



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**For African penguins, it's going to get worse before it gets better**

(Cape Town, 26 October 2023) – STARTS – The African penguin population will show a decline from 2022 to 2023, despite will power and a successful worldwide waddle this month.

The #NotOnOurWatch (#NOOW) campaign isn't taken aback. #NOOW was conceptualised and planned as a long-term project to save the endemic and endangered African penguins in the wild before 2035, when it will be too late. There are three steps to achieving this: raise awareness, garner support and then tackle the hard issues.

“On 14 October the support for #NOOW was phenomenal. Thousands of people waddled their way around the world, across seven continents and with the help and support of more than 100 institutions,” said Dr Judy Mann, President of the International Zoo Educators Association, Executive Head of Strategy at the Two Oceans Aquarium Foundation and a founder of the #NotOnOurWatch survival campaign.

“We'll continue to build on that momentum with letters to Barbara Creecy, South Africa's Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, and events next year on 25 April for World Penguin Day and 12 October for International African Penguin Awareness Day. But we're also going to dig deeper into the harder issues, one of which will be supporting scientists, conservationists, the government, and the fisheries industry to come to feasible agreements with outcomes everyone can live with, including the African penguin,” Dr Mann said.

Backers of the #NOOW campaign, the Two Oceans Aquarium and the Two Oceans Aquarium Foundation, won't be taking a back seat either. In November, the Two Oceans Aquarium in Cape Town will be unveiling an exceptional new penguin exhibit, which will ensure that as many as 50,000 visitors a month walk away with a deeper understanding of the plight of the African penguin.

And it's not just in South Africa that the campaign continues. The Florida Aquarium, Georgia Aquarium, Zoos Victoria, Penguins International and AZA SAFE African Penguin have got the African penguin's back. As do institutions in Japan, Tasmania, New Zealand, Australia, the UAE, France, Croatia, Poland, Italy, Mozambique, Canada, Peru and Chile, who all took part in International African Penguin Awareness Day on 14 October.

“From our experience at AZA SAFE - Saving Animals From Extinction - we know it's possible to protect the African penguin – its extinction doesn't have to be inevitable. But it will get worse before it gets better,” said Dr Patricia McGill, Program Leader for AZA SAFE African Penguin and Senior Conservation Scientist at the National Aviary in Pittsburgh, USA. “The important thing about conservation is to know that there will be wins and losses on the way to achieving your goal. It's like everything in life. The trick is to never give up. We're *never* going to give up on the African penguin.”

In the weeks and months ahead #NOOW's radio and television adverts will be aired, with thanks to East Coast Radio in Durban and Cape Talk and Kfm in Cape Town, and Ster Kinekor and DSTV

countrywide. More partners will be coming on board. More action will be taken. Hope is not lost. On the contrary, with the huge worldwide waddle on 14 October, it's clear that there's much more hope than there was before.

#NOOW's worldwide waddle was endorsed by the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development as a Decade Activity.

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For more information you can:

- Access photographs from many of the waddles via WeTransfer - <https://we.tl/t-h91I3RXEC5>
- Email [info@africanpenguins.org](mailto:info@africanpenguins.org)
- Contact Heather Wares, head of communications at the Two Oceans Aquarium at [hwares@aquarium.co.za](mailto:hwares@aquarium.co.za) or on +27 21 814 4539
- Visit the campaign's website at <https://www.africanpenguins.org>
- Access media resources at <https://www.africanpenguinnotonourwatch.org/media-and-resources>
- Look at #NOOW's television advert at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zr4yyjUZ-5g>
- Find out more about the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development: <https://oceandecade.org/>

#NOOW would like to thank everyone who took part and all of the following organisations for their extraordinary support for the 14 October worldwide waddle:

The Two Oceans Aquarium, Two Oceans Aquarium Foundation, uShaka Sea World, National Zoological Garden, The Johannesburg Zoo, Penguin Promises, SANCCOB saves seabirds, The Florida Aquarium, Georgia Aquarium, National Aviary, Les Terres de Nataé, Liquid Dive Adventures, Tofo Scuba, I Am Water Ocean Conservation, Marine Dynamics, Betty's Bay Conservancy, Betty's Bay parkrun, Kogelberg Biosphere, Animal Ocean, Sentinel Ocean Alliance, Century City parkrun, Sharklife, SeaXplore, Secret Sunrise Durban, Durban Point parkrun, Siso Dwana Lodge, Divetek, Ngiri Safaris, Scuba World International, Penguin Protection Parade, Zoos Victoria, Ripley's Aquariums, Louisville Zoo, Little Rock Zoo, Lehigh Valley Zoo, Lion Country Safari, Miyazaki City Phoenix Zoo, Shikoku Aquarium, Buin Marino, Fundacion Mundomar, The Cape Parrot Project, The False Bay Yacht Club, Century City parkrun, Hansie en Grietjie, Nagoya Port Aquarium, Sunshine City Aquarium, Nagasaki Penguin Aquarium, Zoo Tampa, Nifrel, Ueno Zoo, West Edmonton Mall, African Penguin SAFE, Noriko, The Under the Oaks Market, Kfm 94.5, Headlines PR, Cape Nature, Tourvest, the African Penguin and Seabird Sanctuary, Coffee on Clarence, the Toronto Zoo, East Coast Radio, Penguin Promises, in Tasmania a member of the Australian Antarctic Division, Parley Ocean School, Japan's Penguin Academy, Mawson Station, Antarctica, Macquarie Island, Australia, The Edge Mountain Retreat, HUG in Hogsback, the Toronto Zoo, Eco Maties, Pueblo Zoo, Denver Zoo, Pisco, Peru, Punta San Juan, Miami Seaquarium, Henson Robinson Zoo, Kaiyukan, Osaka, and Pohatu Penguin Conservation Trust.

#### About the #NotOnOurWatch campaign

#NOOW was conceptualised in 2022 after scientists and conservationists agreed there needed to be a public action project to try to stop the functional extinction of the unique African penguin by 2035. The campaign kicked off in March 2023 and its goal is to raise awareness, gather support and take action to reverse the decline of the African penguin population in the wild. Public support in South Africa and around the world, including in the USA, Europe, Asia, Australia and South America will help to ensure that the South African government, the conservation community and private industry work together to make wise decisions concerning the future of the African penguin.

The campaign was made possible with support from the Two Oceans Aquarium Foundation, The Florida Aquarium, Georgia Aquarium and Zoos Victoria.



**2021** United Nations Decade  
**2030** of Ocean Science  
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