FEATURES

LOCAL DOCUMENTARY 'GUTTED' RECEIVING GLOBAL RECOGNITION

THE documentary film *Gutted: The Plight of the Kalk Bay Fishers*, has been selected for the Kaduna International Film Festival in Nigeria — its fourth international film festival so far.

Produced by Greenpeace Africa during the organisation's Ocean Treaty campaign last year, the film chronicles the struggles of the Kalk Bay fishing community in Cape Town.

The campaign, launched in September last year, calls on the United Nations to protect a third of the world's oceans.

Gutted, produced by Angelo Louw, highlights the struggles faced by small-scale fishers in the Western Cape due to regulations which favour industrial fishing over local communities, whose livelihoods have been destroyed as result.

Many of these fishers have been turned into criminals for carrying on their family trades in the absence of stringent fishing licences.

"It was important for us to highlight how corporate interests are destroying the very fabric of society, and leading to the rapid deterioration of fishing communities on the Cape Flats," said Louw. "The harder the government makes it for small-scale fishers to get fishing licences, the worse things are going to get."

The short film, which was previously short listed for the Melkbos Short Film Festival, where it received a special mention, and the First-Time Filmmaker Sessions in New York City, has now sparked conversations around the issue of small-scale fishing.

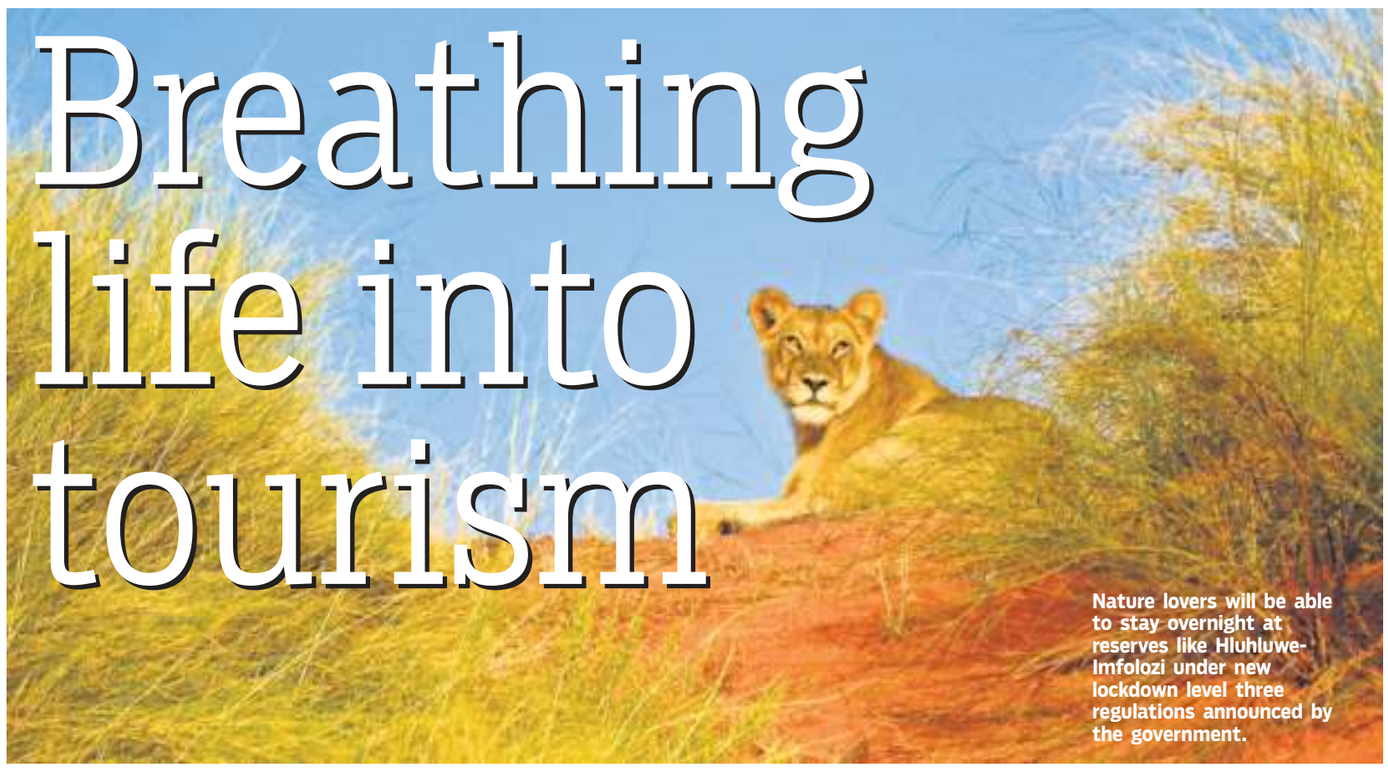
"I am very proud that we have been able to spark a conversation of this magnitude.

"I am especially proud that an issue spanning the entire course of our democracy has finally come to light and can no longer be ignored," Louw said.

He encouraged the public to watch the film on Greenpeace Africa's YouTube channel and to continue to share links to it to continue the conversation until government responds, and to raise even more awareness.

— Witness Reporter.

Breathing life into tourism



Nature lovers will be able to stay overnight at reserves like Hluhluwe-Imfolozi under new lockdown level three regulations announced by the government.

NGOs welcome the reopening of intra-provincial nature-based tourism

ESTELLE SINKINS

CONSERVATION NGOs — The Endangered Wildlife Trust, BirdLife South Africa, Wildlife and Environment Society SA, Wilderness Foundation Africa — have welcomed the news that nature lovers can now travel and stay at the country's parks and reserves.

Under the measures announced by Tourism Minister Mmamoloko Kubayi-Ngubane, last week, residents will be allowed visits for leisure purposes within the province.

Inter-provincial travel is still not permitted for leisure purposes, although business travel is allowed.

The new regulations mean that accommodation establishments are now permitted to operate under the following conditions:

• No more than two people allowed per room except for parents and their children. Establishments require and must keep a copy of proof of identity.

• Short-term home rental and sharing remains closed.

Tour operators will be allowed to conduct guided tours in open safari vehicles subject to the provision for both social distancing and maximum ventilation.

While the Covid-19 global pandemic has affected almost every aspect of life as we know it, its impact on the tourism sector has been particularly catastrophic, with many businesses already closed or on the brink of closure having had no income since March 26.

Kubayi-Ngubane said: "The impact of the pandemic has been devastating for the sector. Many businesses are at risk and many jobs have already been lost. However, we are doing everything we can to ensure that the impact is minimised. "Over the last four months, we've had to work hard in partnership with the private sector to develop health and safety protocols and find innovative ways for the early reopening of the sector.

"Successive discussions with industry representatives on stringent prevention protocols and guidelines for the tourism sector yielded results, along the way with various sub-sectors and activities opening under levels three and four.

"This included restaurants, accommodation establishments, casinos, hiking, self-drives at game farms and professional services."

The minister said the department would continue to liaise with those working in the sector, but in the meantime they hoped the changes which have been made wouldl allow the sector to remain viable.

Despite concerns over job losses in major local industries in recent years, the tourism sector has demonstrated resilience.

According to Stats SA's Tourism Satellite Account, in 2018, total tourism spend in South Africa was R273,2 billion. Domestic tourism accounted for 56% of total spend and 44% was international inbound travel.

Before lockdown, tourism supported 1,5 million jobs and contributed 8,6% to the GDP.

More than 60% of employed people in the sector were women (mostly in the areas of catering and accommodation).

The nature-based tourism sector is a key support system for conservation, through income generation for park management, wildlife protection, anti-poaching and to some degree border control through the management of human movement in transfrontier parks.

Game reserves in SA also generate significant benefits to the surrounding communities who contribute goods and services consumed by visitors.

In the absence of economic activity in parks, during the lockdown, there has been an increased risk of poaching, illegal resource extraction and park invasion.

In a statement, the four organisations said: "Years of engaging communities to share in the benefits arising from conservation and nature-based tourism equitably will be undone if our protected areas lose their economic value to the communities who depend on them, and should illegal resource use become their only means of survival."

Many people employed in nature-based tourism are unskilled or semi-skilled and are usually breadwinners, they said.

"Reopening local tourism may contribute to securing employment for many, and to securing livelihoods in the most vulnerable households and regions," the NGOs said.

"SANParks, as the custodian of approximately 70% of SA's state-owned protected area network, derives 80% of its income from nature-based tourism activities.

"A significant component of this revenue funds park management, anti-poaching measures, management of marine protected areas, ranger patrol and protection services, including the aircraft and associated rhino security technologies, as well as management of wildlife.

"There are also many community-owned reserves that generate income for clinics, schools, community recreation facilities and jobs linked to goods and services associated with these reserves, including catering and accommodation.

"Several of these community-owned reserves are linked to national and provincial parks and benefit from visitors to parks or their own concessionaire-managed lodges."

The conservation bodies also believe that getting out into nature is essential for people who have been confined in urban areas, citing the many studies which have shown the close link between human wellbeing and being in nature.

"Approximately 70% of visitors to our national parks are local tourists and thus the tourism sector can continue to support thousands of livelihoods even before our borders reopen," the NGOs said.

"Intra-provincial tourism means that accommodation facilities can immediately be opened up for overnight stays, without incurring the risks associated with national or international travel," they said.

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Experts and vets will explain what's happening and answer viewers' questions. **PHOTO: ELEPHANTS ALIVE**

Watch elephant collaring live

WILDLIFE conservation organisation Elephants Alive!, in collaboration with the Blue Sky Society team, will be hosting a live streaming of two elephants being fitted with tracking collars on August 8.

Viewers will be able to join conservationists and vets as they track the elephants in the Greater Kruger National Park, immobilise them and fit the new collars. And then watch as they come round and walk off into the bush.

All the while, experts and vets will explain what's happening and answer viewers' questions.

The online fundraising event is part of Elephants Alive's ongoing project to study elephants in the area, something it has been doing for nearly 25 years.

The work spans three countries as they follow the elephants from the Kruger National Park and private reserves bordering the park in South Africa to the Gonarezhou National Park in Zimbabwe and Parque Nacional de Limpopo in Mozambique.

Elephants Alive! has collared nearly 200 animals and can identify more than 2 000 individual elephants from their tusk and ear patterns by recording features like ear tears, notches and holes, as well as tusk shape.

This work has provided a unique insight into the social bonds, breeding behaviour and movements of the animals over time.

Elephant collars also provide scientific information, helping the organisation to understand the animals' movements in response to safety, sex, food and water.

The data also maps areas that elephants avoid and can show if an animal is too close to a village or is moving at unusual speed, which could indicate a potential poaching event. Collaring elephants is, however, expensive. Each collar costs around R90 000 and the hope is that this virtual event will help raise much-needed funds.

The first elephant will be collared between 8 am and 10.30 am on August 8, with the second elephant to get a collar being screened from 2.30 pm to 5 pm.

Tickets can be booked through www.quicket.co.za For more about the Elephants Alive! collaring project go to www.elephantsalive.org — Witness Reporter.