



Blue Flag Beaches

The Blue Flag has become a symbol of quality guaranteeing high standards of beach management for local inhabitants. Beaches can lose their Blue Flag status if they fail to comply with the strict requirements. South Africa was the first country outside Europe to receive Blue Flag accreditation for its beaches.

The programme started in Europe in 1987 to encourage beaches to comply with the EU (European Union) Bathing Water Directive. Today, there are more than 3 200 Blue Flag sites in at least 41 countries. In South Africa, the Blue Flag programme is managed by the Wildlife and Environment Society of South Africa (WESSA) in partnership with the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism and participating coastal and local authorities.

The Blue Flag is a voluntary eco-label managed by the Foundation for Environmental Education, an NGO based in Europe. It is awarded annually to beaches and marinas that meet a specific set of criteria encompassing:

- water quality;
- safety and services;
- environmental management; and
- environmental education and information.

In Cape Town, the programme is managed by the City's Sport & Recreation Department, and the environmental programmes are coordinated by ERM's Environmental Capacity Building, Training and Education Unit.

Blue flag beaches serve as outdoor classrooms



Nineteen South African beaches have been awarded international Blue Flag status for 2008/09 for excelling in safety, cleanliness, provision of amenities and maintenance of environmental standards.

South Africa boasts a large number of beaches that have been awarded the international Blue Flag status, such as:

Eastern Cape	Kwazulu-Natal	Western Cape
<p>Port Elizabeth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hobie Beach - Humewood Beach - Kings Beach - Wells Estate <p>Port Alfred</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Kelly's Beach <p>Jeffrey's Bay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dolphin Beach 	<p>South Coast</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hibberdene - Margate - Marina/San Lameer - Ramsgate 	<p>Gordon's Bay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bikini Beach <p>Cape Town</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Camps Bay Beach - Clifton 4th Beach - Muizenberg Beach - Strandfontein Beach - Mnandi Beach <p>Hermanus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Grotto Beach - Hawston Beach <p>Stilbaai</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lappiesbaai Beach

Useful links:

<http://www.blueflag.org/>

http://www.places.co.za/html/blue_flag_beaches.html

<http://www.southafrica.info/travel/surf/blueflagbeaches.htm>