

<p><b>EASTERN CAPE PARKS BOARD</b></p> <p><b>POLICY</b></p> <p><b>ALIEN SPECIES IN PROTECTED AREAS</b></p>
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Policy	Alien Species in Protected Areas
Policy Ref Number	Conservation 0000/2009
Version	Version 2
Applicability	All protected areas managed by Eastern Cape Parks Board
Contact Person	Head: Scientific Services
Status	Approved
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Date of First Approval	28 May 2009
Last Amended	
Related Policies	Large Mammal Management Policy
Legal Framework	National Environmental Management Act 107 of 1998 National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act 10 of 2004 National Water Act 36 of 1998 National Veld and Forest Fire Act 101 of 1989 Provincial Parks Board Act 12 of 2003

## Definitions

In this policy, the following definitions apply:

*alien species* (as per the NEM:BA)

- a) a species that is not an indigenous species; or
- b) an indigenous species translocated or intended to be translocated to a place outside its natural distribution range in nature, but not an indigenous species that has extended its natural distribution range by natural means of migration or dispersal without human intervention

*indigenous species* (as per the NEM:BA)

- a species that occurs, or has historically occurred, naturally in a free state in nature within the borders of the Republic, but excludes a species that has been introduced in the Republic as a result of human activity\*

*\* Note: For the purposes of this policy we take a more biologically meaningful approach which only includes sites where the species naturally occurred, based on best the science available.*

*invasive species* (as per the NEM:BA)

- means any species whose establishment and spread outside of its natural distribution range –
- a) threaten ecosystems, habitats or other species or have demonstrable potential to threaten ecosystems, habitats or other species; and
  - b) may result in economic or environmental harm or harm to human health

*natural distribution range*

- means the areas in which a species historically occurred

## 1. Overview

The primary role of protected areas is to conserve and to serve as a benchmark for indigenous biodiversity which includes maintaining ecosystem functioning. Alien species, and in particular alien invasive species (AIS) can have a significant impact on the ecological integrity and biodiversity of natural systems and are recognized as one of the primary threats to biodiversity globally. Invasion can result in a loss of indigenous diversity (including species through, *inter alia*, novel disease, increased competitive effects, predation, genetic pollution *etc.*), as well as altering community composition, structure and dynamics (e.g. shifting the nature and intensity of natural processes such as causing an increase in the frequency and intensity of fires, increased frequency and intensity of flooding, accelerated and spreading soil erosion, a reduction in water quality as well as other negative impacts on ecosystem functioning and services).

A range of alien and invasive plant and animal species are present in Eastern Cape, including in the reserves managed by the Eastern Cape Parks

(ECParks). These are present as a result of past introductions (e.g. many wildlife species) or through current invasions (e.g. many plants species). Failure to control or effectively manage these species will almost certainly result in the loss of biodiversity in its broad sense (i.e. composition, structure and function) as well as the ecosystem services which the reserves currently provide.

National legislation on the environment, biodiversity and protected areas require levels of compliance regarding the management of AIS.

There is thus a need to create a policy and guidelines on the management of alien and invasive species on ECP managed protected areas.

## **2. Principles**

- Alien species alter the ecology of an ecosystem and thus are undesirable in protected areas. [Note: The fact that they may “be doing well” in a habitat is irrelevant in the management of protected areas for a biodiversity objective].
- Some alien species become invasive and their impact becomes orders of magnitudes larger. Failure to manage or control these populations in protected areas can result in significant loss of biodiversity.

## **3. Policy statement/s**

- ECParks will not introduce any alien species into protected areas.
- ECParks will strive to control all alien species in protected areas under its management in the most ecologically appropriate, efficient, cost effective and financially beneficial manner.
- ECParks will prioritize the control of invasive alien species in protected areas. This will be based on the available budget and supporting scientific information.
- Alien species may be permitted onto protected areas as a management tool under strict conditions.
- Alien species may be permitted onto protected areas for conservation purposes under strict conditions.
- ECP will work with and co-operate with neighbouring communities and with other agencies and organs of state in the monitoring, control and eradication of invasive species.

- No species will be permitted to be translocated from an ECP managed reserve to an area where it is not indigenous.

#### 4. Implementation guidelines

##### To be developed

- Alien species control technical manuals.
- Conditions for permitting of alien species onto protected areas for conservation and management purposes.

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Ms N.N. Maswana  
Chief Executive Officer

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Date

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Mr. A. Muir  
Chairperson of the Board

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Date