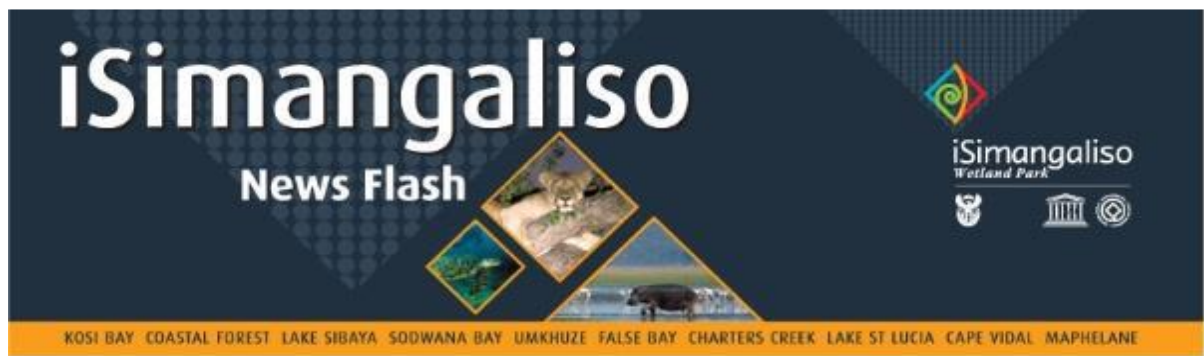




FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

13 October 2025

Saving our fish in Kosi Bay Estuary

Over the past few months, iSimangaliso Wetland Park Authority in partnership with Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife, has been hard at work removing illegal gillnets and unregistered boats, from Kosi Bay Estuary.. This field work is part of an ongoing effort to keep iSimangaliso estuarine systems healthy and thriving, with patrols having taken place in June and August 2025 respectively



Kosi Bay is one of South Africa's most treasured natural areas, is home to a rich variety of fish, birds, and other wildlife. This Ramsar-listed wetland supports the livelihoods of local communities who depend on its resources. Illegal gillnetting is a huge threat to this invaluable part of our World Heritage Site. Nets trap fish indiscriminately, causing serious damage to the delicate balance of the estuary, affecting young and breeding process. If left unchecked, such practices could lead to declining fish stocks and the loss of biodiversity that makes Kosi Bay so special. The recent enforcement operations brought together Park staff from iSimangaliso, field rangers from Ezemvelo, and compliance officers who had one goal in mind: *to protect and preserve the ecosystem.*

Early mornings and long hours on the water became the norm as teams coordinated to patrol the channels, remove gillnets, and educate local fishers about sustainable practices. This collaboration between iSimangaliso and Ezemvelo within the Park, continues to show how much can be achieved when conservation authorities work hand in hand, despite the fiscal and human capacity challenges. Each recovered net meant fewer fish lost, and one more step toward restoring the balance of this iconic system.

The work wasn't easy. Patrols were carried out by boat and on foot, often through challenging terrain and under tough weather conditions. Yet, the determination of the teams never wavered. By the end of the operations, several illegal nets and boats were removed, giving fish populations a better chance to recover and ensuring that legal, sustainable fishing remains possible for those who rely on it.



Every enforcement effort like this one makes a real difference. Protecting Kosi Bay isn't just about conserving wildlife, it's about preserving a way of life, a heritage, and a future. This by no means is an indication that the interventions are sufficient, but they are necessary.

The iSimangaliso Wetland Park Authority is calling on all community members, fishers, and visitors to report illegal gillnetting or fishing activities. Together, we can ensure that Kosi Bay continues to provide for both nature and people not just today, but for generations to come.

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Statement issued by iSimangaliso Wetland Park Authority

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Solidarity

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Sustainability