

# Wildlife Preparedness & Response Challenges in Africa: A Case Study of Namibia and South Africa



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Preparedness &  
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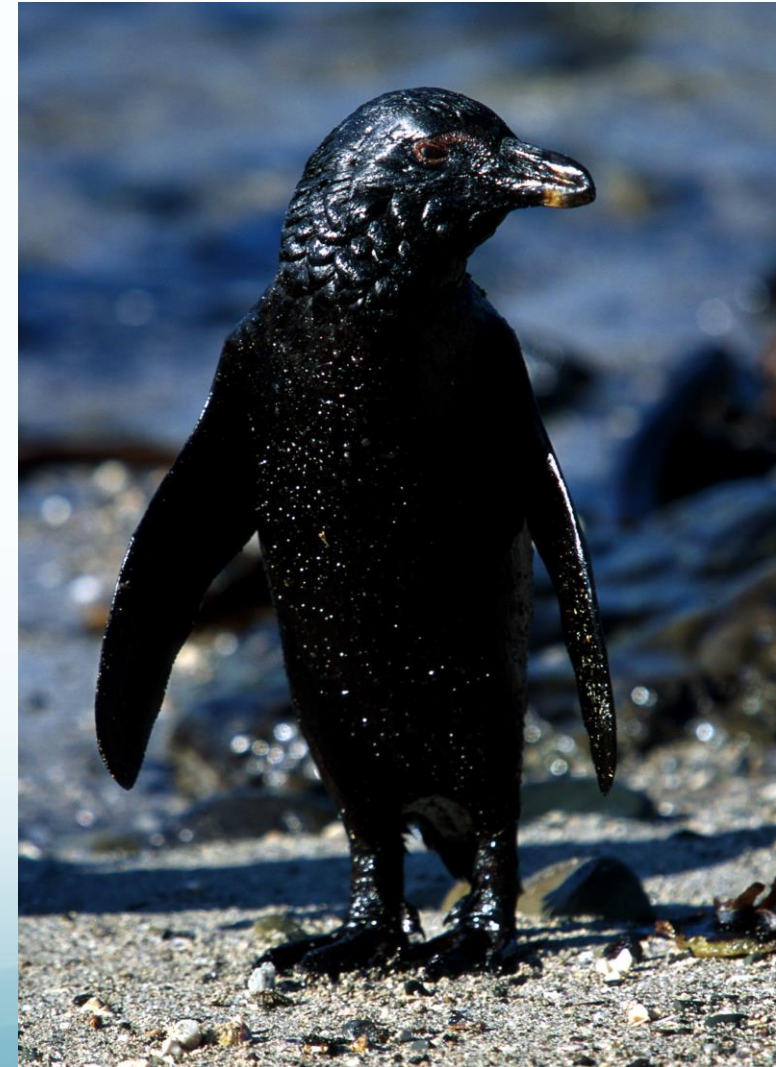
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# Presentation Summary

- About SANCCOB's work
- Geographical Area
- Sensitive species at risk / endangered species
- Threats
- Overview of 2009 Namibia spill & SANCCOB's involvement
- Industry & stakeholder association with OWR
- Summary







# About the Southern African Foundation for the Conservation of Coastal Birds (SANCCOB)

## **Rescue, Rehabilitation & Release**

- ☐ Endangered species conservation
- ☐ Chick Bolstering Project
- ☐ First Responder Network

## **Preparedness & Response: oiled seabirds**

- ☐ Disaster preparedness
- ☐ Policy development

## **Research**

- ☐ Disease surveillance
- ☐ Post-release monitoring
- ☐ Population & foraging ecology

## **Colony Support**

- ☐ Seabird Rangers
- ☐ Training
- ☐ Seabird monitoring

## **Education**

- ☐ Outreach
- ☐ Special Education Needs Schools

## **Advocacy & Government Assistance**

- ☐ Fisheries management
- ☐ Oiled wildlife preparedness



# Integrating oiled wildlife response into mainstream contingency plans

- Improved oiled wildlife preparedness through national legislation
- Listed in the NOSCP as the identified seabird responder by the SA government
- “Draft” National Oiled Marine Wildlife Contingency Plan
- Participation in government exercises and preparedness working groups



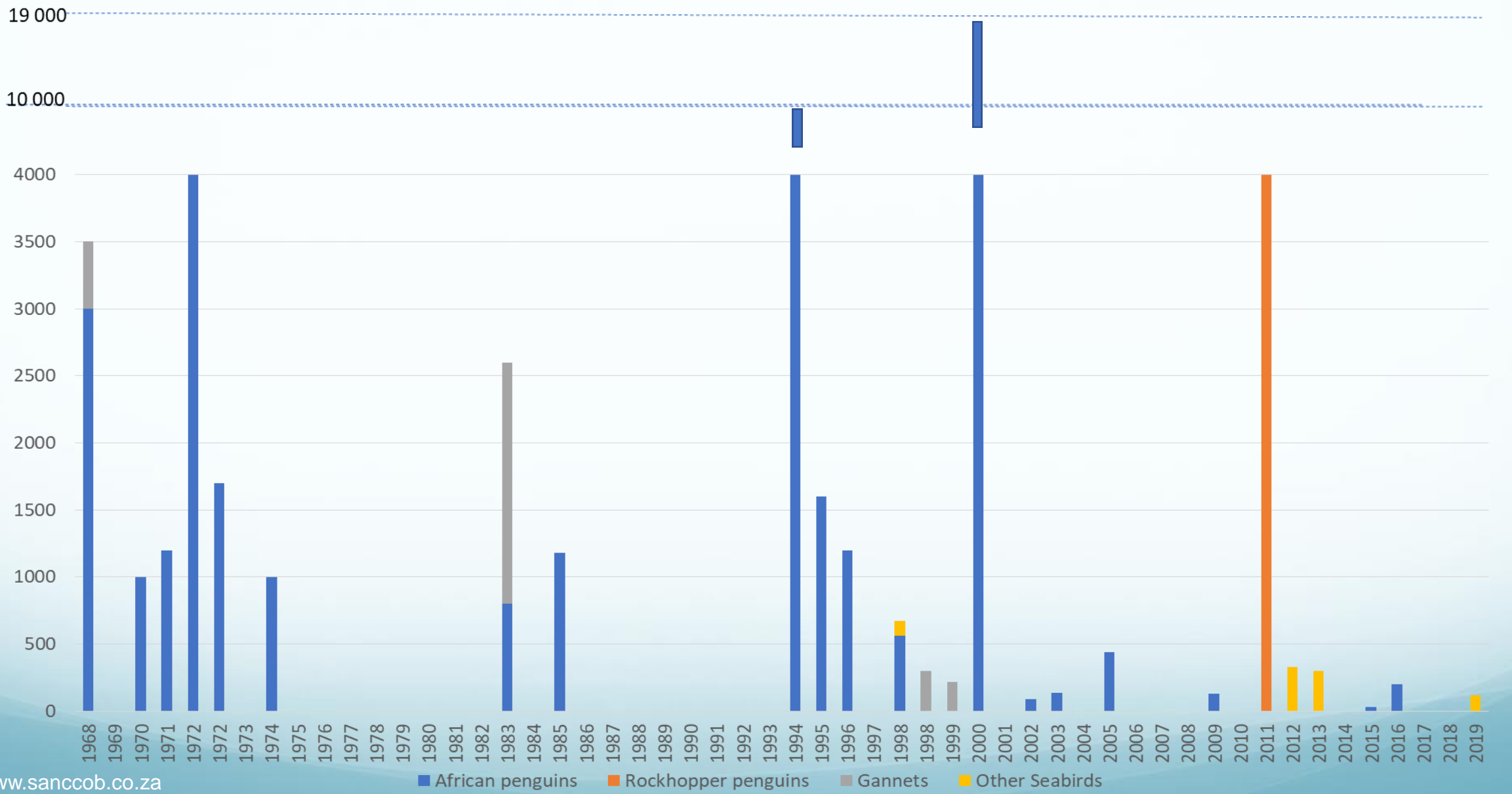
# SANCCOB's role during the *MV Treasure* oil spill

- SANCCOB is the only local capability in South Africa, having responded to every major oil spill affecting seabirds since 1968
- Threatened >40,000 African penguins
- Trusted and solid relationship with local conservation partners and global expertise
- >90% rehabilitated and released





# SANCCOB has responded to every major oil spill affecting seabirds along the African coastline since 1968



# Impact: Oiled seabird response in South Africa & Namibia

■ 1968	- <i>Esso Essen</i> tanker	Cape Point	±3,000 seabirds
■ 1970	- <i>Kazimah</i>	Robben Island	±1,000 African Penguins
■ 1972	- Tanker collision	Ystervark Point	4,000 seabirds
■ 1974	- <i>Oriental Pioneer</i>	Struisbaai	thousands of seabirds.
■ 1983	- <i>Castillo de Belver</i>	Saldanha Bay	1,400 gannets, 800 African Penguins
■ 1985	- <i>Capodistrias</i>	Cape Recife	±900 African Penguins
■ 1994	- <i>Apollo Sea</i>	Robben Island	10,000 African Penguins
■ 1995	- Mystery spill	Dyer Island	1,600 African Penguins
■ 1996	- <i>MV Cordigliera</i>	Port St Johns	1,200 African Penguins
■ 1998	- Harbour spill	Cape Town	671 seabirds
■ 1998	- Mystery spill	Malgas Island	±300 Cape gannets
■ 1999	- Mystery spill	Malgas Island	±220 Cape gannets
■ 2000	- <i>MV Treasure</i>	Robben, Dassen	19,000 African Penguins
■ 2009	- <i>Mystery spill</i>	Namibia	200 African Penguins
■ 2011	- <i>MS Oliva</i>	Tristan da Cunha	4,000 Rockhopper penguins
■ 2012	- <i>Seli 1</i> (3yr duration)	Table Bay	326 seabirds
■ 2013	- <i>Kiani Satu</i>	Buffels Bay	299 seabirds
■ 2015	- Mystery Spill	Algoa Bay	30 African Penguins
■ 2016	- STS Bunkering	Algoa Bay	200 African Penguins
■ 2019	- STS Bunkering	Algoa Bay	120 seabirds

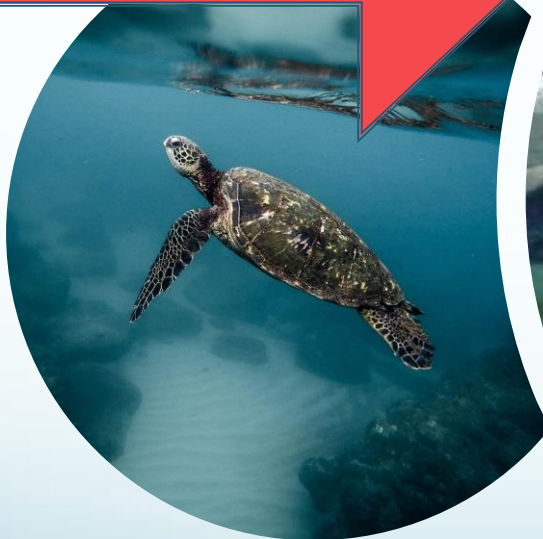




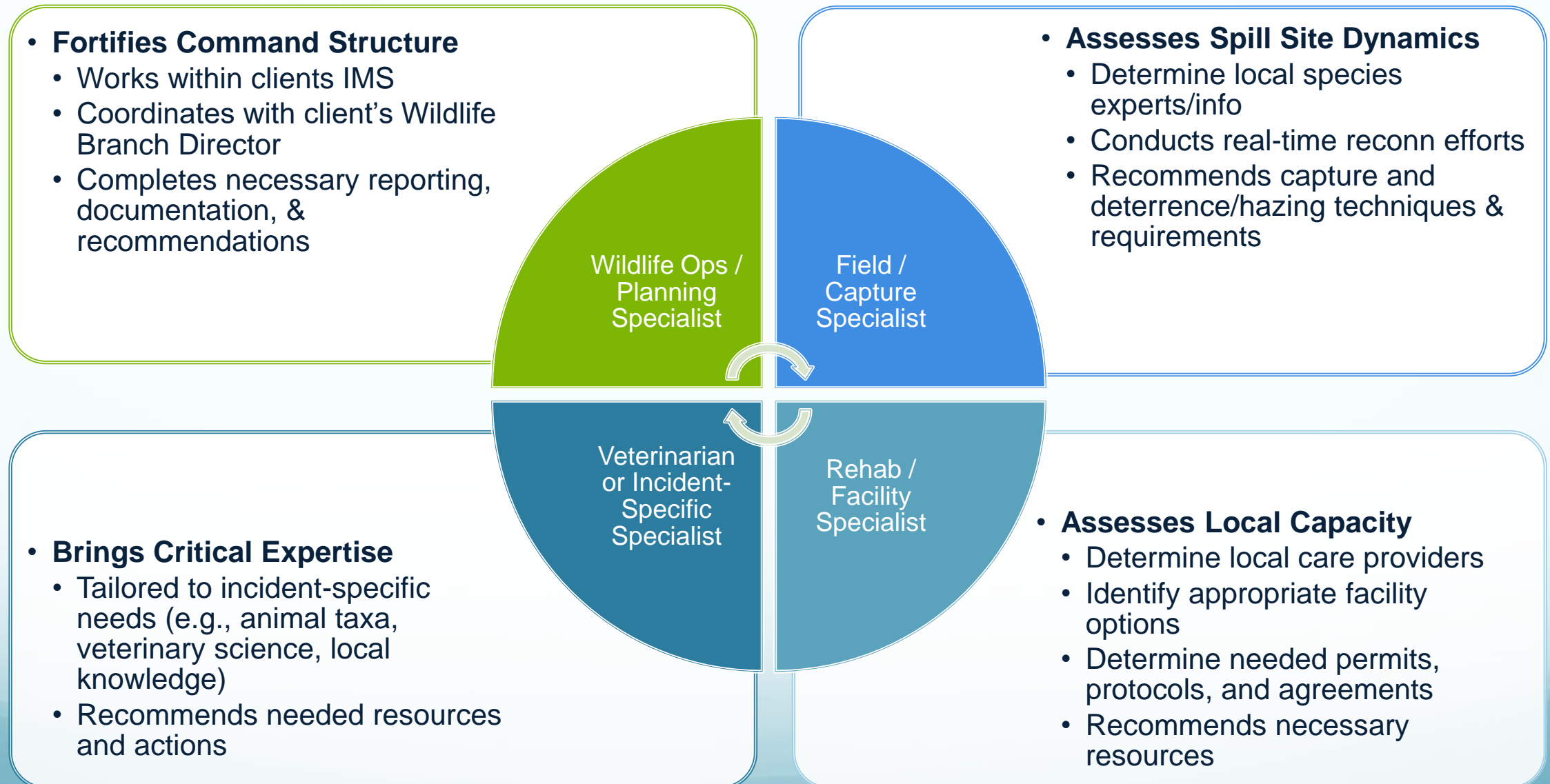
4 people x 4 days

# GOWRS Tier 3 Wildlife Assessment Team

1. Wildlife Ops/Planning Specialist
2. Field/Capture Specialist
3. Rehabilitation/Facility Specialist
4. Veterinarian or other specialist



# GOWRS Assessment Team: Functions





## Sensitive species of the Benguela Ecosystem



African penguin



Cape gannet



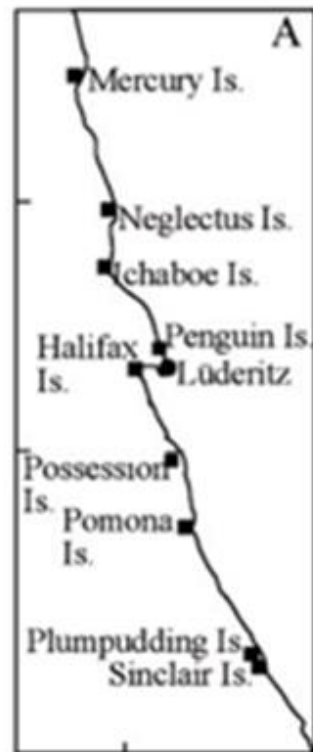
Cape cormorant



Bank cormorant



Damara Tern

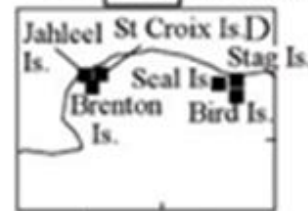
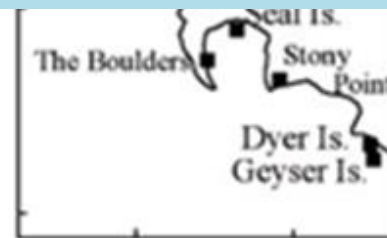


## African penguin population:

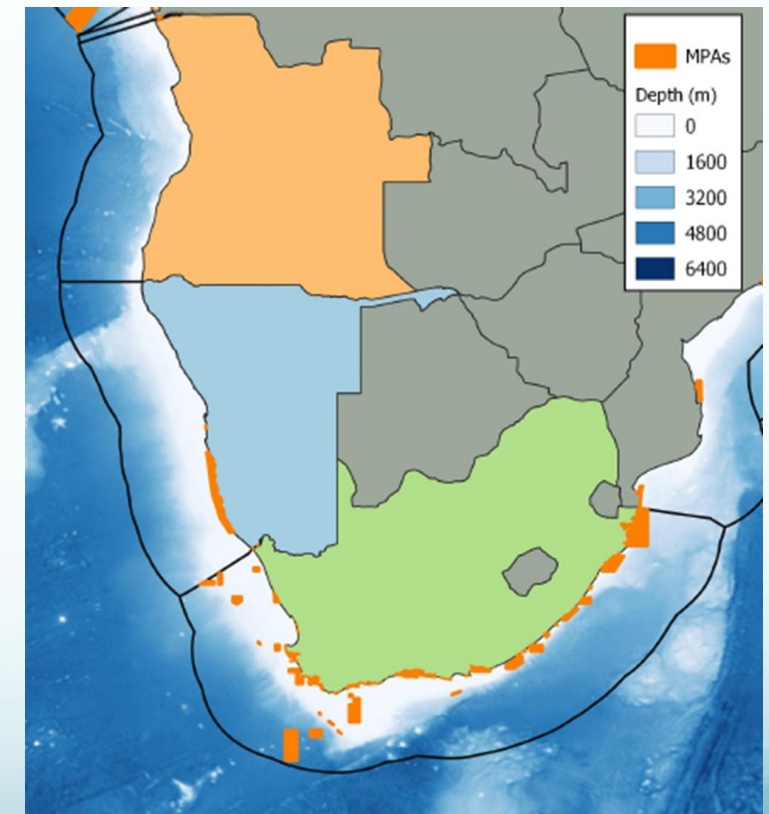
Global: ~ 18 000 bp

Namibia: ~4 143 bp

(MFMR, 2019)



*Seabirds are among the most threatened groups of animals*



Marine Protected Areas around the Southern African coastline



# Loss of Biodiversity

## Halifax Island, Namibia



1930s Eberlanz Museum, Lüderitz



2004, Jessica Kemper



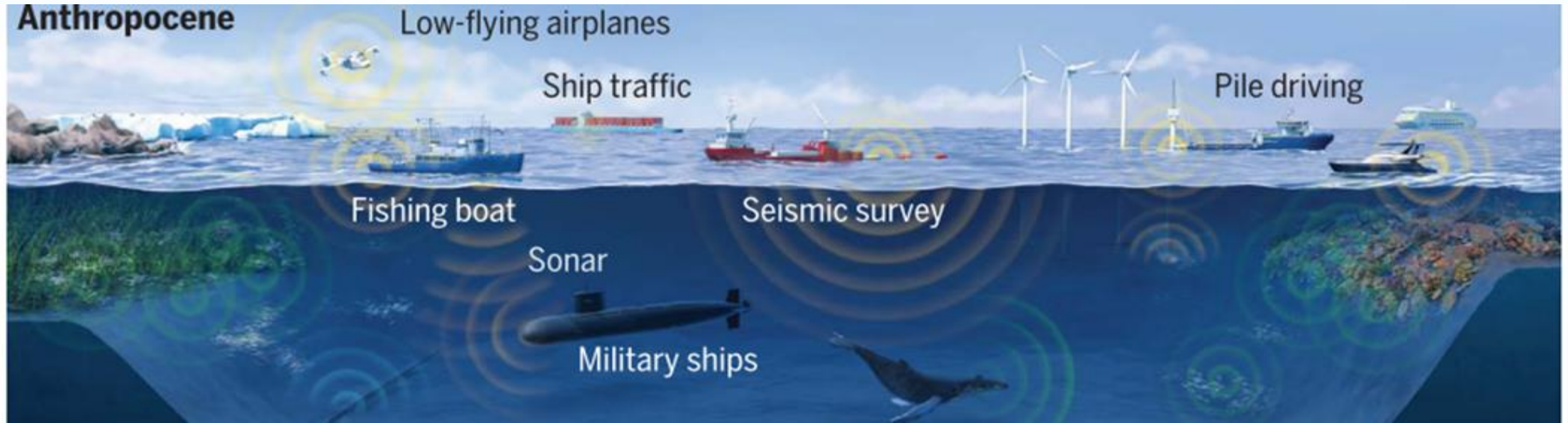
# Threats

- Lack of food – energy-rich food shortage
- Oil pollution
- Disease
- Oil & Gas exploration
- Mining activities (land & sea)
- Vessel grounding
- Vessel refuelling spill





# Threats - Noise



Mechanisms of noise impacts remain untested but may include:

- Impacts on forage fish
- Direct impacts on penguins and other seabirds
- Disruption of at-sea acoustic communication



# Oiled wildlife Preparedness & Response Challenges

- ❑ Protection of wildlife is not high on the list of priorities in Namibia & rest of Africa; largely reliant on non-profit organisations for oiled wildlife preparedness & response;
- ❑ Oiled wildlife preparedness and response is not currently regularly funded by government or industry;
- ❑ Lack of Government budget for **preparedness** (equipment, surveillance, training);
- ❑ Economic growth generally takes precedence over nature conservation;
- ❑ Large number of stakeholders and role players often results in lack of coordination;
- ❑ Lack of legislation requiring oiled wildlife contingency planning;



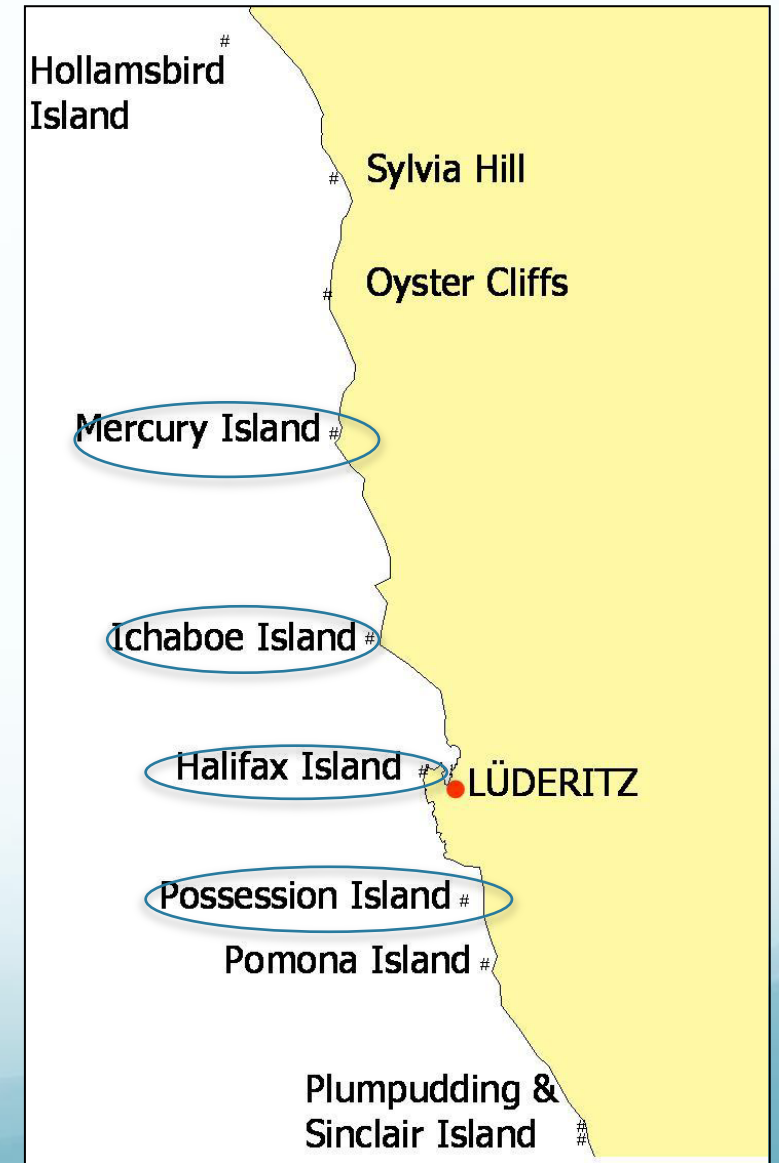
# Unidentified oil spill, Lüderitz, 2009

*The oil spill in  
April 2009  
affected 171  
African  
penguins over a  
distance of  
150km*



# African penguins – Namibian breeding distribution

- African penguin breeding pairs: 4143 bp
- Breeds at 12 localities in Southern Namibia
- The four main islands support 96% of the population
- Oiled penguins were collected from the four main islands
- All islands are managed by the Ministry Fisheries & Mineral Resources (MFMR)





- 171 oiled penguins were collected from the four main islands, spanning 150km
- 161 of the penguins were taken to Lüderitz
- 10 penguins were cleaned, rehabilitated and released on staffed islands



**All penguins were washed in Lüderitz by MFMR staff and volunteers**



# The situation in 2009...and still today

- MFMR: small rehabilitation facility in Lüderitz
- 1 x enclosure, 1 x pool and a small hospital
- Can handle up to ~30 penguins





# Inadequate rehabilitation facilities



- Facilities too small
- Response escalated to Tier 3
- Evacuation of the strongest penguins from Lüderitz to SANCCOB, Cape Town
- The 129 strongest penguins were selected and prepared for the 1300 km journey
- CITES permit = delay!





## 20 hours and 1300km later...

- All 129 penguins survived the journey
- Most penguins suffered dehydration
- 2 penguins died a few days later
- Post-mortems showed internal bruising / bleeding
- Deaths possibly linked to excessive periods of confinement





# Release & Post-release monitoring

- Average time in captivity: 41 days (both in Lüderitz and at SANCCOB)
- 113 penguins released in Cape Town near Robben Island and 39 penguins released near Lüderitz in May/June 2009





# Return of the penguins

- By 31 August, 17 penguins and 17 locally released penguins had been re-sighted (21%)
- It took 14 days to cover a distance of 1019 km (~73 km per day)
- 3 previously oiled penguins were breeding in August





# Conclusions



1. First trans-boundary evacuation of the species
2. Longest transport (by road) of the species
3. Evacuation successful with few mortalities
  - Strongest penguins only
  - Penguins well prepared
  - Good ventilation
  - Documents in order
  - (no delays at the border)
4. This could not be achieved with other species
5. Lack of preparedness = compromised animal welfare





# Positive outcomes

- African penguins returned to their islands in Namibia
- Confirms strong homing behaviour and philopatry of the species
- Prompt actions and collaborative efforts of MFMR and SANCCOB ensured a successful rescue operation





# Multi-stakeholder approach – Oiled Wildlife Preparedness

**DEBMARINE**  
NAMIBIA

 **NAMDEB**  
A NAMIBIA DE BEERS PARTNERSHIP

 **DEBMARINE  
NAMDEB  
FOUNDATION**  
CREATING A POSITIVE DIAMOND LEGACY

## SAFE DISASTER RELIEF PROJECT

collaborate on cross-border  
oiled wildlife preparedness and  
response

**MARYLAND ZOO**

**ASSOCIATION  
OF ZOOS &  
AQUARIUMS** | **SAFE**  
SAVING ANIMALS  
FROM EXTINCTION

**NCE**  
Namibian Chamber of Environment

**REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA**  
**Fisheries and Marine Resources**



# Why this project is urgent & necessary

- Conservation efforts for the African penguin requires a holistic approach, irrespective of country;
- Current lack of monitoring and interventions by government for Namibia's seabirds;
- Namibia is unprepared for oil spills affecting seabirds (and other wildlife);
- Poor conservation status - Nam AP population: 4143 bp (MFMR, 2019);
- South Africa and Namibia are both party to the Benguela Current Convention;

The Convention is a formal treaty between the governments of Angola, Namibia and South Africa that sets out the countries' intention "to promote a coordinated regional approach to the long-term conservation, protection, rehabilitation, enhancement and sustainable use of the Benguela Current Large Marine Ecosystem, to provide economic, environmental and social benefits."





# Industry Assistance



**Funded by the Debmarine- Namdeb Foundation (2021):**

1. Oiled wildlife response equipment stockpiles – Lüderitz & Oranjemund
2. National contingency planning
3. Training of key personnel: first response techniques and stabilisation



# Future plans for Namibian seabird protection

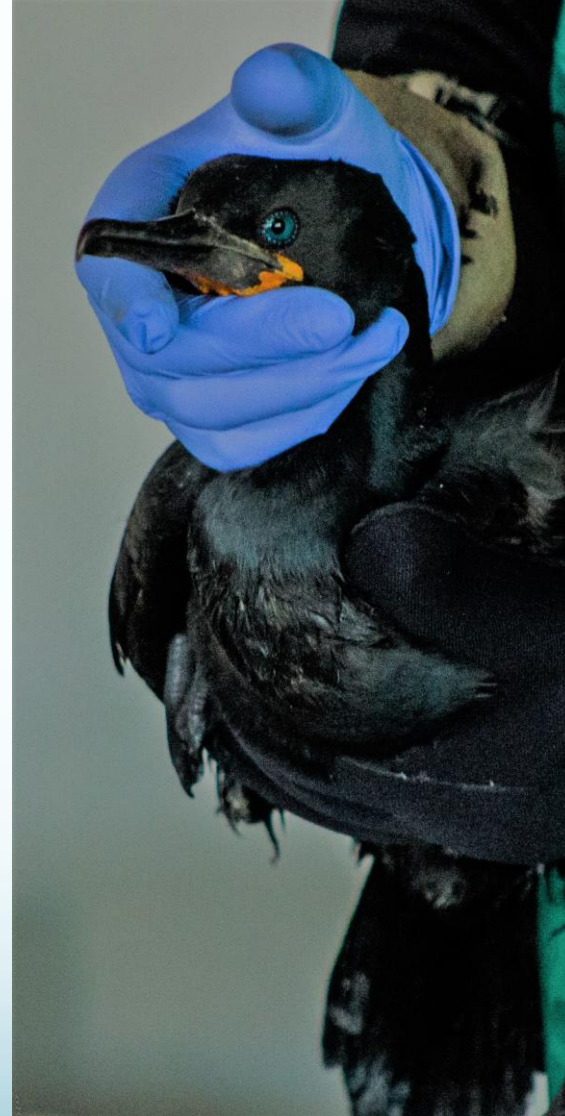
- Establishment of a marine biodiversity organisation: NAMCOB
- Larger rehabilitation facility
- Capacity building
- Strengthen protection of the Namibia Islands MPA
- OWR equipment on the four main seabird islands
- Industry support is key





# Summary

- Integrate wildlife issues into all aspects of NOSCP
- Contingency planning – site specific
- Setting objectives for wildlife response
- Training and preparedness
- Familiarisation with roles and responsibilities
- Funding & capacity
- Maintain scarce skills, knowledge & abilities
- Skills transferral and knowledge sharing with the rest of Africa



# Thank you joining this wildlife webinar!

