The National Symbols

The National Flag

When the flag is hoisted on a flag pole the red band must be the uppermost and the black triangle to be on the side of the pole or hoist. When it is displayed horizontally against a wall, the hoist should be to the left of the spectator and the red band uppermost.

- The National Flag must not be used to start or finish any competition, stone etc. at unveiling or similar ceremonies;
- The National Flag must not be used to cover a statue, plaque, corner of a platform;
- The National Flag must be not used as a tablecloth or be draped in any manner in a room or building.
- When the National Flag is displayed vertically against a wall, the hoist should be to the left of the spectator and the red band uppermost.
- When it is displayed horizontally against a wall, the hoist must not touch the floor of the ground.
- The flag must not be used as a tablecloth or be draped in front of a platform;
- The flag must not be used to cover a statue, plaque, corner stone etc. at unveiling or similar ceremonies;
- The flag must not be used to start or finish any competition, race or similar event.

The National Tree is the REAL YELLOWWOOD (Podocarpus latifolius), found from Table Mountain, along the southern and eastern Cape coast, in the ravines of the Drakensberg up to the Blouberg and the Soutpansberg in Limpopo. The bark of the real yellowwood is khaki-coloured to grey when it is old, deeply split and peels off in strips. The crown is relatively small in relation to its height and is often covered with grey lichen.

The National Flower is the GIANT or KING PROTEA (Protea cynaroides), found in the south-western and southern areas of the Western Cape, from the Cedarberg up to just east of Grahamstown. The artichoke-like appearance of the flower heads of the king protea lead to the specific name ‘cynaroides’, which means ‘like cynara’ (the artichoke). A number of varieties in colour and leaf shapes are found, but the most beautiful is the pink flower.

The National Animal is the SPRINGBOK (Antidorcas marsupialis). This species has adapted to the dry, barren areas and open grass plains and is thus found especially in the Free State, North West province and in the Karoo up to the west coast. They move in small herds during winter, but often crowd together in bigger herds in summer. They breed throughout the year and lambs are born after a six-month gestation period.

The National Bird is the BLUE CRANE (Anthropoides paradisea). It is quite common in the Karoo, but is also seen in the grasslands of KwaZulu-Natal and the Highveld, usually in pairs or small family parties. This elegant bird is a light blue-grey, with a long neck supporting a rather bulbous head, long legs and elegant wing plumes which sweep to the ground. It eats seeds, insects and reptiles.

The National Fish is the GALJOEN (Coracinus capensis) and is found only along the South African coast. It keeps to mostly shallow water, is often found in rough surf and sometimes right next to the shore. The galjoen is a familiar sight to every angler. The diet of the galjoen consists mainly of red bait (ascidians), small mussels and barnacles.