

# iSimangaliso

## News Flash



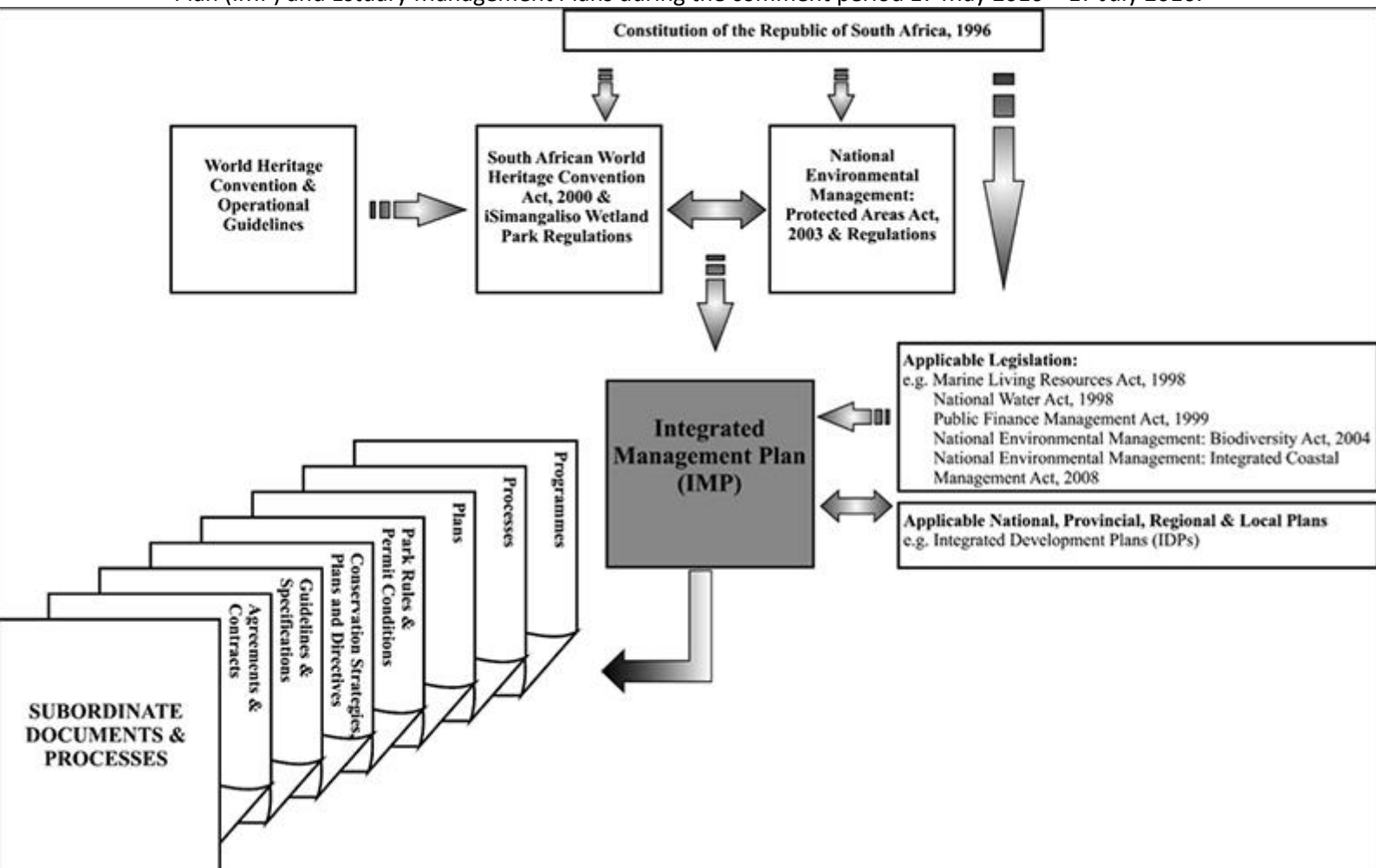
iSimangaliso  
Wetland Park



KOSI BAY COASTAL FOREST LAKE SIBAYA SODWANA BAY UMKHUZE FALSE BAY CHARTERS CREEK LAKE ST LUCIA CAPE VIDAL MAPHELANE

### iSimangaliso invites public to view draft Integrated Management Plan

The iSimangaliso Wetland Park World Heritage Site invites the public to review and comment on its Draft Integrated Management Plan (IMP) and Estuary Management Plans during the comment period 17 May 2016 – 17 July 2016.



The IMP is a high level plan in terms of the national World Heritage Convention Act (Act No. 49 of 1999) and National Environmental Management: Protected Areas Act, 2003 (Act 57 of 2003) that provides the framework for the management of South Africa's first World Heritage Site, identifies threats and challenges, and includes a five year plan and tools for environmental management and tourism, such as zonation. It includes three estuarine management plans with specific actions related to the management of the Kosi Bay, Lake St Lucia and Mgoobozeleni systems.



*iSimangaliso, the country's third largest park at approximately 358 534ha, extends from the Mozambican border, north of the Kosi Bay Estuary, to Maphelane, south of the St Lucia Estuary. Its eastern boundary is the Indian Ocean and its western boundary incorporates the entire Kosi, Sibaya and St Lucia lake systems, as well as uMkhuze. It contains four RAMSAR sites (wetlands of international importance) and comprises some 90% of South Africa's protected estuaries. Above: The Lake St Lucia Narrows open up into Makakatana Bay in the southern section.*

Three outstanding universal values were attributed to the Park by UNESCO – biodiversity, ecosystems and superlative natural beauty. Indigenous peoples have shaped the environment over generations and remain an integral part of its management and use.

The iSimangaliso Authority's mandate is to balance conservation and sustainable development – which is the new model for protected area management in Africa. In the words of both former SA President Nelson Mandela and current President Jacob Zuma, it is striving to end the paradox of “poverty amongst natural plenty” in the region.





*iSimangaliso's collective vision is to create Africa's greatest conservation-based tourism destination driven by community empowerment. In fulfillment of this goal, this IMP sets out the strategic direction and drivers for the next five years. Our conservation strategy continues to be one of the 'rewilding' of iSimangaliso, which powerfully links conservation to the development and empowerment of local communities. Highlights of the IMP to date included the creation of jobs in the fields of scientific research, entrepreneurship, cleaning and greening, construction of roads and new Park infrastructure, maintenance, alien plant clearing, fencing, security and black-owned tourism concessions among others.*



*The reintroduction of all historically occurring species, as well as increasing numbers within the carrying capacity, is one of the Park's conservation goals in rewilding iSimangaliso. Above: Rhino have been relocated to new sections of iSimangaliso, while lions were reintroduced to the uMkhuze section after a 44 year absence.*

The Authority's development and empowerment priority is to deliver tourism developments linked to land claimant co-management agreements that create jobs, stimulate economic growth and generate revenue that contribute towards community empowerment. Despite the challenges of the global economic slowdown, opportunities for tourism growth remain. Already, the Park contributes 6.7% of KwaZulu-Natal's gross domestic product with over 6900 permanent tourism jobs created. The 2017 IMP sets the framework to take this to new heights. Alongside this, iSimangaliso will continue to implement other programmes that deliver benefits and contribute toward community empowerment.



*Ecosystem restoration is central to the rewilding strategy. An important focus of this work is the ongoing restoration of iSimangaliso's Lake St Lucia system, Africa's largest estuarine lake. This is considered the largest wetland restoration project in South Africa, and was started under the current IMP. After 50 years of partial separation from the Lake St Lucia system, the uMfolozi River is being re-connected to the estuary, returning its major source of fresh water and re-establishing the dynamic natural processes governing the opening and closing of the estuary mouth.*

iSimangaliso CEO Andrew Zaloumis says, "On-going consultation and dialogue with our co-management partners and other community stakeholders is vitally important. During the course of the Park's rewilding, guided by this IMP, the Authority will implement strategies to promote meaningful participation by stakeholders, and will continue to prioritise the maintenance of effective relationships with iSimangaliso's neighbours. Experience shows that the time and effort put into creating and maintaining clear channels of communication is an essential investment in conservation. Indeed, achieving the rewilding vision and strategy set out in this IMP for this unique World Heritage Site depends upon it."

The IMP can be downloaded from [www.acerafrica.co.za](http://www.acerafrica.co.za) under the "iSimangaliso Integrated Management Plan" link and hard copies are available at:

- ACER (Africa) Environmental Consultants' Office (Mtunzini)
- Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife offices at uMkhuze, Sodwana Bay, Kosi Bay and Pietermaritzburg
- The Crocodile Centre (St Lucia)
- Ghost Mountain Inn, Mkuze
- The following public libraries nationally: Durban Central, Durban North, Hluhluwe, Jozini, Mtubatuba, Manguzi, Mbazwana, Richards Bay, and St Lucia, Bryanston, Rosebank, Blackheath, Johannesburg and Pretoria, the Nelspruit Public Library and Cape Town's Public Library.

In an endeavour to ensure all interested parties an opportunity to comment, iSimangaliso will also host a series of open public days:

- Tuesday 21 June 2016 – Mbazwana Thusong Service Centre from 9h00 – 12h00
- Tuesday 21 June 2016 – the Protea Hotel in Hluhluwe from 14h00 – 17h00
- Wednesday 22 June 2016 – the Siyabonga Craft Centre in St Lucia from 9h00 – 12h00
- Thursday 28 June 2016 – the Durban Botanic Gardens from 15h00 – 19h00

"Ownership of this national treasure by all South Africans is essential and the public is encouraged to input into the IMP document," concludes Zaloumis.

For Park information, visit [www.isimangaliso.com](http://www.isimangaliso.com), contact [info@isimangaliso.com](mailto:info@isimangaliso.com) or call 035 590 1633. Follow us on [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#) and [Youtube](#), or visit our website at [www.isimangaliso.com](http://www.isimangaliso.com).

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Newsflash No.: 2016.05.16

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This iSimangaliso Newsflash is regularly issued by the iSimangaliso Wetland Park Authority. These communications underline our ongoing commitment to update, inform and involve the public, holidaymakers and interested parties about the Park, and to address any concerns brought to our attention.  
Andrew Zaloumis, CEO

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