



## Living in The Island Conservancy

Sedgefield's natural beauty and laid-back vibe attract many people, especially those living on The Island. The Island's charm comes from its location in nature, surrounded by water and wild areas filled with flora and fauna.

When entering The Island, you may have noticed a sign indicating that it is a Conservancy. Living in The Island Conservancy means taking on certain responsibilities, but it also offers a dream lifestyle. Let us explore what is expected of residents and what they can expect in return.

### What is a Conservancy?

*"A Conservancy is a voluntary agreement between landowners to manage the environment..."*

The most important parts of that definition are that it is a voluntary agreement and that it is there for management of the environment. Conservancies are overseen by CapeNature.

### Why is The Island a Conservancy?

The Sedgefield Island is a part of the Cape Floral Kingdom and is recognized as a World Heritage Site. The Island is home to unspoilt Southern Cape Dune Fynbos, reeds, sedges, and saltmarsh, providing a rich natural environment for various species.

In acknowledgment of the need to protect the island's natural assets as the human population grows, the island was registered as a Conservancy with CapeNature to manage the effects of human settlement on the environment.

### Your Responsibilities

Membership of the Conservancy is voluntary. Residents are not forced to become members and the Conservancy does not (and cannot) impose any rules on you.

While our streets belong to Knysna Municipality, our beaches and water belong to SANParks, implying a dual set of rules. By voluntarily coming to live in a Conservancy, you are expected to follow some basic courtesies related to the Conservancy and to adhere to applicable laws. This includes:

- Drive cautiously and slowly because our streets are used by children, walkers, and wildlife, such as birds and tortoises. (Official speed limits are 40km/h on tar, 30km/h on dirt.)
- Do not use poisons. Rodent poisons kill birds and other predators. Ant poisons and herbicides also have a detrimental effect on the environment. The Conservancy can advise on alternatives.
- Be a responsible gardener by planting indigenous plants *that grow naturally in this area*. Support the bees by planting a variety of plants that will provide year-round flowers.
- Remove all invasive plants on your property. You are required by law to remove Category 1 invasives and should remove all categories of invasives. A full list is available on [www.invasives.org.za](http://www.invasives.org.za) or from the Conservancy.



- Leave gaps under your fence so that small animals can move between properties. That way tortoises, mice, and other creatures can interact, promoting a healthy ecosystem.
- Be a responsible dog owner. Dogs should be under their owner's close control when out for a walk. Dogs are not allowed to chase or disturb wildlife, and owners are expected to ensure this. Pick up after your dog using the bags provided by the Conservancy and place these in a bin.
- Be a responsible cat owner. Wildlife is protected on The Island and is not there for your cat to hunt. Keeping cats in at night reduces damage to bird and small animal populations.
- Do not dump anything in wild areas. Your garden refuse can introduce foreign plants that will grow on verges and in wild areas.
- Birds are protected, especially during nesting seasons. Do not try to chase them or interfere with them while they are nesting.

## The Conservancy's Responsibilities

Our goal is to raise awareness about the environment on The Island, improve its conservation status, protect and increase wildlife, preserve existing ecosystems, promote indigenous plants and trees, and eradicate invasive vegetation. We also aim to enhance its overall beauty and economic value.

Conservancies are not law enforcement agencies, but they do have a role as conservation 'eyes on the ground' for the municipality and official conservation bodies

So, what will the Conservancy do for you? The Island Conservancy's job is to:

- Help members with conservation-related tasks and problems, such as alien plant removal advice, snake removal, rodent control.
- Work with other community bodies, such as the Eyeland Neighbourhood Watch and the Ratepayers Association to protect your investment and environment.
- Support the local economy by promoting Sedgefield and The Island as ecotourism destinations.
- Provide residents with information about their rights and responsibilities regarding municipal areas such as verges outside properties.
- Ensure that wild areas are cleared of invasive alien species and to keep them clean and usable for residents.
- Oversee colonial bird breeding seasons, trying wherever possible to minimise the impact on both residents and birds.
- Maintain close relationships with conservation bodies, drawing on these organisations' knowledge, support, and, where necessary, law enforcement. We will represent members' interests to promote win-win implementation of conservation-related rules on and around The Island
- Work with the municipality regarding our wild areas, street signage and speed control measures.

## In Conclusion

Living on The Island comes with many benefits, but it's up to us to protect them. These include higher property values, managed wild areas, low crime rates, and help from the Conservancy.

By our actions, we can ensure The Island remains a haven for generations to come.