

# Tall Ship Oosterschelde en route to Cape Town, Marking a Historic Milestone in the Global DARWIN200 Conservation Mission

LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM, March 24, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Having successfully rounded the treacherous waters of Cape Horn, the historic Dutch tall ship [Oosterschelde](#) is currently en route to South Africa where the ship will round the Cape of Good Hope and visit Cape Town and Simonstown to continue the [DARWIN200](#) conservation mission.

From April 5th to April 29th, DARWIN200 and the historic tall ship Oosterschelde will be host a inspirational cohort of Darwin Leaders, emerging young conservationists from Madagascar, Uganda, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Tunisia, Nigeria/Israel, and Tanzania, who will engage in critical conservation efforts alongside local NGOs in South Africa (details below).

The young Darwin Leaders will contribute to various projects, including sea turtle rehabilitation with the Two Oceans Aquarium, Cape Vulture monitoring at CapeNature's Potberg colony, and Bontebok antelope conservation at De Hoop.

They will also support Marine Dynamics and the Dyer Island Conservation Trust in studying great white sharks, rehabilitating African penguins, and researching whale and dolphin populations.

Additional initiatives include investigating human-wildlife conflict with Cape baboons and documenting South Africa's unique carnivorous plants.

The DARWIN200 collaborative mission underscores the global commitment to safeguarding biodiversity while providing hands-on experience for the next generation of conservationists.



DARWIN200 / Tall Ship Oosterschelde - the king penguins of South Georgia - Photograph by Josh Clarke

## Retracing Darwin's Path: A Mission for Conservation

Setting sail from Plymouth, UK, in August 2023, Oosterschelde, as part of the DARWIN200 mission, embarked on an extraordinary two-year planetary conservation mission, retracing Charles Darwin's 19th-century route on the HMS Beagle.



DARWIN200 / Tall Ship Oosterschelde

Oosterschelde has covered over 31,500 nautical miles on a journey that has so far taken 545 days. The voyage aims to host and train a total of 200 exceptional young environmentalists from all over the world, engaging them in hands-on conservation efforts in the same locations where Darwin and his colleagues explored the natural world almost two centuries ago.

### Darwin Leader Projects in Cape Town and Simonstown:

#### Manar El Kabir (Tunisia) – African Penguin

Once abundant, African penguins are now critically endangered due to human disturbance and climate change. Urgent conservation action is needed to protect this species with the Dyer Island Conservation Trust in Gansbaai.

#### Zuleica Duarte (Cape Verde) – Great White Shark

Great white sharks have seemingly disappeared from the southern coastline, with many blaming the arrival of two orcas. But is there more to this mystery? This project will explore the multiple threats and changes impacting shark populations with the Dyer Island Conservation Trust in Gansbaai.

#### Munkuli Gift (Zimbabwe) – Cape Vultures

Cape vultures face deadly threats from power lines, as collisions and electrocution are major causes of mortality. Yet, their role as nature's clean-up crew is invaluable, saving billions worldwide. How can we improve coexistence with farmers and promote vulture-friendly infrastructure with CapeNature in De Hoop?

#### Aiita Apamaku (Uganda) – Bontebok

The Bontebok's survival is a conservation success story, where science and genetics helped bring an almost extinct species back. What lessons can we learn for other endangered species with CapeNature in De Hoop?

#### Sharona Shnyder (Israel/Nigeria) – Invasive Carp

This project connects nature conservation with community engagement, addressing invasive carp's impact on freshwater ecosystems while supporting local livelihoods. Working with CapeNature & Gift of the Givers in GroenVlei.

Valerie Silali (Kenya) – Sea Turtle Rescue

The Two Oceans Aquarium Turtle Conservation Center is part of a global and African network of rehabilitation and conservation efforts. With Darwin200 fostering a new generation of young leaders, how can we strengthen international collaborations for sea turtle conservation?

Herizo Randrianandrasana (Madagascar) – Seals of Cape Town

Cape Fur Seals at the V&A Waterfront coexist with human economic development. How can we balance conservation and sustainable coexistence in a way that benefits both seals and people in Cape Town?

MauricetteMarie Rajaobelina (Madagascar) – Baboons

As humans invaded baboon habitats, confrontations arise. But this challenge is not just about baboons—it's also about how the modern Homo sapiens view their relation with wild animals. How can we find a mutual, sustainable way to live together? Working with ICWild & the University of Cape Town.

Loswitha Murugani (Zimbabwe) – Fynbos & Cedar

The Fynbos biome is one of the world's most biodiverse ecosystems, but habitat loss threatens species like the iconic Cedar tree. How can we improve protection and restoration? And since fire is essential to Fynbos, how do we balance controlled burns with modern safety concerns? Exploring solutions with Rupert Koopman in Cederberg.

Hendré Bertrand (South Africa) – Carnivorous Plants

Carnivorous plants are among nature's most fascinating adaptations, thriving in nutrient-poor environments. How can we protect these unique species from habitat destruction and climate change? Investigating with Cape Carnivores in Stellenbosch.

Oosterschelde's Epic Voyage: From Cargo Vessel to Cultural Icon

The Oosterschelde is one of the world's finest, fully restored historic tall ships and the largest sailing vessel ever to be restored in the Netherlands. She is registered by the Dutch Government as a monument of great cultural and historical value. The ship is one of the oldest and most authentic ships in the international fleet of Tall Ships. Oosterschelde relaunched after a major refurbishment in 1996 and was recommissioned by Her Royal Highness Princess Margrith of The Netherlands. She is a bastion of Dutch ship building and is described by the ship's Director and Captain Gerben Nab as having had at least five lives, starting in 1917 as a cargo vessel. Over the past 30 years Oosterschelde has welcomed thousands of sailors and adventure seekers on board including royalty, politicians, presidents and pop stars, even once hosting a birthday party for Sir Tom Jones!

Oosterschelde was the first Dutch commercial tall ship to sail to both the north and south poles and successfully tackle the infamous Cape Horn.

A celebration programme of Darwin-inspired public events is planned in Cape Town including: Open Day Oosterschelde, a chance to visit the ship (24 April 14:00-17:00), Darwin Leader conservation presentation at Two Oceans aquarium (26 April 18h30) and Exhibition of original Darwin and evolution-themed artworks that will be displayed at the Art@Africa gallery on the V&A Waterfront throughout April 2025. The official opening of the art exhibition

Full sailing details: <https://www.dutchtallship.com/sailing-trips/>  
DARWIN200 - <https://darwin200.com/>

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<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1Xi1OMq6YZgOsYvJpKlfb40eYxzOg32fZ>

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