WELCOME TO THE ANTARCTIC RIGHTS FESTIVAL

CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA
30th Nov - 4th Dec 2026

You are warmly invited to join us for five days of celebrations, as we honour Antarctica's inherent rights, and stand together for the signing of the Antarctica Declaration.

Through ceremony, assembly, art, testimony, science, intuition, ancestral jurisprudence and wisdom, the Festival invites us to imagine and practice other ways of relating to the Earth community.



DYLAN WHALE

GARN AFRICA

EMPATHEATRE

Dzomo la Mupo

EARTHRISE COLLECTIVE

ANTARCTIC RIGHTS

WILD LAW | INSTITUTE

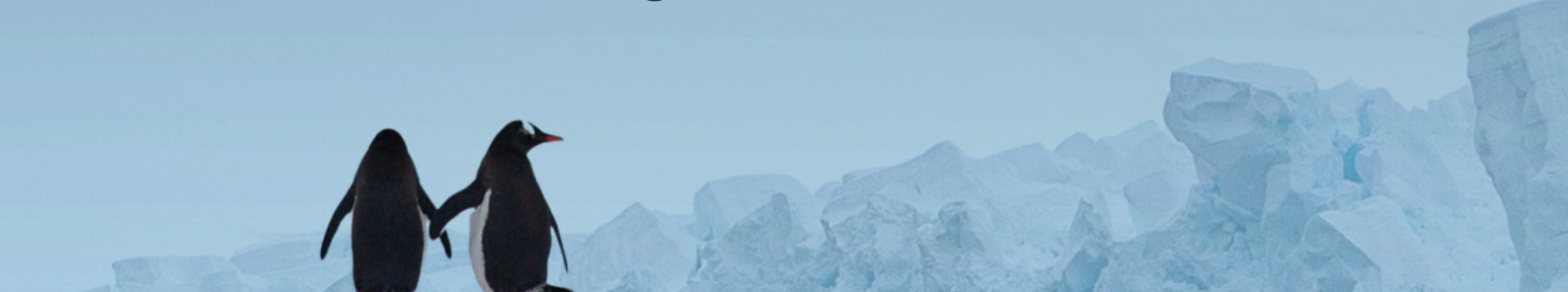
RIGHTS FOR EVERY MEMBER OF THE EARTH COMMUNITY



About the Festival

The Antarctic Rights Festival is a gathering unlike any other: a city-wide celebration of life, law, ceremony and the wild world we are part of.

Convened by the Antarctic Alliance, the Global Alliance for the Rights of Nature (GARN), and allied organisations from around the world, it brings Cape Town alive with creativity, ecological debate, ancestral knowledge and Earth-centred legal discourse.



Declaration & Tribunal

At the heart of the week is the **public signing of the Antarctica Declaration**: a visionary but legally grounded document that recognises Antarctica and the Southern Ocean as a living entity with inherent rights, among them the right to a voice in the international decisions that shape her future.

The week also convenes the **International Rights of Nature Tribunal**, hearing testimony on the plight of krill, alongside the inaugural in-person **gathering of the Antarctic Alliance**, uniting members from every corner of the world in a shared commitment to her protection. Evenings turn to **Wild Talks** of intuitive, interspecies listening, rooted in African ancestral knowledge that has long understood animals, water and land as kin to be heard, before the week closes at the IUCN Academy of Environmental Law Colloquium, where the Declaration is carried into the international legal stage.



Programme



Monday
30/11/2026

17h30

Ritual Assembly and Reunion of the Waters

Delegates bring Waters from their home shores, pouring them together at the tide's edge.

18h00

Remembrance of the Lost Species

A candlelit vigil honouring extinct animals, plants and habitats, wreath-laying and dance in tribute to the more-than-human lives once held.

St James Beach, at the Tidal Pool

20h00

Gathering in Kalk Bay

As the vigil closes, we gather in Kalk Bay over refreshments to sit together, hold what has been honoured, and turn towards hope for what is still to come.

Kalk Bay

Tuesday to Friday
01/12 - 04/12/2026

10h00–20h00

Antarctica: Elemental Dialogues - Art Exhibition

A polyvocal exhibition using art and the senses to draw a distant, ice-bound continent into closer emotional and cultural proximity. This is an invitation to feel what Antarctica asks of us.

Centre for the Book



Tuesday
01/12/2026

10h00
Indigenous Prayers: Opening in Honour of Antarctica

A multicultural ceremony of prayer, song and connection, opening our hearts to Antarctica as kin rather than territory.

Company Gardens

10h15
Whale, Water, Ice & Krill - A Citizens' Assembly

An experimental, co-creative gathering and imaginative space to give voice to whale, water, ice and krill, setting the ground for the day.

Company Gardens

11h00
Procession Towards the Declaration

A symbolic procession giving voice to Antarctica and the Southern Ocean, moving to the rhythm of the more-than-human. African drums, the voices of Cape Town Opera, and multispecies puppets embodying whale, ice, krill and birds, as Antarctica's presence is carried through the Gardens towards the signing of her Declaration.

Company Gardens

12h00
Public Signing of the Antarctica Declaration

A historic moment in the rise of Earth jurisprudence: witness the signing of a Declaration affirming Antarctica's inherent rights and calling for her meaningful representation in every decision that shapes her future. Simultaneous signing of personal pledges to stand up for Antarctica.

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14h00 – 16h00
Antarctica as Blueprint: Panel Discussions

Scientists, lawyers, academics and knowledge-holders explore how Antarctica offers a blueprint for a global shift towards the Rights of Nature.

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18h00 – 20h00
Wild Talk I: Antarctica, the Living Laboratory

An evening talk exploring how we can listen to, and learn from, Antarctica.

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Wednesday
02/12/2026

10h00 – 12h30
International Rights of Nature Tribunal: The Antarctica Case

A tribunal hearing testimony about alleged violations of the Universal Declaration of the Rights of Mother Earth and of the rights and freedoms recognised in the Antarctica Declaration.This will include evidence from experts on the impact of the industrial krill fishery (the tiny keystone species whose survival underpins the entire Southern Ocean food web), and the impacts of climate change on Antarctica and Antarctic beings.

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14h00 – 17h00
International Rights of Nature Tribunal hearing continues and interim findings of the Tribunal

The Tribunal continues, hearing evidence and concludes with the panel of judges handing down their preliminary findings and recommendations for next steps.

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18h00 – 20h00
Wild Talk II: Ancestral Listening and Intuitive Interspecies Communication

An evening of intuitive, interspecies listening, grounded in science, and in the African ancestral knowledge that has long understood animals, water and land as kin to be heard.

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Thursday
03/12/2026

10h00 – 17h00
Gathering of the Antarctic Alliance
Alliance members gather to discuss and agree on the structure of the Alliance and its strategy and objectives.
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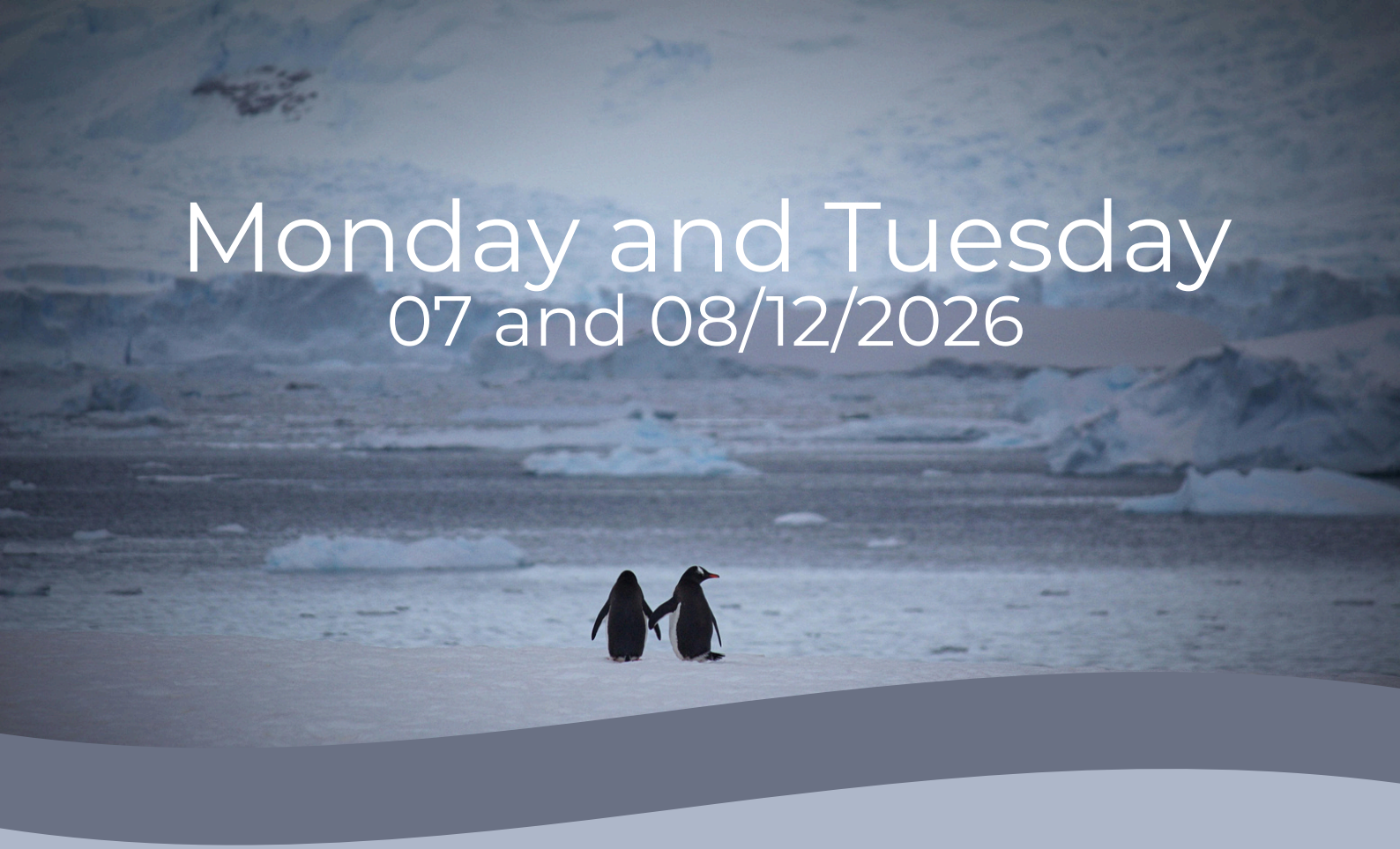
18h00 – 20h00
Antarctica as Kin: Film Screening & Panel
Films exploring Antarctica as a relative and source of wisdom, followed by a panel discussion on more-than-human perspectives.
Labia Theatre

Friday
04/12/2026



14h00 – 16h00
Programme To Be Confirmed
Details of this session will be announced soon;
Watch this space.

18h00 – 20h00
Imagining 2126: A Flourishing Southern Ocean, a century from now.
Walking backwards from a thriving future: the cultural, institutional and political steps needed to imagine a flourishing Southern Ocean in a century. Envisioning a pathway to implementation as the festival draws to a close.
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Monday and Tuesday
07 and 08/12/2026

IUCN Academy of Environmental Law Colloquium
Day 1

TBC: Antarctic Rights side event during the colloquium hosted by the IUCN Academy of Environmental Law.
University of Cape Town (UCT)

IUCN Academy of Environmental Law Colloquium
Day 2

Environmental lawyer Cormac Cullinan joins the opening plenary panel to bring the Rights of Antarctica and the newly signed Antarctica Declaration before an international audience of scholars and law practitioners.
University of Cape Town (UCT)