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## **RICH AND DIVERSE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT**



November 2022.

Working as a team, the De Aar Solar Power plant, together with its sister renewable energy projects, Aries Solar Power and Konkoonsies Solar Power, have demonstrated the richness and diversity of the Northern Cape biosphere.

A 4-month long competition kicked off on World Environment Day, 5 June, where employees were encouraged to submit observations of plants and animals in their direct environments, revealing six flora species of conservation concern identified on and around the 100-hectare De Aar Solar Power site. A total of 222 species of fauna and flora were discovered, including many insect species, which are perhaps the most highly successful group of all animals in our natural environment.

“As renewable energy producers, it is important to foster an appreciation and to increase awareness of the diverse range of species that surround us – both large and small, as well as to create awareness about the many alien species we have living in our environments,” commented Marli Schoeman, Environmental Specialist for De Aar Solar Power.

The competition employed data collection technology made available by nature app, iNaturalist, as a tool to facilitate the identification of species.

In the competition’s ‘best photo’ category, the winning photo was captured by the Site Manager of De Aar Solar Power, Sulana De Jager. Her shot was of the Quiver Tree (*Aloidendron dichotomum*) getting its common name from the San people’s practice of hollowing out the tubular branches to form quivers for their arrows. Unfortunately, as with much of its range, this species is in decline due to climate change, and it is currently listed as vulnerable in South Africa.

iNaturalist is a joint initiative of the California Academy of Sciences and the National Geographic Society – to find out more: [www.inaturalist.org](http://www.inaturalist.org)

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**051 250 4300**

[info@dearsolar.co.za](mailto:info@dearsolar.co.za)