ANIMAL SPECIES COMPLIANCE STATEMENT FOR THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT ON PORTION 30 OF FARM 257 MISGUNST AAN DE GOURITZ, VLEESBAAI, MOSSEL BAY, WESTERN CAPE

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7 November 2024

DECLARATION OF SPECIALIST INDEPENDENCE

We, Mr Willem Matthee and Prof. Jan A. Venter, hereby declare that:

- we are acting as independent specialists regarding this application;
- we do not have any interest, hidden or otherwise, in the outcome of this application, apart from financial compensation for the work done to survey the proposed development area and compile this report;
- surveying the site for this faunal compliance statement was done objectively, and that
 this report and the facts therein contained (regardless of its impact on the application
 approval process) will not be affected by any outside factors;
- we have the required expertise to perform surveys and produce compliance statements as it pertains to the faunal aspect of this proposed development
- · we will comply with the relevant Acts, regulations and legislation;
- we have not, and will not, engage in conflicting interests while performing our duties for this activity, and have no influence over the decision-making authorities regarding their accepting or rejecting of this proposed development;
- we undertake to disclose to the applicant and competent authority all material and information within my possession that may influence the decision-making process regarding the proposed development;
- all particulars furnished by us in this form are true and correct, and that it is an offense to present a false declaration, and that such a false declaration is punishable in terms of Section 24F of the Act; and that
- this document is to be viewed as a whole, and not misquoted out of context.

Date: 7 November 2024 Date: 7 November 2024

| DATE | REVISION | STATUS | PREPARED | CHECKED AND |
|-----------------|----------|------------|----------|---------------------|
| | | | BY | APPROVED BY |
| 7 November 2024 | 0 | Approved | Willem | Prof. Jan A. Venter |
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| | | submission | | Registration Nr. |
| | | | | 400111/14) |
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1. INTRODUCTION

Cape EAPrac (Pty) Ltd was appointed to facilitate the environmental impact aspects of the proposed development on Portion 30 of Farm 257 Misgunst Aan De Gouritz, (S34°17'50.36"; E21°55'29.61"), near Vleesbaai, Western Cape. One house is planned for the development.

The property is approximately 8 620 m² in size, and dominated by indigenous Hartenbos Dune Thicket vegetation. The indigenous vegetation is dominated by white milkwood (*Sideroxylon inerme*), kooboo-berry (*Mystroxylon aethiopicum*), dune olive (*Olea exasperata*), blue kunibush (*Searsia glauca*), and candlewood (*Pterocelastrus tricuspidatus*), while areas invaded with alien invasive plants have rooikrans (*Acacia cyclops*) present.

As per the "Protocols for the Assessment and Minimum Criteria for Reporting on Identified Environmental Themes" (hereafter called "the Protocols"), as promulgated in Government Gazette Notice 320 (Government Gazette 43110, 20 March 2020), and amended in Government Gazette Notice 3717 (Government Gazette 49028, 28 July 2023), the Protocols must be adhered to for all new applications for Environmental Authorisation.



Fig. 1: The cadastral boundary for Portion 30 of Farm 257 Misgunst Aan De Gouritz (imagery obtained from Cape Farm Mapper, v.3.1.0).



Fig. 2: The locations where the house is planned (white star), located close to the road that runs through the property. Imagery from Cape Farm Mapper v.3.1.0.

The Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE) screening tool (performed on 13 October 2023) identified the site as having **Medium** sensitivity in terms of the animal species theme (Fig. 3), due to the potential presence of eight animal species of conservation concern. These species, along with their associated sensitivities are:

- African marsh-harrier, Circus ranivorus (Aves) Medium sensitivity
- Black harrier, Circus maurus (Aves) Medium sensitivity
- African crowned eagle, Stephanoaetus coronatus (Aves) Medium sensitivity
- Denham's bustard, Neotis denhami (Aves) High sensitivity
- Knysna warbler, Bradypterus sylvaticus (Aves) High sensitivity
- Coastal blue butterfly, Lepidochrysops littoralis (Insecta) Medium sensitivity
- Sensitive Species 8 (which cannot be disclosed) Medium sensitivity
- Yellow-winged agile grasshopper, Aneuryphymus montanus (Insecta) –
 Medium sensitivity

The site sensitivity verification report suggested that the development footprint has a **LOW sensitivity**, due to the habitat not being suitable for any of the SCC to occur within the development footprint, and the area proposed for the development not being an important ecological corridor. A site sensitivity map was also compiled for the animal species theme (Appendix 1): the entire property was classified as Low sensitivity, as there is a very low chance that the area supports populations of the SCC identified by the screening tool report.

As per the Protocols, this compliance statement is based on the findings of a desktop study (using Cape Farm Mapper, iNaturalist, BGIS and GBIF), as well as a site visit (conducted on 9 November 2023), to determine the presence or likely presence of the SCC, and the potential impacts of the proposed development on these SCC.

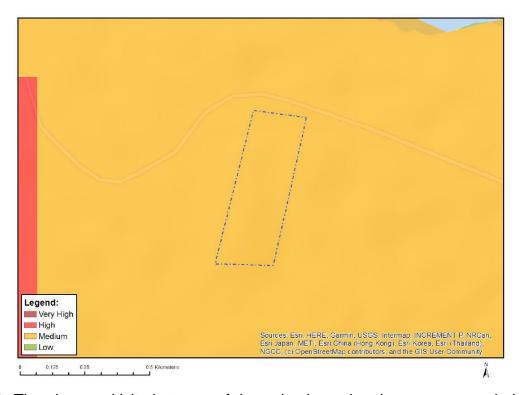


Fig. 3: The site sensitivity in terms of the animal species theme, as recorded in the DFFE screening tool (performed 13 October 2023). The entire property is classified as Medium sensitivity, due to the possible occurrence of eight species of conservation concern.

2. DETAILS OF THE SPECIALISTS

Both specialists that compiled this document have experience in faunal species identification, and the identification of suitable habitats for various species, from invertebrates to large mammalian species. Their details are in the table below.

Table 1. The details and experience of the specialists involved with this report.

| Specialist and contact Qualifications | | SACNASP | Experience | |
|---|---------------|----------------|------------------------------------|--|
| details | | Registration | | |
| Prof. Jan A Venter | PhD (Biology) | 400111/14 | 27 years' experience in faunal | |
| Email: | UKZN | | ecology and conservation in both | |
| JanVenter@mandela.ac.za | | | the government and tertiary | |
| Mobile: 0824161096 | | | education sector. Current | |
| | | | position: Associate Professor in | |
| | | | the Department of Conservation | |
| | | | Management at Nelson Mandela | |
| | | | University | |
| | | | | |
| Willem Matthee | M.Sc. (Nature | Not registered | Willem has three years' | |
| Email: | Conservation) | | experience in surveying | |
| WillemM@mandela.ac.za | NMU | | amphibian populations, and an | |
| Mobile: 084 620 4246 | | | additional five years of bird | |
| | | | surveys. He has also been | |
| | | | involved in animal diversity | |
| | | | surveys on an on-off basis for the | |
| | | | past six years. He has completed | |
| | | | his MSc in Nature Conservation in | |
| | | | 2014. He currently lectures as a | |
| | | | lecturer in Conservation Ecology | |
| | | | at the Nelson Mandela University | |
| | | | George Campus. | |

3. METHODS

The findings of this report are based on:

- a desktop study to determine the potential presence of the SCC identified by the DFFE screening tool report (and any SCC not identified in the report) at the study site; and
- 2) a site visit to the study site, to determine the presence of (and habitat suitability for) the SCC highlighted by the DFFE screening tool report, and any SCC not flagged by the screening tool report.

The desktop study included the use of iNaturalist and the Global Biodiversity Information Framework (GBIF) records. Records from these resources were used to determine whether the SCC have been recorded at (or near to) the study site, but the species' actual presence or likely presence was based on the findings of the site visit.

A site visit was performed on 9 November 2023, between 09:00 and 13:00. During the site visit, the species observed (mainly animal species, but also the plant species forming part of the habitat present at the study site) were recorded. Observations were visual (i.e., the animals were observed), acoustic (the animals were heard), or based on the presence of tracks or dung. The survey consisted of walking throughout the study area, observing the study site from different vantage points, and attempting to cover the entire property sufficiently to determine the presence or absence of the SCC (with an emphasis on the area that forms the development footprint, and the areas directly around the development footprint). The main purposes of the site visit were to determine whether:

- 1) any of the eight SCC flagged by the screening tool occur at the study site;
- 2) the site for the proposed development acts as a corridor for any of the SCC highlighted by the screening tool;
- 3) the vegetation that will be impacted by the proposed development likely supports undetected individuals or populations of the SCC highlighted by the screening tool (that were not picked up during the desktop study); and
- 4) there are any SCC present at the site that were not picked up by the screening tool.

3.1. Desktop Study

3.1.1. Location and Vegetation

The site for the proposed development is located on Portion 30 of Farm 257 Misgunst-Aan-De-Gouritz, near Vleesbaai, Western Cape (S34°17′50.36″; E21°55′29.61″). The property is 8 620 m² in size, and is located approximately 530 m from the spring high tide mark.

The vegetation is classified as Hartenbos Dune Thicket (AT40), which is classified as Endangered (DFFE, 2022). The vegetation in the area is mostly intact and pristine, with some invasion by rooikrans (*Acacia cyclops*). This species is originally from Australia, and is invasive in the coastal regions of the Western Cape. The only existing infrastructure on the property is the road that bisects it in a north-south direction, and a lookout tower. The thicket vegetation is dominated by *Sideroxylon inerme*, *Searsia glauca*, *Olea exasperata*, *Mystroxylon aethiopicum* and *Osteospermum moniliferum*.

3.1.2. Animal species sensitivity

The DFFE screening tool identified eight species of conservation concern (SCC). These species, along with their associated sensitivities are:

- African marsh-harrier, Circus ranivorus (Aves) Medium sensitivity
- Black harrier, Circus maurus (Aves) Medium sensitivity
- African crowned eagle, Stephanoaetus coronatus (Aves) Medium sensitivity
- Denham's bustard, Neotis denhami (Aves) High sensitivity
- Knysna warbler, *Bradypterus sylvaticus* (Aves) High sensitivity
- Coastal blue butterfly, Lepidochrysops littoralis (Insecta) Medium sensitivity
- Sensitive Species 8 (which cannot be disclosed) Medium sensitivity
- Yellow-winged agile grasshopper, Aneuryphymus montanus (Insecta) –
 Medium sensitivity

Based on the desktop study (and the subsequent SSVR), which included the use of iNaturalist and the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF), there are the following likelihoods of these SCC occurring at the site of the proposed development:

- A very low likelihood of C. ranivorus, C. maurus, S. coronatus, N. denhami and
 A. montanus;
- A low likelihood of *B. sylvaticus*, Sensitive Species 8, and *L. littoralis* occurring within the development footprint.

Circus ranivorus (African marsh-harrier) occurs mainly near large inland water bodies and estuaries along the coast, an in the adjacent open vegetation (Simmons, 2005a). This species is classified as Endangered in South Africa (Taylor, 2015a), with habitat loss and degradation being the most significant threat to the continued survival of this species. This site is not nearby any large water body, and does not have the open vegetation required for resting and breeding. There are six records of this species on the Global Biodiversity Information Framework (GBIF) database from the area around Vleesbaai between 2009 and the present. All of these records are from the Southern African Bird Atlas Project (SABAP2), and does not provide precise GPS co-ordinates of the records. Although this species is therefore present in the Vleesbaai area, there is no water body present on the property, and this species therefore has a very low likelihood of occurring at the study site, or being impacted by this development

Circus maurus (Black harrier) mainly occurs in fynbos vegetation and open vegetation such as agricultural fields (Simmons et al., 2005b). There are 31 records of this species on the GBIF database in the area around Vleesbaai. All these records are from the SABAP2 project, and lack specific GPS co-ordinates. The records are therefore from all over the local pentad, and likely from more open vegetation (such as sheep pastures) around Vleesbaai. Due to the density of the vegetation at the site, there is a very low likelihood that this species occurs at the study site, or will be affected by this development.

Stephanoaetus coronatus (African crowned eagle) is a very large eagle occurring in forests and dense woodlands (Simmons, 2005c). The GBIF database contains 17 records of this species near Mossel Bay, all from the SABAP2 project. Since these records are without precise co-ordinates, they likely are from observations in forested areas near the Langeberg Mountains (to the north of Mossel Bay), and not from coastal thickets. The vegetation along the coast is not tall enough to support this species, and there is therefore a very low likelihood of this species occurring at the site, or being impacted by the proposed development.

Neotis denhami (Denham's bustard) prefers open vegetation, including natural ((fynbos and grasslands) and man-made (pastures and agricultural fields) vegetation (Allan, 2005). It is classified as Vulnerable in South Africa (Taylor, 2015c), mainly due to powerline collisions, habitat conversion to intensive monoculture fields, and overgrazing of grassland habitats. There are 47 records of this species in the area around Vleesbaai (between 2007 and the present), with one from the eBird Observation dataset, three on iNaturalist, and the remaining 43 records from SABAP2 (without precise GPS co-ordinates). These records are almost certainly from rangelands and old fields in the surrounding landscape, as the thicket vegetation present along the coast is too dense to support this species. There is therefore a very low likelihood that this species occurs at the study site, or will be impacted by the proposed development.

Bradypterus sylvaticus (Knysna warbler) is a vulnerable bird species occurring in dense thickets, including riparian vegetation and coastal thickets dominated by White milkwood, Sideroxylon inerme (Smith, 2005; Taylor, 2015b). The main threat to this species is habitat destruction, specifically the clearing of coastal clearings where it occurs. It appears to be largely absent from areas dominated by Acacia cyclops, though it may use suitable thickets dominated by other exotic species (specifically lantana and bramble). There are eight records of this species in the surrounding area on the GBIF database, all from SABAP2 observations. It is likely that these observations were made in the Sideroxylon inerme-thicket vegetation that occurs along the coast, similar to the vegetation on this property. The thicket vegetation adjacent to the proposed development (i.e., outside the development footprint) likely supports this species, but there is a low likelihood that it will occur in the area where

the two houses are proposed (due to the vegetation not being dense and stratified enough to support this species). Due to the likely occurrence in the area (but likely absence from the development footprint itself), there is a medium likelihood that it occurs at the study site, but a low likelihood that it occurs within the development footprint. With adequate mitigation measures, the potential impacts (if this species does occur in the vegetation around the development footprint) can be mitigated, and the development can have a very low impact on this species.

Lepidochrysops littoralis (Coastal blue butterfly) has 21 georeferenced records on the GBIF database, with five thereof being in the area around Vleesbaai and Mossel Bay. The type locality for this species is Still Bay (50 km west of Vleesbaai), where it inhabits rocky ridges in coastal fynbos (Pringle et al., 1994). The nearest record is from a specimen collected north of the N2 approximately 25 km west of Mossel Bay. This species appears to frequent rocky outcrops (particularly limestone) in sandy fynbos, which is absent from the study site. There is therefore a low likelihood of this species occurring at the study site, or being impacted by the development.

Sensitive Species 8 (which cannot be disclosed) occurs in areas with sufficient vegetation cover and food, mainly indigenous forests and thicket vegetation, in areas with low levels of disturbance (Venter et al., 2016). There are no records of this species from the area on the GBIF database, with the closest records being from Still Bay in the west and Great Brak River in the east. Both these records are from areas with sufficient *Sideroxylon inerme*-dominated thicket vegetation, where enough food is available for this animal to survive. Although the property does have some thicket vegetation present, it is short coastal thicket vegetation, which has sporadic distribution on the property. With no records of this species from the area, and the habitat not being ideal, there is only a low likelihood of this species occurring on the property, or being impacted by the proposed development.

Aneuryphymus montanus (Yellow-winged agile grasshopper) is a little-known, vulnerable grasshopper species known from only six localities (Hochkirck et al., 2018). There are no records of this species close to the study site on the GBIF database, with the closest record being from the Swartberg Mountains (approximately 110 km from this site). A. montanus prefers arid fynbos on rocky substrates, neither of which are present on this property. Due to the lack of records from the area and the lack of suitable habitat on the property, there is a very low likelihood of this species on this property.

3.2. Site visit

3.2.1. Vegetation

The site visit, performed on 9 November 2023, confirmed that the vegetation on the property is dominated by Hartenbos Dune Thicket, with some invasion by *A. cyclops*. The thickets are mostly located in the troughs between naturally-stabilised dunes, with the vegetation on the dune crests being dominated by shorter fynbos-like vegetation.

The proposed site for the house is within the fynbos vegetation, adjacent to the location of the lookout tower. See Appendix 4 for the location of the proposed development, and Appendix 3 for a more detailed illustration of the proposed development.



Fig. 4: The lookout tower present on the property. The house is proposed for the area to the right (north) of this photograph (see Figures 5 & 6).



Fig. 5: The area to the north of the lookout tower. This relatively open area is the proposed location of the house.



Fig. 6: The view of the proposed site of the house, as seen from the lookout tower to the south thereof.



Fig. 7: The vegetation on the property consists of a mixture of fynbos shrubland and thicket vegetation



Fig. 8: The vegetation on the property is generally short thicket and fynbos, with short *Searsia* and *Diospyros* plants present in the thicket vegetation (with some thicket species occurring in—between thicket patches, but not at high enough density to be classified as thicket vegetation).



Fig. 9: There is some exotic rooikrans, *Acacia cyclops*, on the property, but clearing thereof has taken place in certain areas.



Fig. 10: A second house was initially proposed for the section adjacent to The second (smaller) house is proposed for an area adjacent to thicket vegetation, but was ultimately decided against.

3.2.2. Animal species sensitivity

During the site visit, none of the species of conservation concern (SCC) were recorded at the site. The thicket vegetation around the property is, however, suitable for *Bradypterus sylvaticus*, and this species occurs in similar thickets in the area. This species is unlikely to use the fynbos vegetation within which the development is proposed, and (provided that no thickets are cleared and construction occurs outside the breeding period of this species) the development is unlikely to impact this species. Likewise, *Sensitive Species 8* (which cannot be disclosed) could occur within the thicket vegetation, though there is only a medium likelihood of this species occurring at the site (there are no records of this species from the Vleesbaai area). As with *B. sylvaticus*, the removal of thicket vegetation must be avoided, though there is no time period to confine construction to that will limit the impacts on this species. However, with both these species, there is a **very low likelihood** of them occurring within the development footprint, and they are unlikely to be impacted by the proposed development.

There are some thicket plant species growing between the more extensive thicket vegetation. These areas (the fynbos-thicket mosaic vegetation, as per the Plant Species and Terrestrial Biodiversity report for this proposed development; Fouche, 2024) are, however, unlikely to be crucial for the SCC that may occur on the property, especially with the presence of denser, more suitable vegetation occurring on the majority of the property (outside the development footprint). While the intact thicket vegetation should not be disturbed or removed for the proposed development due to its importance to the SCC that may occur on the property, the fynbos-thicket mosaic vegetation is less important for these species.

None of the other six SCC (*C. ranivorus*, *C. maurus*, *S. coronatus*, *N. denhami*, *L. littoralis*, and *A. montanus*) are likely to occur at the study site, as there are no suitable habitats for any of these species at the study site. *C. ranivorus* requires large wetland ecosystems with open vegetation adjacent thereto; neither of these requirements are met at the study site. *C. maurus* and *N. denhami* require open vegetation, while the vegetation at the study site is too dense and tall, with it being dominated by thicket vegetation. Conversely, *S. coronatus* requires tall forest or densely-wooded vegetation, which is not present at the study site (the vegetation is either too sparse

or too short to support this species). *L. littoralis* occurs along rocky ridges or outcrops in sandy environments; though there are stabilised dunes present at the study site, there are no rocky outcrops present. Lastly, *A. montanus* requires arid fynbos vegetation on a rocky substrate: none of these requirements are met, with the area experiencing a relatively high rainfall, being dominated by thicket vegetation, and being on a sandy substrate. There is therefore a **very low likelihood** of these other six SCC (*C. ranivorus*, *C. maurus*, *S. coronatus*, *N. denhami*, *L. littoralis* and *A. montanus*) occurring within the development footprint, and being impacted by the proposed development.

3.2.3. Other animal species

During the site visit, a total of 17 animal species were recorded (Appendix 2). These observations consisted of eight bird, seven insect (including four butterfly), one mammal, and one reptile species. Noteworthy observations of animal species at the site include Cape grysbok (*Raphicerus melanotis*), Sombre greenbul (*Andropadus importunus*), an unidentified legless skink, *Chrysoritis thysbe thysbe*, and *Phasis thero*.

4. ANIMAL SPECIES COMPLIANCE STATEMENT

The DFFE screening tool identified the study area as having a **Medium sensitivity** for the animal species theme, due to the potential presence of eight species of conservation concern. The site visit, however, identified that this site has a **LOW SENSITIVITY** for the animal species theme, due to:

- The very low likelihood of five of the eight SCC (*C. ranivorus*, *C. maurus*, *S. coronatus*, *N. denhami*, and *A. montanus*) occurring at the site;
- The low likelihood of the remaining three SCC (*B. sylvaticus*, Sensitive Species 8, and *L. littoralis*) occurring at the site;
- The low impact of the proposed development relative to the size of the property;
 and
- The proposed development leaving enough natural vegetation to act as ecological corridors and habitats for species in the area;

The development is unlikely to have a significant impact on the SCC highlighted by the screening tool, as they are unlikely to occur at the study site (due to a lack of suitable habitat, or not being recorded near the study site), or have enough suitable habitat on the property to move to during construction. Though *B. sylvaticus* is known from the area, no specimens were heard or seen during the site visit. If it is present at the site, the *S. inerme*-thickets are likely to be the main habitat within which they occur.

The sensitivity map has been drawn up for this property (Appendix 1). The study site has a low sensitivity overall for the animal theme, due to the majority of the SCC having a very low likelihood of occurrence at the site, and none of the SCC being detected during the site visit. Though Sensitive Species 8 and *B. sylvaticus* were not reported, the natural thicket vegetation may possibly act as ecological corridors and breeding habitats for these two species if they are present (but undetected).

5. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Due to the very low likelihood of *C. ranivorus*, *C. maurus*, *S. coronatus*, *N. denhami*, and *A. montanus* occurring at the site, coupled with the low likelihood that *L. littoralis* and medium likelihood that Sensitive Species 8 and *B. sylvaticus*, occurs at the study site and will be impacted by the proposed development, the EAPs recommend (through the desktop study and site visit) that the site has an overall **LOW sensitivity** rather than the High sensitivity assigned by the screening tool. The thickets (especially where while milkwood, *Sideroxylon inerme*, is present) should be left undisturbed. *A. cyclops* that establish should be removed, to prevent it spreading into the natural vegetation.

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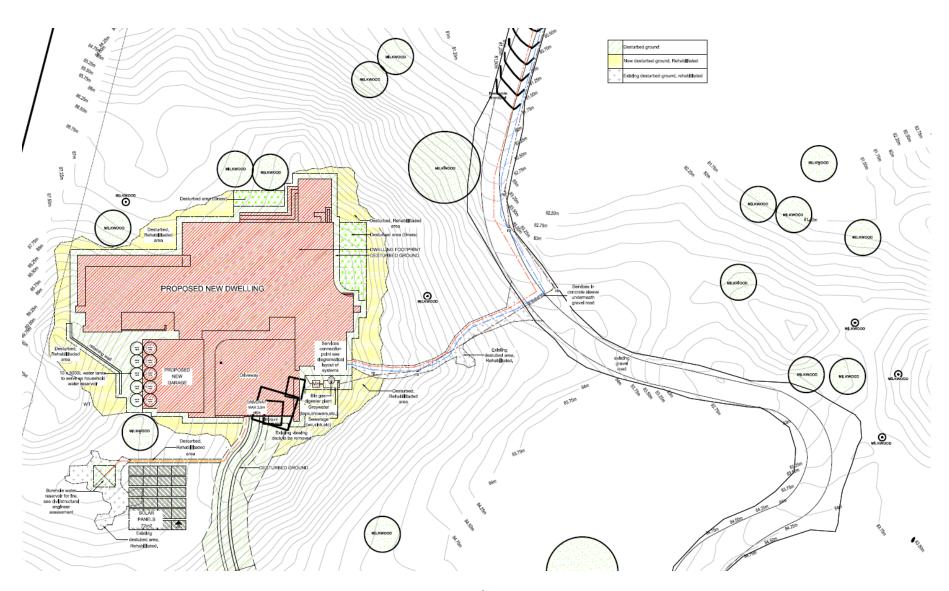
APPENDIX 1: ANIMAL SPECIES SITE SENSITIVITY MAP FOR PORTION 30 OF FARM 257 MISGUNST AAN DE GOURITZ, VLEESBAAI



APPENDIX 2: ANIMAL SPECIES RECORDED ON PORTION 30 OF FARM 257 MISGUNST AAN DE GOURITZ, VLEESBAAI, WESTERN CAPE

| Common name | Scientific name | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------|--|--|
| Birds | | | |
| Apalis, Bar-throated | Apalis thoracica | | |
| Bulbul, Cape | Pycnonotus capensis | | |
| Cuckoo, Diederik | Chrysococcyx caprius | | |
| Greenbul, Sombre | Andropadus importunus | | |
| Martin, Rock | Ptyonoprogne fuligula | | |
| Starling, Common | Sturnus vulgaris | | |
| White-eye, Cape | Zosterops virens | | |
| Woodpecker, Cardinal | Dendropicos fuscescens | | |
| Insects: Coleoptera | | | |
| Beetles, Green Longhorn | Litopus latipes | | |
| Beetle, Variegated Lady | Hippodamia variegata | | |
| Insects: Diptera | | | |
| Fly, Biting | Exoprosopa sp. | | |
| Insects: Lepidoptera | | | |
| Arrowhead | Phasis thero | | |
| Brown, Silver-bottom | Pseudonympha magus | | |
| Opal, Common | Chrysoritis thysbe thysbe | | |
| White, Meadow | Pontia helica | | |
| Mammals | | | |
| Grysbok, Cape | Raphicerus melanotis | | |
| Reptiles | | | |
| Skink, Legless (unidentified) | Acontias cf. meleagris | | |

APPENDIX 3: THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE LAYOUT OF HOUSE COMBRINK ON PORTION 30 MISGUNST 257



APPENDIX 4: THE LOCATION OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE, AS PER THE SITE DEVELOPMENT PLAN. DARK CIRCLES INDICATE MILKWOOD TREES.

