



CYPERUS TEXTILIS

WORLD WETLANDS DAY:

# ROSSMIN WETLAND REHABILITATION PROJECT

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BY CLIVE FRANK



TYPHA CAPENSIS

February 2nd 2023 marks a new beginning for the Rossmin wetland, located 10 km inland of Port Shepstone on the South Coast of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. On this World Wetlands Day, we celebrate the initiation of a project that will see the rehabilitation of this wetland from a damaged sugar cane farm to a thriving indigenous wetland.

Wetlands are essential ecosystems that provide numerous benefits to our environment, economy, and communities. They serve as critical habitats for a wide range of plant and animal species, play a key role in the water cycle, and act as carbon sinks that help regulate our planet's climate. Moreover, wetlands provide a variety of ecosystem services such as water filtration, flood control, and recreation opportunities.

The Rossmin wetland, located in the valley rim above the Umzimkhulu River, has been damaged by long-term sugar farming, but now, a new chapter begins with the initiation of its rehabilitation. The conceptual intervention designs for the restoration of the topographic landscape have been put in place, and the rehabilitation process is now underway.

The wetland is a mosaic of indigenous vegetation and provides crucial habitat for a diverse range of plant and animal species. One of the key plant species found in the Rossmin wetland is the Cyperus Textilis, also known as Papyrus. This species is a type of sedge that grows in shallow water and provides important habitat for various wetland-dependent species. Other significant plant species in the wetland include the Bullrush (Typha Capensis), Shrubby Ludwigia (Ludwigia Octovalvis), and Reed (Phragmites Australis).



PHRAGMITES AUSTRALIS





**AFRICAN BLACK DUCK**



**LITTLE GREBE**



**CAPE TEAL**

In addition to the plant species, the Rossmin wetland is also home to a variety of wetland-dependent waterbird species which include the African Black Duck, the Little Grebe and the Cape Teal. Waterbirds serve as important indicators of the health of wetland ecosystems.

As the wetland continues to mature and rehabilitate, it is expected that these bird species, as well as other bird species such as the Grey Heron, Malachite Kingfisher and the African Spoonbill, will thrive.

The rehabilitation of the Rossmin wetland is not only important for the health of the wetland ecosystem and the species that depend on it, but also for the surrounding community. The wetland provides essential ecosystem services such as water filtration and flood control, recreational opportunities like birdwatching, and nature walks that can be enjoyed by local communities.

In conclusion, World Wetlands Day provides us with an opportunity to appreciate the significance of wetlands and their importance to our environment, economy, and communities. The Rossmin wetland, with its rehabilitation now underway, is a testament to the power of conservation and the positive impact we can have on our planet and its inhabitants.

We hope that by highlighting the importance of wetlands and the rehabilitation of the Rossmin wetland, we can encourage everyone to support conservation and rehabilitation efforts for these critical ecosystems.

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**ROSSMIN**