



SANCCOB™
saves seabirds



Annual Report 2018

Africa's largest seabird hospital



CEO Dr Stephen van der Spuy addresses guests



SANCCOB Board Directors cut the ribbon



Seabird hospital corridor



Admissions Room with ICUs, X-Ray Room and Pharmacy



Surgical theatre with public viewing window



Two dedicated Intensive Care Units



Mrs Elizabeth Cridland shared the history of her SANCCOB involvement



A view from the deck

Officially opened on 18 November 2018



Former SANCCOB Chairperson, Ms Mariette Hopley



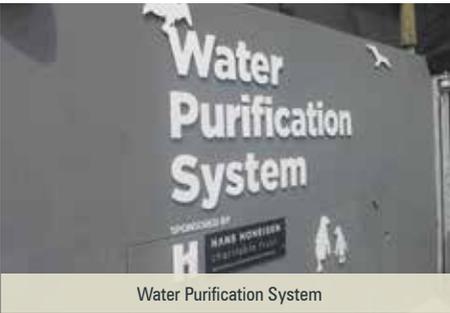
New wash, rinse and drying bays for oiled birds



Guests tour the new wash bay



Rehabilitation pool with associated pens



Water Purification System



Photo frame on viewing deck



New gift shop on site



US actor, Shannon Elizabeth in attendance

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Message from the Chairperson

It's a great honour for me to take up the position of Chair of SANCCOB, an organisation which is very dear to my heart and one with which I've had a long standing and proud relationship. From being a volunteer vet nurse in the Apollo Sea Oil spill in 1994, to Rehabilitation Manager during the Treasure and more recently as a board director for the past 10 years. I want to take this opportunity to thank Mariette Hopley, the outgoing Chairperson, for her incredible contribution to SANCCOB's success and whom we hope to continue having a strong partnership with into the future. I would also like to honour our current board directors who give up their time and expertise so generously to the conservation of our seabirds, our staff who work so diligently and with such compassion and of course our volunteers, without whom we would not be able to function. I honour you all.

The past year has been another landmark year for SANCCOB with the opening of the new purpose built and water efficient Seabird Hospital on 14 November 2018. This new facility includes two surgical theatres, a digital X-ray unit, a laboratory to aid in diagnosis, two Intensive Care Units (ICU), three new rehabilitation pools and 13 new rehabilitation pens. Over the past 15 months under review from 1 January 2018 to 31 March 2019, we admitted 2,398 seabirds of which 398 were abandoned penguin chicks and eggs, and achieved an 86% release rate. We also ramped up our contribution to the in-colony support to seabirds through the appointment of a new Penguin and Seabird Ranger on Robben Island in August, bringing the total to seven SANCCOB conservation staff in seabird colonies in the Western Cape.

It's important to remember however, that we celebrate these successes against a backdrop that provides a stark reminder of the context our seabirds find themselves in. The story they tell and the hardships they face should be a reminder to us of the extent to which we are messing with our life support system. Nature provides the food we eat, the water we drink, it keeps our air breathable and the climate habitable. Seabirds are well-established indicators of the health of the environment and the decreasing trend in their status should set off warning bells for us. This year we have witnessed the impact of poor food availability on breeding success of the African Penguins, placing increased urgency to lobby for their conservation. We experienced the impact of the Avian Influenza outbreak in the Boulders' colony and we saw hundreds of rescued Lesser flamingo chicks from Kamfers Dam in Kimberley due to the drought, needing life-saving rehabilitation.

Our task remains huge, but when I look around the organisation I see ordinary people doing extraordinary things. I see passion, determination, integrity, expertise, optimism and the list goes on. So I am hopeful for the future and look forward to doing great things together in 2020!



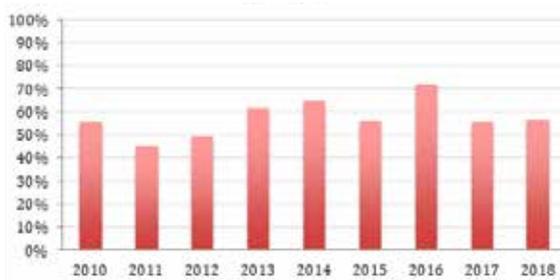
Message from the Chief Executive Officer

What a wonderful privilege to be part of the SANCCOB team during the 50-year anniversary. Reaching this milestone is a wonderful achievement, and it's an honour to be able to thank the staff and all the SANCCOB supporters both present and past for their dedication to making SANCCOB successful and a wonderful place to work. When becoming part of the SANCCOB team, one quickly realises that this is a dedicated family of hardworking people who have one goal – protecting nature and saving seabirds. SANCCOB has developed from its modest early stages to become an internationally recognised leader in seabird conservation.

Considerable effort is put into ensuring we record our conservation efforts. One startling record shows the large percentage of endangered birds we receive at SANCCOB (mostly African penguins). The graph below illustrates over the past nine years that over 45%, and in most years over 50% of the birds we admit to the SANCCOB rehabilitation centres, are endangered.

Avian Influenza had a devastating impact on our seabirds in South Africa in 2018 and in Namibia in 2019. The death of thousands of seabirds was attributed to the outbreak. In this report, our veterinarian discusses the outbreak as well as collaboration on further research to gain a better understanding of the disease in seabirds.

Endangered seabirds admitted to SANCCOB annually



We continue to express our serious concerns regarding the offshore ship-to-ship bunkering operations taking place in Algoa Bay in close proximity to the largest remaining breeding colonies of endangered African penguins and Cape gannets on the islands of St Croix and Bird, respectively. These two islands have been identified as 'Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas' by BirdLife International. Algoa Bay is a marine biodiversity hotspot, which has been recognised by the recently declared Addo Marine Protected Area. The impact of oil spills from bunkering will and has had serious effects on all marine life in the region.

Once again our finance team meticulously managed our financial processes. We are pleased with the audit outcomes and financial performance. This stable financial platform allows for continued growth and the ability to position SANCCOB as a leading seabird conservation organisation.

On the 14th of November 2018 we opened the largest most specialised seabird hospital in Africa showcasing the highest international standards in seabird rehabilitation. This day represented the realisation of many past dreams and was celebrated with a grand event at the Seabird Centre in Cape Town where we had the opportunity to thank our many local and international donors. The financial and in-kind support we received to make the new hospital a reality was truly remarkable.

A difficult but necessary decision was made to close the Cape St Francis (CSF) Centre and operate from our PE Centre only, in the Eastern Cape. We are grateful for the support of surrounding communities and special thanks to Jane Coultas – daughter of SANCCOB founder, Althea Westphal – who has been involved since the very beginning.

Looking forward I am very pleased we will be finishing the construction of the first permanent dedicated rehabilitation pool at the SANCCOB Centre in Port Elizabeth (PE) in 2019. The construction includes six rehabilitation pens, a filtration room and two storerooms. This development will substantially increase the number of birds that can be rehabilitated on a daily basis. The positioning of the Port Elizabeth centre remains critical due to its close proximity to Algoa Bay.

Our hope is that we raise sufficient funds to construct a visitor centre at the Cape Town Seabird Centre. This development will provide much needed facilities to assist SANCCOB in generating operational funds as it will include a souvenir shop, a coffee shop / restaurant, education / meeting room and ablutions. The proposed plan is to start construction of this facility in 2020.



We are fortunate to have excellent working relations and continued support from our government partners, including the Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries, CapeNature, South African National Parks, City of Cape Town, Robben Island Museum and the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Municipality.

We thank our dedicated Board of Directors for their continuous and passionate support and value their guidance to ensure SANCCOB remains strategically focused and financially secure. I applaud the excellent commitment, passion and work effort shown by SANCCOB Staff. It is truly a privilege to be working with such a dedicated and highly skilled team. Without the volunteers contributing thousands of volunteer hours, we would not be able to do the critical work we do. We salute your commitment.

Thank you!



VETERINARY DEPARTMENT

The veterinary department had an eventful year, highlighted by the opening of our new seabird hospital in Table View and then the unfortunate outbreak of Avian Influenza, which severely affected our wild seabirds.

As always I was assisted by the dedicated seabird rehabilitators, community service vets, visiting volunteer veterinarians, and veterinary nursing students. In the Eastern Cape, our veterinary nurse oversaw the veterinary treatment of our patients under the guidance of local private vets in 2018. In 2019 Dr Krassnitzer, has worked at our Port Elizabeth centre as a compulsory community service vet.



Endoscopy training using a Kelp gull cadaver

Statistics

At our Cape Town centre we performed 399 surgical procedures and 414 X-Ray studies in the 2018/2019 year in review from 1 January 2018 to 31 March 2019. Our cases ranged from simple wound-cleaning procedures to more advanced enucleations and orthopaedic surgery.

MONTH	SURGICAL PROCEDURES		X-RAYS	
	Penguins	Other Seabirds	Penguins	Other Seabirds
January	24	8	17	16
February	26	11	4	13
March	14	11	7	19
April	13	24	5	18
May	10	23	10	23
June	6	11	6	8
July	12	5	13	16
August	16	7	4	8
September	21	2	13	11
October	15	5	26	4
November	25	4	29	3
December	29	0	21	4
January 2019	29	6	35	12
February 2019	19	0	19	9
March 2019	15	8	20	21
Full total	274	125	229	185
Average	18	8	15	12

In the Eastern Cape all veterinary procedures and X-rays were done offsite by the local vets who also supervised the treatment of medical cases. The veterinary cases included African penguins with malaria, emaciated cormorants and birds with injuries caused by predators, boats, plastic, fishing line and hooks.

Mortality event investigations

SANCCOB's research and veterinary departments were called upon to investigate several events of mass mortality in seabirds.

Date	Location	Species and Approximate Number Affected	Suspected cause	Other stakeholders
7 March 2018	Danger Bay Saldanha	14 Kelp Gulls 11 Hartlaub's Gulls	Botulism or Toxin from nearby rubbish dump	Saldanha municipality
28 February to present	Brandfontein	480 Cape Gannets and other seabirds	Predation and possibly Avian Influenza	CapeNature
6 April 2018	Melkbos	50 Cape Cormorants	Deliberate human trauma or unknown predator	City of Cape Town CapeNature SANParks
9 September 2018	Simon's Town	30 Cape Cormorants	Deliberate human trauma or unknown predator	City of Cape Town CapeNature SANParks
9 October 2018	Malgas Island	50 Cape Gannets	Seal Predation	SANParks
1 April 2019	Duinefontein	30 Cape Cormorants	Deliberate human trauma or unknown predator	City of Cape Town CapeNature SANParks

Interesting Cases

Gannets with wing fractures

Two Cape gannets were admitted as emaciated juveniles with fractured wing bones. Their fractures were stabilised with orthopaedic pins and both were successfully released after the fractures healed.

Cape Cormorant with a broken leg

A Cape cormorant was admitted as a juvenile with two broken bones in the right leg. We placed the bird on a drip on admission and we were able to do surgery three days later. Both the fractured bones were pinned and healed within eight weeks. After the feathers had regrown and was once again waterproof, the bird was released after 18 weeks in our care.

Severe laceration on African Penguin

AP179 was an underweight blue admitted on 26 July 2018 from Dwarskersbos with severe lacerations to the right side of his head. After five surgical procedures to clean and suture the wounds he was able to move to the rehabilitation pens and was released two months later on 18 September.

Severe injuries and scars

AP920 was admitted to SANCCOB Table View on a Saturday in November 2016 with a severe degloving injury in the abdominal area. Most of the skin on the right side of the body was missing. Our CEO performed an emergency surgery that very night to clean the wound and place temporary sutures to hold it closed. The damage was so severe that there was not enough skin to close the wound quickly and a further eleven surgical procedures were needed over four months before it could heal. Once the wound had healed, the bird had a large scar and did not meet release criteria at the time. AP920 was required to spend a year in the Home Pen until its next moult at the end of 2017. After a successful moult, a featherless patch at the site of the old injury meant that we had to surgically remove some of the scar tissue where feathers were not growing, using a procedure similar to a 'tummy tuck'. The first surgical procedure was done to remove as much of the scar as possible and pull the surrounding healthy skin over the wound. After another moult, loose skin was useful for a final procedure to remove the remaining featherless, scarred skin and the bird was released – fully waterproof – in January 2019.

Avian Influenza in Seabirds

South Africa's worst recorded seabird disease outbreak occurred in 2018. Fourteen different species of seabirds were infected by the highly pathogenic H5N8 strain of Avian Influenza (bird flu).

In December 2017, SANCCOB Table View started to admit Swift terns affected by an unusual disease which caused weakness and neurological symptoms, shortly followed by similar cases in the Eastern Cape. We were unable to save the affected birds and, on further testing, diagnosed H5N8 Avian Influenza. The first cases identified in African penguins were in January 2018.

During the outbreak we had to ensure that we could continue our rehabilitation work safely without endangering other seabird patients at SANCCOB. The SANCCOB facility in Port Elizabeth was placed under temporary quarantine but through close collaboration with the local Veterinary Services we could keep our Table View and Cape St Francis facilities open.

SANCCOB's long-standing history of disease research and surveillance was crucial in response to the Avian Influenza outbreak in the wild. We were able to assist the State Veterinary Service, the Department of Environmental Affairs, the managing authorities of the different colonies, and other stakeholders during the outbreak. SANCCOB assistance included advising on protocols for diagnosing the disease, responding to sick birds, carcass disposal and biosecurity. We are also collaborating with the University of Pretoria on further research focused on Avian Influenza in African penguins. We presented two presentations to members of the South African Veterinary Association on Avian Influenza in seabirds and the management of the disease in wild populations and rehabilitation centres, also to be reported on at the 2019 International Penguin Conference in New Zealand.

By the end of the outbreak, the deaths of approximately 100 African penguin and 5,000 Swift terns were officially attributed to the disease. The true numbers of mortalities will have been far higher. The disease may have caused the deaths of 1,500 Cape gannets, and 100 Cape cormorants which were also found dead during the outbreak. Luckily, large numbers of penguins did not die within the colonies in South Africa. The last case of Avian Influenza detected in a seabird in South Africa was in May 2018.

In 2019 African penguins in Namibia were affected by the same strain of Avian Influenza which had a worse effect on the colonies there, resulting in approximately 500 African penguin mortalities since January 2019.

Veterinary Training

In January 2018, SANCCOB's veterinarian attended a two day veterinary training session on avian rehabilitation, treatment and orthopaedics. In January 2019 the course was repeated and took place in SANCCOB's newly-renovated education room.



Professor Darrell Abernethy of University of Pretoria attended SANCCOB's Veterinary Training session



REHABILITATION

While 2018 presented many challenges including a fire, drought and disease, the major highlight for the rehabilitation team was the realisation and opening of the new seabird hospital, located in Table View, Cape Town. There are now dedicated rooms, enclosures and pools for specific species, with improved functionality to ensure we deliver the best possible care to our seabird patients. The installation of a water treatment and filtration system addressed our critical need for water in the middle of Cape Town's drought. The difference between the old facility and the new is astounding; however, there was a certain amount of nostalgia as the old facility was being torn down. Those walls could tell a few stories and it had managed thousands of seabirds over the years, including oiled seabirds, thousands of fluffy penguin chicks, gannets and many sick and injured birds – it served its purpose well. It was time for a facility that was not only going to benefit the birds in our care, but also the staff and volunteers, who work long hours to return these birds back to the wild – we could not be prouder!

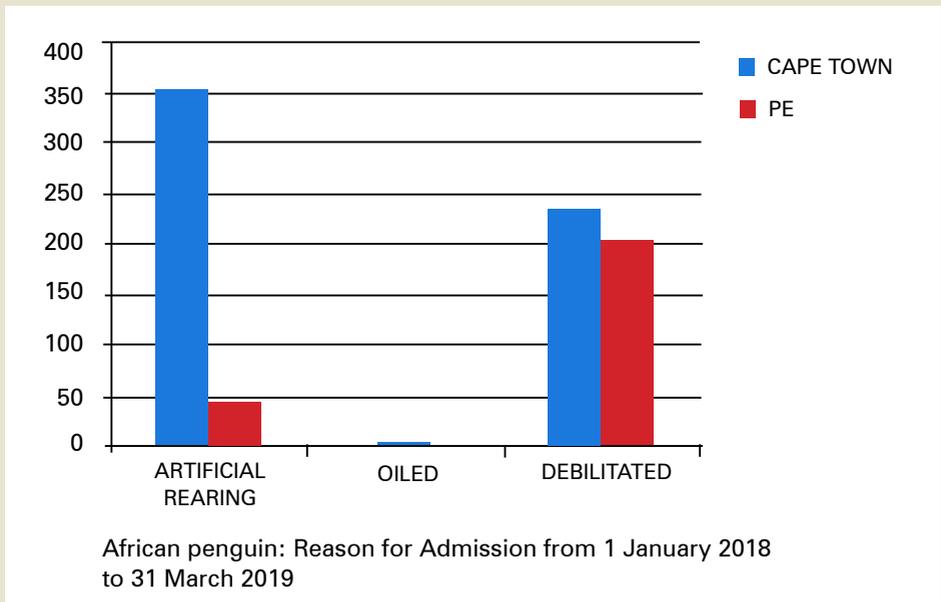
Sadly in 2019 a raging fire at the Cape Recife Nature Reserve placed the Port Elizabeth centre at risk of burning down. A massive operation was undertaken by staff, volunteers and members of the public to evacuate over 200 birds that were in our care. They were taken to a member of staff's home where temporary enclosures were set up in the garden and garages. Fortunately, all birds managed the stress of the process very well and survived the ordeal. After two days, the fire department advised that the fire had been completely extinguished and that it was safe to return the birds back to the centre.

Seabird admission numbers for 2018/2019 were lower than previous years, not because conditions were favourable, but because seabirds were struck by the highly pathogenic Avian Influenza Virus (H5N8). Since Avian Influenza is a controlled disease, the government imposed stringent biosecurity measures and restrictions in an effort to prevent the spread of the virus. These restrictions affected everyone working with seabirds, including colony staff, who was unable to carry out their normal monitoring duties. The virus affected many species of seabirds nationally but the Swift tern was severely affected and sadly, thousands of Swift terns succumbed to the virus in the Western Cape.

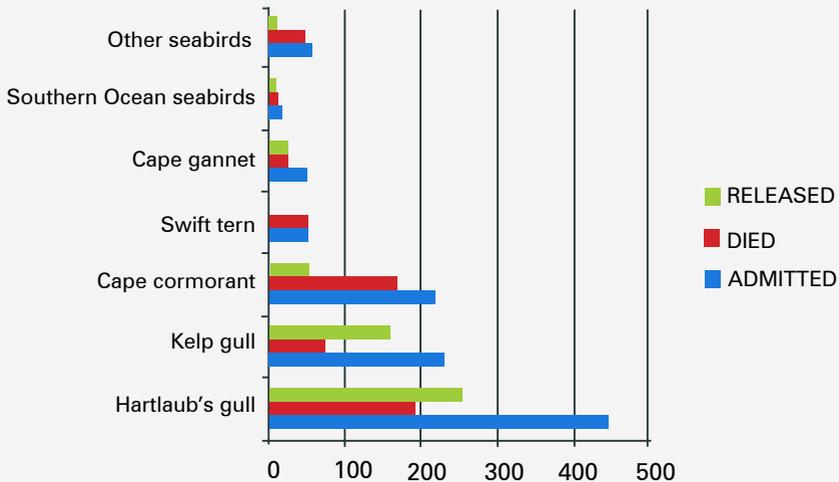
Seabird admissions and release

A total of 2,398 seabirds were admitted to SANCCOB's two centres in Table View (Western Cape) and Port Elizabeth (Eastern Cape) from 1 January 2018 to 31 March 2019. 841 African penguins were admitted, including abandoned chicks (398), oiled penguins (4) and generally debilitated penguins (439). 1,557 flying seabirds of various species were also admitted for rehabilitation. Overall, the release rate for African penguins was 72% and 47% for flying seabirds.

The lower number of African penguins admitted highlights the impact of Avian Influenza and the lower admission numbers are likely also to be attributed to the lowest number of African penguins in the wild, now at 15,188 breeding pairs in South Africa (Department of Environmental Affairs).



It can be difficult to identify when seabirds initially become sick, but flying seabirds are at an even greater disadvantage than penguins in some ways as they may even still have the ability to fly away when trying to capture them for treatment. As a result, by the time they start showing symptoms, their illness or injury has progressed and, despite our team utilising all resources, they often don't survive. The graph below illustrates that both SANCCOB centres managed to release 34% of Cape gannets, while only 22% of Cape cormorants were returned to the wild – a species that is notoriously difficult to rehabilitate.



Numbers of flying seabirds that were admitted, released and died at both SANCCOB centres

Focusing on the Cape gannet and Cape cormorant, both species are classified as endangered and both species are dependent on prey items such as sardine, like the African penguin. It was reported that 2018 had the lowest biomass of sardine recorded since 1985 and that this precious food source had reached below a critical level, prompting authorities to impose a different set of rules for determining the total allowable catch. The lack of food availability for seabirds is supported by these species' admission weights, which we refer to as 'emaciated'. These cases are extremely challenging and require intensive care, often with birds placed on intravenous drips in an attempt to slowly improve hydration and speed up treatment uptake.

Species	Healthy weight	Average weight admitted to SANCCOB
Cape gannet	2.6kg	1.76kg
Cape cormorant	0.8 – 1kg	0.67kg



Cape gannet chicks abandoned at Bird Island Nature Reserve, Lambert's Bay

In addition to admitting debilitated and underweight Cape gannets, conservation authorities monitor chick growth in seabird colonies and track when these birds fledge the nest. During some years when conditions have been unfavourable, the parents leave the nest before chicks have lost their fluffy downy feathers and become self-sufficient.

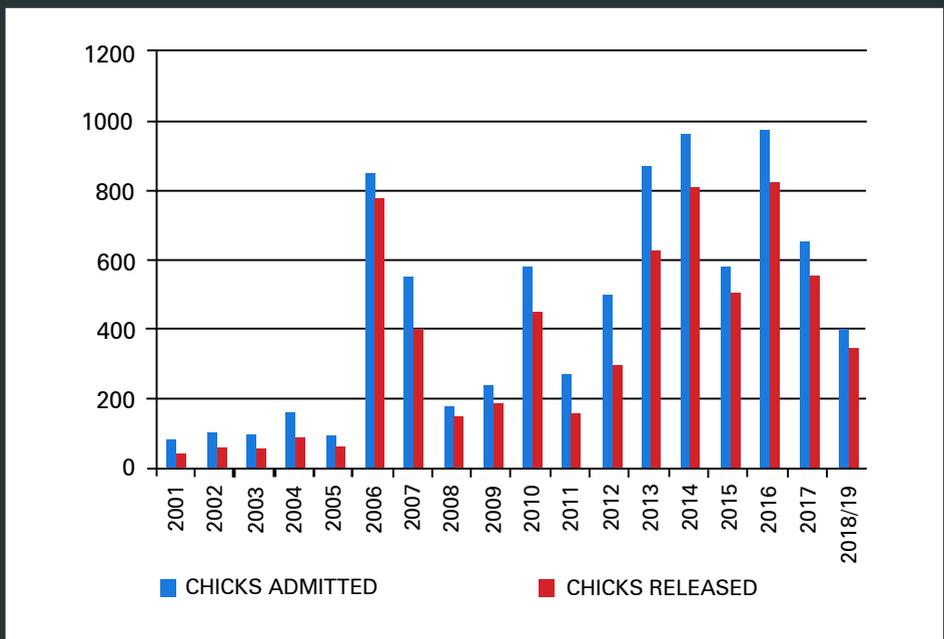
During June 2018, 26 abandoned gannet chicks were cleared from the West Coast colony and transported to SANCCOB. After several weeks of fish feeding and swimming to ensure healthy weights and waterproof plumage, the birds met the release criteria. CapeNature's Yves Chesselet, who supervises the Bird Island site and has worked at this gannet colony for many years was able to witness the release of 69% of the rescued birds in the Atlantic Ocean, off Table Bay; birds that he himself monitored and identified as abandoned.

Chick Bolstering Project

398 African penguin chicks were admitted – including eggs hatched – to both SANCCOB centres. As with previous years, the higher number of chicks admitted to the Table View facility is owed to the fact that the majority of the chicks were cleared from the Western Cape’s land-based colonies, Stony Point and Boulders. Access is limited by poor and often dangerous weather conditions which hamper conservation authorities in retrieving sick or abandoned chicks from the island colonies such as Bird Island and St Croix, located in Algoa Bay, Port Elizabeth. We are proud to have released 345 African penguin chicks back to the wild, an 87% release rate.

SANCCOB is often approached by institutions globally to share our successful techniques in the artificial rearing of African penguin chicks and the pioneering work to hatch and release other seabird species, such as the African Black Oystercatcher. In 2018, two publications were produced showcasing SANCCOB’s work, ensuring this information is freely accessible.

- Klusener R, Hurtado R, Parsons NJ, Vanstreels RET, Stander N, van der Spuy S, Ludynia K (2018) From incubation to release: Hand-rearing as a tool for the conservation of the endangered African penguin. PLoS ONE
- Klusener R, Hurtado R, Stander N, Parsons NJ (2018) First report of a hatched, hand-reared, and released African oystercatcher. Zoo Biology



The Annual Report is always a good time to look back and over the past 17 years, SANCCOB's Chick Bolstering Project has admitted 8,159 African penguin chicks since 2001 and released 6,393 back into their natural habitat where it is hoped they will survive and breed, with the aim of removing this species off the endangered list.



Chick Rearing Unit intern, Miren Schleicher, cleans the cloaca of an African penguin chick

African penguin land-based predator attack makes full recovery

An adult African penguin was rescued from the Stony Point penguin colony in Betty's Bay where it is suspected that a water mongoose attacked this bird causing substantial injuries to its head. Trauma cases are often lengthy and require intensive care; in this case, three x-rays and five surgical procedures were performed. Due to the feathers being disrupted from the head wound, the bird completed its annual moult whilst undergoing rehabilitation and after 109 days at SANCCOB, AP034 was finally released.



African penguin patient shortly after its 5th wound treatment surgery

Training

SANCCOB offers practical and theoretical training to researchers, aquarium staff and colony personnel. During 2018, SANCCOB delivered training to staff from penguin colonies and the Two Oceans Aquarium on topics such as handling and safe transportation of penguins and penguin eggs, feeding techniques and restraint for blood sampling. Those in attendance were from Kogelberg Biosphere Reserve, City of Cape Town and SANParks and rangers were provided with a transportation booklet and a practical session on these topics.

Lesser Flamingos – January 2019

SANCCOB Table View admitted 560 Lesser flamingo chicks on 28 January 2019, due to abandonment by their parent birds during a drought affecting Kamfers Dam in Kimberley. The chicks arrived in very poor condition and severely dehydrated, and unfortunately, some chicks did not survive the journey to Cape Town.

This admission was a first for SANCCOB; having never hand-reared flamingo chicks before so a steep learning curve unfolded for the team. Our global partners from zoos and aquariums travelled from across the world to share their flamingo rearing and husbandry experience to assist us. This was an intense time during the first couple of weeks. Mortality was extremely high; deaths ranged from general dehydration to yolk sac infection and salmonella. SANCCOB received an enormous amount of support from the public; from donating much-needed items from our wish list to volunteering their time.

The surviving Lesser flamingo juveniles were transferred by air to a purpose-built quarantine facility in Kimberley for further evaluation before release back at Kamfers Dam, and five flamingos with Avian Pox lesions were transferred to the National Zoological Gardens in Pretoria for further treatment. Each released juvenile flamingo was fitted with a numbered colour band on its leg, which will be used for post-release monitoring purposes.



Lesser flamingos were placed in a specially erected enclosure to accommodate walking and exercising their growing legs



RESEARCH

Colony support

In 2018, Robben Island was added to the colonies that SANCCOB supports by placing Penguin & Seabird Rangers to assist the managing authorities with the day-to-day activities in the colonies and the rescue of abandoned eggs and chicks, as well as injured, diseased or oiled birds.

Penguin & Seabird Rangers are now placed at Robben Island, Stony Point and Simon's Town and work closely with Robben Island Museum, CapeNature, the City of Cape Town and SANParks. They are a crucial link between the colonies and SANCCOB and make sure injured and abandoned birds get transported safely to SANCCOB.

Sadly, in early 2019, we lost our valued Penguin and Seabird Ranger at Stony Point, Marcelo October, who passed away rather suddenly due to illness. He has been such an important addition to the Stony Point colony, assisting CapeNature with everything from nest checks, habitat restoration to education programmes, and will be dearly missed.



Rest in peace Marcelo October

2018 was a difficult year for our colony staff as, due to Avian Influenza being present in South African seabird colonies, access to the colonies was limited and staff working in the colonies had to adhere to strict hygiene protocols. Predation events (mostly by caracals but also fur seals and other terrestrial and marine species) are another threat to the species in the colonies. SANCCOB has thus extended its colony support work in the form of facilitating workshops for the managing authorities regarding topics like disease surveillance, predator control and management, as well as training of colony staff.

We hope to be able to continue the fruitful collaboration with the managing authorities and to extend our colony support to the Eastern Cape too.

Transponder work

Avian Influenza prevented any transponder work in the colonies as research activities were prohibited to prevent any further spreading of the disease. However, SANCCOB inserts transponders in each penguin that is released from the centres and 438 in the Western Cape and 222 in the Eastern Cape were fitted with transponders and released in 2018.

All colony staff in the main colonies is equipped with hand-held readers that are used to detect transpondered birds during nest checks. Ground-readers are now installed at Robben Island, Boulders, Stony Point and Dyer Island in the Western Cape, and Bird Island in the Eastern Cape, and soon to be set up on St Croix Island. These readers record transpondered birds that cross the reader on their way to sea or back into the colony.

Initial data shows that a large number of hand-reared and rehabilitated African penguins are regularly recorded in the colonies by the transponder readers. We could also provide evidence that birds that were admitted with severe injuries and had undergone surgeries have returned to successful breeding after being released from SANCCOB.

We are currently conducting in-depth analysis of long-term survival of hand-reared chicks and other penguins released from SANCCOB. The data obtained through the transponder project will play a fundamental role in understanding the movement of juvenile African penguins and the pressures they face at sea. The transponder project is largely funded through the Association of Zoos & Aquariums (AZA) Saving Animals From Extinction (SAFE) Programme.

Disease surveillance

SANCCOB has a long-standing history of disease research and surveillance. With the occurrence of Avian Influenza in South African seabirds in 2018, this expertise has become crucial in understanding disease risks, transmission pathways and for developing contingency plans for future outbreaks and hygiene protocols to prevent the spreading of the disease. SANCCOB has worked closely with the State Veterinary Service, the Department of Environmental Affairs and the managing authorities of the different colonies during the outbreak and has started collaborating with the University of Pretoria on research focused on Avian Influenza in African penguins.



Our Robben Island Penguin and Seabird Ranger, Andile Mdluli, weighs an African penguin

Publications:

- Vanstreels RET, Proctor H, Snyman A, Hurtado R, Ludynia K, Parsons NJ, Pistorius PA (2018) Nasal mites (Mesostigmata: Rhinonyssidae) in African penguins (*Spheniscus demersus*). **Parasitology**
- Vanstreels RET, Parsons NJ, Pistorius PA, Schaefer AM (2018) Prognostic indicators of immature rehabilitated African penguins (*Spheniscus demersus*). **Journal of Wildlife Diseases**
- Vanstreels RET, Yablsey MJ, Parsons NJ, Swanepoel L, Pistorius PA (2018) A novel candidate species of Anaplasma that infects avian erythrocytes. **Parasites and Vectors**
- Khomenko S, Abolnik C, Roberts L, Waller L, Shaw K, Monne I, Taylor J, Dhingra M, Pittiglio C, Mugyeom M, Roche X, Frederick K, Kamata A, Okuthe S, Kone P, Wiersma L, von Dobschuetz S, Soumare B, Makonnen Y, Morzaria S, Lubroth J (2018) 2016-2018 Spread of H5N8 highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) in sub-Saharan Africa: epidemiological and ecological observations. **Focus On. FAO**
- Vanstreels RET, Hurtado R, Snyman A, Roberts DG, Parsons NJ, Pistorius PA (2019) Empirical primaquine treatment of avian babesiosis in seabirds. **Journal of Avian Medicine and Surgery**
- Parsons NJ, Vanstreels RET, Schaefer AM (2018) Prognostic indicators of rehabilitation outcomes for adult African penguins (*Spheniscus demersus*). **Journal of Wildlife Diseases**
- Campbell K, Steinfurth A, Underhill LG, Coetzee J, Crawford RJM, Dyer B, Ludynia K, Makhado A, Merkle D, Rademan J, Upfold L, Sherley R (2019) Local forage fish abundance predicts foraging effort and offspring condition in an Endangered marine predator. **Journal of Applied Ecology**
- Masotla MJ, Snyman A, Makhado AB, Dyer BM (2019) First breeding record of Pintado petrel (*Daption capensis*) at Marion Island. **Biodiversity Observations**
- Vanstreels RET, Parsons NJ, Pistorius PA (2018) A three-legged African penguin *Spheniscus demersus*. **Marine Ornithology**



GOVERNMENT LIAISON



SANCCOB places a high priority on finding ways to support government for the long term protection and survival of our seabirds in the wild. As such, we are involved in a number of National Working Groups that oversee and implement critical conservation actions.

At a national level, we sit on the African penguin Population Reinforcement and Habitat Working Groups (WG), which are WGs led by the Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries (DEFF). These WGs are constituted under the African penguin Biodiversity Management Plan (APBMP) and are the fora where the implementation of actions in the APBMP are discussed and tracked. They are also the fora where guidelines and regulations have been drafted, and we have assisted in drafting the 'Guidelines for Conservation Translocations of African penguins' and the 'National Norms and Standards Relating To The Management Of Seabirds And Shorebirds In Captivity' to mention two examples.

We also sit on the Seabird Technical Team, a Scientific WG chaired by DEFF that oversees seabird monitoring and research and are an observer on the Small Pelagic Scientific Working Group, which provides the recommendations to the DEFF Pelagic Management WG on small pelagic quotas.

We are a member of the Incident Management Organisation of Operation Phakisa. Further details on the support we provide to Operation Phakisa, the Bunkering Stakeholder Working Group and the environmental sub-committee, the 'Bunkering Environmental Working Group,' are described in the Oiled Wildlife Response section of this report.

We are also committed to supporting the local, provincial and national conservation bodies with whom we work very closely. We assist with monitoring, research, disease surveillance and population management issues and sit on multiple advisory committees.

Lastly, we are a member of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), and of the IUCN Penguin Specialist Group.





OILED WILDLIFE RESPONSE

Oil Spill Incidents

Although South Africa has an extensive history of responding to oil spills we have been fortunate to enjoy another year without a major oil spill off the South African coastline. That being said, seabirds are still at risk from other types of spills. SANCCOB admitted a total of 85 Kelp gulls that had become oiled in fish oil at a fish processing plant in Saldanha Bay. Fortunately, SANCCOB was able to rescue and rehabilitate the birds and release them back into the wild.

Training, Exercises & Conferences

Despite there being no oil spills, SANCCOB has continued to maintain a level of preparedness by participating in training, procuring necessary equipment and attending conferences with local and global oil spill response affiliates. SANCCOB was invited by the Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) to help organise and provide oiled wildlife response training in Algoa Bay as part of their annual oil spill response training programme. The three day training workshop was attended by a number of diverse stakeholders including members of municipal and provincial government; the South African Maritime Safety Authority; Transnet; and members of the oil and gas industry.

In addition, SANCCOB visited Baltimore, USA, to attend the International Effects of Oil on Wildlife Conference and presented a paper titled 'Improving Preparedness through cooperative efforts between governments, agencies, industry and NGOs in South Africa.' SANCCOB's CEO and Preparedness and Response Manager also had the opportunity to complete the HAZWOPER 24h ('Hazardous Waste Operations') course run by the Alaska SeaLife Centre at Maryland Zoo, as well as training on 'responding to oiled sea turtle and pinniped care' at Tri-State Bird Rescue in Delaware. SANCCOB's CEO was also invited to present on SANCCOB and the strong relationship with Maryland Zoo at an evening event at the Zoo.

Operation Phakisa

SANCCOB has continued to play an active role in Operation Phakisa ensuring that the interests of seabirds are taken into account and has attended monthly Incident Management Organisation meetings chaired by the Department of Transport. The meetings are now hosted by disaster management centres around South Africa on a bi-monthly basis to ensure participation from stakeholders in different provinces and to build relationships within the disaster management sector.

After years of input, South Africa's 'National Oil Spill Contingency Plan' has now been finalised and contains a chapter dedicated to 'Environmental Response and Impact Monitoring'. SANCCOB has continued to work with the DEA and other stakeholders to develop a 'National Oiled Wildlife Preparedness and Response Contingency Plan'.

Offshore Bunkering in Algoa Bay

The South African Maritime Safety Authority (SAMSA) and TRANSNET have regrettably continued to permit offshore ship-to-ship bunkering operations in Algoa Bay within a few nautical miles of the largest remaining breeding colonies of African penguin and Cape gannet species on St Croix and Bird islands respectively. SAMSA and TRANSNET continue to accept applications from other applicants and three operators are now authorised to conduct these operations despite the objections raised by SANCCOB and various environmental stakeholders.

SANCCOB is now actively attending the newly formed 'Bunkering Stakeholder Working Group' as well as the environmental sub-committee called the 'Bunkering Environmental Working Group' consisting of environmental stakeholders to ensure that proper procedures are being followed by government and industry. SANCCOB is also engaging with some of the operators to develop and improve oiled wildlife preparedness and response measures to minimise the risk of an oil spill affecting the sensitive marine wildlife in Algoa Bay.



Washing of oiled Kelp gull admitted from Saldanha Bay

Oiled Wildlife Response Consultancy Work

SANCCOB has continued to engage with the oil and gas industry both nationally and internationally offering oiled wildlife preparedness and response services. We are also working to promote the development of oiled wildlife preparedness and response plans; providing response to oiled wildlife training; developing and participating in oil spill exercises; and offering oiled wildlife response management services across the globe.

Global Oiled Wildlife Response System

SANCCOB continues to play a role in the development of the Global Oiled Wildlife Response System (GOWRS). In October 2018 SANCCOB hosted the GOWRS in-person meeting in Cape Town, which included a meet and greet at the new SANCCOB seabird hospital just before the official opening. In March 2019 SANCCOB's CEO and Preparedness and Response Manager travelled to the University of California in Davis, USA to attend another in-person meeting hosted by the Oiled Wildlife Care Network.

SAFE Disaster Relief Project

The Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) in the USA is running a project called S.A.F.E (Saving Animals From Extinction) that has a Disaster Relief Project, whose main objectives is to improve oiled wildlife preparedness and response for African penguins in South Africa and Namibia.

SANCCOB continues to work closely with the AZA Coordinator from Maryland Zoo to support the development of wildlife contingency plans and protocols; facilitate disaster response training; support research; and support the purchase of designated disaster response equipment.

In 2018 the project received over R200,000.00 from Maryland Zoo to purchase designated oiled wildlife response equipment in Port Elizabeth, which was identified as the main priority given the maritime operations developing in the Eastern Cape.

In October 2018, SANCCOB's Preparedness and Response Manager and Research Manager travelled with the SAFE US Coordinator through Namibia to meet with various stakeholders and expand the project across the border, which has approximately 5,000 breeding pairs of African penguins. More recently, SAFE has also provided funding directly to rehabilitation facilities in Namibia to deal with the devastating outbreak of Avian Influenza.



EDUCATION

SANCCOB Cape Town and SANCCOB Port Elizabeth offered a variety of education and learning programmes in the past year. Our Education teams in both the Western Cape and Eastern Cape reached out to mainstream schools and Learners with Special Education Needs (LSEN), and engaged learners through the use of interactive and appealing materials and enthusiastic facilitators. SANCCOB Port Elizabeth was also open for daily tours to visitors whilst the Cape Town centre re-opened for tours in November 2018 after nearly two years of construction work to further develop the facility.

Education Programme for Learners with Special Education Needs

The Education team in Cape Town hosted 305 learners from seven LSEN schools in its environmental education programme. These learners have intellectual disabilities and sometimes additional physical and/or neurological impairments. They participated in two school lessons, a bird-watching trip to Rietvlei Nature Reserve, a beach clean-up along the West Coast, and attended the annual penguin festival in Simon's Town. Each school received a resource pack which included a large penguin plush toy, a penguin adoption, a 4-in-1 recycling bin with recycling bags, as well as a personalised calendar. Schools also received a 'garden-in-a-box', containing seven different vegetables to assist them with their feeding schemes.

It is hoped that the resource packs will assist teachers with environmental education in their schools, and pass the message to an increased number of learners in other classes.

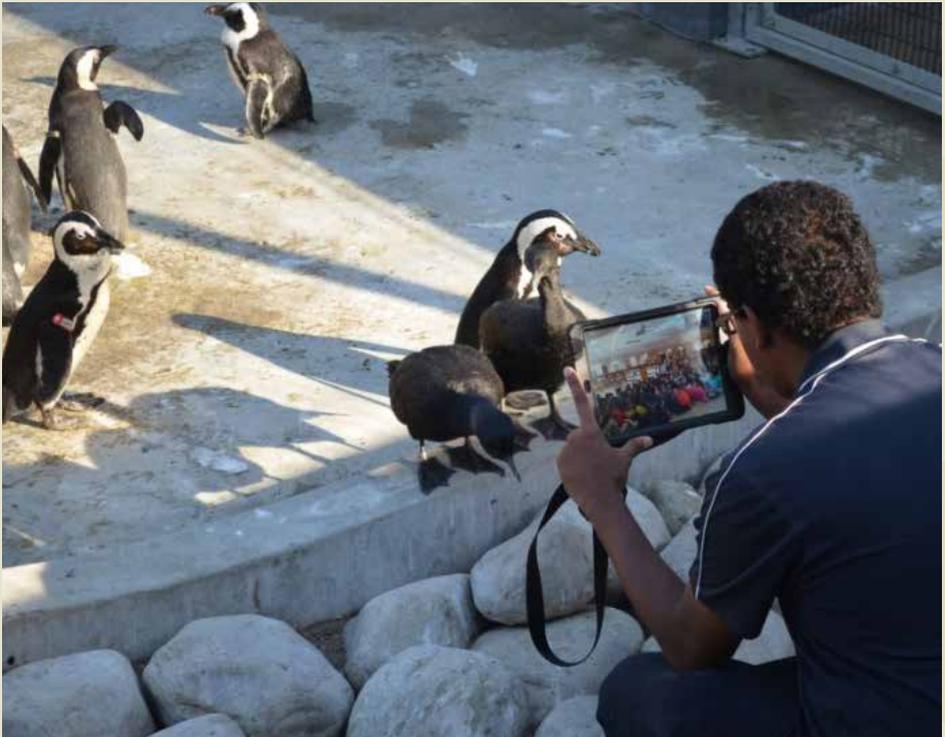
Education for mainstream schools

Despite the ongoing renovations of the seabird hospital in the year under review, SANCCOB Cape Town conducted lessons with a total of 615 learners from 28 different mainstream schools in Cape Town and surrounds. The lesson included a tour of our facility, an encounter with an ambassador bird, as well

as an educational and interactive game. SANCCOB Port Elizabeth received a total of 5,140 learners that toured the centre. Another 3,147 learners from a total of 17 mainstream and LSEN schools were visited by the SANCCOB Education teams in Cape Town and Port Elizabeth.

Skype Lessons

In April 2018 the education team started the Earth Day Skype season. SANCCOB provided free online lessons to 1,871 learners and 83 teachers from across the globe – from the United States to the United Kingdom (including Ireland), Canada, the Middle East, Central and Eastern Europe (including Ukraine), Sweden, as well as Pacific Asia. This year, the Skype lessons specifically focused on plastic pollution and the effects on seabirds, and demonstrated how learners can have a positive impact on the environment through increased awareness.



SANCCOB Educator, Alex Rogers, during a Skype lesson in the Table View Home Pen

Little Blues Club and Chinstraps Club

The Little Blues Club in Port Elizabeth was incredibly popular again last year, attracting a total of 129 children aged 8 to 12. The club members met monthly and learned about the oceans and coastal environment. Members participated in beach walks, seashore safaris and discussed issues impacting on our oceans.

As the demand for a similar programme grew over the past few years for older youth, SANCCOB Port Elizabeth decided to start the Chinstraps Club. The club drew in a total of 48 young people aged 12 to 18.

Impressively, the beaches in and around the SANCCOB Port Elizabeth centre in the Cape Recife Nature Reserve are remarkably clean because of committed members who make it their daily duty to clean it.

During the school holidays in July and December, a total of 69 children participated in the holiday programme at the Port Elizabeth centre. Participants did arts and crafts and their creations were used to decorate the centre. Children also enjoyed an appearance from Santa Claus.

Public Reach

The opening of the new seabird hospital in Cape Town in November 2018 resulted in an increase in visitors touring the new facility, with 1,659 individuals over a period of five months. SANCCOB Port Elizabeth recorded over 4,700 visitors from 1 January 2018 to 31 March 2019.





VOLUNTEERS

SANCCOB would not be able to achieve its objectives without the hard work, support and dedication of its valuable volunteers. From assisting with hands-on work with the seabirds, to providing assistance in support functions of the organisation, such as education, marketing, driving and administration, volunteers certainly are an integral part of the daily running of the centre and an extension of the SANCCOB staff.

Both the Local and International Volunteer Programmes are well supported at SANCCOB's centres in both the Western and Eastern Cape and the International Volunteer Programme attracted 113 individuals, representing 15 countries.

Our local volunteers play a very important role in our operations. Several local volunteer inductions were held throughout the year to invite and train new candidates.

The recent Flamingo Crisis resulted in a major response from locals and we had 351 new local volunteers join in to assist us at this busy time. These volunteers mostly worked in the food preparation, laundry and cleaning station areas and some have continued their volunteering work after the crisis either work with the seabirds or as volunteer drivers.

SANCCOB thanks its volunteers in Cape St Francis

With the closing of the SANCCOB centre in Cape St Francis, all of SANCCOB's Cape St Francis local volunteers underwent first responder training. These volunteers have become a formidable team that rescues ill and injured seabirds in the Eastern Cape. We humbly thank and applaud the Cape St Francis and Jeffreys Bay community volunteers and stalwarts for their dedicated efforts in African penguin and seabird rehabilitation and conservation for the past 30 years.

Increase in international volunteers at SANCCOB Port Elizabeth

At the end of 2017 the SANCCOB centre in Port Elizabeth restructured its volunteering programme with Khaya, an agency that places volunteers at local organisations. As a result, SANCCOB Port Elizabeth received an increased number of volunteers in the year 2018/2019 under review. A total of 33 international volunteers worked at the centre as opposed to six in the year prior.

Internships

SANCCOB manages an independent internship programme that hosts interns for three or six months at a time. SANCCOB also acts as host to interns from external internship programmes such as the National Research Foundation.

During 2018, a total of 37 new interns received training at SANCCOB's Cape Town Port Elizabeth centres. The majority of these interns participated in Seabird Rehabilitation internships and several interns, who previously signed up for our International Volunteer Programme, returned to SANCCOB in 2018 to participate in an internship.

Internship	Number of Interns
Chick Rearing	9
Seabird	21
Nursery	5
Education	1
Research	1
TOTAL	37

For the eighth consecutive year, the National Research Foundation (NRF) placed interns at SANCCOB. During the 2018/2019 programme, five interns were hosted at SANCCOB and for the 2019/2020 programme, SANCCOB has been awarded another five interns.

These internships are important skills development programmes and SANCCOB is proud to be associated with them. SANCCOB looks forward to continue to mentor these individuals in 2019 and provide them with valuable workplace experience.



Cape Town centre interns and volunteers

Animal Professional Experience

In 2018, SANCCOB hosted 28 international zoos and aquaria staff in this programme. The individuals represented the following institutions: Detroit Zoo, Saginaw Children's Zoo, Maryland Zoo, Lincoln Park Zoo, Monterey Bay Aquarium, Zoo Knoxville, Zoo Tampa, Aquarium of the Pacific, San Diego Zoo Global, Steinhart Aquarium, Georgia Aquarium, Denver Zoo, Greensboro Science Centre, Mystic Aquarium, Attica Zoological Park, Henry Villas Zoo, SHEDD Aquarium, Six Flags Discovery Kingdom and Adventure Aquarium.

The majority of the participants join the programme during the peak period of November and December, known as 'chick season' at SANCCOB. Their experience has been described as incredibly rewarding as they are able to develop their own skills, share their knowledge with SANCCOB and also further develop the partnership between their institutions and SANCCOB.

During the flamingo crisis in February 2019, SANCCOB had 10 international animal professionals who traveled from abroad to share their expertise in our time of need. These individuals represented the following institutions: Maryland Zoo, National Aviary Pittsburg, Edinburgh Zoo, Seaworld San Diego, Lincoln Park Zoo, Indianapolis Zoo, Zoo Marine and International Bird Rescue. The participants were either Veterinarians or Animal Keepers, who work with flamingos at their host institutions. SANCCOB greatly appreciated their expertise in hand-rearing the Lesser flamingo chicks.



RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

As a non-profit organisation, we pride ourselves on the incredible support of our donors. Our donors include South African grant-making (philanthropic) foundations and trusts, corporates, companies, international zoos and aquaria, and individuals who are passionate about seabird conservation. More and more, our funding structure relies on regular financial and in-kind donations from thousands of individuals, both locally and internationally. This gives us the flexibility to spend the funds where it is most needed in our seabird rehabilitation and conservation efforts.

During the flamingo crisis, an incredible number of local and international volunteers responded to our call for urgent assistance in chick rearing whether it involved scrubbing floors, doing the laundry, preparing formula or answering the phone at reception. Moreover we received a large amount of in-kind donations after reporting on our rescue and rehabilitation project in the local and international media (CNN, BBC, Sky News to name a few). If it weren't for the overwhelming media and public response, it would have been less possible to save these Lesser flamingo chicks.

Of course, responding to a disaster goes beyond the immediate crisis. What are we doing to address climate change, drought; what are we doing to ensure that endangered seabirds can survive in the wild; now and in the future?

Our organisation offers various giving opportunities for projects and programmes that underpin our rehabilitation efforts – for instance, avenues for giving to research projects directly impacting on the survival of the endangered African penguin, marine education and awareness projects in both Cape Town and Port Elizabeth and surrounds, and to conservation efforts by SANCCOB's penguin and seabird rangers at the South African penguin colonies. Excitingly, last year, we appointed a new Penguin and Seabird Ranger on Robben Island, which is an island that has recently been declared a Marine Protected Area (in April 2019). This is a dream come true!



Christina Pretorius and Marie-Claire Knoop of IFAW visited the new seabird hospital with Nicky Stander and Dr Stephen van der Spuy



SANCCOB CEO with President and CEO of Columbus Zoo, Tom Staff

Financials

You will notice ahead, this year we report on financials that cover a period of 15 months (as opposed to the usual 12 months). This is because we have shifted our financial year-end from 31 December to 31 March, which means that we will have 1 January 2018 to 31 March 2019 to report on for the past financial year.

The work we do is only possible because of the support we receive from a wide range of partners. We hope to count on the same loyal support again in the next year so that together, we are able to save an even larger proportion of Southern African seabirds.

Extract from Statement of Comprehensive Income

SANCCOB NPC (Registration number: 2001/026273/08)
Financial Statements for the 15 Months ended 31 March 2019

Figures in Rand	15 months ended 31 March 2019	12 months ended 31 December 2017
Revenue	20,549,736	18,682,406
Cost of sales	(645,077)	(396,025)
Gross profit	19,904,659	18,286,381
Other income	816,707	843,251
Operating expenses	(18,391,268)	(13,364,193)
Operating profit	2,330,098	5,765,439
Investment revenue	1,111,620	2,208,311
Fair value adjustments	(631,736)	136,814
Surplus on bargain purchase	-	6,941,029
Finance costs	(3,387)	(5,775)
Profit before taxation	2,806,595	15,045,818
Taxation	-	-
Profit for the 15 Months	2,806,595	15,045,818
Other comprehensive income	-	-
Total comprehensive income for the 15 Months	2,806,595	15,045,818

The above is an extract from the audited Annual Financial Statements. For full disclosure, please refer to the Statement of Comprehensive Income on Page 9 of the audited financial statements.

Board and Staff

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Dr Samantha Petersen	Chairperson
Dr Stephen van der Spuy	Chief Executive Officer
Inge Cilliers	Treasurer
Dr Azwianewi Makhado	Board Director
Peter Misselbrook	Board Director
Iain Hamilton	Board Director
Dr Anton Wolfaardt	Board Director

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Albert Snyman	Research Assistant
Alex Rogers	Educator
Andile Mdluli	Penguin & Seabird Ranger Robben Island
Angela Wilmot	Volunteer Coordinator
Christian Triay	Preparedness & Response Manager
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Sibongile George	Rehabilitation Assistant
Stephanie Brisland	Data Administrator
Xola Tsewu	Marketing & Fundraising Coordinator PE
Zainab Mouton	Fundraiser
Zamokuhle Lazola	Rehabilitation Assistant PE

In addition to staff listed, SANCCOB also funds the placement of four Penguin and Seabird Rangers in Simon's Town.

Thank you to our donors

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Email: reception@sanccob.co.za

Registration Number: 2001/026273/08
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