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Introduction

Unfortunately, biodiversity data does not sit in a single repository. Furthermore, depending on the end user's needs and technical capabilities, different data sets may be more relevant than others. Below we list a number of resources which may be of interest to interested parties. This is a living document, and we hope to add to it in future updates. For now, we have limited it to resources relevant to the whole of South Africa, which broadly fit into three categories:

- Logistical Data such as administrative boundaries & cadastral data
- Ecosystem or landscape level data, such as Land Cover and Ecosystem Extent
- Species Data

Not all resources fit neatly into one category or another. Additionally, some are in the form of interactive map applications, other repositories from which data can be downloaded, while others still are a combination of the two.

Should you wish to put forward additional resources to include in updated versions of this document, please reach out to science@ewt.org.

Resources

Name: National Web-based Screening Tool (DFFE)

Link: https://screening.environment.gov.za/screeningtool/#/pages/welcome

Description:

"The National Web based Environmental Screening Tool is a geographically based web-enabled application which allows a proponent intending to submit an application for environmental authorisation in terms of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations 2014, as amended to screen their proposed site for any environmental sensitivity. The Screening Tool also provides site specific EIA process and review information, for example, the Screening Tool may identify if an industrial development zone, minimum information requirement, Environmental Management Framework or bio-regional plan applies to a specific area. Some of these documents can then be accessed through the Screening Tool via links, for consideration during screening. Further to this, the Screening Tool identifies related exclusions and/ or specific requirements including specialist studies applicable to the proposed site and/or development, based on the national sector classification and the environmental sensitivity of the site. Finally, the Screening Tool allows for the generating of a Screening Report referred to in Regulation 16(1)(v) of the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations 2014, as amended whereby a Screening Report is required to accompany any application for Environmental Authorisation and as such the tool has been developed in a manner that is user friendly and no specific software or specialised GIS skills are required to operate this system."

Name: Threatened Species No-Go Map (Endangered Wildlife Trust)

Link: https://nogo.ewt.org.za/ & https://ewt.org/resources/no-go-map-tool/

Description:

"*Using the underlying data from the EST the Endangered Wildlife Trust has created a threatened species no-go mapping tool that builds on the foundation of the environmental screening tool to fill a number of important gaps but primarily to identify areas of significant biodiversity impact, especially for species of conservation concern, if a development was to be approved. These Threatened Species No-Go areas not legally mandated by DFFE but should be considered as priority areas to avoid, as the first port of call, for any prospective developer, given their high sensitivity. The tool screens for a broad range of environmental sensitivities, including terrestrial plant and animal biodiversity. The South African Biodiversity Institute, the Endangered Wildlife Trust, and BirdLife South Africa have collaborated to develop the species data that feeds into the screening tool. The criteria for inclusion of a species is that it is a species of conservation concern listed on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species or South Africa's National Red List website as Critically Endangered, Endangered, or Vulnerable according to the IUCN Red List 3.1. Categories and Criteria. There are currently over 422 animal and 4,600 plant species represented in the screening tool.*"

Name: BGIS (SANBI)

Link: https://bgis.sanbi.org/SpatialDataset

Description:

"*Freely available biodiversity-related datasets for South Africa with associated metadata.*"

- 2024 National Vegetation Map (https://bgis.sanbi.org/Projects/Detail/2258)
- 2023 Marine Ecosystem Map and Classification (https://bgis.sanbi.org/Projects/Detail/2246)
- 2022 Red List of Ecosystems for the Terrestrial Realm for South Africa (https://bgis.sanbi.org/Projects/Detail/1233)
- 2021 Strategic Water Source Areas (surface water) (https://bgis.sanbi.org/Projects/Detail/1242)
- 2017 Strategic Water Source Areas (groundwater) (https://bgis.sanbi.org/SpatialDataset/Detail/661)
- 2018 South African Inventory of Inland Aquatic Ecosystems (https://bgis.sanbi.org/Projects/Detail/217)
- 2018 National Integrated Coastal Map (https://bgis.sanbi.org/Projects/Detail/214)

Name: Property Search Web Application (Chief Surveyor General)

Link: https://csggis.drdlr.gov.za/psv/

Description:

"*Interactive web tool allowing users to search for and identify Parent Farms, Farm Portions, Holdings and Ervens for the whole of South Africa*"

Name: National Spatial Planning Data Repository (Department of Agriculture, Land Reform & Rural Development)

Link: https://nspdr.dlrrd.gov.za/portal/home/ & https://nspdr.dlrrd.gov.za/portal/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=15c8165898344643966932974a0a26d5

Description:

"The National Spatial Planning Data Repository has been developed to ensure up-to-date integration of most government project data for efficient and effective spatial planning. It will also enable sharing of spatial data throughout the country and across public and private sectors under the auspices of the Spatial Data Infrastructure Act (Act 54 of 2003). Data in the repository includes

- *Administrative boundaries*
- *Agriculture*
- *Environment*
- *Hydrology*
- *Infrastructure*
- *Properties*"

Name: District Municipality, Local Municipality and Ward Demarcations

Link: https://dataportal-mdb-sa.opendata.arcgis.com/

Description:

"*Municipal Demarcation Board (MDB) determines boundaries of local and district municipalities in South Africa, and further delimits municipal wards for purposes of local government elections. This site provides the public with access to spatial (GIS-related) data produced by MDB for municipalities and wards.***"**

Name: High Resolution Settlement Layer

Link: https://open.africa/dataset/south-africa-high-resolution-settlement-layer-2015

Description:

"The High Resolution Settlement Layer (HRSL) provides estimates of human population distribution at a resolution of 1 arc-second (approximately 30m) for the year 2015. The population estimates are based on recent census data and high-resolution (0.5m) satellite imagery from DigitalGlobe. The population grids provide detailed delineation of settlements in both urban and rural areas, which is useful for many research areas—from disaster response and humanitarian planning to the development of communications infrastructure."

Name: Register of Protected Areas

Link:
https://dffeportal.environment.gov.za/portal/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=7e27f116dd194c1f9d446dacc76fe483 & https://www.dffe.gov.za/egis

Description:

"An interactive map service that shows the various types of PROTECTED AREAS and CONSERVATION AREAS in South Africa. All legally declared protected areas can be searched and viewed through the use of the protected areas register (PAR) interactive map. This map service shows the various types of protected areas and conservation areas in South Africa. Users can generate reports and statistics Conservation areas are areas responsibly managed for biodiversity conservation but not legally declared as protected areas."

Name: SA Renewable Energy EIA Applications

Link:
https://dffeportal.environment.gov.za/portal/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=0ab209da1aa348e9b9ab7b2d87ba6149 & https://www.dffe.gov.za/egis (see also: https://powertracker.oxpeckers.org/)

Description:

"The South African renewable energy EIA application database contains spatial data for renewable energy applications for environmental authorisation (EA). It includes spatial and attribute information for both active (in process and with valid authorisations) and non-active (lapsed or replaced by amendments) applications. Data is captured and managed on a parcels level as well as aggregated to the project level."

Name: South African National Land Cover & Land Cover Change Assessment

Link: https://www.dffe.gov.za/egis

Description:

"The South African National Land Cover (SANLC) datasets are a series of land cover classification datasets for South Africa. The datasets are based on the gazetted land-cover classification standard (SANS 19144-2) and have 73 classes of information"

Name: MineAlert

Link: https://powertracker.oxpeckers.org/

Description:

"MineAlert is a website and mobile app that alerts residents and organisations to mining applications and licences in their regions. It aims to promote public- and private-sector accountability in the mining sector, to advance civil society and socio-economic rights, to protect the free flow of information, and to strengthen justice and equality. MineAlert provides a centralised platform for users to access, track and share information and documents on mining applications and licences"

Name: IUCN Red List

Link: https://www.iucnredlist.org/

Description:

"The IUCN Red List is a critical indicator of the health of the world's biodiversity. Far more than a list of species and their status, it is a powerful tool to inform and catalyse action for biodiversity conservation and policy change, critical to protecting the natural resources we need to survive. It provides information about range, population size, habitat and ecology, use and/or trade, threats, and conservation actions that will help inform necessary conservation decisions."

Name: Red List of South African Species

Link: https://speciesstatus.sanbi.org/

Description:

"South Africa's official site for Species Information and National Red Lists; here you will find information on South African animal species including their descriptions, their ecological requirements, their distributions and documentation linked to threat assessments. The South African Biodiversity Institute has worked in partnership with host research institutions, and conservation NGOs to document our species diversity and assess its threat status using the IUCN 3.1 Red List Categories and Criteria."

Name: Red List of South African Plants

Link: https://redlist.sanbi.org/index.php

Description:

"This website hosts all national assessments conducted for plants. The latest version includes 1657 updated assessments and 1225 new maps. Over the past three years, SANBI's Threatened Species Unit has focused on reevaluating assessments of succulent plants, proteas, newly described species and additional species identified by field botanists as needing status changes. Of these, 83 species are listed for the first time on the Red List."

Name: National Sensitive Species List

Link: https://nssl.sanbi.org.za/

Description:

"A listing of sensitive species maintained by SANBI. Sensitive species are those that are vulnerable or potentially vulnerable to collecting, over-exploitation, commercial and/or medicinal use."

Name: Regional Red Data Book of Birds of South Africa, Lesotho and Eswatini 2025

Link: https://www.birdlife.org.za/red-data-book/

Description:

"The Red Data Book of Birds 2025 online presents the most comprehensive and up-to-date regional assessments of bird species across Southern Africa. Developed through rigorous scientific research

and in collaboration with local and international experts, the Red Data Book provides critical insights into the conservation status of birds in the region. The Red Data Book of Birds 2025 follows the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List framework, adapted to reflect the unique environmental challenges and species diversity of Southern Africa. The assessments follow the globally recognised IUCN Red List categories and criteria, offering an evidence-based guide to the risks of extinction faced by avian species in the region."

Name: DataZone by Birdlife

Link: https://datazone.birdlife.org/ & https://datazone.birdlife.org/contact-us/request-our-data

Description:

"*The BirdLife DataZone is powered by the collective expertise of the entire BirdLife Partnership, providing decision-makers and conservation practitioners with state-of-the-art data, knowledge and tools to conserve birds and biodiversity worldwide. Spatial data can be requested directly from the website*"

Name: World Database of Key Biodiversity Areas

Link: https://www.keybiodiversityareas.org/sites/search & https://www.keybiodiversityareas.org/kba-data/request

Description:

"*Key Biodiversity Areas, which are among the most incredible and diverse places on Earth for nature, from deserts to the middle of the ocean, are sites of global importance to the planet's overall health and the persistence of biodiversity. By mapping these most important sites on Earth, and providing information about the wildlife living there, private industry, governments and other stakeholders can make the best decisions about how to manage that land (or waters), where to avoid development, and how best to conserve and protect the animals and plants for which the sites are so important.*"

Name: Alliance for Global Extinction Map and Data

Link: https://zeroextinction.org/ & https://zeroextinction.org/site-identification/2023-global-aze-map/

Description:

"*AZE sites that must be effectively protected if the world's most threatened species are to survive. This map is updated annually, with the most recent update having taken place in mid-2024. The location of each AZE site is shown as a polygon on the map below. Sites can be searched by country, taxonomic group, or by a polygon that you select. Tabular information on the species at each site is available at the bottom of the map and can be exported.*"

Name: Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF)

Link: https://www.gbif.org/ & https://www.gbif.org/country/ZA/summary

Description:

"GBIF—the Global Biodiversity Information Facility—is an international network and data infrastructure funded by the world's governments and aimed at providing anyone, anywhere, open access to data about all types of life on Earth."

Name: Freshwater Biodiversity Information System (FBIS)

Link: https://freshwaterbiodiversity.org/ & https://freshwaterbiodiversity.org/map/

Description:

"The FBIS is a powerful, visual, data-rich information system for hosting and serving freshwater biodiversity data in South Africa. It serves as a platform for the inventory and maintenance of data, thereby facilitating the evaluation of long-term change in freshwater biodiversity and ecosystem condition, and guiding future monitoring strategies and management decisions."