



Nautilus News

Aug/Sept 2025

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Exploring the Renosterveld of the Overberg

Often regarded as the ugly sister of fynbos, Renosterveld is part of the Greater Cape Floristic Region's Fynbos biome. Unlike the flamboyant fynbos, the Renosterveld does not shout for attention. Its charm is subtle, its story one of resilience.

The name “Renosterveld” evokes the rugged spirit of the landscape, conjuring images of vast plains where rhinos once roamed among the shrubs.

Today, the Renosterveld is a mosaic of low shrubs, grasses, and wildflowers, stretching across the Overberg's rolling hills like a patchwork quilt stitched by nature's hand. Its muted greens and browns, punctuated by bursts of color from geophytes—those bulbous plants that hide beneath the soil—belie the richness of life it harbors.

“Renosterveld may be the most important vegetation type that you’ve never heard of.”

Field Guide to the Renosterveld of the Overberg

Renosterveld is dominated by grasses and shrubs of low to medium height (0.5 – 1.2m) belonging to the Asteraceae (Daisy) family, with a notable geophytic (bulb) component that is typically only seasonally evident, or particularly prolific after a fire.

In the Overberg, Renosterveld extends from Botrivier in the west to Heidelberg in the east, Bredasdorp in the south and Swellendam in the north.

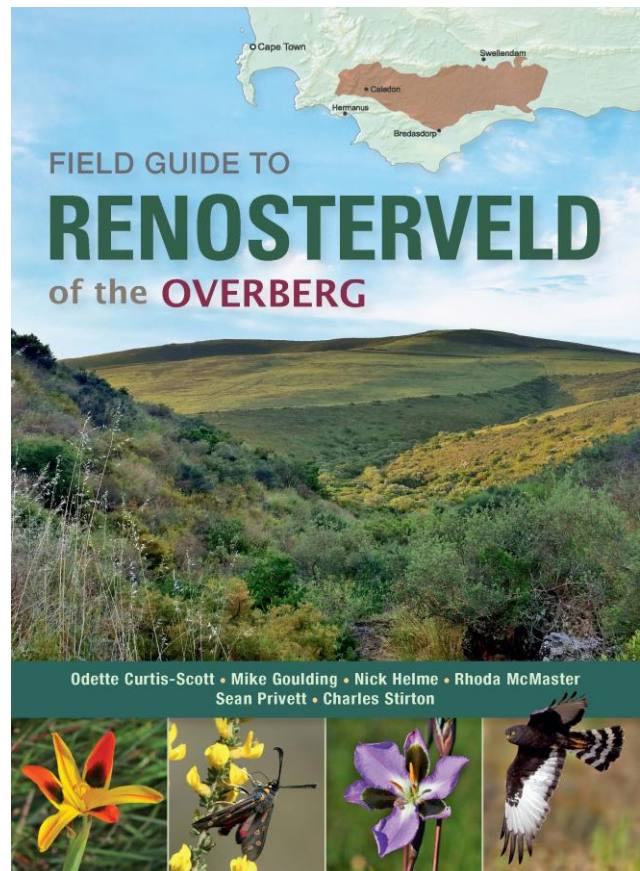
One of the world's most biodiverse temperate shrublands, the Renosterveld is also one of the most endangered. The Overberg's fertile soils, ideal for agriculture, have been its blessing and its curse. Wheat fields and vineyards now dominate where Renosterveld once stretched unbroken, reducing this ecosystem to fragmented pockets.

Despite the high levels of habitat fragmentation, Renosterveld has managed to sustain an incredible diversity of life, and this is not restricted to the plants. Although the Renosterveld wildlife of today no longer includes the megafauna, such as the now extinct Bluebuck and Quagga, a surprising diversity of smaller mammals, birds, amphibians, reptiles and insects remains.

The challenges facing the Renosterveld are stark. Less than 5% of its original extent remains, making it one of the most critically endangered habitats in the world. Invasive species, climate change, and agricultural expansion threaten what little is left. Yet, there is hope in the Overberg's quiet corners.

Conservation initiatives, driven by passionate botanists like Dr Odette Curtis-Scott and local communities, are fighting to protect these fragments. Programs like the Overberg Renosterveld Conservation Trust, established by Dr Curtis-Scott in 2012, work tirelessly to restore habitats, educate farmers, and reintroduce species like the geometric tortoise, a tiny, star-patterned creature that calls the Renosterveld home.

[Click here](#) to learn more about the Overberg Renosterveld Conservation Trust and to support efforts to save one of the world's most threatened habitats.



Source: *The Field Guide to the Renosterveld of the Overberg*. This excellent guide describes almost 1 000 plants and 140 animals found in the region, with informative photographs of each species.

Reserve Manager's Report: August 2025

1. Building Projects

- Units 16,17, 24, 25, 34 and 52 are under construction, while units 43 and 31 are being upgraded.
- The aesthetics committee will meet again on Friday 19 Sept, at 08:30.

2. Water

- Water usage for the month was measured on 25 August.
- The bulk water reading was 33 424 kl; the reserve used 813 kl

3. Estate Projects

- Most of the team's time this month was taken up with the removal of alien vegetation.
- Please report any rooikrans trees in your garden that need to be removed.
- We are working on a map to indicate our progress in cleaning up the reserve and hope to include the map in the next issue of this newsletter.

4. Environment

- Residents are invited to join us on Fridays when the beach is cleaned. Thank you to those who regularly lend a hand, and to everyone who picks up litter when walking/fishing on the beach.

5. Maintenance

- Ongoing tasks include grass-cutting where necessary, regular cleaning of the viewing deck, and weekly inspections of the pump stations, sewerage plant and internal firebreaks.
- Water troughs at the pump stations are cleaned every Monday.
- The sewerage plant is operating as expected. The plant was seeded twice during the month.



Thanks to Rene Hodges for sharing this beautiful photograph of a Cape Eagle-owl (Afr: Kaapse Ooruil).

[Click here](#) if you want to listen to the calls of the two similar looking eagle-owls (the Cape Eagle-owl and the Spotted Eagle-owl). In this clip, the Cape Eagle-owl has a more 'bark-like' call accompanied by a clicking sound. The male Spotted Eagle-owl has a distinct two-note call, while the female's call has three notes.

6. Security

- No incidents were reported during the past month
- Residents are requested to please report any security issues to Marcel or Markus Killian.
- Please inform Marcel if you will be away for an extended period, and you would like security to carry out patrols /inspections of your property during your absence. Kindly also inform security if someone will be housesitting for you.

Out and about

Upcoming events

Midbrak Market

Brinkleys River Village
Every Saturday from 9:00

Wild Oats Farmers Market

Sedgefield,
Every Saturday

20 September

Oktoberfest

George

24 Sept

Heritage Day @ Outeniqua Game Farm

3-5 October

Kyknet Buite Ekspo Hartenbos

5 October

Monthly Robinson Pass Farmer's Market

12 October

Garden Route Kite Festival
Sedgefield

Important reminder

Homeowners who have not yet complied are requested to submit their approved, up-to-date building plans in accordance with Guidelines for the Conservation Levy.

Nautilus Bay Exco expresses its gratitude to all owners for their timely levy payments, enabling Marcel and his team to keep our beautiful reserve in pristine condition.



Gert van der Walt



René Hodges

