



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Thousands take a stand for African penguins' survival**

(Cape Town, 14 October 2023) – STARTS - Thousands of people around the world have taken a stand today to say that Not On Their Watch will the African penguin go extinct by 2035.

The biggest ever worldwide waddle for this endangered species began in Tasmania and Japan, wound its way to the UAE, Europe and Africa and will carry on in Canada, the USA and Latin America. Aquariums, zoos, conservationists, activists, animal lovers, schools, scuba clubs, parkruns and private citizens held events on behalf of the #NotOnOurWatch (#NOOW) African penguin survival campaign and today's important waddle was endorsed by the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development as a Decade Activity.

“The turnout has been incredible and we're both humbled and grateful to see how many people care so much about saving the African penguin,” 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. “To have such an abundance of supporters that there were events planned on seven continents was beyond our wildest dreams. And this is just the start. With this ground swell behind us, we feel confident South African authorities, conservationists and private industry will hear these voices from around the world and work more closely together to protect our unique and endemic penguins.”

The events today have been creative and varied, from a gender-reveal for Venus, the African penguin chick at uShaka Sea World in Durban, South Africa, to virtual meetings, a Secret Sunrise dance, to #NOOW's youth ambassadors interacting with the crowds, to runners dressed in black and white, scientific talks, penguin feeding shows, protest walks with placards, children's games, music and videos. The waddle itself has reflected how multicultural our world is and shown how many people, organisations, countries and continents care not only about the future of African penguins, but also the ocean and this planet.

“Japanese people love penguins more than you'd expect. We have African penguins at several aquariums and zoos, so once these supporters joined, it became a big movement,” said Dr Kanako Tomisawa, Secretary for the Species Management Committee of the South East Asian Zoos and Aquariums Association, Board member and Social Media Editor of the International Zoo Educators Association, Spokesperson for Omuta City Zoo in Japan and Executive Committee member, Conservation Planning Specialist Group, Japan. “If South Africa is able to save these penguins then more countries can use it as an example because other penguin species are also starting to decline. It's time to act. There is still hope.”

ENDS

For more information you can:

- Access photographs from some of today's waddles at <https://we.tl/t-2uUf2ilm31>
- #NOOW's video is at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zr4yyjUZ-5g>
- The #NOOW radio clip is attached
- 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>
- See a list of most of the organisations waddling at <https://www.africanpenguinnotonourwatch.org/join-a-waddle>
- Find out more about the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development: <https://oceandecade.org/>

About the #NotOnOurWatch campaign

#NOOW was created 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's goal is to create a movement and raise awareness about the need for urgent 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 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.



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**2030** of Ocean Science  
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