



**Media release**

**15 September 2022**

**(Cape Town, Western Cape)**

**Nurture yourself with CapeNature for free this Access Week**

CapeNature celebrates its 8<sup>th</sup> annual Access Week between the 20<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> of September 2022. The public are invited to access any one of 23 selected nature reserves across the Western Cape for free during this time. Visitors will be allowed day entry at no cost to enjoy walking, hiking, bird watching, swimming and mountain biking. CapeNature will also be facilitating a variety of programmes for different community groups during this period.

Although there are many reasons why access to nature is important for all South Africans, it's significance for rejuvenation is increasingly being recognised. This year, CapeNature is focusing on the importance of access to nature for health and wellbeing benefits.

"We have partnered with the Masiyembo Association to facilitate "NatureAllied" programmes where the focus is on enhanced wellbeing by connecting with nature. Our Stakeholder Engagement Officers will be facilitating programmes for a range of groups including schools, senior citizens, youth and non-profit community groups during the week", says Dr Razeena Omar, CEO: CapeNature.

Access to nature should be considered an essential service: vital for a kinder, healthier and happier society. Studies repeatedly show that nature connection promotes better mental health. If people feel safe, then regular meaningful moments in nature help reduce stress, anxiety, fatigue; improve mood, energy, focus; and bolsters psycho-social resilience and overall life satisfaction. It even strengthens one's desire to care for the environment and all life.

Jess Tyrrell and Dr Matthew Zylstra, facilitators of the "NatureAllied" training programme, believe that this work awakens the human blueprint. "Our neurophysiology evolved with nature so we are wired for it to be part of our lives. Nature is not just a 'nice-to-have' bonus - we *need* it to function

optimally. Nowadays we also need to help our bodies remember what this innate connection feels like - now more than ever.”

Participating nature reserves range from the West Coast to the Winelands, Overberg, Garden Route and even the Klein Karoo and include:

WEST COAST: Groot Winterhoek, Bird Island, Cederberg, Matjiesrivier, Rocherpan.

WINELANDS: Limietberg, Hottentots Holland, Jonkershoek, Assegaibosch, Vroulikheid.

OVERBERG: Kogelberg, De Mond, De Hoop, Marloth, Grootvadersbosch, Walker Bay, Stony Point.

GARDEN ROUTE: Robberg, Keurbooms River, Goukamma.

KAROO: Swartberg, Gamkaberg, Anysberg.

The following are important to note when booking: Free access is only applicable to regular reserve hours and to entries at CapeNature reserve gates. Unfortunately, no free access will be given to those who book through the contact center. No pre-bookings are necessary although the maximum capacity availability applies to visitor walk-ins. Free access fee will pertain to general access, in other words the conservation fee to include hiking, mountain biking and other day activities allowed. The waiver unfortunately does not apply to the Whale Trail, select landowners, partners or concessions.

If groups are interested in facilitated access they can contact the Learning and Awareness team at [learning@capenature.co.za](mailto:learning@capenature.co.za) and for more information one can visit [www.capenature.co.za](http://www.capenature.co.za). For more information on “NatureAllied” Training and the Masiyembo Association visit <https://www.masiyembo.org>.

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## **ABOUT CapeNature**

[CapeNature](#) is a public entity mandated to promote and ensure biodiversity conservation within the Western Cape. The entity manages most of the mountain catchments and reserves that supply ecosystem services to the citizens of the Western Cape. This requires good scientific data, a sound understanding of fynbos ecology and commitment to the principles of integrated biodiversity management and planning. Most of this work is in remote areas out of the public eye but has a direct bearing on the quality of life of millions of people in the province.

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