



WESTERN CAPE NATURE CONSERVATION BOARD

POLICY DOCUMENT CONTROL


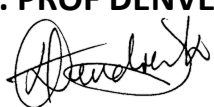
SECTION:	BIODIVERSITY CAPABILITIES
SUBJECT:	HONEYBEE COLONIES IN CAPENATURE PROTECTED AREAS POLICY
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DATE:	23 NOVEMBER 2020
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DEFINITIONS/ABBREVIATIONS

Term	Definition
Apiculture	The breeding, raising and care of bees; technical term for beekeeping
CapeNature Protected Areas	All Protected Areas formally under the management of the Western Cape Nature Conservation Board.
Honey bee	A bee of the species <i>Apis mellifera</i> with two southern African subspecies, <i>Apis mellifera scutellata</i> (African honey bee) and <i>Apis mellifera capensis</i> (Cape honey bee). The latter subspecies is mostly confined to the Fynbos region of the southern and western Cape
Managed honey bee colonies	Honey bee colonies that are kept in commercial hives, either for honey production, harvesting of other bee products (beeswax, propolis, pollen, royal jelly) or for the commercial pollination of crops. This includes subsistence bee hives.
Refugia	An area in which a population of organisms can survive through a period of unfavourable conditions

1. INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE

Honeybees are part of wild genetic stock safeguarded by protected areas and are an important part of a variety of wild pollinators resident in natural areas and more specifically, protected areas. These pollinators are mostly insect pollinators such as bees, (honey bees, solitary bees and carpenter bees), pollen wasps, ants, flies (including bee-flies, hoverflies and mosquitoes), butterflies, moths and flower beetles.

Apiculture, or the keeping of managed honey bees (beekeeping), in areas outside of protected areas is a relatively large economic activity performed by both small and large scale farmers in South Africa and is supported as long as it is conducted according to standards that promote the long-term sustainability of apiculture as well as honey bee populations.

In some parts of the world there have been marked declines in honey bee populations which has significantly affected insect pollination dependent agriculture. This strategy has been developed to proactively avoid a similar situation developing in the Western Cape Province.

Beekeeping of the honey bee (*Apis mellifera*) colonies in protected areas not only creates managerial problems (such as an added fire risk due to beekeeping practices), but can also have a negative impact on biodiversity. Firstly, commercial pollination services move honey bees between localities to pollinate crops that flower at different times of the year. This can result in a decrease in regional genetic diversity as the genetic stock of local bee populations is homogenised as they interbreed with honeybees from other areas. Formal protected areas conserve honey bee populations with many attendant local adaptations and behaviours. Wild honey bee populations in protected areas are therefore valuable repositories for biodiversity and functioning ecosystems

Secondly, the introduction of managed honey bee colonies into protected areas can lead to the transmission of diseases and parasites from managed colonies to wild

colonies within protected areas. Commercial pollination has spread honey bee diseases around the country and several of these are diseases of international importance, such as American Foul Brood Disease. Introducing infected honey bee hives into Protected Areas is likely to lead to increased mortality in wild honey bee populations and serve as an infection source for commercial honey bees.

Furthermore, ecosystems and/or ecological processes necessary to sustain and support biodiversity in protected areas can be disrupted by bee keeping practises. Large numbers of honey bees exclude other bee species and avian pollinators from floral resources, which may result in the demise of these species if the number of honey bee individuals is artificially increased. Honey bees are not necessarily good pollinators of all plants and sometimes take nectar from flowers without pollinating them. This can result in some bee species and some monolectic (plants with one or a few closely related pollinator species) plant species being threatened by high honey bee densities.

CapeNature hereby establishes this policy for the regulation and management of honey bee colonies in CapeNature protected areas.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to regulate the placement of honey bee colonies on CapeNature Protected Areas.

The policy is issued in terms of Section 16(1)(e) of the Nature Conservation Ordinance No. 19 of 1974 and seeks to achieve the objectives and purposes of the Ordinance.

This policy replaces the previous CapeNature policy regarding placement of commercial beehives on Western Cape Provincial Nature Reserves, dated 19 July 2000.

3. OBJECTIVES

The primary objective of this policy is to safeguard healthy, natural and genetically diverse honey bee populations in CapeNature protected areas, which will allow these

protected areas to operate as refugia for locally adapted bee populations and to build a network of healthy source honey bee populations that can disperse naturally into and throughout the rest of the province. This will provide support to the diverse and hopefully expanding use of apiculture in the Province.

The objectives of this policy are:

- 3.1 To protect wild honey bee (*Apis mellifera*) colonies occurring in CapeNature protected areas from any potential genetic, ecological, pathogenic and parasitic threats. This will allow them to form a naturally dispersing source of healthy bees to support ecosystem functioning and apiculture in the Western Cape Province.
- 3.2 To prevent the removal of honey bee (*Apis mellifera*) colonies from CapeNature protected areas.

4. POLICY STATEMENT

The following policy is hereby established in terms of the placement of honey bee colonies in any of its protected areas.

- 4.1 CapeNature does not allow the introduction of honey bee colonies into their protected areas in order to prevent the effects of any potential pathogenic, parasitic, ecological or genetic threats.
- 4.2 CapeNature does not allow the removal of wild honey bee colonies from protected areas, thereby maintaining its responsibility towards the conservation of biodiversity.
- 4.3 CapeNature will relocate swarms of honey bees that may interfere with tourism activities and protected area management infrastructure to safe areas within the same protected area, minimising the transport distance as far as is practical.

5. RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER POLICIES

The following CapeNature policies are applicable to the placement of managed honey bee colonies on CapeNature Protected Areas:

- 5.1 Occupational Health and Safety policy.

- 5.2 Policy on the consumptive utilization of biological resources from protected areas and surrounds in the Western Cape Province

6. SCOPE AND INTENDED AUDIENCE

This policy is applicable to all CapeNature Protected Areas under the formal management of the Western Cape Nature Conservation Board, trading as CapeNature.

7. REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

The following acts, regulations and control measures are applicable to this policy.

- 7.1 National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act, 2004 (Act 10 of 2004).
- 7.2 National Environmental Management: Protected Areas Act, 2003 (Act 57 of 2003).
- 7.3 Regulations for the Proper Administration of Nature Reserves, 2012
- 7.4 Regulations for the Proper Administration of Special Nature Reserves, National Parks and World Heritage Sites, 2005
- 7.5 Western Cape Nature Conservation Board Act, 1998 (Act 15 of 1998).
- 7.6 Nature Conservation Ordinance, 1974 (19 of 1974) and Regulations.
- 7.7 Control Measures Relating to Honey bees. Agricultural Pests Act, 1983 (Act 36 of 1983).

The above is not an exhaustive list, and is subject to change with the promulgation of any future new and/or additional legislation passed subsequent to the approval of this policy.

8. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Conservation Managers (On and Off Reserve), in consultation with the Landscape Manager, Landscape Conservation Intelligence Team and Biodiversity Capabilities, must apply this policy from the effective date. Learning and Awareness are to communicate this strategy and why it is important for everyone to have safe honey bee populations in Protected Areas and the role of honey bees in apiculture and agriculture.

Apiculture is to be promoted as a viable and valuable activity across sectors of the Western Cape economy.

9. ENFORCEMENT OF POLICY

The CapeNature Directorate: Conservation Operations must ensure that this policy is implemented and take the necessary steps in the event of contravention of the policy. If the requirements under this policy are not met, it may result in non-compliance, and the exercising of activities contrary to these policy requirements could render that activity an offence, which could result in prosecution and/or a fine in terms of the Ordinance.

As such, non-compliance with these policy requirements will be dealt with by the full suite of legislative tools available, that is, the Ordinance and Regulations, as well as the list of offences and fines list.

10. INCEPTION DATE

The inception shall be the date upon which the policy is approved by the Board.

11. POLICY REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed at least every five years and amended as necessary, with amendments to be approved by the Board.

Several approaches to engaging internally and externally with stakeholders were applied during the drafting of this policy, including structured facilitated workshops, meetings and the provision and circulation of information for input. The draft policy was circulated for input to all Conservation Managers (On and Off Reserve), Ecologists, Ecological Coordinators and Landscape Managers and the Executive, and the policy was presented at Quarterly Ecological Meetings. External stakeholders and specialists were engaged during smaller workshops to provide opportunities for specific engagements.