


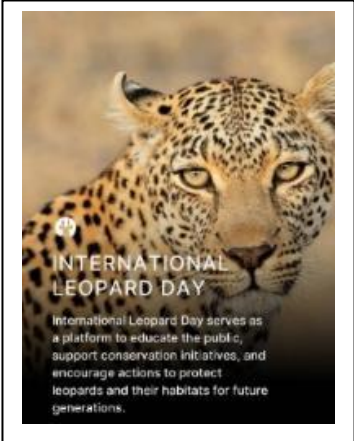





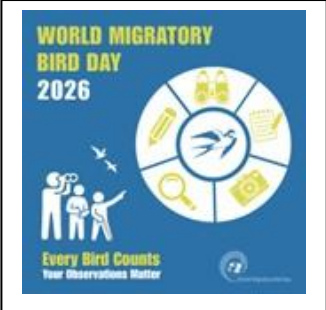




*The purpose of this Prayer Diary is to provide subjects for your reflection and prayer as the Spirit moves you*

<p><b>Friday</b></p>	<p><b>1</b></p>		<p>"Do you have a dream?" asked the mole.</p>  <p>"That there'd be no more war, and we would be kind, and look after all this beauty."</p>
<p><b>Saturday</b></p>	<p><b>2</b></p>	<p><b>International Leopard Day (3 May)</b></p> <p>Leopards (<i>Panthera pardus</i>) in South Africa are not officially listed as "Endangered" but are classified as <i>Vulnerable</i> on the IUCN Red List. While they have disappeared from 67% of their former range in the country, they are not yet critically endangered, although they face severe ongoing threats of habitat loss, depletion of prey base, illegal poaching and human-wildlife conflict, often resulting from livestock predation.</p> <p>Leopards have the most varied diet of any big cat but are opportunistic carnivores. Their favourite prey consists of small-to-medium-sized buck but will definitely not turn their noses up at a juicy monkey when the opportunity arises. When "push comes to shove", they'll tuck in on carrion (dead animals). In fact, they have the most varied diets of all cat species.</p>  <p>A leopard's worst enemies are other large predators that compete for food and territory, primarily lions, but also packs of hyenas or wild dogs. Sadly, humans are their biggest threat due to persecution and habitat loss.</p> <p>Leopards usually hunt medium-sized buck (weighing 10-40kg) but on occasion, they do hunt larger prey such as young giraffes. Leopards are capable of carrying prey weighing up to two or three times their own body weight up a tree.</p> <p>Unlike lions, leopards live in extremely variable habitats ranging from desert to bush to forest as they have very adaptable hunting and feeding behaviour.</p> <p>Leopards are solitary cats unless caring for cubs and are mainly nocturnal, usually most active between sunset and sunrise.</p>	

		<p>An interesting fact is that leopards have five toes on their front paws but only four toes on the back. The extra toe on their front paws is used only when hunting to help bring down prey.</p> <p>Leopards are very special (and of course, most beautiful) cats and efforts are ongoing to protect the species through organizations like the <a href="#">Cape Leopard Trust</a> , the <a href="#">Endangered Wildlife Trust</a>, <a href="#">KwaZulu-Natal Leopard Monitoring Project</a> and the <a href="#">Ingwe Research Programme</a></p> <p><b>We can also become involved by:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supporting Conservation Organizations involved in leopard protection and research.</li> <li>• Citizen Science: Report sightings and sign-of-presence (tracks/scat) in the Western, Eastern, and Northern Cape through the Cape Leopard Trust's online tool.</li> <li>• Reduce Human-Wildlife Conflict: Support programs that help farmers implement livestock protection measures.</li> <li>• Combat Illegal Trade: Support initiatives like Panthera's "<a href="#">Furs for Life</a>" project, which provides faux fur to reduce the demand for real skins in traditional ceremonies.</li> <li>• Support Habitat Protection: Promote the maintenance of ecological corridors between protected areas.</li> <li>• Raise Awareness: Educate others about the threats facing leopards, including habitat loss and poaching.</li> <li>• Pray for all in leopard conservation.</li> </ul> <p>Together, we can ensure that this incredible, magnificent cat will be with us and future generations for many years to come.</p>
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>3</b>	<p><b><i>A quarter of the world's mammals and one fifth of the world's plants are under threat of extinction.</i></b></p> <p>Lord we thank you for this beautiful world with its amazing variety of animals and plants.</p> <p>Help us to understand your world more - to appreciate the beauty of nature.</p> <p>Encourage us to make wildlife conservation areas in our churchyards, gardens, parks and farms and to take part in local nature surveys.</p> <p>Help us to support wildlife conservation charities with our money and our words</p> <p>May we never forget that we are stewards of your creation and that we hold it in trust for future generations.</p> <p>Amen</p>
<b>Monday</b>	<b>4</b>	<p>Father of creation, we thank you for all that you have made;</p> <p>For the joy and glimpses of you we find in nature's beauty,</p> <p>For the variety of all you have provided through its resources.</p> <p>Help us to tread lightly and use wisely,</p> <p>Valuing the needs of others, and of creation, above our own desires.</p> <p>Challenge us where we need to change our lifestyles,</p> <p>Convict us when we need to speak out on behalf of a voiceless people, or world</p> <p>And soften us where we have stood in judgement of others.</p> <p>Father in your mercy, change us and use us</p> <p>For the restoration of your world, and the protection of all your children.</p> <p>Amen.</p>

<p><b>Tuesday</b></p>	<p><b>5</b></p>	<p><b>5-11 May - International Composting Awareness Week</b></p> <p><i>2026 Theme: "Compost! Feed the Soil that Feeds Us."</i></p> <p>This year's theme highlights the vital role compost plays in sustaining life on land and aligns well with the UN Sustainable Development Goal 15 (Life on Land) to emphasise compost's role in restoring soil health.</p> <p>Healthy soil, built by recycling food scraps into nutrient-rich compost, is essential for sustainable, productive food systems, climate resilience, and ecosystem health.</p> <p>Adding compost to the soil provides stable carbon, nutrients, and microorganisms that improve soil structure. It also diverts organic waste from landfills, reduces the need for chemical fertilizers and pesticides, and aids in carbon storage and enhances water retention in soil, making crops more resilient.</p> <p><b><i>Composting turns kitchen scraps into "black gold" for gardens, so, If you have not yet already done so, start your compost pile today!</i></b></p> <p><i>"As for that in the good soil, they are those who, hearing the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with patience." - Luke 8:15</i></p> 
<p><b>Wednesday</b></p>	<p><b>6</b></p>	<p>Breath of Life, from whom all order was created, the whole of creation bears witness to you. Teach us to respect all creatures, increase our gratitude for your loving providence.</p> <p>Forgive us for our insensitivity and carelessness with the environment, instigate us to fight for socio-environmental preservation and for the end of the climate crisis, taking care and working for the preservation of species and the maintenance of life on earth, as living proof of our conversion to the way of Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and with the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.</p> <p>Amen.</p> <p><b><i>Bishop Marinez Rosa dos Santos.</i></b>  <i>Bassotto, Amazon, Brazil</i>  <i>(inspired by the Collects for the Environmental Responsibility of the Common Prayer Book of the Anglican Episcopal Church of Brazil)"</i></p>
<p><b>Thursday</b></p>	<p><b>7</b></p>	<p>"When nature is viewed solely as a source of profit and gain, this has serious consequences for society. This has engendered immense inequality, injustice and acts of violence against the majority of humanity, since resources end up in the hands of the first comer or the most powerful: the winner takes all. Completely at odds with this model are the ideals of harmony, justice, fraternity and peace as proposed by Jesus."</p> <p><b><i>Pope Francis</i></b></p> 

<p>Friday</p>	<p>8</p>	
<p>Saturday</p>	<p>9</p>	<p><b>World Migratory Bird Day (1<sup>st</sup> of 2)</b></p> <p><b>2026 Theme: “Every Bird Counts – Your Observations Matter!”</b></p> <p>The global Partners behind <a href="#">World Migratory Bird Day</a> (WMBD) chose this theme to highlight the important role of community science (also referred to as citizen science) for the conservation of migratory birds.</p> <p>The 2026 campaign shines a spotlight on people-driven efforts that are essential for bird conservation and science, celebrating how individuals, communities, and organizations around the world are helping to build the knowledge base to better conserve migratory birds across borders.</p> <p>By focusing on the contribution of individuals, participatory science and public bird monitoring efforts, the campaign will celebrate the millions of bird enthusiasts around the world that are contributing to the data and knowledge that inform policy decisions and are essential for bird conservation - through each recorded observation.</p> <p>From backyard observations to coordinated global surveys, millions of people around the world contribute vital information about migratory birds, their habitats, and the challenges they face each year. Through these recorded observations, people are engaging in community / citizen science that helps track migration patterns, population trends, and changes in habitats across flyways. The campaign will showcase how every observation contributes essential data and supports evidence-based conservation at local, national, and international scales.</p> <p>When people take part in bird counting activities that help gather this important data, they also strengthen their connection to nature, deepen their understanding of the pressures facing birds, and often become stewards of nature protection, strengthening society’s engagement with nature.</p> 

		<p>You can get involved in conservation-focused projects that contribute to long-term monitoring and research, such as community science programs, coordinated bird counts, or public events that build awareness of how sustained data collection supports migratory birds. Even small, regular observations can add value when they are part of a larger, ongoing effort to track populations over time.</p> <p>In South Africa, the <a href="#">Southern African Bird Atlas Project 2 (SABAP2)</a> coordinates this large-scale citizen science project launched in 2007, managed by the <a href="#">FitzPatrick Institute of African Ornithology</a> to map bird distributions across South Africa, Lesotho, and Namibia. Volunteers (citizen scientists) use the <a href="#">BirdLasser</a> app to record sightings within 5-minute "pentad" grid cells.</p> <p><b>Every bird counts! Make a difference by counting birds for conservation! – try your hand at becoming a Citizen Scientist.</b></p>
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>10</b>	<p><b>Mother's Day</b></p> <p>May the blessing of the Divine Be an especially bright benediction Upon mothers everywhere On your blessed day - On Mother's Day!</p> <p><i>Author Unknown</i></p> 
<b>Monday</b>	<b>11</b>	<p>Thank you, Lord for the opportunity to see the beauty of your great gift of nature. Thank you for granting me the responsibility to look after such a special gift. Thank you, Lord God, for life and love that you provide in such abundance. Please Lord, forgive me for all the faults and hurts I have caused you when you love me so.</p>
<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>12</b>	 <p>"We are the most 'intellectual' species to walk the planet, but we're not intelligent. If you're intelligent you don't destroy your only home."</p> <p>Dr. Jane Goodall, DBE 1934 - 2025</p>

<p><b>Wednesday</b></p>	<p><b>13</b></p>	<p><i>We pray for scientists and engineers:</i>  Creator God – creator of our world, of science, and of creativity itself,  You hold all knowledge.</p> <p>We praise you and thank you for the insights you have given people into engineering, science and systems in the past.</p> <p>In your mercy, grant revelation to scientists and engineers that they might discover solutions and systems to aid adaptation.</p> <p>Not that we might continue to take the earth and its resources for granted, or grow arrogant, but that your precious children might be spared.</p> <p>Lord, in your mercy, lead our scientists and engineers to truth, and transformation.</p>
<p><b>Thursday</b></p>	<p><b>14</b></p>	<p><b>Ascension Day</b></p> <p>Creator God, as we celebrate your Son's , lifting our eyes to the heavens, help us not to forget the Earth below. You have entrusted this fragile planet to our care. Forgive us where we have scarred your world with greed and waste.</p> <p>Lord Jesus, you have ascended to reign over all things. Empower us by your Spirit to act as true stewards of your creation. Inspire us to tread gently on this common home, protecting its seas, forests, and creatures, and ensuring its riches for future generations.</p> <p>As you departed, you promised to be with us always. May that presence fuel our commitment to ecological justice and our love for all you have made.</p> <p>Amen.</p>
<p><b>Friday</b></p>	<p><b>15</b></p>	<p>“The fact is that no species has ever had such wholesale control over everything on Earth, living or dead, as we now have. That lays upon us, whether we like it or not, an awesome responsibility. In our hands now lies not only our own future, but that of all other living creatures with whom we share the Earth.”</p> <p><b>David Attenborough</b>  <i>From the documentary series, Life On Earth.</i></p>



Saturday

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### Endangered Species Day

*“What you do makes a difference, and you have to decide what difference you want to make” – Dr. Jane Goodall*

There are over 100,000 known species of plants, animals and fungi in South Africa. Many scientists strongly believe that there could be another 50,000 species in the country that have not been discovered yet. Endangered Species Day is a special occasion dedicated to raising awareness about the beautiful creatures that share our planet and need our help. Here in South Africa, we are incredibly fortunate to boast some of the world’s most diverse and unique wildlife. From majestic big cats to quirky little critters and unique plants that are found nowhere else in the world, our country is a treasure chest of biodiversity. Let’s celebrate these species and learn a bit about how we can all help to protect them.



According to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), a species is considered endangered when it has a 50-70 % population decrease over 10 years, a restricted geographic area less than 5000km<sup>2</sup> or a population size less than 2,500 functional adults. Factors contributing to this precarious status can include habitat loss, climate change, over-exploitation, pollution, and invasive alien species. Essentially, if we don’t act fast, these species could disappear from our planet entirely – a tragedy for our ecosystems and future generations.

South Africa is home to an astonishing range of wildlife, many of which are unfortunately at great risk of extinction. Here are a few notable endangered species that call our beautiful country home:

	<b>Black Rhino</b> - Extensively poached for their horns, with populations dramatically reduced to around 6,421 by 2025. Poaching for their horns has dramatically reduced their numbers. Conservation efforts are ongoing, with many dedicated individuals and organisations working tirelessly to protect these beautiful creatures.
	<b>Riverine Rabbit</b> - One of the world’s rarest and most endangered mammals with only an estimated 157 to 207 mature individuals remaining in the Karoo . Habitat destruction and agricultural expansion pose significant threats to this elusive and nocturnal species. These rabbits play an important role in aerating the soil and maintaining the ecological health of the Karoo.
	<b>African Wild Dog:</b> Less than 450 individuals are estimated in South Africa, facing habitat loss and snaring.



**Pangolin:** The most trafficked mammal in South Africa (and in the world), often killed by electrified fences and illegal trade.



**African Penguin** - Numbers have plummeted, due to dwindling food resources leaving only about 19,800 mature individuals.



**Cape Vulture** - These impressive birds play a critical role in our ecosystems by keeping them clean and disease-free. Sadly, poisoning, electrocution by power lines, and loss of habitat have led to a significant decline in their populations. Conservationists are working hard to monitor and protect these essential scavengers.



**Knysna Seahorse** - Endangered due to coastal development and pollution.



**Pickergill's Reedfrog** - A tiny, highly threatened frog species due to habitat loss and pollution.



**Kraaifontein spiderhead** (*Serruria furcellata*) - This critically endangered spiderhead because of urbanization near greater Cape Town.





**Cape Flats Conebush** - This Protea (*Leucadendron levisanus*) species is a critically endangered native to the Cape Flats in Cape Town. This unique shrub features striking yellow-green foliage with slender branches that bear very small, spoon-shaped leaves and beautiful conical heads. This species supports pollinators like birds and bees and is under threat by alien invasive species, water pollution, illegal dumping and lack of fire management.

### What Can We Do to Help?

#### 1. Support Conservation Organisations

		<p>Get involved with our volunteering program or consider donating or volunteering with groups like the Endangered Wildlife Trust or Save the Rhino. Many fantastic organisations are working on the ground to protect South Africa's wildlife.</p> <p><b>2. Educate and Raise Awareness</b></p> <p>Talk to your friends and family about the importance of protecting our endangered species. Share information on social media and get involved in local conservation events. The more people know, the more we can collectively make a difference.</p> <p><b>3. Practice Responsible Tourism</b></p> <p>When visiting our stunning national parks and reserves, follow guidelines to minimise your impact. Stick to designated paths, avoid disturbing wildlife, and support eco-friendly businesses.</p> <p><b>4. Reduce, Reuse, Recycle</b></p> <p>Every little bit helps! Reducing your carbon footprint can help mitigate climate change, which is a significant threat to many species. Recycle mindfully, reduce waste, and opt for sustainable products.</p> <p><b>A Bright Future for South Africa's Wildlife</b></p> <p>Endangered Species Day is a reminder of the incredible biodiversity we are privileged to have in South Africa and the responsibility we share to protect it. By working together, we can ensure that future generations will also have the chance to experience the wonder of our unique wildlife.</p> <p><b><i>Prayerfully consider what your action will be in the fight against extinction, both this year and in the future!</i></b></p> <p><i>Information taken from <a href="#">NatureConnect</a></i></p>
<p><b>Sunday</b></p>	<p><b>17</b></p>	<p><b>Ascension Sunday</b></p> <p>Creator God, On this Ascension Sunday, we celebrate Christ taking our humanity into the heart of heaven, yet we know he remains with us in all of creation.</p> <p>We confess that we have not always been good stewards of this Earth; we have damaged your handiwork through greed and neglect.</p> <p>As Jesus ascends to reign, inspire us to act with justice and love for all living things.</p> <p>Give us the grace to tread lightly, to cherish your resources, and to protect the soil, sky, and waters that sustain life.</p> <p>Empower us by your Spirit to turn our eyes from gazing upward and instead commit ourselves to the healing of our common home.</p> <p>We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.</p> <p>Amen.</p>

<p><b>Monday</b></p>	<p><b>18</b></p>	<p><b>Encyclical Letter <i>Fratelli Tutti</i> of Pope Francis on the Fraternity and Social Friendship</b></p> <p><b>Chapter Five</b></p> <p><b><i>A Better Kind of Politics</i></b></p> <p>161. Another sign of the decline of popular leadership is concern for short-term advantage. One meets popular demands for the sake of gaining votes or support, but without advancing in an arduous and constant effort to generate the resources people need to develop and earn a living by their own efforts and creativity. In this regard, I have made it clear that “I have no intention of proposing an irresponsible populism”.<sup>[133]</sup> Eliminating inequality requires an economic growth that can help to tap each region’s potential and thus guarantee a sustainable equality.<sup>[134]</sup> At the same time, it follows that “welfare projects, which meet certain urgent needs, should be considered merely temporary responses”.<sup>[135]</sup></p>  <p>162. The biggest issue is employment. The truly “popular” thing – since it promotes the good of the people – is to provide everyone with the opportunity to nurture the seeds that God has planted in each of us: our talents, our initiative and our innate resources. This is the finest help we can give to the poor, the best path to a life of dignity. Hence my insistence that, “helping the poor financially must always be a provisional solution in the face of pressing needs. The broader objective should always be to allow them a dignified life through work”.<sup>[136]</sup> Since production systems may change, political systems must keep working to structure society in such a way that everyone has a chance to contribute his or her own talents and efforts. For “there is no poverty worse than that which takes away work and the dignity of work”.<sup>[137]</sup> In a genuinely developed society, work is an essential dimension of social life, for it is not only a means of earning one’s daily bread, but also of personal growth, the building of healthy relationships, self-expression and the exchange of gifts. Work gives us a sense of shared responsibility for the development of the world, and ultimately, for our life as a people.</p> <p><b><i>Prayerfully consider how this affects our Country</i></b></p>
<p><b>Tuesday</b></p>	<p><b>19</b></p>	<p>Creator of our common home,  You fill the earth and sea and sky with life  Forgive us our neglect of your creation  The choking waste of our pollution  The damage done by careless habits  And our indifference to future generations.  Help us to amend our lives  To refuse more plastic if we can’t reuse it  To lift our voice for lasting change  And to live well and gently on the earth  To the glory of your Son, the Living Word  Through whom you made this fragile world.  Amen.</p> <p><b>Rt Revd Steven Croft</b>  <i>Bishop of Oxford</i></p>

<p><b>Wednesday</b></p>	<p><b>20</b></p>	<p><b>World Bee Day</b></p> <p><i>2026 Theme: 'Bee' Together to Sustain the Planet</i></p> <p>When you think about bees, what comes to mind? Honey? Beeswax? A painful sting? There's more to bees than we know – much more. Aside from the delicious honey they make, bees are incredibly important to the environment; they are responsible for helping almost all the plants on Earth to reproduce, and without them, we would have much less food to eat. 35% less food, in fact.</p> <p>Many people see bees as buzzing little insects to be afraid of. But bees are amazing creatures with the power to ensure food security around the world. This is why it is important for everybody to appreciate how much bees matter.</p> <p>Bees come in all shapes and sizes, and not all of them sting or make honey. They live in almost every corner of the world, and many have evolved to work in harmony with the plants around them. Some bees have adapted to specific flowers, and others travel huge distances, carrying pollen far and wide.</p> <p>There are more than 20,000 different bee species on Earth – but just eight species produce honey, with the thousands of others also responsible for pollinating billions of plants around the world.</p> <p>By ensuring that plants can reproduce, grow and thrive, bees help to keep entire ecosystems on their feet. This ensures that plants avoid inbreeding, with different pollens from different species facing various threats contributing to plant diversity. Think of bees as the plant kingdom's 'matchmakers'.</p> <p>Their vast numbers also contribute important minerals to the soil as they die, and their fighting spirit helps keep predatory or invasive insect species in check.</p> <p>Birds, lizards, reptiles and other insects eat bees. Many of them have even developed special methods and adaptations to avoid being stung. Without bees, many animals would be left without an important, protein-rich source of food, let alone the honey that bees produce. And nobody wants a world with no honey!</p> <p>Possibly, the most important role that bees play in our lives is the one around our food security. While many grains, cereals, and crops like wheat are generally wind- pollinated, not always needing help from other creatures, many of our other plant-based foods depend on bees to grow.</p> <p>Bees have been around for 120 million years, and yet, in just a few generations, their populations are now shrinking and non-honeybees are disappearing at alarming speed. While we can't be sure of the causes of these declines in the bee population, habitat loss, pesticides, and climate change are some of the suggested causes.</p> <p>As expanding farmland, mismanaged natural resources, and drought threaten <a href="#">South Africa's honeybees</a>, our food security – which is already under pressure – will only continue to weaken.</p> 
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		<p>By spreading awareness and embarking on important projects like replanting indigenous plant species that support and sustain honeybees, we can all ensure that there are enough bees around to keep on pollinating our crops.</p> <p>If we don't act soon, we won't just find ourselves in a world without honey; we'll find ourselves living in one with low food security.</p> <p>Start helping honeybees today. Learn about how you can <a href="#">make your garden more "bee-friendly"</a>, know which products are harmful to bees and avoid buying them, and support causes dedicated to helping save bees and the environment they live in.</p> <p><b>'Bee' kind to bees!</b></p>
<p><b>Thursday</b></p>	<p><b>21</b></p>	<p><b>Prayer for Biodiversity</b></p> <p><b>Creator God</b>, we pray for our brothers and sisters of the air: blue swallows, thrushes, sparrows, doves, eagles, owls, wattled cranes, oyster catchers... Give us a sign through them to decrease the pollution in the air we breathe. Creator God, let us pray.</p> <p>Creator God, we pray for our brothers and sisters of water: shells, algae, tilapia, frogs...</p> <p>Wake our compassion at the sight of their wounds so that we cease polluting the water.</p> <p>Creator God, let us pray.</p> <p>Creator God, we pray for our brothers and sisters of the earth: mongoose, impalas, pythons, yellowwoods, the tomato plants and the earthworms... May their humility and simplicity inspire us to live according to your will. Creator God, let us pray.</p> <p>Creator God, we pray for the leaders and ministers, for mayors and CEOs of companies. May they hear the call from God through other creatures and make sustainable, wise decisions.</p> <p>Creator God, let us pray.</p> <p>Creator God, we pray for our community.</p> <p>We ask you the courage to act regarding our environment and not to succumb to the temptation of wasting.</p> <p>Creator God, let us pray.</p> <p><b>By the Green Church Project, Montréal, Canada</b> (adapted for South Africa by Noeleen Mullett)</p>
<p><b>Friday</b></p>	<p><b>22</b></p>	<p><b>International Day for Biodiversity</b></p> <p>The <i>International Day for Biological Diversity (or World Biodiversity Day)</i> is a United Nations–sanctioned international day for the promotion of biodiversity issue and falls within the scope of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.</p> <p>International Biodiversity Day in 2026 continues with the theme of "<b>Harmony with Nature and Sustainable Development</b>", heavily emphasising</p> <div data-bbox="1157 1832 1497 2101" data-label="Image"> </div>

efforts to accelerate actions to meet the 23 targets of the [Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework \(KMGBF\)](#).

Biodiversity remains the answer to several sustainable development challenges. From nature-based solutions to climate, health issues, food and water security, and sustainable livelihoods, biodiversity is the foundation on which we can build a more sustainable future for ourselves and generations to come.

South Africa is one of the world's 17 megadiverse nations, ranking third in plant species richness with 10% of global plant species and 7% of reptile, bird, and mammal species despite covering only 2% of the land surface. It boasts high endemism (56-70% for some groups) and three biodiversity hotspots, driven by diverse climates and geological, marine, and terrestrial ecosystems.

Sadly, South Africa's biodiversity is heavily threatened, with at least 25% of land already transformed by human activity. Major threats include habitat loss and degradation (agriculture, mining, urbanization); alien invasive species; over-harvesting of natural resources and of course the ever-present elephant in the room - Climate change.

We as individuals can help slow the loss of biodiversity. Since consumption of resources is a root cause of biodiversity loss, we can consume less and be more mindful about what we consume. We need to leverage our purchasing power to help protect biodiversity by consuming products that do not harm the environment. Ecolabels enable consumers to determine which products are green, safe, and environmentally sustainable. Doing some research into labels claiming to be environmentally friendly is a good policy, but here are a few trustworthy labels available in South Africa.



**Forest Stewardship Council** – The FSC promotes the sustainable management of the world's forests by ensuring that the harvest of forests for timber and non-timber products maintains a forest's biodiversity, productivity, and ecological processes, and by respecting the rights of and providing incentives to indigenous people to sustain forest resources. In addition to prohibiting the destruction of natural forests, the FSC safeguards endangered species, and bans toxic pesticides and the planting of genetically modified trees. FSC certified products include lumber, paper, printing, packaging, furniture, and other products made from wood.



**Fair Trade Certified** – This label guarantees that farmers and workers that produce products in the developing world are getting a fair deal. It also ensures protection of local ecosystems and promotes sustainable and organic agriculture. Fair Trade certified products include beans and grains, cocoa, coffee, flowers and plants, fruits and vegetables, honey, herbs and spices, nuts and oil seeds, sugar, tea and wine. Apparel, sports balls, and beauty products can also be certified.



**Marine Stewardship Council** – The MSC is a global organization that develops standards for sustainable fishing and certifies seafood (from wild capture fisheries only) that comes from sustainable fisheries. At sustainable fisheries, current catches must be maintained at levels that ensure fish populations and their ecosystems remain healthy and productive today and in the future.

		<p>Aligned with MSC WWF provides a <a href="#">list of certified sustainable fish</a> for responsible eating.</p> <div data-bbox="448 197 628 333"> </div> <p>The <b>Standards and Labelling (S&amp;L) programme</b> implemented by the Department of Energy, places energy labels on appliances that provide consumers with accurate and comparable information on their energy efficiency. The project forms part of an integral part of the measures geared towards reducing electricity consumption and the carbon footprint of the residential sector in South Africa. <a href="#">The information provided on the label informs users of the energy efficient</a> rating of each appliance, the manufacturer and product model. For some appliances, the label will also have non-energy data such as water consumption per cycle and appliance noise level. Labels have seven horizontal colour coded bars. Each colour-coded bar reflects an energy threshold for a particular appliance.</p> <div data-bbox="448 674 628 831"> </div> <p><a href="#">Badger-Friendly Honey</a> Initiative. The <b>Badger-Friendly Honey</b> Initiative aims to minimise the conflict between <b>badgers</b> and commercial beekeepers in South Africa and provide positive incentives for <b>badger-friendly</b> beekeeping.</p> <p><b>Resolve to be Part of the Solution!</b></p>
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<p><b>Saturday</b></p>	<p><b>23</b></p>	<p><b>World Tortoise Day</b></p> <p><b><i>Tortoise Conservation – A Race Against Time</i></b></p> <p>South Africa is one of the most biodiversity-rich countries in the world and is home to no less than two of the world’s most well-known botanical biodiversity hotspots, the Succulent Karoo and Fynbos Biomes. However, few people are aware that South Africa also holds the title as the tortoise capital of the world. The country is home to no less than 13 tortoise species, most of which are endemic.</p> <p>Tortoises in one form or another have been around pretty much forever if you consider that the earliest known turtle lived 260 million years ago. This little lizard-like creature had a unique characteristic: its ribs curved backwards and were exceptionally thick, forming an armoured dome under its skin. <i>Eunotosaurus</i> was to become the ancestor of all tortoises, turtles and terrapins. Scientists put their secret to outliving even the dinosaurs, which disappeared approximately 65 million years ago, to their conservative morphology and time-tested adaptations.</p> <p>Incredibly, despite their over 200-million-year track-record of survival, globally tortoises are struggling to persist in the modern world under mankind’s relatively short but deadly reign. The statistics are damning, showing that over 60% of the 357 recognised species have either become extinct or are threatened. Approximately 52% of all assessed tortoise taxa have been classified as Critically Endangered, Endangered or Extinct.</p> <p>This global spiral to extinction is largely due to habitat loss and importantly the degradation of remaining habitat, the impacts of climate change, illegal trade, and a few more locally specific ones, such as uncontrolled fires and electric fencing. However, a relatively new threat that has emerged globally is that of</p> <div data-bbox="1152 1167 1493 1462"> </div>
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hyperpredation by airborne predators, primarily crows and ravens (part of a group collectively known as corvids).

Crows are extremely intelligent, highly adaptable and will eat virtually anything. Crows and ravens have joined the ranks of what are known as subsidised species. Simply put, they are thriving globally on the wide selection of resources human activity has inadvertently provided for them. Their populations are increasing exponentially and expanding into new areas, where they become native invaders.

Hyperpredation occurs when subsidised species exert excessive pressure on prey populations. This effect has been particularly catastrophic for tortoises for several reasons. They are very long-lived but grow and mature slowly and reproduce at a slow rate. Smaller species, like the dwarf tortoises, produce only 1 – 3 eggs a year from the age of around twelve. For a population to remain stable, mature individuals need to reproduce for decades to produce enough offspring that survive to adulthood.

When it comes to crow predation, size matters, as in the case of dwarf tortoises where even adult tortoises are highly vulnerable to crow predation. Crows use their powerful bills to peck through the shells of young tortoises and can fly up with adult dwarf tortoises and drop them onto rocks to break their shells open. The loss of adult tortoises makes the recovery efforts of dwindling populations that much more challenging.

The Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT), in partnership with Dwarf Tortoise Conservation (DTC) and the Turtle Conservancy (TC) launched a dwarf tortoise project two years ago to locate viable populations and implement conservation action for two species of dwarf tortoises in the Karoo.

The Karoo is home to nine of the 13 tortoise species found in South Africa. There are five species of dwarf tortoise globally, four of which occur in the South African Karoo and one in Namibia. As their name implies, dwarf tortoises rank amongst the smallest of the tortoise species. In fact, the Speckled Dwarf Tortoise, endemic to Namaqualand, is the world's smallest tortoise species, reaching a maximum length of about 10cm. Two decades ago, Dwarf tortoises were abundant. However recent research on the Karoo Dwarf Tortoise has demonstrated an alarming decline in population numbers for both species.




Currently the only species of tortoise in South Africa with a dedicated conservation project is the Critically Endangered Geometric Tortoise. We urgently need to implement concerted conservation efforts for the other tortoise species, including all the dwarf tortoise species and other relatively small species such as the tent tortoises. The outlook for all these species is grim without specific conservation interventions.

The [EWT tortoise conservation](#) work is supported by Turtle Conservancy, Dwarf Tortoise Conservation, Rainforest Trust and the IUCN NL.


#### **How can we help?**

- Drive with care, especially when in rural areas.
- Combat wildlife crime by reporting suspicious persons.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Verify people claiming to do research with the organisation they claim to be from.</li> <li>• Support legitimate local conservation initiatives.</li> </ul> <p>All tortoises are protected species and listed under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) as well as provincial legislation, such as the CapeNature Conservation ordinance of 1974 and National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act 10 of 2004. It is illegal to collect any tortoise species in South Africa, and they may not be kept as pets without a permit.</p>
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>24</b>	<p><b>26 May – Africa Day</b></p> <p>God Bless Africa; Guard her children; Guide her leaders And give her peace, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen</p> 
<b>Monday</b>	<b>25</b>	<p><b>Isaiah 24:5-13 (The Message)</b></p> <p><b>Earth Polluted by Its Very Own People</b></p> <p><sup>5-13</sup> Earth is polluted by its very own people, who have broken its laws, Disrupted its order, violated the sacred and eternal covenant. Therefore a curse, like a cancer, ravages the earth. Its people pay the price of their sacrilege. They dwindle away, dying out one by one. No more wine, no more vineyards, no more songs or singers. The laughter of castanets is gone, the shouts of celebrants, gone, the laughter of fiddles, gone. No more parties with toasts of champagne. Serious drinkers gag on their drinks. The chaotic cities are unliveable. Anarchy reigns. Every house is boarded up, condemned. People riot in the streets for wine, but the good times are gone forever— no more joy for this old world. The city is dead and deserted, bulldozed into piles of rubble. That's the way it will be on this earth. This is the fate of all nations: An olive tree shaken clean of its olives, a grapevine picked clean of its grapes.</p>

<p><b>Tuesday</b></p>	<p><b>26</b></p>	<p>We search for you oh Lord in the wind that blows.          We search for you oh Lord in the rain that washes the paths clean.          We look for you oh Lord in dark of the night.          We desire you oh Lord, fill our hearts with your love.          We find you oh Lord, in all of these places.          Without your grace oh Lord we are empty.</p> <p><b>A Celtic prayer</b></p>
<p><b>Wednesday</b></p>	<p><b>27</b></p>	<p><b>Declaring Glory (The Earth Sings its Refrain)</b></p> <p>When I was young          You woke me with the sound of song          The wind and rhythm drew me along          I echoed in the hymn of the dawn          I turned, and turned          This dance that all the planets learned          In circles, 'round the stars as they burned          I praise You as I orbit and turn</p> <p>Declaring glory, glory (x2)</p> <p>The mountains rise          The forests grow before my eyes          The moments and the seasons in mind          Then turn again, embracing the tide          The waters fall          And carve their way across my soil          Their canyons cutting deep in my soul          I praise You while the rivers still roar</p> <p>Declaring glory, glory (x2)</p> <p>New life begins          Your creatures dance across my skin          Like me, they have Your Spirit within          But soon they fade away as I spin          They fall to dust          And dress me in decay and rust          Their secrets buried deep in my crust          I praise You in the layers of dust</p> <p>Declaring glory, glory (x2)</p> <p>All the rocks wear down          Beneath passing of the crowds          The rivers run until they run out          I praise You till my fire's run out (x 3)</p> <p>I'll praise my Maker in every age (x2)          I'll praise my Maker in every age (glory, glory) (x2)          Glory (ooh, oh), Glory ,Glory (mm)</p> <p><b>Song by Jon Guerra and The Porter's Gate</b>  <i>Songwriters: Paul Zach / Jon Guerra / Molly Parden / Nicholas Chambers / Kate Bluett. Declaring Glory (The Earth Sings its Refrain) lyrics © Integrity's Alleluia! Music, Paul Zach Publishing, Kate Bluett Music</i></p> <p><a href="#">Listen</a></p>



<p><b>Thursday</b></p>	<p><b>28</b></p>	<p>God of creation, who loves all he has made and all that has evolved, open the eyes of your people, that your love might be reflected in our care for the planet. Through Jesus Christ, who walked this earth and calls us by name. Amen.</p> <p><b><i>Rt Revd Nicholas Baines</i></b> <i>Bishop of Leeds</i></p>
<p><b>Friday</b></p>	<p><b>29</b></p>	<p>“Among irrational animals the love of the offspring and of the parents for each other is extraordinary because God, who created them, compensated for the deficiency of reason by the superiority of their senses.”</p> <p><b><i>Saint Basil of Caesarea (4<sup>th</sup> century)</i></b></p>
<p><b>Saturday</b></p>	<p><b>30</b></p>	<p>How clearly the sky reveals God’s glory! How plainly it shows what he has done! Each day announces it to the following day; each night repeats it to the next. No speech or words are used, no sound is heard; Yet their message goes out to all the world and is heard to the ends of the earth.</p> <p><b><i>Psalm 19:1-4 (GNB)</i></b></p>
<p><b>Sunday</b></p>	<p><b>31</b></p>	 <p>Wherever you are, bloom beautifully there.</p>

