



CITY OF CAPE TOWN
ISIXEKO SASEKAPA
STAD KAAPSTAD

Invasive Species Programme

Making progress possible. Together.

Our Invasive Species Programme consists of a number of projects. Find out more about areas we target by reading about these projects below.

Animal Invasives project

Our [Animal Invasives programme](#) focuses on animal invaders, including vertebrates and invertebrates. These invasive animals have negative impacts on our indigenous animals through hybridisation or competition.

Invasive animals are found in a range of environments such as terrestrial, freshwater, marine environments and in the soil, from where they harm our indigenous animals.

Most of the invasive vertebrates in South Africa have been deliberately introduced, while most of the invertebrates were accidentally introduced e.g. through potted plants, freight, food and timber goods.

FAST FACT: Animals such as European fallow deer, grey squirrels and common starlings were introduced to Cape Town by Cecil John Rhodes during the colonial era to enhance the sense of “home away from home”.

[View our animal invasive list](#) to become familiar with invasive species in your area.

Aquatic Invasives project

[Alien invasive aquatic weeds](#) have negative impacts on biodiversity, human health, and the economies of countries around the world. Alien invasive aquatic plant species have also invaded freshwater lakes, dams and rivers throughout Cape Town.

There are currently 15 problematic aquatic weed species found in Cape Town:

- South Africa’s four main aquatic weeds are also found in Cape Town’s waters
- Water hyacinth (*Eichhornia crassipes*) which is the world’s worst aquatic weed
- Water lettuce (*Pistia stratiotes*)
- Parrot’s feather (*Myriophyllum aquaticum*)
- Kariba weed (*Salvinia molesta*)

The project uses a combination of different control methods:

- Manual control – labour intensive
- Chemical control – applying herbicides according to label instructions by suitably qualified herbicide applicators
- Biological control – insects are released regularly

Cape Town’s nutrient rich rivers and vleis provide ideal conditions for aquatic weeds to grow; on-going maintenance is the only way to ensure the water remains free of aquatic weeds.

[View our aquatic invasives list](#) to become familiar with invasive species in your area.

Terrestrial Invasives projec

[Terrestrial invasive plants](#) refer to plants that invade terrestrial ecosystems such as mountains, forests, or landscapes.

These plants are found in different growth forms:

- Trees (pine, hakea, port jackson)
- Shrubs (lantana, castor-oil plant, American bramble)
- Herbs (spear thistle, Patterson's curse, Spanish broom)
- Spreading or flat-growing herbs (Madeira vine, nasturtium, false strawberry)
- Creepers or climbers (morning glory, english ivy, moth catcher)
- Succulents (sweet prickly pear, sisal, torch cactus)

Terrestrial invasive plants have great impact on the areas they invade. Invasive species are a greater threat to native biodiversity than the combined effect of pollution, harvesting, and disease. Landowners, including the City of Cape Town must by law, have control programmes in place to address the impacts caused by invasive species.

The project uses different methods to control terrestrial invasive plants:

- **Mechanical** – chainsaws to fell and cut down invader plants.
- **Manual** – hand-pulling of seedlings or cutting down smaller plants with hand tools.
- **Herbicides** – applying herbicides according to label instructions by suitably qualified herbicide applicators.
- **Biological control** – using natural enemies (herbivorous insects, mites or plant pathogens).
- **Fire** – this method can be used in two ways, either by burning an entire area or by burning stacks after an initial clearing.

The best results are obtained through a combination of two or more of the above control methods, generally referred to as "integrated control".

[View our invasive species list](#) to become familiar with invasive species in your area.