

FISH HOEK VALLEY RATEPAYERS & RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

(Incorporating Fish Hoek, Clovelly and Sun Valley)

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**SUBJECT: STOP POLLUTION OF TABLE MOUNTAIN NATIONAL PARK
MARINE PROTECTED AREA (MPA)**

1. DISCUSSION

We who live in the Fish Hoek Valley feel blessed to live surrounded by the Table Mountain National Park Marine Protected Area (MPA). However, it is our concern that this once pristine environment will no longer be sustainable due to active pollution. The City of Cape Town has been pumping raw sewage out to sea sometimes at a distance of 1.7km to 2.1kms, but even this distance is insufficient under certain wave conditions. Our main concern now is the ever increasing breakdowns in sewage pumps and pipes in the City limits. Sewage often contains mammalian bacteria, such as E. coli, which can negatively affect other mammals. E.coli is a bacterium that can cause gastrointestinal problems. It can also lead to irritation of the skin, eyes and ears, and in some cases respiratory problems. In extreme cases in children and the elderly it can also lead to kidney failure.



“Trek fishermen haul out a catch of Harders (mullet) on Strandfontein beach” Pic: Jason Boud

Due to a poor design of our storm-water reticulation system and lack enforcement of proper connections, our storm-water culverts often contain high counts ($>10^5$) of E. coli and Enterococcus (mammalian bacteria), according to the City's own laboratory testing (Scientific Services 2018), which usually indicates sewage is getting into the run-off system. [Note: the City does not publish these results.^{1 2}] Our culverts dump directly into our bay or indirectly via a small estuary / river mouth. The marine fish in our bay are contaminated with E. coli bacteria as reported earlier, which "poses a threat to the livelihood of thousands fishing in the bay, and to the health of those living off their catches. A fish exporter has revealed that the SA Bureau of Standards (SABS) made the disturbing discovery this year stating the Harders were 'unfit for human consumption'." ³ This was confirmed by a subsequent test by SABS days later.

Supporting Legislation

We posit that there is sufficient legislation to protect the Table Mountain National Park Marine Protected Area (MPA) from pollution. Although some of the following pertain to fishing, if the pollution is not stopped, the fish will either be killed, won't spawn or can't be eaten by humans.

National Environmental Management: Protected Areas Act 57 of 2003 ⁴

2. Purpose and application
 - (c) ...[to] conserve its biodiversity; and
 - (d) to promote sustainable utilisation...
3. Guiding principles
 - (a) to protect ecologically viable areas...
 - (b) to preserve the ecological integrity of those areas;

NOTICE DECLARING THE TABLE MOUNTAIN NATIONAL PARK MARINE PROTECTED AREA UNDER SECTION 43 OF THE MARINE LIVING RESOURCES ACT, 18 OF 1998 ON 4 June 2004 ⁵

The objectives of declaring the Marine Protected Area are to:

- (1) Protect and conserve marine ecosystems and populations of marine species;
- (2) Protect the reproductive capacity of commercially important species of fish, including abalone, rock lobster and traditional linefish and to allow their populations to recover;
- (3) Promote eco-tourism within the Marine Protected Area.

Marine Living Resources Act #18 of 1998 ⁶

3. Objectives and principles
 - (a) ...ecologically sustainable...
 - (b) the need to conserve marine living resources for both present and future generations;
 - (c) the need to apply precautionary approaches in respect of the management and development of marine living resources;
 - (d) ...
 - (e) the need to protect the ecosystem as a whole,...

¹ <https://www.news24.com/Green/News/city-of-cape-town-fails-to-publish-water-quality-tests-for-two-years-20190212>

² <https://www.GroundUp.org.za/article/city-fails-publish-water-quality-tests-two-years/>

³ <http://www.iol.co.za/news/south-africa/western-cape/false-bay-reels-from-ecoli-shock-1782681#.VGzWpWccToo>

⁴ <https://cer.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2010/05/National-Environmental-Management-Protected-Areas-Act-57-2003-Norms-and-standards-20140707-GGN-37802-00528.pdf>

⁵ <https://cer.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/MPA-Table-Mountain-National-Park-MPA.pdf>

⁶ https://cer.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2010/07/18-OF-1998-MARINE-LIVING-RESOURCES-ACT_8-Mar-2016-to-date.pdf

- (f) the need to preserve marine biodiversity;
- (g) the need to minimise marine pollution;

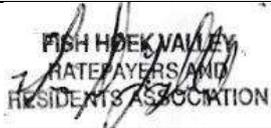
Conclusion

The City of Cape Town has a “Have your say” action, but they never listen to the majority of objections on nearly all issues.⁷ Thus, many Capetonians feel that the City’s interpretation of public participation is a sham.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended, for the reasons set out in this report, that:

- The City of Cape Town’s Coastal Waters Discharge Permit be rescinded;
- All City effluent is properly treated before “flushing” into the sea with water being reclaimed; and
- Regulations be promulgated that force the redesign of the City’s storm-water system so that all run-off is passed through a bio-filter before being discharged into the Marine Protected Area.

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DATE	16 February 2019

⁷ <https://www.bigissue.org.za/news/how-we-are-soiling-the-sea/>