

# RUPERT THE RED STEENBRAS

Hello..... I'm Rupert the Red Steenbras. People say **I'm endangered** which means my species is at high risk of extinction! This means we could disappear forever!

But I have **no plans** to join the dodo or the dinosaurs.



I hope the **Marine Protected Areas (MPAs)** where I live with my extended family will help us survive into the future!

South Africa has **41 species of seabreams** – more than any other country in the world!

In all there are about 100 species worldwide.

We are **seabreams** – a family of fish that live on reefs.

**Red steenbras are only found in South Africa.**

Scientists call a species found only in one country an **endemic species**.

This makes us special!

Photo: Steve Benjamin



I live at Miller's Point in a

**no-take zone** of the

**Table Mountain National Park MPA** ★  
in Cape Town.

Photo: Steve Benjamin

Many different fish live with me in the **kelp forest**.

Roman, hottentot, strepies, fransmadam and steentjies – we are all seabreams!

Roman

Steenjie

Fransmadam

Streepie

Blue hottentot

Photo: Steve Benjamin

We are the **king of the seabreams** as we are the biggest of all seabreams in the world.

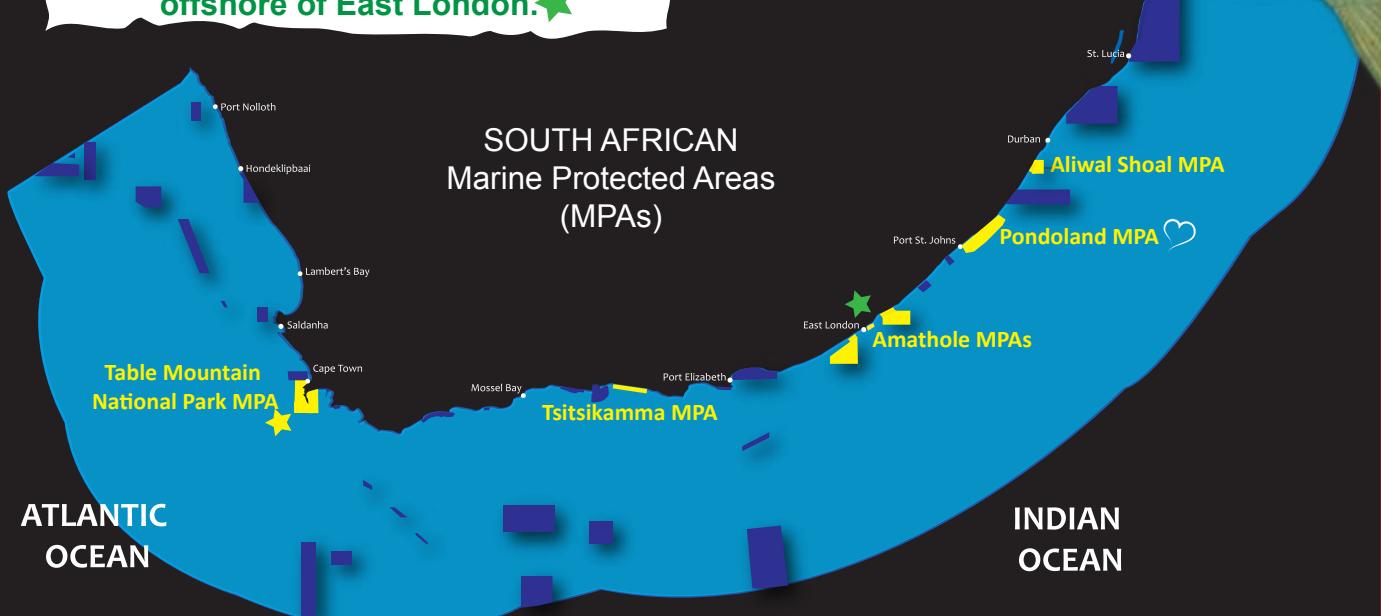
**This makes us extra-special!**



The **biggest** red steenbras that was ever measured was **1.5m long** and weighed **57kg** – bigger than some moms!

The oldest red steenbras I know lived to **55 years old!**

When I grow up I plan to live in the **Amathole Offshore MPA** where my magnificent Uncle Rudy lives, **far offshore of East London.**★



We start to **breed** when we are **about 7 years old.**

We gather in large groups called **spawning aggregations** where we release our eggs and sperm into the water at the same time.

My parents met at the wreck off **Msikaba** – a special place in the **Pondoland MPA...**



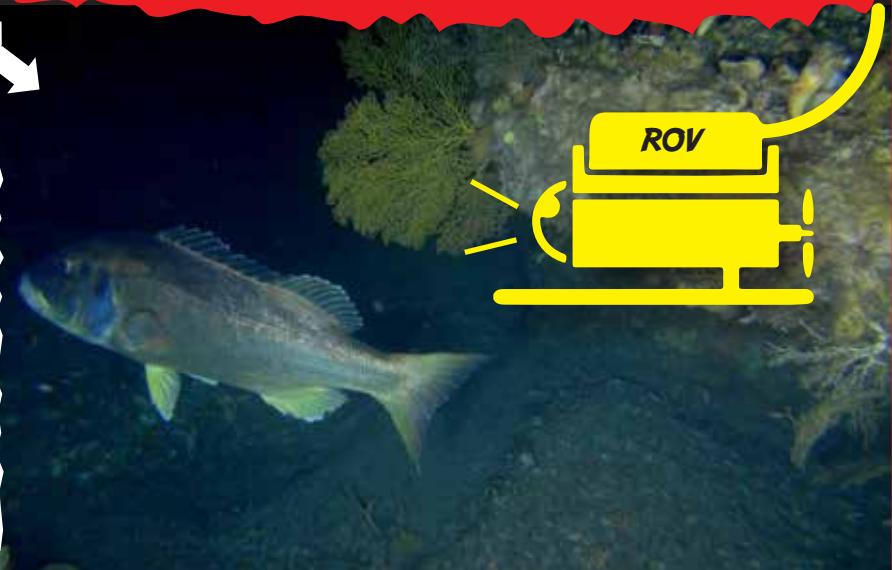
Uncle Rudy is a magnificent fish!

Some recreational anglers still like to catch such big animals and call them

**Coppers...**

See the lovely shiny coppery scales in this picture taken by **REMOTELY OPERATED VEHICLE (ROV)**?

Take care Uncle Rudy... remember what happened to Uncle Robert!



# WHAT HAPPENED TO UNCLE ROBERT?

This is a true story...

## DAILY NEWS

Bruce



In 1989, when Uncle Robert the red steenbras was young he was caught by a young scientist called Bruce in the Tsitsikamma MPA.

Robert was 75 cm and he was tagged and released back to sea.

In 2011, a ski-boat fisherman caught Robert from a boat on a reef off Kei Mouth – he was then 112 cm. The responsible fisherman found the tag and told Bruce. This information helps scientists to understand how far Robert had swum and how much he had grown. Aunt Rachel was also tagged in the Tsitsikamma MPA and she swam all the way from Tsitsikamma to the Aliwal Shoal MPA, which was a record 923 km!



Uncle Robert

# QUESTIONS

1. How long was Uncle Robert at sea from when he was tagged to when he was recaptured?
2. How many centimeters did he grow?
3. Can you work out how much he had grown per year?
4. Which fish traveled the longest distance - Uncle Robert or Aunt Rachel? Tip - look at the map!
5. How many MPAs did Uncle Robert pass through from where he was tagged to where he was captured?

Uncle Rudy – **please be careful** if you swim out of the no-take zone!

## HOW CAN YOU HELP US SURVIVE ?

- ★ Tell your friends how special and **COOL** we are.
- ★ Know the rules. You can only catch **ONE** red steenbras per person per day and they **cannot be sold**. The **minimum size** for keeping a red steenbras is **60cm**. If anglers catch a red steenbras smaller than this, they must carefully **put it back**. **PLEASE!** It might be my baby sister! **Any red steenbras caught between 1 October and the 30 November must be released as this is when we breed.**
- ★ Explain to others how **MPAs help us**. By living in an MPA we can **breed in peace and reach our maximum size and age** so that we can have lots of babies and make more fish for the future.
- ★ If you like fishing you could **become a tag and release fisherman** and help scientists learn more about how far fish move and how fast they grow. Go to the **ORI Tag website: [www.oritag.org.za](http://www.oritag.org.za)**



# WHAT ARE MARINE PROTECTED

Marine Protected Areas are nature reserves in the sea.

They have **no-take zones** where fishing is not allowed.

In these safe spaces, fish can get really **BIG**.

Bigger fish make **more eggs, more often** and their **babies survive better** because their **eggs have more fat** to give baby fish more energy to survive.



Draw a line between the word and the correct meaning.

Endemic

The lowest or smallest

Maximum

A nature reserve in the sea

Aggregation

The biggest or most

Marine Protected Area

In danger of disappearing forever

No-take zone

A group or large gathering

Minimum

Found only in one country

Endangered

An area where no fishing is allowed



# QUESTIONS

1. What is the maximum length of a red steebras?
2. What is the maximum age?
3. What age do scientists think red steenbras can start to spawn?
4. How many red steenbras are you allowed to keep in one day?
5. What is the minimum legal size?
6. When is the closed season for red steenbras?
7. What is the furthest known distance traveled by a red steenbras?
8. How can you help to protect red steenbras and their friends?



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