gannet rookery in South Africa. The birds are currently preparing for their annual breeding season; as such it is normal for them to fly great distances to optimal foraging areas. At this point, it is assumed that these gannets foraged in the oil polluted region and flew back to the island.

The birds were packed in SANCCOB's specially designed transport boxes to ensure that they are not injured during transportation. The birds were flown from the island to Paardevlei, Woody Cape section of Addo Elephant National Park, where they received electrolyte fluids before they were transported by road to SANCCOB's rehabilitation facility in Cape St. Francis.

A team of 22 SANCCOB staff, SANParks Rangers, Tenikwa staff and local volunteers admitted the birds until late at night before they were sectioned into groups according to their strength and the percentage of oiling. Around 9pm the birds finally quietly settled down for the night under the warm infrared lights.

Venessa Strauss (SANCCOB Conservation Director) said that, "The action plan for the next couple of days is to restore the hydration of the birds by giving them electrolyte fluids, as well to improve their strength by feeding them pilchards twice daily. Over the weekend, we will focus on washing the lightly oiled birds first and hopefully be able to release them towards the end of next week". After the stressful washing process it takes a number of days for the birds to regain their natural water-proofing by swimming in the pools at the rehabilitation centre. SANCCOB's veterinary team will evaluate 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 additional 17 African penguins were admitted from the Garden Route over the past two days. The majority of the birds are juveniles and tend to travel far distances from their natal colonies to forage. Most of these penguins are heavily oiled and fairly weak and require intensive care before they will be ready for washing.

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The SANParks Marine Section Rangers continue to be stationed on Bird Island for the next few days to monitor the colony and capture any oiled gannets. On the Garden Route, the CapeNature, SANParks, Disaster Management teams and local volunteers are actively patrolling the beaches for oiled birds.

**WE URGE THE PUBLIC NOT TO ATTEMPT TO REMOVE THE OIL FROM ANY PENGUINS OR GANNETS. UPON FINDING OILED SEABIRDS PLEASE IMMEDIATELY CONTACT SANCCOB (WILNA WILKINSON - 082 326 4143) OR EDEN BIODIVERSITY AND COASTAL MANAGEMENT (VERNON GIBBS - 072 670 5108) AND THEY WILL ARRANGE FOR COLLECTION.**

For any media queries, photo opportunities and scheduled visit please contact SANCCOB's Communications Officer, Francois Louw at [francois@sanccob.co.za](mailto:francois@sanccob.co.za); 042 298 0160.

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