

2023 Kudu Awards winners revealed

South African National Parks (SanParks), supported by TotalEnergies and First National Bank (FNB), has recognised deserving conservationists at this year's annual Kudu Awards ceremony held at Gallagher Convention Centre in Midrand on 30 November 2023. According to the chief executive officer (CEO) of SanParks Hapiloe Sello, the awards now in its 17th year recognises internal and external stakeholders that have demonstrated exceptional commitment to sustainability, improving livelihoods and achieving real change on the ground in our national parks.



Source: wirestock via [Freepik](#)

Sello said an understanding and support for conservation is of vital importance for us to realise the protection of our national parks through means supported by all stakeholders and communities. "As part of this award function, various stakeholders are honoured, including media houses, media practitioners, non-governmental organisations, schools, communities, corporations and individuals.

In the **media category**, Suzanne Paxton from SABC RSG won Best Journalist: Radio for her in-depth story on the effects of climate change focusing on the Northern Cape. Kruger Magazine won the **Best Publication: Print** for their outstanding work covering a wide range of wildlife and valuable conservation stories in and around Mpumalanga and Limpopo Provinces. Greening Afrika (Media Torque and Events) won the **Best Publication: Online** for their outstanding and tireless effort dedicated to covering an online story on the green economy for sustainable and inclusive growth in Africa.

The **Innovation Award** winner is Mudau Phathutshedzo from Dziphathu Green Tech, in recognition of his efforts to incorporate scientific knowledge and expertise to efficiently collect biomass waste and convert it into eco-briquettes and create job opportunities for several young people in Venda, Limpopo.

The **Women in Conservation Award** winner was Joslin Bauer for her contribution to sustainable conservation and leading the way in a bold and impactful manner in an industry that is underserved by female entrepreneurs.

The **Lifetime Achievement Award** was bestowed on two (2) dedicated employees, Jose Mulhovo and the late Oom Popo Scott. Mulhovo was awarded for 49 years of unbroken service in the Kruger National Park. Scott served SanParks for 45 years in the Tsitsikamma section of the Garden Route National Park and was one of the founders of the popular Otter Trail.

Conserving, managing national parks

"We are very proud to work with SANParks in their invaluable work in conserving and managing our national parks. Congratulations to all the nominees and winners of this year's SANParks Awards. This dedication and commitment to preserving our natural heritage is truly unwavering for TotalEnergies Marketing South Africa (TMSA).

"We would like to express our deepest gratitude to SanParks for their continued partnership over the past 65 years. Together, we have achieved so much in the preservation of our biodiversity, the protection of our water resources, and the implementation of circular resources management.

"At TotalEnergies Marketing South Africa, we are committed to reducing our carbon footprint, promoting renewable energy solutions, and embracing innovative technologies to mitigate the impacts of climate change and to actively contribute to the sustainable development of South Africa," said Mariam Kane-Garcia, TotalEnergies Marketing South Africa managing director and CEO.

Boosting economy, job creation

Sipho Silinda, CEO of FNB Public Sector Banking, said: "The conservation of wildlife feeds directly into the tourism sector, an industry that remains resilient and is a fundamental contributor to the country's economic growth. Conservation is one way to ensure the tourism sector can continue contributing to economic growth through job creation.

"Furthermore, our partnership with SanParks has taught us that environmental awareness is a journey rather than an event. We understand that we have a responsibility as a responsible citizen to conserve and protect the environment by actively getting involved in initiatives that are contributing to this cause."

The Awards evening which also included the **Chief Executive Awards** recognised the dedication and selfless efforts of SANParks employees towards achieving the goals of SanParks' mandate. A total of 28 Chief Executive Awards were given out this year ranging from the **Shield Award, Best Customer Service, Best Constituency Builder, Best Ranger Post, Best Performing Camp, Best Performing Park of the Year, Excellent Performance in the Workplace, Best Performing Division, Best Leadership Award** and **Special Team Effort Award**.

"Congratulations to all the winners of the Kudu Awards. Thank you for your efforts and continue to shine the light on conservation and make people aware of the importance of the environment," concluded Sello.