



# Berg River Estuarine Management Plan (Draft 2017)

This plan was compiled by Anchor Environmental (version 1 in 2008) and Royal Haskoning DHV (version 2 in 2017) for the client: Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning: Western Cape Government.

The vision for this Management Plan is determined by the following:

- Recognition of the ecological status of the Berg River Estuary and associated wetlands;
- Protection of the exceptional biodiversity of the region;
- The Establishment of a protected area;
- Control over boat traffic; and
- Control of development along the river banks, close to the high water mark.

**The ultimate purpose of the Management Plan includes:**

- Sustainable development;
- Conservation of wetland biodiversity;
- Preserving the unique character;
- Tourism, local and regional economic development;
- Regulating boat traffic on the waterways of the Estuary;
- Proper law enforcement in the area;
- Access to the Estuary;
- Control of pollution and littering; and
- Registration of jetties and slipways.

## Economic significance:

It accommodates an important fishing harbour, as well as the cultural-historical bokkom industry. It also holds great value for recreation and is a great tourist attraction for:

- Boat and bank angling;
- Water sports and other forms of recreation;
- Appreciation of scenery and nature;
- Residential development;
- Cerebos and Kliphoek salt works; and
- Port Owen Marina.

## Challenges that warrant urgent action:

**Increasing boat traffic for recreational purposes, especially big and fast boats used for sporting activities.**

More challenges include:

- Impediment of the free flow of large volumes of fresh water required for seasonal scouring of the waterways. This is the result of increased irrigation and the building of dams upstream;
- Increasing residential development within or close to the high water mark;
- Pollution by fishing boats and factories;
- Increased occurrence of alien vegetation such as water Hyacinth, Eucalyptus and Acacia species; and
- Intensive agricultural activities in the catchment area.



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## Important Facts:

**This site is very special as it is the third largest estuary on the South African West Coast and one of only four perennials.**

It drops only 1m over the last 40km, forming a flood plain of 61 square kilometres.

It supports exceptional populations of plant and animal species, namely:

- 127 water birds;
- 93 other non-passerine birds;
- a total of 46 000 birds have been counted during summer months;
- populations of 25 nationally important bird types, as well as at least 5 Red Data bird species occur here;
- 35 fish species occur here, 80% of which use the estuary as a nursery for marine species;
- A large variety of insect and other invertebrate species (crabs, prawns) serve as food for bird and fish populations.
- Distinct plant communities are of the utmost importance for the abundant fish and bird populations. Mudflats offer rich feeding grounds and reed beds along the banks offer breeding places;
- Plant root plays a critical role in wetlands as they serve as a filtering system to clean water from most sediments, before releasing it into the sea.

# ZONES OF THE BERG RIVER ESTUARY: SEE MAP BELOW



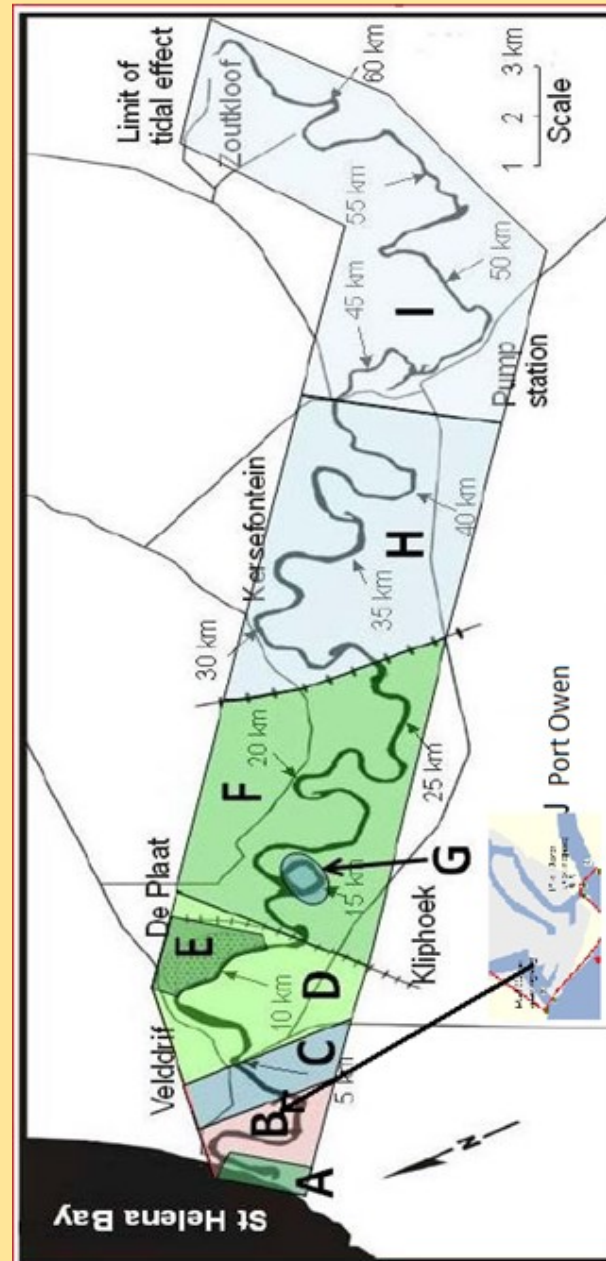
**Zone A** (Old Mouth Lagoon): Is a prohibited entry area;

**Zone B** (Fishing Harbour): Is a zone where fishing and bait collection is permitted; water skiing is not permitted; scuba diving is only allowed with permission from the harbour master;

**Zone C** (Carinus Multipurpose Recreation Area): Is an area where all forms of water sport, fishing and bait collection are permitted; scuba diving is only allowed with permission from the harbour master;

**Zone D** (Conservation Area that includes Bokkomlaan): Is a zone where only sailing, canoeing, board sailing, swimming and fishing is permitted. Specifically prohibited in this area are kite boarding and water skiing as well as access to salt marshes and intertidal mudflats. Scuba diving is only allowed with permission from the harbour master;

**Zone E** (De Plaat Conservation Area): Is a prohibited entry area;



Here is a map of the Berg River Estuary with the various designated management zones.

**Zone F** (Kruispad Area): Is an area where all forms of water sport and fishing, except for scuba diving as defined, is permitted;

**Zone G** (Kliphoek multipurpose recreation area): Is an area where all forms of water sport, fishing and bait collection, except for scuba diving, are permitted;

**Zone H** (Kersefontein/Langrietvlei recreation area): Fishing is only allowed with a permit from a registered licensed vessel and if from shore, with permission of the land owner;

**Zone I:** This Zone is no longer within the Bergrivier Municipality boundary and is therefore excluded from this by-law;

**Zone J** (Port Owen Marina): Is subject to POMA rules and regulations; and

**Tidal Zones:** Access from all zones to the tidal zone that includes mud flats, salt marshes and sand banks is prohibited.

## CONTACT US:



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