

Penguins – 5 June 2021 – Cape Nature, South Africa

Our next stop was Stoney Point Reserve home of African Penguins.

I am going to catch everyone up as to how we got to Cape Nature after last writing about De Hoop Nature Reserve.

While we were having a great time at the De Hoop Nature Reserve my phone rang. The call we had been waiting for since leaving Morocco. “Your car will be ready to pick-up on 3 June.” Yes!!! Yes!!! Yes!!!

We left De Hoop and drove back to Cape Town. I had made a hotel reservation in the Gardens area based on a recommendation from Hilleary. We arrived, checked-in, I walked to a nearby bank and picked up the necessary cash, and let our shipping agent know we would pick up the 4Runner the next morning. We picked up the 4Runner and immediately found a gas station – 4Runner’s gas tank was on empty and spare gas containers were empty because of international shipping regulations. That afternoon Nancy and I went to the mall. Nancy got her nails done while I bought an extra cell phone with a local sim card – we needed better Google Map service on a cell phone than what we were getting with our U.S. international service.

Next morning, we loaded up and hit the road. So great to be back in the 4Runner – our home away from home – *and on the road again*.

The plan was to leave Cape Town, drive east toward the town of Hermanus and up the coast along the Garden Route.

Our first stop was to be Hermanus with stops at Stony Point Reserve and Harold Porter National Botanical Gardens. This day went as planned – I love it when a plan comes together. OK, I stole that last phrase from Colonel John “Hannibal” Smith of the A-Team.



The boardwalk at Stony Point Nature Reserve, South Africa.



An African Penguin.

The African Penguin was formally called the Jackass Penguin because of its donkey like braying sound. The first breeding nest was found at Stony Point in 1982.

During the 20th century the global population of African Penguins has decreased by almost 90% and is now considered an endangered species. Stony Point has a breeding colony of about 2,000 pairs of penguins and is one of the largest breeding sites in the world. Yet, in 1900 more than a million African Penguins breed on Dassen Island.



This penguin is sitting on a nest of eggs.



In to or out of the ocean, depends on how hungry the penguin is now.

The African Penguin is roughly two feet tall and six to six and half pounds. Typical lifespan is 10 to 11 years but it is not unusual for an African Penguin to live to 20 years.

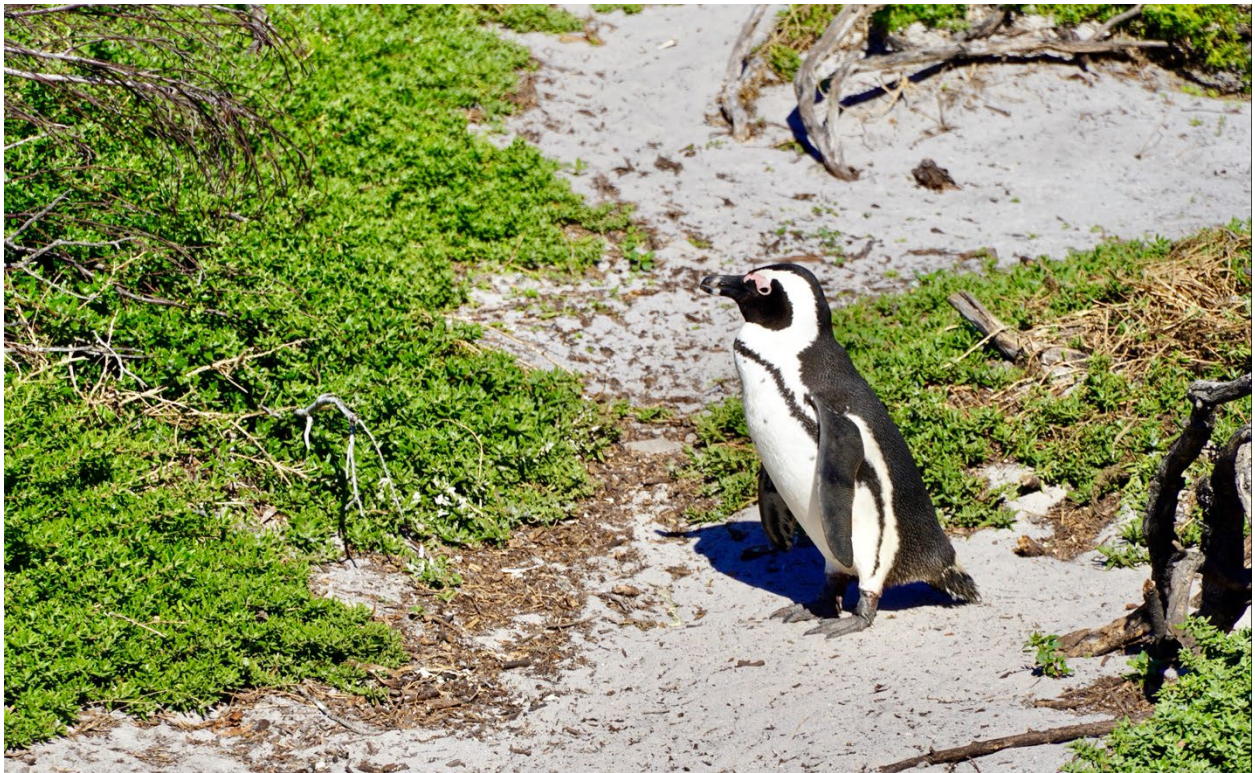


A youngster with down feathers on the left and a parent on the right.

The African Penguin typically swims at 3 km/hr-1.8 mph. But when in danger can swim at 10 km/hr – 6 mph and have been clocked at 19 km/hr – 11.4 mph.



Based on size, a female laying on the next and her mate standing next to her.





There were more than just penguins at Stony Point. Four species of Cormorants are here. And yes, we identified all four: Cape, Crowned, Bank and White-breasted.





It is so much fun to watch penguins walk.



The informational signage was very good along the boardwalk.



One of at least a half dozen Dassie or Rock Hyrax we saw as we left the boardwalk and walked toward our 4Runner.

Stony Point Nature Reserve is one of 31 reserves that make up CapeNature. Before we left the West Coast, we visited three other CapeNature reserves including De Hoop which we visited before Stony Point.

Stony Point is a two- and half-hour drive from Cape Town. As birders of course we enjoyed our time here but then who doesn't enjoy watching penguins.