



CITY OF CAPE TOWN
ISIXEKO SASEKAPA
STAD KAAPSTAD

SPATIAL PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT
ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT

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Conservation Wise

Conserving Biodiversity for Future Generations

October –December 2025: REPORT OF THE MILNERTON

RACECOURSE ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE



From left to right: Southern Masked Weaver; Cape Sand frog; Red veined darter; Spotted Thick-knee.

Funded by the **Royal Ascot
Master Property Owners'
Association** (RAMPOA) in
partnership with the City of Cape
Town and Nature Connect.



Spring walk at Milnerton Racecourse Conservation Area

The Annual Spring Walk took place on Saturday, 11th October 2025, from 10:00 to 13:00. This year, participants were able to explore both the northern and southern parts of the reserve — including the southern section, which is normally closed to the public. This was organised and led by Abdul-Gakeem Rakiep the MRC Site Manager. Although the morning started off cloudy, the skies cleared up nicely, making it a great day for a walk.

A total of 16 residents joined the event. During the walk, the Table Bay Nature Reserve (TBNR) student, Sandile Myundu, led an informative session about why the reserve is so important. He spoke about the local plants and animals, the role of wetlands, and the fire management practices needed to protect the critically endangered Cape Flats Sand Fynbos. He also explained how all these parts of the environment are connected and depend on one another.



Figure 1: Sandile (TBNR Student) explaining the difference between the male and female Cape Flats Conebush.



Figure 2: Sandile closing off the spring walk.

Biophysical Monitoring – Water

The fynbos is one of the world's most unique and fragile ecosystems, and its health depends heavily on water. We monitor rainfall and wetland water levels to understand how this ecosystem is coping with shifting weather patterns and increasing drought. When rainfall drops or wetlands dry out too quickly, fynbos plants struggle to grow, fires become more intense, and wildlife that relies on wetland moisture is put at risk. Keeping track of these changes helps us (conservation teams) protect sensitive species, restore wetlands, and plan for the effects of climate change. In short, monitoring water in the fynbos helps safeguard the future of this irreplaceable landscape.

Below shows the changes in monthly rainfall records for Milnerton Racecourse from **2023** to **2025** (Measurements up to 31st December 2025).

Rainfall (mm)													
Year	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	TOTAL
2023	17.50	10.30	67.20	44.70	140.70	236.20	78.20	47.00	138.00	6.00	7.00	0.00	792.80
2024	0.00	2.00	25.50	36.00	4.00	78.00	295.00	133.00	16.00	1.00	10.00	11.00	611.50
2025	4.00	0.50	8.00	33.50	51.00	124.00	107.00	88.3	6.5	8.30	0.00	0.00	431.10
Average	7.2	4.3	33.6	38.1	65.2	146.1	160.1	89.4	53.5	5.1	5.7	3.7	

Fixed-point photography is a simple but powerful monitoring method widely used in conservation.

We use fixed-point photography in wetlands to track **water level changes** over time. By taking photos from the same spot, they can easily see if a wetland is drying out, flooding, or recovering. This simple method helps show how rainfall, seasons, and restoration work affect water levels. It's an easy way to keep an eye on wetland health.

Fixed point photography monitoring of wetlands is conducted monthly. The results of October 2025 in comparison to October 2024 can be seen in the figures below:



Figure 3: Fixed-point photograph of Wetland 1, taken on the 15th of October 2024.



Figure 4: Fixed-point photograph of Wetland 1, taken on the 20th of October 2025.



Figure 5: Fixed-point photograph of Wetland 2, taken on the 15th of October 2024.



Figure 6: Fixed-point photograph of Wetland 2, taken on the 20th of October 2025.



Figure 7: Fixed-point photograph of the Dam, taken on 15th of October 2024.



Figure 8: Fixed-point photograph of the Dam, taken on 20th of October 2025.

Biodiversity monitoring

Biodiversity monitoring means **keeping an eye on nature**—the plants, animals, and ecosystems around us.

It's important because it helps us see:

- If the environment is healthy
- If any species are disappearing
- If pollution or climate change is causing problems

By watching nature closely, we can fix issues early and protect the things we depend on, like clean water, fresh air, and safe food.

Field guides and iNaturalist was used to record all fauna sightings for the period of October – December. Some of these sightings can be seen below.



Figure 9: Southern Masked Weaver (*Ploceus velatus*)



Figure 10: Reed cormorant (*Phalacrocorax africanus*)



Figure 11: Long Skimmer (*Orthetrum trinacia*)



Figure 12: Cape honeybee (*Apis mellifera capensis*)



Figure 13: Tube Kaslossie (*Ixia paniculata*).



Figure 14: Cape Flats conebush (*Leucadendron levisanus*)