

**The International Day for Biological Diversity is celebrated on 22 May annually and this year's theme is "Our solutions are in nature".**

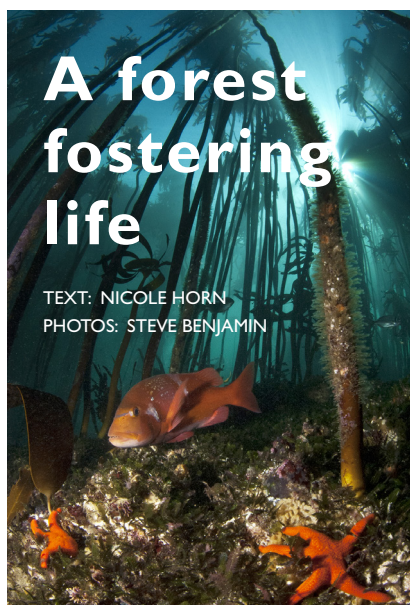
The COVID-19 pandemic has got us thinking about our relationship to the natural world and specifically the animals we share this planet with. While there is currently much speculation about the transmission of COVID-19, and the role of bats and pangolins, it is important to understand that scientists have mapped only a fraction of wildlife viruses. Many of these have co-evolved in a staggering variety of insects and other animals — not just in pangolins and bats.

One certainty is that the illegal trade in wildlife is not good for wildlife or humans, and CapeNature will continue to uphold the law and to do our part to fight this scourge.

The Western Cape is known for its unique and diverse biodiversity with 70% of its endemic species found nowhere else in the world! It is therefore only apt to shine the spotlight on at least one of its many ecosystems on International Day for Biological Diversity.



**22 MAY 2020**  
INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR  
BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY  
*Our solutions are in nature*



## A forest fostering life

TEXT: NICOLE HORN  
PHOTOS: STEVE BENJAMIN

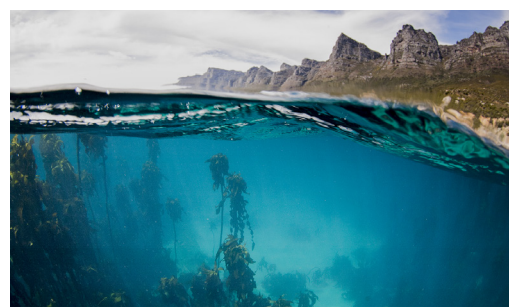
South Africa has one of the biggest forests on the planet, but it's not where you may think it is. This is a swaying underwater kelp forest that extends for approximately 1 000km, parallel to the shoreline from the west coast to the southern coast where it reaches De Hoop Nature Reserve. It extends about 100m offshore and is extremely rich in marine life and biodiversity, containing about 14 000 different species.

Our kelp forests are as productive per unit area as a tropical rainforest and they are a unique habitat that provides food for marine life and shelter from some of the roughest storms. The underwater forests play an important role in preserving the health of the oceans through photosynthesis and purifying surrounding water by removing waste produced by its inhabitants.

The variety of species found among these long brown seaweed include cuttlefish, octopuses, starfish as well

as rock lobsters that feed off grazers like spiny sea urchins and juvenile abalone that hide between the urchin spines. Kelp forests are home to many fish species endemic to South Africa.

So when next you celebrate South Africa's amazing natural heritage, remember the vibrant and flourishing ecosystems produced by our amazing underwater kelp forests.



## CapeNature foils abalone poachers



ON SUNDAY 10 MAY 2020, doing their routine vehicle check points and patrols in the Kogelberg Landscape, CapeNature officials received information of vehicles possibly transporting shipments of abalone. The CapeNature Kogelberg team immediately moved to cut off the vehicles.

CapeNature in collaboration with the South African Police Service and Provincial Traffic apprehended the vehicles. Although empty, evidence of abalone were found. The CapeNature team, knowing the area very well, back-tracked the movements of the vehicles and inspected sites where the shipments could have been dropped.

LEFT: The confiscated abalone were counted and handed over to the Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries.

The first shipment consisting of 27 bags with a total of 2 476 abalone was found on a farm in the area. Shortly thereafter a second shipment was found on another farm, which included 19 bags containing 3 372 abalone.

CapeNature forms an integral part of the broader Operation Phakisa active along the Western Cape coastline. In this case, local knowledge of an area provided vital clues as to where the abalone was hidden. Dropping bags of abalone is a common practice when divers, runners and transporters are being chased.

**Lockdown does not mean locked-out.**

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061 871 2539 | 074 936 2139  
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Email

info@capenature.co.za

