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“ECPTA IS
COMMITTED TO
PROMOTING THE
EASTERN CAPE AS A
PREMIER TOURISM
DESTINATION.”

FIRST QUARTER NEWSLETTER

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Eastern Cape
PARKS & TOURISM AGENCY

01

ECPTA LAUNCHES WINTER CAMPAIGN TO HIGHLIGHT MATATIELE'S REMARKABLE TOURISM OFFERINGS

The Eastern Cape Parks and Tourism Agency (ECPTA) officially launched a winter campaign aimed at shining a spotlight on the remarkable tourism offerings in the picturesque region of Matatiele. The campaign seeks to raise awareness among travellers and highlight the area's diverse attractions, captivating landscapes, and warm hospitality.

Under the leadership of CEO Vuyani Dayimani, the ECPTA is committed to promoting the Eastern Cape as a premier tourism destination. Through strategic partnerships and collaborations, the agency has curated a selection of unique experiences that showcase the best of what Matatiele has to offer.

"Matatiele holds a wealth of treasures waiting to be discovered by visitors. From its breathtaking natural landscapes to its rich cultural heritage, the region offers something for everyone," said Dayimani. "Through our winter campaign, we aim to bring attention to the hidden gems of Matatiele and invite travellers to embark on an unforgettable journey of exploration."

The winter campaign highlights a range of activities and attractions that make not just Matatiele an appealing destination for tourists but Eastern Cape as a whole. The hidden gems of Matatiele were on display to try and bring awareness to tourism offerings of that part of the province.

In Matatiele birding enthusiasts can revel in the region's diverse bird species, while adventure seekers can enjoy exhilarating motor biking trails and invigorating hiking routes amidst the picturesque surroundings.

History buffs will be captivated by the chance to explore the area's historical buildings, which tell fascinating stories of the region's past. Matatiele is also renowned for its warm hospitality, with approximately 40 guest houses offering comfortable accommodations and a chance to experience authentic local culture.

Philip Rawlins, a passionate tour operator from Motsamai Tours, expressed his enthusiasm for Matatiele's tourism potential. "We have so much to offer in this region, from birding and hiking to historical landmarks and delectable local cuisine. It's time for Matatiele to take center stage as a preferred choice for travellers seeking unique and memorable experiences," said Rawlins.

The launch event, attended by government officials, industry stakeholders, and members of the local community, served as a platform to highlight the collaborative efforts between ECPTA and local businesses. The campaign aims to create job opportunities and stimulate economic growth by encouraging visitors to explore the region and support local establishments.

The winter campaign in Matatiele is part of the Eastern Cape's broader commitment to positioning itself as a year-round destination including its spectacular winter events in other parts of EC such as the renowned Makhanda Arts Festival, the exciting Kirkwood Wildfees, and the Snow Festival adding to the provinces winter appeal, the Eastern Cape offers diverse and engaging experiences for travellers.

As the winter campaign takes flight, the ECPTA invites travellers to embark on an unforgettable journey through Eastern Cape, where they will discover a tapestry of natural beauty, cultural heritage, and warm hospitality. The collaboration between government and private businesses, as emphasized by CEO Vuyani Dayimani, is vital in ensuring the sustainability and growth of the tourism sector in the Eastern Cape.

With its rich offerings and commitment to excellence, Matatiele and the broader Eastern Cape region are poised to captivate the hearts of adventurers and leisure travellers alike. As the winter campaign gains momentum, the ECPTA encourages everyone to explore the hidden gems of Matatiele and experience the enchantment that awaits in this remarkable destination.

**“DIVERSE
ATTRACTIONS,
CAPTIVATING
LANDSCAPES,
AND WARM
HOSPITALITY”**



Daily Dispatch Journalist, Bomikazi Mdiya with Motsamai Tours Tour Operator, Philip Rawlins after enjoying some fly fishing lessons at Mountain Lake Reserve, Matatiele.

02 TEACHERS HONoured WITH 50% DISCOUNT AT PROVINCIAL NATURE RESERVES

In recognition of the unwavering dedication of teachers during the challenging times of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Eastern Cape Parks and Tourism Agency (ECPTA) has launched a special initiative to express gratitude and appreciation. As part of this initiative, all school teachers are being offered an exclusive 50% discount to visit the provincial-owned nature reserves.



TO SHOW OUR APPRECIATION WE ARE OFFERING

Educators

50% OFF

Bookings made by 31 July
for stays between 23 June
and 31 July 2023 at
Eastern Cape Provincial
Nature Reserves
T's & C's apply.

www.visiteasterncape.co.za



ECPTA offers 50% discount for teachers

The ECPTA, in collaboration with the participating reserves, aims to give teachers a well-deserved break and an opportunity to recharge during the upcoming 3-week June/July school holidays. The initiative allows teachers to avail the discount on bookings made for stays between 15th June and 15th July 2023.

Bongani Matshisi, the ECPTA Brand Manager, explained that the idea behind this promotion stemmed from the successful Health Care Worker promotion launched in the previous financial year. The agency recognized the need to extend the gesture of appreciation to teachers who have played an essential role in ensuring the education and well-being of students throughout the pandemic.

“Our aim is to express our heartfelt gratitude to teachers for their commitment, dedication, and exceptional work during the difficult times of Covid-19,” said Matshisi. “Teachers have been at the forefront, ensuring continuity of education and providing support to students, despite the numerous challenges they have faced. This initiative is a small token of our appreciation for their resilience and tireless efforts.”

The participating nature reserves where teachers can avail the discount include Ongeluksnek Dwesa Cwebe, Silaka, Mkambati, Hluleka, Great Fish River, Mpofu - Fort Fordyce, Thomas Baines, and Tsolwana. These reserves offer a diverse range of natural beauty, captivating wildlife, and tranquil surroundings, providing an ideal escape for teachers to unwind and reconnect with nature.

The 50% discount initiative not only seeks to appreciate teachers but also aims to raise the profile of the participating nature reserves. By encouraging teachers to explore these natural treasures, the ECPTA hopes to promote awareness about the rich biodiversity and scenic landscapes that the Eastern Cape has to offer.

Teachers are invited to take advantage of this generous offer and embark on an unforgettable adventure in the Eastern Cape’s captivating wilderness. Whether it’s exploring the stunning coastal reserves, venturing into the lush forests, or immersing oneself in the serenity of the river valleys, these nature reserves promise rejuvenation and tranquility.

With the 50% discount promotion, the ECPTA endeavors to create an opportunity for teachers to relax, recharge, and reconnect with nature. By extending this gesture of appreciation, the agency recognizes the crucial role teachers play in shaping young minds and nurturing the future generation.

So, to all the dedicated teachers out there, seize this opportunity to experience the wonders of the Eastern Cape’s provincial nature reserves. Book your discounted stay today and indulge in the natural beauty that awaits you. Let the serene landscapes and breathtaking wildlife serve as a testament to your remarkable contributions to society.

“IN
RECOGNITION
OF THE
UNWAVERING
DEDICATION
OF TEACHERS.”

“ECPTA INVITES
TRAVELLERS TO
EMBARK ON AN
UNFORGETTABLE
JOURNEY.”

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PARKS & TOURISM AGENCY

03 EVENTS: CATALYSTS FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH AND PROMOTION OF EASTERN CAPE AS A PREMIER TOURISM DESTINATION

“CULTURAL DIVERSITY, NATURAL BEAUTY, AND RICH HERITAGE”

Events have long been recognised as powerful triggers for economic growth and effective tools for promoting tourism destinations. In the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa, a plethora of provincial events supported by the Eastern Cape Parks and Tourism Agency (ECPTA) serve as vibrant showcases of the region’s cultural diversity, natural beauty, and rich heritage. These events not only attract visitors from near and far but also contribute significantly to the local economy and help establish the Eastern Cape as a premier tourism destination.

One of the key advantages of hosting events is the positive impact on the local economy. As visitors flock to the Eastern Cape for these occasions, they inject money into the region through various channels, including accommodation, transportation, dining, and shopping. The increased spending provides a significant boost to local businesses, supporting job creation and stimulating economic growth. By supporting events, ECPTA plays a vital role in driving economic activity, benefiting not only the event organizers but also the wider community.

Furthermore, events serve as effective platforms to showcase the unique attributes and attractions of the Eastern Cape. They provide an opportunity to highlight the region’s natural wonders, historical sites, cultural heritage, and diverse wildlife. By



**MARK YOUR
CALENDARS AND
EMBRACE THE
UPCOMING EVENTS:**

**National
Arts Festival**
22nd - 02nd July 2023

**Kirkwood
Wildsfees**
30th June - 2nd July 2023

**Corona Open
Jeffreys Bay**
13th - 22nd July 2023

**Music In
The Snow**
29th July 2023

Eastern Cape is a destination for authentic winter events worth exploring.

aligning the events with the region's tourism offerings, ECPTA effectively promotes the Eastern Cape as a must-visit destination for both domestic and international travellers. These events act as magnets, drawing visitors who may be enticed to explore further and experience the countless treasures the Eastern Cape has to offer.

The Eastern Cape is home to a range of events that exemplify the region's vibrancy and allure. To mention a few on the horizon, the National Arts Festival, held annually in Makhanda, stands as one of Africa's largest and most prestigious arts festivals. It showcases a diverse array of performances, exhibitions, and cultural experiences, attracting artists, art enthusiasts, and visitors from around the world. The festival not only celebrates artistic expression but also provides a platform for local talent to thrive and gain exposure.

Another standout event is the Kirkwood Wildsfees, a celebration of the Eastern Cape's agricultural heritage and abundant wildlife. This family-friendly festival combines entertainment, live music, food, and agricultural exhibitions, offering visitors an immersive experience of the region's natural beauty and agricultural prowess. The Kirkwood Wildsfees provides a unique opportunity to engage with the local community and experience the Eastern Cape's rich cultural tapestry.

The Eastern Cape has a lineup of upcoming events that promise unforgettable experiences. The Music in the Snow event in Hogsback, set amidst the breathtaking landscapes of the Amathole Mountains, offers a magical winter retreat with live music performances and a cozy, festive atmosphere. The event attracts visitors seeking a unique blend of music, nature, and warm hospitality.

04

MKHAMBATHI NATURE RESERVE PROMOTES ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS AND CONSERVATION

In the face of mounting environmental challenges, community-driven initiatives are playing a crucial role in raising awareness and promoting sustainable practices. One such initiative took place at the Mkhambathi Nature Reserve, a part of the Eastern Cape Parks and Tourism Agency's (ECPTA) conservation efforts. On the 8th of June 2023, the reserve hosted a World Ocean Day event aimed at educating local communities about the significance of our oceans and the unique ecosystems within the reserve, while also emphasizing the importance of conservation and sustainable practices.

The event featured engaging workshops, informative talks, and interactive activities designed to encourage participants to adopt eco-friendly lifestyles and take responsibility for their environmental footprint. By promoting actions such as waste reduction, energy conservation, and responsible tourism, the campaign sought to empower individuals to become stewards of the natural environment.

“RAISING AWARENESS & PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES.”

Lwazi Khuzwayo, the Manager of Mkhambathi Nature Reserve, highlighted the importance of engaging younger participants in the campaign. Interactive sessions were specifically designed to instill a love for nature from an early age, emphasizing the significance of protecting endangered species and conserving fragile habitats. By nurturing the next generation of environmental advocates, the reserve aims to create a lasting impact.

“ENGAGING WORKSHOPS, INFORMATIVE TALKS, AND INTERACTIVE ACTIVITIES.”

“When we engage with the youth, the information can be easily passed on to parents, fostering more community involvement,” explained Khuzwayo. “We also encouraged residents to actively participate in the planning and execution of the campaign, ensuring that their voices are heard, and their concerns addressed.”

To maximize the reach and impact of the campaign, the ECPTA partnered with Nyavini village, one of the communities adjacent to the ECPTA reserves. This collaboration enabled a wider audience to benefit from the educational initiatives and allowed for a more inclusive approach to environmental awareness and conservation.

Beyond the World Ocean Day event, Mkhambathi Nature Reserve continues to be a sanctuary for biodiversity, offering visitors the opportunity to witness the wonders of nature and gain a deeper understanding of the delicate balance between humans and the environment. The reserve serves as a living laboratory for research and education, contributing to ongoing efforts to protect and preserve our natural heritage.

Through initiatives like the environmental awareness campaign, the ECPTA and Mkhambathi Nature Reserve are striving to create a more sustainable future. By empowering individuals and communities to embrace responsible practices and protect our precious ecosystems, we can collectively work towards a healthier planet for generations to come.



ECPTA staff and community members ensuring the cleanliness of Mkhambathi Nature Reserve.

05 ECPTA EMPOWERS COMMUNITIES THROUGH ANTI-POACHING SOCCER AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

In a bold effort to raise awareness about wildlife conservation and combat poaching, the Eastern Cape Parks and Tourism Agency (ECPTA) has taken an innovative approach that harnesses the power of sports and community engagement. The Thomas Baines Nature Reserve, located in the Eastern Cape, recently hosted a thrilling soccer tournament in early June. The tournament aimed to educate young people from communities adjacent to ECPTA-managed reserves about the critical issue of poaching and its detrimental impact on society.



Winners of the anti-poaching soccer tournament flanked by ECPTA staff and SAPS members.

The Eastern Cape is renowned for its diverse ecosystems and abundant wildlife, including the majestic Big Five. However, the region faces a severe threat from rampant poaching. Poachers target animals for their tusks, horns, skins, and other body parts, which fetch high prices on the illegal wildlife trade market. The loss of wildlife not only disrupts the delicate balance of ecosystems but also hampers the region's potential for sustainable tourism.

Siphelele Hlazo, the Manager of Thomas Baines Nature Reserve, emphasized the power of sports, particularly soccer, in uniting people and driving change. "The campaign aims to educate local communities, especially the youth, about the importance of wildlife conservation and the devastating consequences of poaching," Hlazo explained. By leveraging the widespread popularity of soccer in South Africa, the initiative seeks to engage and empower individuals to actively participate in protecting their natural heritage.

Hlazo further highlighted the role of soccer tournaments in reaching a large audience and fostering relationships with surrounding communities. Recognizing the passion for soccer among the region's youth, the tournament served as an effective platform to convey the campaign's message. It also acted as a means of building relationships and demonstrating that the provincial protected areas welcome community involvement in the fight against poaching, not only for rhinos but for all wildlife.

The ECPTA's Public Outreach programs play a vital role in spreading awareness and knowledge. Through educational workshops and awareness sessions conducted in schools, community centers, and public spaces, the agency provides valuable information about the Eastern Cape's diverse wildlife and the threats it faces. Moreover, these sessions empower local communities to actively contribute to the protection of their natural heritage.

The anti-poaching soccer awareness campaign spearheaded by the ECPTA and Thomas Baines Nature Reserve represents a significant stride in the ongoing battle against poaching. By uniting communities, empowering individuals, and fostering a sense of ownership over wildlife conservation, the initiative holds the potential to make a lasting impact on preserving the region's precious ecosystems and safeguarding its iconic wildlife.

As the campaign gains momentum, the ECPTA and its partners remain dedicated to promoting a harmonious coexistence between humans and nature. Through the convergence of sports, education, and community involvement, the Eastern Cape is forging a path towards a more sustainable and wildlife-rich future.

**“THE POWER
OF SPORTS,
PARTICULARLY
SOCCER, IN
UNITING PEOPLE
AND DRIVING
CHANGE”**



Yours to Explore



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“ADVENTURE IN
THE EASTERN
CAPE’S CAPTIVATING
WILDERNESS.”

re

Eastern Cape
PARKS & TOURISM AGENCY

06

THE EASTERN CAPE'S MOST THRILLING NATURAL SPECTACLE: THE SARDINE RUN SEASON

Every year, nature puts on a mesmerizing show along the coast of the Eastern Cape in South Africa. Known as the Sardine Run, this incredible phenomenon attracts both marine enthusiasts and curious locals who flock to the shores to witness the spectacle. Currently happening, the Sardine Run is an event that shouldn't be missed, offering a unique experience that showcases the diverse marine life of the region and brings economic benefits to coastal communities like Port St Johns.



Join the adventure and witness the incredible abundance of ocean life that is the Sardine Run.

The Sardine Run occurs between May and July when vast shoals of sardines migrate along the coastline, creating a frenzy of activity in the ocean. This natural event is considered one of the largest marine migrations on the planet and draws the attention of marine predators, seabirds, and even humans who eagerly anticipate the arrival of this awe-inspiring phenomenon.

The Eastern Cape's rugged and unspoiled coastline provides the perfect backdrop for this natural spectacle. As the sardines travel in massive shoals, they create a feeding frenzy along their path. Dolphins, sharks, whales, and countless other marine species join the feast, creating a breathtaking display of predator-prey interactions. The sight of dolphins herding the sardines into tight balls, birds diving from the sky, and sharks cruising through the waters is a sight to behold.

The Sardine Run holds immense importance for the province of Eastern Cape. Not only does it attract tourists from far and wide, boosting the local economy and supporting the tourism industry, but it also showcases the region's rich biodiversity. The Eastern Cape is home to an abundance of marine life, and the Sardine Run serves as a reminder of the ecological treasures that lie just off its shores. It offers a unique opportunity for locals and visitors alike to witness the wonders of nature and develop a deeper appreciation for the marine environment.

Port St Johns, nestled along the Eastern Cape's Wild Coast, is one of the prime locations to witness the Sardine Run. This coastal town becomes a hub of excitement as locals and visitors gather to catch a glimpse of the incredible spectacle. The town's fishing community comes alive during this time, with fishermen heading out to sea in pursuit of the sardines, while others line the shores, casting their nets to take part in the bounty. The Sardine Run injects vitality into the local economy, providing opportunities for small businesses, accommodation providers, and tour operators.

For locals residing in the Eastern Cape, now is the perfect time to experience the Sardine Run firsthand. Take a break from the daily routine and venture to the coastline, where nature's drama unfolds. Whether you choose to watch from the shore, take a boat trip, or even don a snorkel or scuba gear to immerse yourself in the underwater world, the Sardine Run promises to be a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

It's essential to remember that the Sardine Run is a natural phenomenon that occurs on its own schedule, influenced by various factors such as water temperatures and ocean currents. Therefore, it is important to stay updated on the latest reports and consult with local experts or tour operators who can guide you to the best viewing locations.

Don't miss out on this extraordinary event happening right now along the Eastern Cape's coastline. Embrace the beauty of the Sardine Run, marvel at the wonders of the ocean, and support the local communities that benefit from this annual spectacle. Venture out and be captivated by nature's grand performance.

**“PERFECT
BACKDROP FOR
THIS NATURAL
SPECTACLE”**



07

VIRTUAL TOURS OF EASTERN CAPE ACCESSIBLE ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD

The Eastern Cape Parks and Tourism Agency (ECPTA) has unveiled 28 virtual tours that will enable people to view tourism attractions such as the famous Hole in the wall from the comfort of their phones wherever they are.

The virtual tours were unveiled at the Inkosi Albert Luthuli International Convention Centre at the opening of the bustling Africa's Travel Indaba, where businesses from across Africa exhibited their work.

ECPTA Chief Executive Officer Vuyani Dayimani said the virtual tours were the culmination of exploring different strategies of smart marketing the province. The tours are accessible at <http://visiteasterncape.co.za/virtualltours/> at no cost.

“The concept was aggressively developed during the Covid-19 period. We had to remain top of the mind destination so that when people were able to travel they had us in mind,” said Dayimani.

Dayimani continued that the agency started pumping the travel story on social media, but the pictures were not doing justice in terms of capturing processes. ECPTA adopted the approach of virtual tours, and these are supposed to be appetisers but viewed from the comfort of a person's home.

“They can see what an attraction looks like so that they can choose us, we have always had 100 cities to visit in the Eastern Cape and we started with the top 30. The intention is to say if you want to go to the Eastern Cape this is what you can do and the description in words does not do justice to what our place looks like,” said Dayimani.

The tours include a myriad of iconic and lesser-known attractions and locations and span various tourism offerings and categories including adventure, wildlife, scenic beauty, culture and heritage assets.

Eastern Cape
PARKS & TOURISM AGENCY



Yours to Explore

The virtual tours were strategically selected and curated to be representative of all nine tourism regions in the province.

Highlights include virtual tours of Hole in the Wall, Addo Elephant Park, The Valley of Desolation, the Nelson Mandela and Steve Biko Museum as well as the Baviaanskloof World Heritage Site, among others.

The tours also dubbed as educations, allow people with physical barriers to travel and experience the best the province has to offer.

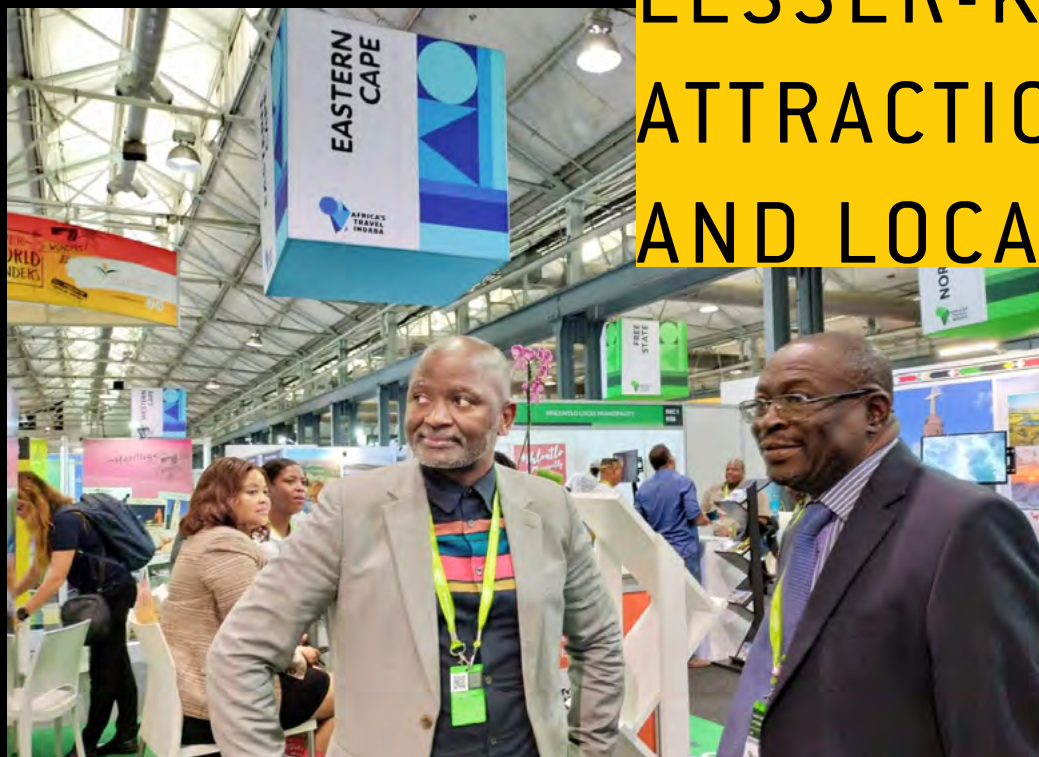
Dayimani said these tours are meant to entice visitors to want to experience that province first hand and the agency is working with other stakeholders such as police to ensure visitors feel safe while travelling.

“We want to make the case that the story of how beautiful the continent is, is not complete if the Eastern Cape is not part of it,” said Dayimani.

Michelle Mahlangu from Pretoria, who took a virtual tour said the experience was thrilling. Seeing people skydiving, the sea and plants was such a nice experience.

“I have never been to the Eastern Cape before and now this has piqued my interest to visit the province. It is next on my bucket list after my trip to Cape Town later in the year,” said Mahlangu.

“THE TOURS
INCLUDE A
MYRIAD OF
ICONIC AND
LESSER-KNOWN
ATTRACTIONS
AND LOCATIONS ”



ECPTA Chief Executive Officer, Vuyani Dayimani together the Deputy Minister of Tourism, Fish Mahlalela during his visit to the Eastern Cape stand at Indaba recently held in Durban



explo

“ADVENTURE, WILDLIFE,
SCENIC BEAUTY, CULTURE
AND HERITAGE.”

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ECPTA AGAINST CRIME TARGETED AT TOURISTS IN THE EASTERN CAPE

In an effort to tackle crime against tourists in Eastern Cape, The Eastern Cape Parks and Tourism Agency (ECPTA) held an engagement session in April 2023, between representatives from various government departments such as Dept of Community Safety, SAPS, Dept of Transport, DEDEAT and private business owners and tourism associations of the Gqeberha and Wild Coast regions.

The tourism sector in the Eastern Cape is disheartened by the recent spate of crimes committed against tourists that include acts robbery, hijackings, ATM scams and abductions. ECPTA strongly condemns these criminal acts and extends its deepest sympathies to the victims and their families. The agency stands in solidarity with the Eastern Cape tourism industry as they work to combat these incidents.

During the meeting, participants discussed various incidents that had occurred in the province, highlighting the negative impact they had on the tourism industry. The meeting was a call to action to address these issues collectively as a sector, to protect the industry and ensure it remains a preferred destination for tourists.

Ideas were presented on how the tourism sector and the public can work together to help combat crime against tourists. This includes lobbying for more visible policing at tourists' hotspots, lobbying for more infrastructure and access upgrades as they hinder turnaround times for assistance, lobbying for more technologically advanced mechanisms for surveillance and monitoring, effective victim support mechanisms, provincial coordinated communication around the incidents and a more open communication system of collaboration between all stakeholders to help each other fight crime.

**“THE MEETING
WAS A CALL TO
ACTION.”**

It was also acknowledged that all stakeholders, the public, government departments, private business owners and tourism associations all have a significant role to play in the fight against criminal elements directed at tourists. It was emphasised that proactive measures, such as improving security at tourist destinations and educating visitors on how to stay safe during their travels are also critical.



Meeting participants strongly condemned the crimes committed against tourists in the Eastern Cape, highlighting the negative impact it had on the province's economy and reputation.

Wild Coast Association member William Ross said "tourism is our bread and butter, some of the businesses you see here are the only employer for large communities in our areas hence we cannot afford to close shop, we have to work together to protect our tourists."

The participants vowed to work together to protect the province's tourism industry and ensure that visitors can enjoy their stay without fear of crime. OR Tambo Deputy District Commissioner, Brigadier Vukile Ntandane and Nelson Mandela Bay's Metro Police chief, Brigadier Trevor Smith, committed to proactively strengthen cooperation between SAPS and the EC tourism sector to prevent reoccurrence of such incidences. A committee including all stakeholders is to be set up to form part of the long-term strategy of tourist's safety for EC.

ECPTA CEO, Vuyani Dayimani concluded the meeting by urging all stakeholders to work together to create a safer environment for tourists in the Eastern Cape.

"We call on all stakeholders in the Eastern Cape tourism industry, including hotel owners, tour operators, and local authorities, to work together to ensure that our province is a safe destination for all," said Dayimani.

He continued to encourage everyone to report criminal activities they witness or experience and to work with law enforcement to bring perpetrators to justice.

"We also recognize that the impact of these crimes goes beyond the immediate harm caused to tourists. They have a detrimental effect on the growth of the tourism industry, which is a critical driver of economic development in the Eastern Cape. By working together to address these issues, we can help ensure that the Eastern Cape remains a preferred destination of choice for tourists from around the world," said Dayimani.

ECPTA also committed to supporting stakeholders in the tourism industry by providing resources, training, and support where applicable to help and keep tourists safe in partnership with relevant stakeholders such as SAPS.

09 EASTERN CAPE TOURISM PRODUCTS GRADUATE FROM AN EXTENSIVE TOURISM INCUBATOR PROGRAMME

A group of Eastern Cape Small, Medium and Micro enterprises (SMME's) graduated from an extensive tourism incubator programme which was held at the Durban International Convention Centre in May 2023. The programme was spearheaded by the National Department of Tourism and supported by Eastern Cape Parks and Tourism Agency (ECPTA).

**“KNOWLEDGE,
TRAINING AND
SKILLS.”**

This initiative aims to equip and develop up and coming local tourism talent, to provide tour operators with the necessary knowledge, training and skills that will enable them to develop and attract both the domestic and international markets by offering packages or products in the most sustainable and competitive way. The National Department of Tourism is offering Tour Operator businesses the opportunity to join their three-year Tour Operator Incubation Programme.

ECPTA Regional Tourism Development Manager, Duma Maqhubela said an incubator program is designed to provide aspiring entrepreneurs and businesses in the tourism sector with the necessary support, mentorship, and resources to establish and expand their ventures.

“By graduating from such a program, these tourism products have likely gained valuable insights into market trends, customer preferences and business management strategies. They may have received guidance on developing unique and authentic experiences, improving their marketing and promotional efforts, and enhancing their overall service quality,” said Maqubela

Maqubela added that this graduation is indicative of the potential these tourism products have to contribute to the Eastern Cape's tourism sector. It highlights their readiness to offer innovative and high-quality experiences to visitors, thereby attracting more tourists and stimulating economic growth in the region. Additionally, the program's successful outcomes demonstrate the effectiveness of investing in tourism incubation initiatives to foster entrepreneurship and drive sustainable tourism development.

"The Eastern Cape can now showcase these graduated tourism products as success stories, potentially attracting more attention from tourists and investors alike. This positive development bodes well for the overall tourism industry in the region, as it diversifies and expands its offerings, creating new opportunities for local communities and stimulating job creation," said Maqubela.

Eastern Cape graduates that were honoured at a graduation ceremony include: Luvo Ndima from Jama Tours, Nana Skhenjana from Globetrotters Travel Agency SA and Zanemvula Tyokwana from Vakasha Tours.



**“SUPPORT,
MENTORSHIP,
AND
RESOURCES.”**

Luvo Ndima from Jama Tours, Nana Skhenjana from Globetrotters Travel Agency SA and Zanemvula Tyokwana from Vakasha Tours honoured at a graduation ceremony recently held at Africa's Travel Indaba.

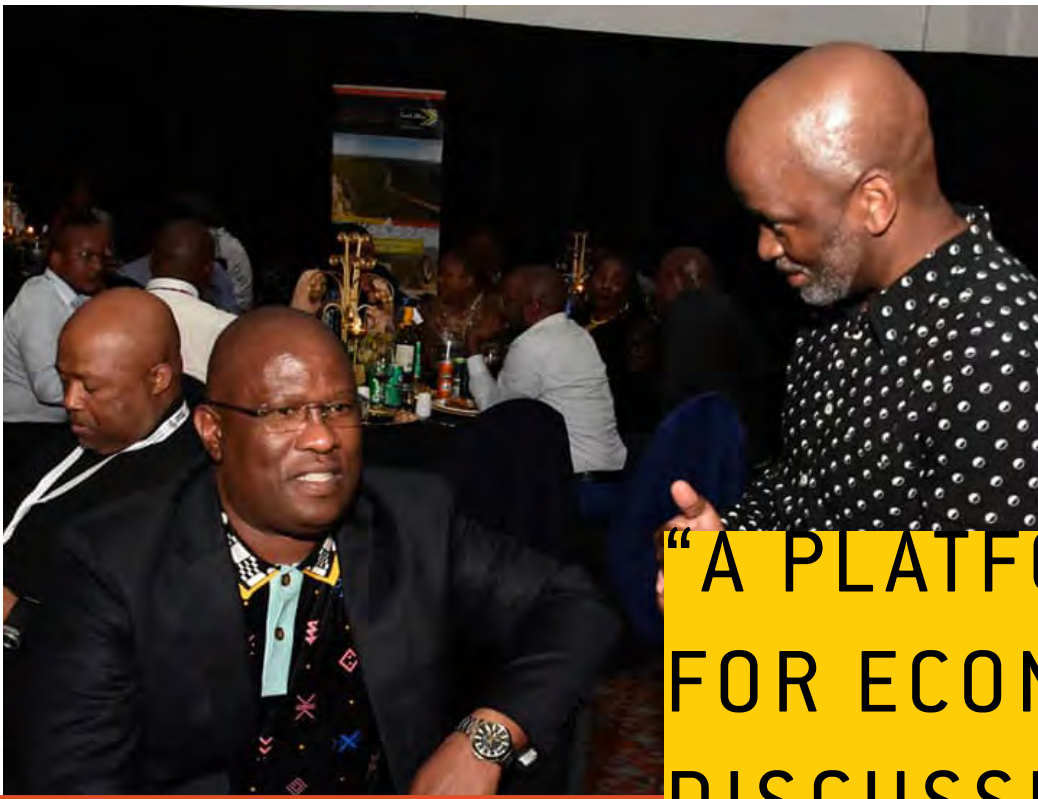
EASTERN CAPE SHINES AS HOST OF BRICS SUMMIT, FOSTERING ECONOMIC COOPERATION AND CULTURAL EXCHANGE

During the month of May 2023, the Eastern Cape played host to the prestigious BRICS Summit, a gathering of the world's emerging economies including Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa. Under the theme of "Ensuring decent work, dignity, and respect for all," the event, supported by the Department of Employment and Labour, The Royal St Andrews Hotel, and other key stakeholders, aimed to promote bilateral trade and investment among member countries while emphasizing the importance of cultural exchange and sustainable economic growth.

During the summit, leaders from the BRICS nations engaged in productive discussions and signed several agreements geared towards facilitating greater economic cooperation. These agreements focused on crucial areas such as technology transfer, infrastructure development, renewable energy, agriculture, and finance. The primary objective was to strengthen ties and foster mutual understanding among the member countries, creating a platform for fruitful collaboration and shared prosperity.

The Eastern Cape Parks and Tourism Agency (ECPTA) supported the summit, seizing the opportunity to showcase the tourism offerings and potential of the Eastern Cape Province to the delegates from various nations. The agency collaborated with local municipalities, district authorities, and tourism stakeholders to ensure an immersive experience for the delegates, leaving a lasting impression.

Zukiswa Ntwasa, the Business Events and Partnerships Manager of the ECPTA, expressed satisfaction with the outcome of the agency's participation in the summit. The agency's main goal was to raise awareness and generate interest among the delegates, ultimately enticing them to visit the Eastern Cape for leisure travel with their families.



Eastern Cape Premier, Oscar Mabuyane with the Eastern Cape Parks and Tourism Agency Chief Executive Officer, Vuyani Dayimani during the BRICS gala dinner recently took place in Port Alfred.

“A PLATFORM FOR ECONOMIC DISCUSSIONS.”

We aimed to create a memorable experience for the delegates, and the positive response was evident in their closing remarks. Many expressed their intention to return to the province with their families for leisure,” said Ntwasa.

The BRICS Summit not only provided a platform for economic discussions but also emphasized the importance of cultural cooperation and people-to-people exchanges. Delegates from the BRICS countries and five African guest countries, namely Botswana, Malawi, eSwatini, Namibia, and Zimbabwe, had the opportunity to engage in various cultural events, academic exchanges, and youth forums.

“The summit facilitated a comprehensive understanding of the tourism potential and offerings in the Eastern Cape Province. Through collaborations with local and district municipalities, we showcased the rich culture, safari experiences, and vibrant township tourism,” added Ntwasa.

The summit highlighted the significance of striking a balance between economic growth and environmental preservation. The member countries recognized the need to protect the environment while ensuring sustainable development. Moreover, the event promoted cultural diversity and strengthened ties among citizens of the BRICS nations.

As the Eastern Cape basks in the success of hosting the BRICS Summit, the province reaffirms its position as a destination of choice for both business and leisure travelers. The summit not only stimulated economic growth but also placed a spotlight on the region’s cultural heritage and natural beauty. The Eastern Cape invites visitors from around the world to explore its diverse offerings and experience firsthand the warmth and hospitality that await them.

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