



forestry, fisheries & the environment

Department:
Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

(For written reply)

QUESTION NO. 2527 {NW3028E}

INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 27 of 2022

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Mr N Singh (IFP) to ask the Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment:

Given that wetlands have been identified as playing a critical role in climate change mitigation, adaptation and biodiversity, what are the full, relevant details of the steps that have been taken by her department to ensure that wetlands in the Republic are adequately protected, sustainably managed and restored where necessary?

2527. THE MINISTER OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT REPLIES:

The Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE) has undertaken numerous steps to ensure that wetlands in the Republic are adequately protected, sustainably managed, and restored where necessary.

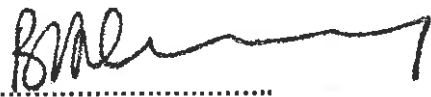
This includes the use of the National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act No. 107 of 1998) (NEMA), the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations to regulate activities that significantly impact the environment, including wetlands. The DFFE, in collaboration with the Departments of Water and Sanitation (DWS) and Agriculture, Rural Development and Land Reform (DALRRD), recently developed the National Wetland Management Framework (NWMF), which provides for a national approach to protect, sustainably manage and restore wetlands. The NWMF has national implementation and serves as a blueprint for coordinated action across government for the

management of wetlands. It has 18 strategic objectives, grouped under seven themes, namely: governance and regulation; advocacy and outreach; catchment planning; sustainable use; restoration; protection; and research, monitoring and evaluation, which are collectively aimed at achieving a vision where wetlands in South Africa are recognised, prioritised and collaboratively governed as high value ecosystems that provide multiple benefits.

The NWMF is aligned with the objectives of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, of which South Africa has been a Contracting Party since 1975 and whose mission is “the conservation and wise use of all wetlands through local and national actions and international cooperation, as a contribution towards achieving sustainable development throughout the world”. The DFFE serves as the focal point for the implementation of the convention. To date, 28 wetlands around the country have been designated as sites of international importance, with the latest site, the Berg Estuary, which occurs in the Western Cape province, designed earlier this year. The locations of the Ramsar Sites are provided in the map below. Three new sites will be added during the remainder of the current Medium-Term Strategic Framework (MTSF).

The DFFE is also responsible for the designation of wetlands of international importance in terms of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands. In terms of the restoration of degraded wetlands, the DFFE has a Working for Wetlands programme that is responsible for wetland restoration nationally.

Regards



**MS B D CREECY, MP
MINISTER OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT**

DATE: 06/09/2022