



Honey Badger

Mammals

Numerous mammals have made the Sandveld their home.

Small antelope that are occasionally seen are the **Common Duiker**, the **Steenbok**, **Cape Grysbok** and **Klipspringer** in the foothills. There are four species of **Golden Mole**, mainly in the coastal belt - all are listed in the Red Data Book. **Van Zyl's Golden Mole** is found only near Lamberts Bay. Another Red Data Book species is the **White-tailed Rat**. Although rarely seen, the **Honey Badger** and termite feeding specialists, **Aardwolf** and **Aardvark** are sparsely distributed in the area. In recent years the **Large Grey Mongoose** and the **African Weasel** have extended their range into the area, probably as a result of land transformation which has increased the habitat for their preferred prey of rodents. The ongoing persecution of other larger predators such as **Black-backed Jackal** and **Caracal** may also have benefited these small predators. **Cape Clawless Otters** are also present. Since they rely on prevailing fresh water, their continued presence is threatened by lowering water tables and drying up of surface water due to increasing central pivot irrigation systems.



Raucous Frog

Reptiles and amphibians

The area boasts some very special reptiles and amphibians.

Apart from species common to coastal lowlands - **Angulate Tortoise**, various **Sandveld lizards** and **geckos**, the **Namaqua Dwarf Chameleon**, the **Raucous Frog** and the **Sand Frog**, there is a more specialised group along the coastal dune belt. This unique West Coast herpetological assemblage includes three legless lizards, two Red Data Book **dwarf burrowing skinks**, the **Rough-scaled Girdled Lizard** and **Austen's Thick-toed Gecko**. Another unique species is the world's smallest tortoise, the **Southern Speckled Padloper** (a Red Data Book animal), and the **Parrot-beaked Tortoise**, both of which prefer sandstone koppie areas. The **Cape Sand Snake** is unique to the coastal areas and, in the east, the **Black Spitting Cobra** is occasionally seen in mountainous terrain.

Two very special reptiles in the Sandveld are the **Dwarf Plated Lizard** (*Perdeva*) with its cobalt blue tail and two creamy white stripes down its back, and the well-armoured **Armadillo Girdled Lizard** (*Skurwejantjie* or *Geelthysie*) which, when threatened, rolls itself into a ball, gripping its tail in its jaws and thus protecting its soft belly. Environmentally-friendly farming practices and the prevention of unplanned coastal urbanisation will ensure the protection of healthy habitats for the survival of these unique Sandveld creatures.



The world's smallest tortoise, the Southern Speckled Padloper



Unearthing a rich cultural heritage

Archaeology

The Sandveld has a rich cultural legacy.

Numerous archaeological findings, including rock paintings dated between 8 000 and 200 years ago, shell middens and deposits in caves, reflect early human activities. One such cave deposit includes remains of animals and plants, hearths and artefacts from the Middle Stone Age (250 000 to 30 000 years ago).

Modern man

Modern man, too, has a place in the bounteous natural diversity of this coastal plain.

The area is farmed for grazing and cash crops - both necessary for agricultural output. However, ecological sustainability of these practices is of current concern. There is a need to set aside portions of remaining natural veld for the benefit of future generations. Sustainable utilisation practices, such as ecotourism, would enable landowners to earn livelihoods

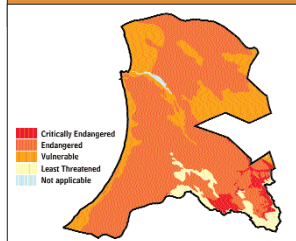


from these natural areas.

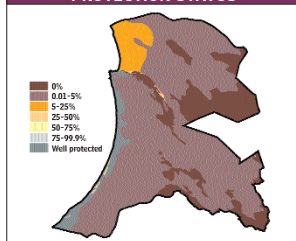
For information on the SCARCE (Survey of Cederberg Amphibians and Reptiles for Conservation and Ecotourism) project visit www.capenature.co.za/cederbergproject

Conservation efforts are urgently needed!

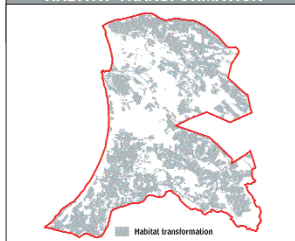
CONSERVATION STATUS



PROTECTION STATUS



HABITAT TRANSFORMATION



Critically endangered ecosystems have lost so much of their original natural habitat that ecosystem functioning has broken down and species associated with the ecosystem have been lost or are likely to be lost (Swarthland Shale Renosterveld).

Endangered ecosystems have lost significant amounts of their original natural habitat, so their functioning is compromised (Cape Inland Salt Pans, Hopefield Sand Fynbos & Leipoldtville Sand Fynbos).

Vulnerable ecosystems have lost some of their original natural habitat, and their functioning will be compromised if they continue to lose natural habitat (Cape Estuarine Salt Marshes, Cape Lowland Freshwater Wetlands, Graaewater Sandstone Fynbos, Lamberts Bay Strandveld & Langebaan Dune Strandveld).

In terms of the National Spatial Biodiversity Assessment, **nine vegetation types are Critically Endangered, Endangered or Vulnerable. This loss of natural habitat is of national concern.**

The area has only three statutory protected areas: Elandsbaai and Rocherpan, which are provincial reserves, and the Rocherpan Marine Reserve.

Furthermore, **five of the vegetation types have less than 5% statutory protection:** Graaewater Sandstone Fynbos, Leipoldtville Sand Fynbos, Hopefield Sand Fynbos, Piketberg Sandstone Fynbos and Swarthland Shale Renosterveld.

In order to prevent continued loss and fragmentation of these endangered ecosystems, appropriate planning and management is required.

The way forward

The Greater Cederberg Biodiversity Corridor is a conservation initiative which forms part of the Cape Action for People and the Environment (C.A.P.E.) where the aim is to secure the conservation of the biodiversity of the Cape Floral Kingdom thereby delivering sustainable economic benefits to the people of the region. A Sandveld Task Team has been formed in order to focus on the urgent conservation imperative that the area presents. This task team is a partnership between landowners, local communities and authorities, non-governmental agencies and formal conservation bodies.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON PARTICIPATION IN THE GCBC AND THE SANDVELD TASK TEAM, CONTACT CAPENATURE AT: (022) 931 2900.



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Nature's bounty in the SANDVELD

A special corner of the Greater Cederberg Biodiversity Corridor

