



**environment, forestry
& fisheries**

Department:
Environment, Forestry and Fisheries
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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NATIONAL COUNCIL OF PROVINCES

(For written reply)

QUESTION NO. 603 {CW668E}

INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 28 of 2020

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Ms C Labuschagne (Western Cape: DA) to ask the Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment:

- 1) What is the current status of the Swartkops Estuary; and
- 2) Whether any rehabilitation programmes have been implemented to drive the restoration of local fish species like cob; if not, why not; if so, (a) what programmes and (b) what are the further relevant details?

603. THE MINISTER OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT REPLIES:

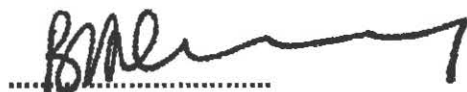
- (1) The National Biodiversity Assessment 2018, Estuaries Realm, found that the Swartkops Estuary was in a heavily modified state (Category D), whilst its fish were in a heavily to severely modified state (Category D/E). High to very high pressures on the system are from flow modification, pollution, land use, development, alien invasive species and overfishing.
- (2) (a)(b) A Water Research Commission funded project at the Nelson Mandela University, involving a number of post-graduate students, is investigating the implementation of a socio-ecological system for the restoration of the Swartkops Estuary. This includes an investigation of the use of

stormwater run-off to rewet abandoned salt-pans. The roles of saltmarsh and harmful algal blooms as nutrient and toxin filters are being quantified. These prevent pollutants from entering the nearby bay. Restoration of riparian vegetation is needed, as well as rehabilitation of large degraded salt marsh areas.

Related projects include a multi-stakeholder collaborative experimental fishery proposal to Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries (DEFF) to harvest invasive Pacific oyster from the Swartkops Estuary as a form of alien control. The oysters would be collected by small-scale fishers, transferred live to an offshore aquaculture facility in Algoa Bay where they would hopefully be purged of pollutants and sold on the fresh seafood market.

A suite of new regulations to mitigate overfishing and facilitate the rebuilding of a number of linefish stocks have been approved. Examples of these approved regulations are slot limits for line-caught sharks and dusky kob. Slot limits represent minimum and maximum sizes designed to protect small juveniles as well as large fecund adult fish. Further protection for dusky kob and all other exploited estuarine-associated fish and invertebrates in estuarine-nurseries is a prohibition on fishing at night in all estuaries countrywide.

Regards



MS BD CREECY, MP

MINISTER OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT

DATE: 23/09/2020