



What is your responsibility as producer?

The rich biological diversity in the Western Cape is not currently being properly protected, which means that it is endangered. This is partly because of insufficient resources, but also because 80% of the land on which this vegetation grows falls on privately owned land outside of formally protected areas.

This is where YOU can play an important role!

The Conservation of Agricultural Resources Act (No. 43 of 1983) requires that all land users keep within the norms for the carrying capacity of the natural veld. You, as producer, are thus responsible for better management of natural resources.

Help us to ensure a better future for society and to leave our natural heritage to the next generations.



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*Tread Lightly!
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Environmental Management in the Ostrich Industry



The balance between utilisation and conservation

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Tread Lightly Ostrich Project: What Is It About?

The South African Ostrich Business Chamber has received more than R3 m from the National Lottery Distribution Trust Fund (NDLTF) for establishing a biodiversity unit that can look after the balance between utilisation and conservation of the natural environment in the biodiversity-rich Little Karoo.



Trampling—the effect of too many ostriches on natural veldt.

150 years of intensive ostrich farming has already left its mark. Unfortunately, less

than 4% of some types of vegetation is left in the low lying areas of the Little Karoo.

This area with its special vegetation is critically endangered. If producers do not adapt their management practices, the services (water catchment areas, pollination, grazing, etc.) with which nature provides land owners will not be able to take place as effectively.

The R3.1 m that will be provided over a period of three years will be utilised for, amongst others, introducing sustainable veld management methods to ostrich producers; thus, building on the fundamental project that was started in 2007.

Field of Study



The project focuses on ostrich producers inside the Oudtshoorn basin — between Calitzdorp and De Rust.

Farms are evaluated based on the importance of their natural veld, and whether they use natural veld for their breeding birds.

Recommendations for alternative management practices can be made. There is a particular focus on environmental factors.

The Biodiversity Management Section of the project's environmental best practices document is used as measure for the improvement or change in the managerial practices of producers.

All producers of ostriches are welcome to contact us for information and advice to meet the environmental standards of this project.



How Do I Tread Lightly?

The *Tread Lightly* project is aimed at raising awareness among ostrich producers of the impact that their farming has on the environment, whether it is on the natural environment, the farm itself, feedlots or camps. In other words, striving for being fully sustainable.

Sustainability refers not only to the economic aspects, but to the social and environmental aspects as well. This project wants to assist producers every step of the way in order to reduce their footprint on the farm, and to try and meet the environmental standards of the project.



The small camp system is seen as a sustainable practice in ostrich farming.

One of the key findings from economic studies carried out during the previous project, showed that the small camp system is the most economically and environmentally sustainable practice. The project will gladly help any producer who wants to study or implement this practice.



Why The Small Camp System?

The *Tread Lightly* project strives to support producers in finding the balance between utilisation and conservation of the natural environment. Most ostrich breeding farms in the Little Karoo are situated in critically endangered areas.

The switch to the small camp system does not only have an economical benefit for the producer, but also a significantly positive impact on the environment. The management practice is thus seen as an environmentally sustainable farming practice.

Accurate recordings of each small camp is of utmost importance in determining the right selection of breeding birds. Besides effective selection, the system reduces the loss of feed and water, as well as losses due to predators.

The sketch below shows how such a small camp system should be arranged and managed.

