

# The Wildlife and Environment Society of South Africa



WESSA (the Wildlife and Environment Society of South Africa) is a truly South African non-government organisation (NGO) with a proud history in our country. For over eight decades WESSA has proactively engaged with the challenges and opportunities presented by South Africa's unique natural heritage and the social and economic systems that depend on it. As a membership-based organisation we have sought to "promote public participation in caring for the Earth" and to build capacity for conservation and sustainable development in a broad cross-section of South African society.

WESSA works to ensure environmental sustainability for current and future South African generations. We focus on the sustainable and equitable management of our natural resource base by building society's environmental sensitivity and competence by calling to, and working with, communities and individuals to move from current to more sustainable action. Our mission to promote public participation in caring for the Earth is expressed in the diverse and dynamic collaborative partnerships that WESSA creates to enable its work. Working within the vital sectors of water, biodiversity, energy and waste, WESSA is a preferred project implementer nationally, regionally and internationally.

Through a commitment to innovation and partnerships, WESSA has become the leading implementer of regional and national environmental initiatives. These include the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Regional Environmental Education Programme working in 15 countries in southern Africa; the national Eco-Schools programme involving more than 500 000 learners; Blue Flag which focuses on the management of our beaches and coastal waters; local Biosphere reserves; the Eskom Energy and Sustainability Programme; WESSA Friends groups; and the Mondi Wetland Programme focusing on protecting and rehabilitating our vital wetland systems.

In particular, WESSA proactively strives to shape policy, ensure compliance and affect social change. It does this through responsive conservation action, innovative educational intervention and human capacity development that empowers people to make sustainable lifestyle and environmental management choices. With highly professional staff, regional offices and thousands of members throughout South Africa, WESSA has a presence on the ground that enables local engagement with major national and global priorities including climate change, water quality and availability, biodiversity loss, waste management and renewable energy.

