

**NEWS REPORT - 21 August 2003**

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**PARK RANGERS TAKE TO THE WATER**

NOT content with confining their conservation duties to land, 15 rangers from the Cape Peninsula National Park (CPNP) have taken the plunge and are now training to skipper small craft on sea.

"The waters around Cape Point will soon be declared a marine park, so it seemed logical to start preparing ourselves for this new territory," says Justin Buchmann, CPNP section ranger.

Justin and his colleagues are taking lessons from seasoned skipper, Geoff Hawkins of Scarborough, who is provincial safety officer for the Western Province Deep Sea Angling Association and an authorised agent of the SA Maritime Safety Authority (SAMSA).

His training vessel, a 4,5 meter long ski-boat equipped with two 30 hp Yamaha motors, can accommodate a training officer and two trainees. The boat was donated by Magson Marine of the Strand for the sole purpose of SAMSA safety and skipper training.

To qualify for the SAMSA approved skipper's licence, each ranger needs to supplement theory with 50 hours of practical experience on the sea and learning how to handle the boat thoroughly in sea conditions.

"I'm happy to provide free training to the CPNP rangers as they will be playing an important role in promoting the safety of small craft around Cape Point," says Hawkins.

Anyone interested in sponsoring petrol and oil for the training courses, can contact Geoff Hawkins on (021) 780-1201.

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