

## CITY OF CAPE TOWN NATURE CONSERVATION



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### **LOWER TOKAI PLANTATION – PROPOSED PICNIC-BRAAI SITE UPGRADE, FAUNA REPORT**

This report comments on the projected effect of the restoration and relocation of picnic and braai sites in the Lower Tokai Plantation area of the Table Mountain National Park. Proposals are to remove planted pines and restore sections of the lower plantation to Cape Flats Sand Fynbos.

The vegetation type in question, Cape Flats Sand Fynbos, is a critically endangered vegetation type endemic to the City of Cape Town. The in area is question is unique for the following reasons:

- 1) It is the only remaining portion of Cape Flats Sand Fynbos that remains that can be connected to a larger area. All other fragments that remain of this vegetation type are reduced and disconnected from larger conservation area.
- 2) It is the only remaining portion of Cape Flats Sand Fynbos that remains that has a river system flowing through it.
- 3) It is the only remaining portion of Cape Flats Sand Fynbos that remains that can connect to Cape Peninsula Granite Fynbos on the lower slopes of mountains.

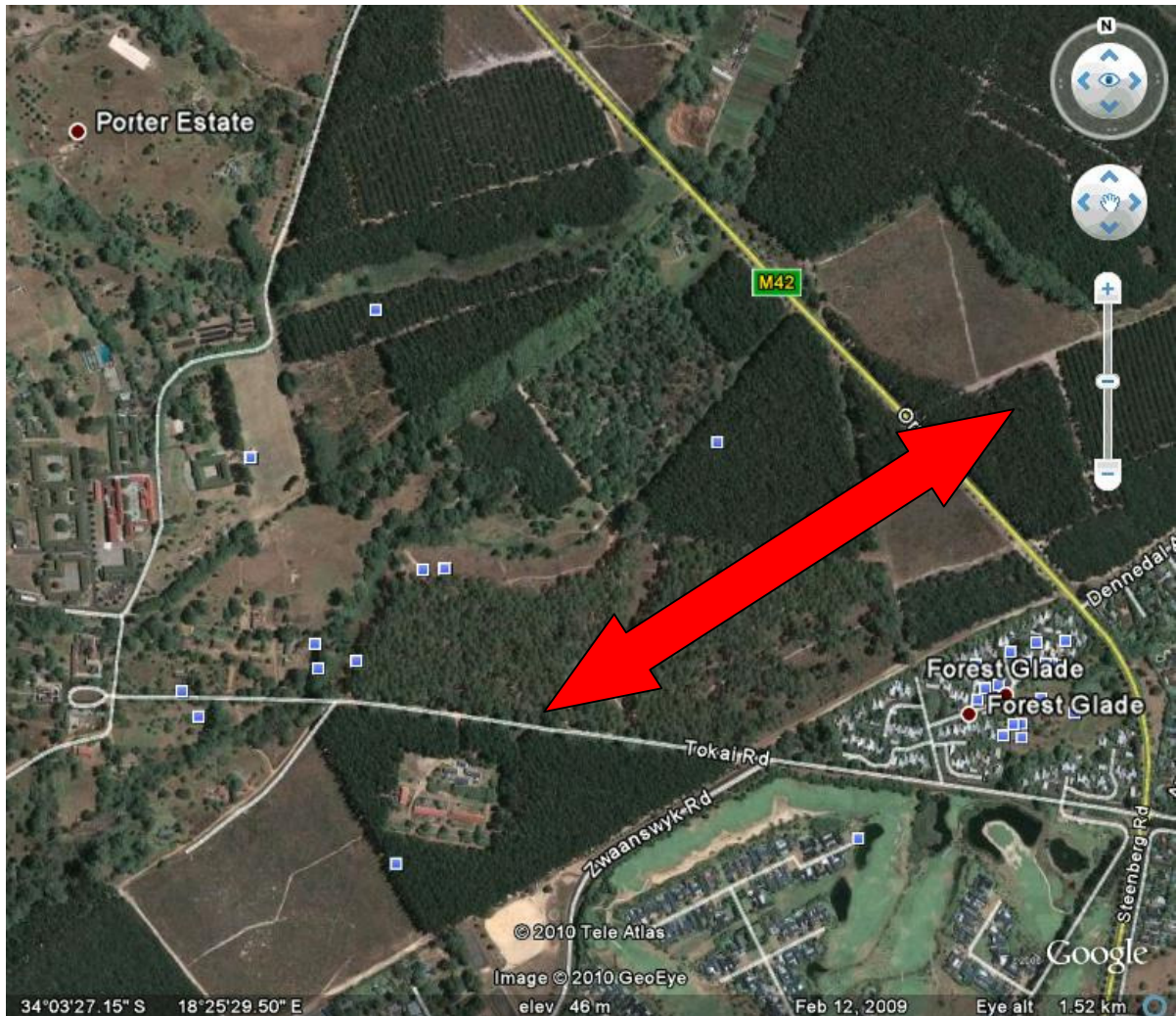
The lower and middle Tokai area is currently host to a number of small to medium size mammal species. These include, Chacma baboon (*Papio ursinus*), caracal (*Caracal caracal*), porcupine (*Hystrix cristata*), grysbok (*Raphicerus melanotis*), grey mongoose (*Galerella pulverulenta*), small-spotted genet (*Genetta genetta*), cape fox (*Vulpes chama*), cape mole rat (*Georychus capensis*) as well as the exotic grey squirrel (*Sciurus carolinensis*). Raptors are a prominent feature of the greater Tokai plantations. Some of these species, e.g. the black sparrowhawk (*Accipiter melanoleucus*), African Goshawk (*Accipiter tachiro*) and Rufous-breasted sparrowhawk (*Accipiter rufiventris*) have opportunistically extended their distribution range into the plantations due to the presence of tall canopy trees (exotic pine and gums). Less is known about the reptiles and amphibians in the area, but common snakes sited include the cape cobra (*Naja nivea*), puff adder (*Bitis arietans*) and mole snake (*Pseudaspis cana*).

The proposed upgrading and rehabilitation of the Lower Tokai Plantation picnic-braai area will result in two direct benefits to the naturally occurring fauna of the area. The first is that the rehabilitated area i.e. back to fynbos, will increase the overall available

habitat for fauna species to utilise. This will result in greater fauna population sizes in the area which is important to prevent local extinction of species. Also the rehabilitated lowlands will be an important habitat for migrating visitors such as the Black Saw-wing Swallow (*Psalidoprocne holomelaena*).

The second benefit is that the realigned braai site will create a terrestrial ecological corridor that allows for greater connectivity of the lower Cape Flats Sand Fynbos portion of Lower Tokai with the Table Mountain range. This will allow species to have seasonal movements between the lowlands (utilised in winter) and the uplands (utilised in summer). The corridor will also allow for the re-colonization of the lower Tokai area by species that have become locally extinct. For example the Orange-breasted Sunbird (*Anthobaphes violacea*) a fynbos endemic species, has not been recorded on the Cape Flats since the 1970's.

A key feature of the picnic area is the Prinskasteel River system. This riverine corridor is vital for the movement of fauna. Consideration in the rehabilitation of this system should allow both for the annual fluctuation regime of the river to take place, as well as slow pond seepage zones to allow for ground water recharge. The rehabilitation of the Prinskasteel River needs to specifically deal with the winter pools and seepage areas for amphibian species such as endangered Western Leopard Toad (*Amietophrynus pantherinus*) and Cape River Frog (*Amieta fuscigula*).



Fauna movement corridor for the Tokai Plantation area

### **Rehabilitation Recommendations**

The clear felling of the pines will have a short term, high impact on certain raptor species. Before felling takes place all trees should be inspected for nesting birds. If nests are found these should be marked and felling within a distance of 50 meters from the nest should not take place while there are chicks on the nest. As the upgraded picnic-braai site will be planted with shade giving trees in the future, consideration should be given to planting trees that can support raptor nests.

Baboons currently frequent the area. They are prone to rummaging and scavenging through litter and waste. As such, baboon proof dustbins as well as an regular removal of litter from the area is required. Currently baboons in the Tokai troop do not harass picnic goers, but if this does become a problem in the future, adequate fencing or other mitigation measures will be required.

The upper portion of Tokai Road abuts the rehabilitation area. Speed limits on this road should be kept to 40 km per hour to reduce the chances of road kills. Driving on the road after sunset should be kept to a minimum.

Fencing in the area should be mindful of animal movements. Boundary fences to the site should be permeable to small mammals and antelope especially through the proposed ecological corridors.

Consideration should be given to the provision of appropriate environmental interpretation e.g. through interpretative signage, of the fauna of the Tokai area.