



# South Africa designates the Bot-Kleinmond Estuarine System as a Ramsar Site

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South Africa



Bot-Kleinmond Estuarine System

South Africa has designated its 23rd Wetland of International Importance. The Bot-Kleinmond Estuarine System ([Ramsar Site no. 2291](#)) is in the coastal Southern African temperate area, within the Agulhas Bioregion. It consists of an estuarine lake, flanked by deeply weathered Bokkeveld shale terrain and mountains oriented perpendicular to the coastline.

The Site is recognized as one of the ten most significant wetlands for waterbirds in South Africa during the dry summer months; 86 species of waterbird have been recorded there. The bird community changes markedly from year to year according to changes in the estuary conditions related to water levels and periodic breaches of the estuary mouth. Overall bird abundance is determined mainly by the presence or absence of red-knobbed coots (*Fulica cristata*) which can occur in extremely high numbers.

The Site is also important as a nursery area for fish, with 41 species from 24 families recorded, of which 19 species are dependent on estuaries to complete their lifecycle.

The surrounding communities of Kleinmond, Fisherhaven and Hawston have a close relationship with the Bot River estuary. Many residents and holidaymakers use the estuary for fishing, swimming and boating. Some invasive species (including the red-eyed wattle *Acacia cyclops* and the African clawed frog *Xenopus laevis*) have had major impacts.

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