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OILED PENGUINS RESCUED BY SANCCOB

The Southern African Foundation for the Conservation of Coastal Birds (SANCCOB) received 80 oiled African penguins during the last two weeks.

Every year SANCCOB responds to large numbers of African penguins that are affected by chronic oiling along the South African coastline. The penguins were rescued by CapeNature and Overstrand Municipality and transported in boxes to SANCCOB's facility in Table View.

The penguins become oiled when they are out at sea finding food for themselves and their chicks. The oil causes the feathers to clump together and expose the penguins' skin to the cold water. The penguins are then unable to swim and find food for themselves. The result is the penguins are found in a cold, emaciated and dehydrated condition on the beach. The oil also has toxic effects on the skin and internal organs of the bird.

The penguins are rescued by conservation authorities or the public. At SANCCOB they are immediately given hydrating fluids and fed to allow them to regain their strength. The penguins are washed once they are strong enough to endure the stressful washing process. Once the penguins have been washed, they are rehabilitated for a period of two to three weeks until they are waterproof, fattened up and ready to be released back into the ocean.

Because of the crash in the African penguin population, SANCCOB tries to save every single bird. Apart from the chronic oiling that affects unknown numbers of seabirds in our oceans, another major threat to African penguins is a scarcity of food.

SANCCOB is appealing to the community to help save the oiled penguins by supporting our Adopt A Penguin programme. Please visit our website www.sanccob.co.za or contact 021 – 557 6155.

For an interview about this story, please contact Venessa Strauss (Chief Executive Officer) (021 - 5576155 / 082 325 4638).

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