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**EDITION**

# Crocworld and team release juvenile Crowned Eagle rescued from the ocean

Even South Africa's most powerful Eagle sometimes needs a little assistance. This was the case for one juvenile Crowned Eagle that was rescued by a family fishing out to sea, after they spotted the bird floating on the water on 26 June. Thanks to the collaborative efforts of Crocworld Conservation Centre, Scottburgh Veterinary Clinic, Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife, and FreeMe Wildlife, the bird was rehabilitated and safely released last month.

The Crowned Eagle was believed to have been suffering from dehydration and fatigue after being found in the salt water. After the bird was saved from near death, it was brought to Dr Jonathan Clark of Scottburgh Veterinary Clinic who assessed and medicated it.

"We got a call from Scottburgh Vet asking if we could help rehabilitate the bird," recalls James Wittstock, Manager of Crocworld Conservation Centre which is based in Scottburgh on the KZN South Coast. "They kindly offered to provide the medication if we could look after the bird, feeding it and creating the right environment for rehabilitation. After 2 to 3 weeks, the bird was eating, strong, and showing signs that it was ready for release."

Last week, Crocworld was contacted by Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife to ask if the bird could be ringed as part of their Crowned Eagle Project, which monitors and researches the species. Members from the non-profit animal clinic, FreeMe Wildlife, came down from Howick to ring the bird on the day of its release.

"We had the whole team involved in the bird's rescue and rehabilitation at Crocworld Conservation Centre where it was safely released," said Wittstock. "It flew into a tree and then finally off into the distance which was great to see."

## The heart of conservation

Rehabilitating rescued animals is one of the many functions of Crocworld Conservation Cen-



tre, which is dedicated to animal conservation. Crocworld is a member of Species360 - a global conservation entity that facilitates information collection from 1 200 aquariums, zoos, and universities, as well as research and governmental facilities worldwide across 99 countries on six continents. Members like Crocworld curate the Zoological Information Management System (ZIMS), the world's most comprehensive database of knowledge on more than 22 000 species, for the global fight against extinction.

## Crocworld's many interesting residents

An important part of the conservation element is the on-site breeding programmes run by Crocworld which are instrumental in furthering the genetic diversity of threatened species. Some previous breeding programmes include the once-endangered American Alligator, the Jackal Buzzard, Marabou Storks, and Cape Vultures. Crocworld is also home to a variety snakes, the world-famous Henry the Nile crocodile and his best friend, Colgate, as well as South Africa's most endangered lizard - the Durban Dwarf Burrowing Skink.

## Beyond its many residents, the indigenous

coastal forest surrounding the centre is home to more than 200 bird species (more than some countries!) including the iconic Palm-nut Vulture and rarely sighted Narina Trogon. Several antelope species such as Bushbuck, Grey Duiker and the diminutive Blue Duiker (South Africa's smallest antelope) can be found foraging around the driveway and forest in the early morning.

## Grab a bite!

Visitors can also take in the exquisite sea views - including sightings of migrating whales, frolicking dolphins, and the world-famous Sardine Run - from Crocworld on the wraparound deck of the Fish Eagle Café. They serve a variety of delectable dishes and refreshing drinks, with great specials throughout the year. To book call Fish Eagle Café on 083 658 7073 or email [mvanzy@cbi.co.za](mailto:mvanzy@cbi.co.za).

## Become a Crocworld member

Crocworld offers memberships that are valid for 12 months from the date of purchase, so stop by and buy one whenever!