

## U. SHORES

### Field Note U12a9. Archaeology - Fish traps – Breede River Mouth



**The fish trap on the south shore of the Breede River Mouth. View to the west.**

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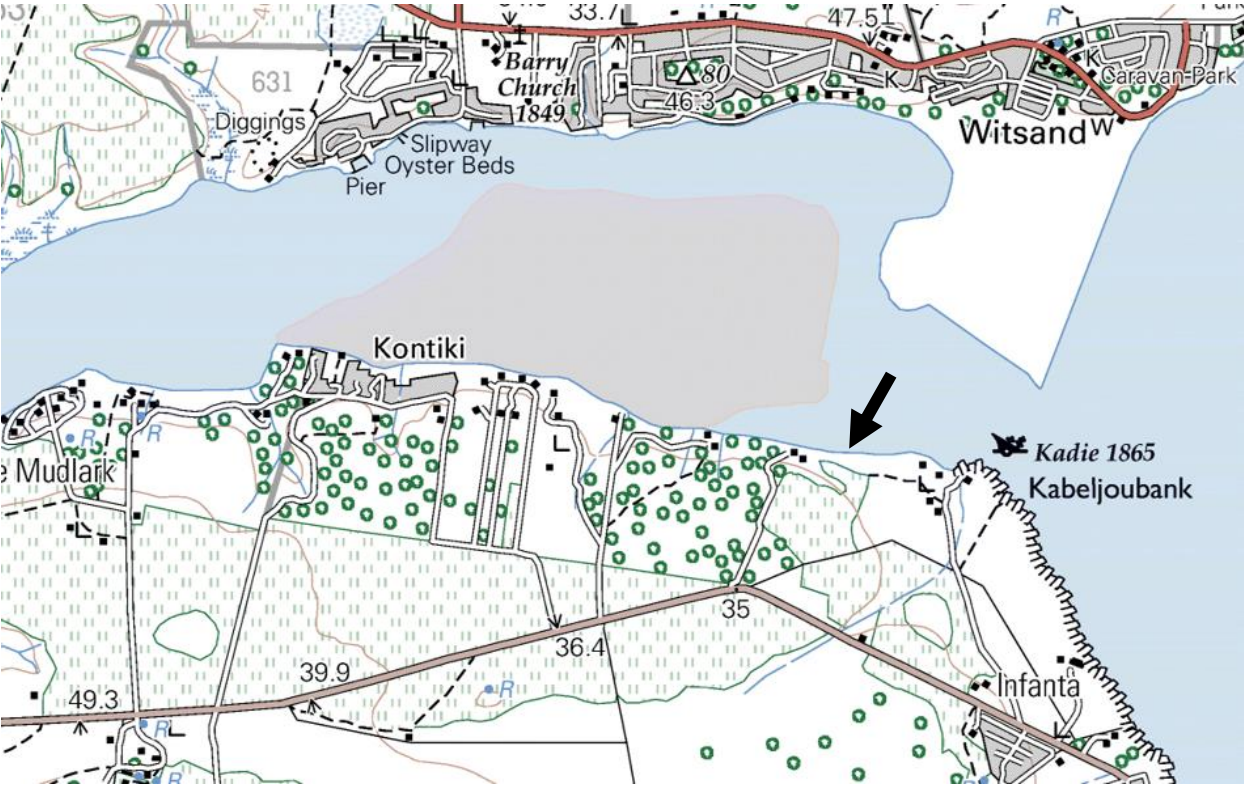
There are twenty-eight sites of intertidal fish trap clusters along the Cape South Coast, eight of which are along the shores of the Study Area. They are (from southwest to northeast): Suiderstrand, Rasperpunt, Cape Agulhas, Struis Bay, Struis Point, Ryspunt, Skipskop and Breede River, containing in total >100 traps of all shapes and sizes (Figure 1). This Field Note is about the trap at the Breede River Mouth.



**Figure 1. Satellite image (rotated) showing the locations of fish trap clusters in the Study Area. Arrow points to the Breede River Mouth.**



The fish trap on the southern shore of the Breede River Mouth is located some 600 m west of Kabeljoubank (Figure 2).



**Figure 2. Topography map (top) and satellite image (bottom) of the Breede River Mouth, showing the location of the fish trap (arrow).**

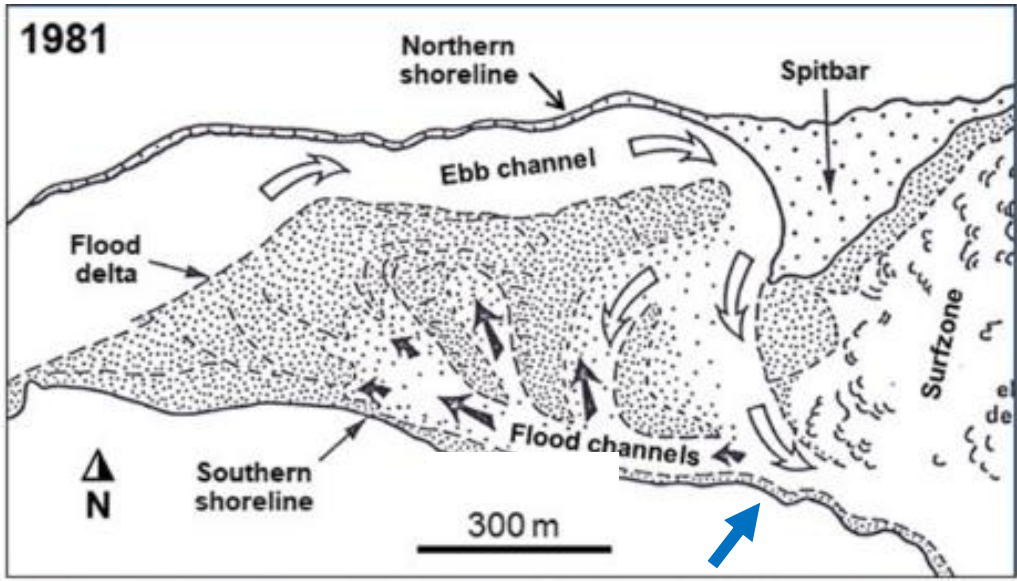
This fish trap was noted by other researchers, and described by Lucy Valeska Kemp, in her unpublished MSc Thesis “Ancient stonewall fish traps on the south coast of South Africa – documentation, current use, ecological effects and management implications”, 2006. She shows an old aerial photograph (no date given) with the tracing of this trap (Figure 3).



**Figure 3. Aerial photograph of the fishtrap on the south bank of the Breede River Mouth.**  
Source and annotations: Kemp’s MSc Thesis, 2006.

The fish trap is the smallest, shallowest and least impressive of all the fish traps, which are described in this chapter. It has a trapeze shape, with the north wall about 100 m long, and the side walls about 15 m long each (it is, therefore, much smaller than that, which was presented in the above photograph: the perimeter is only about 130 m, and the area is less than 2000 m<sup>2</sup>).

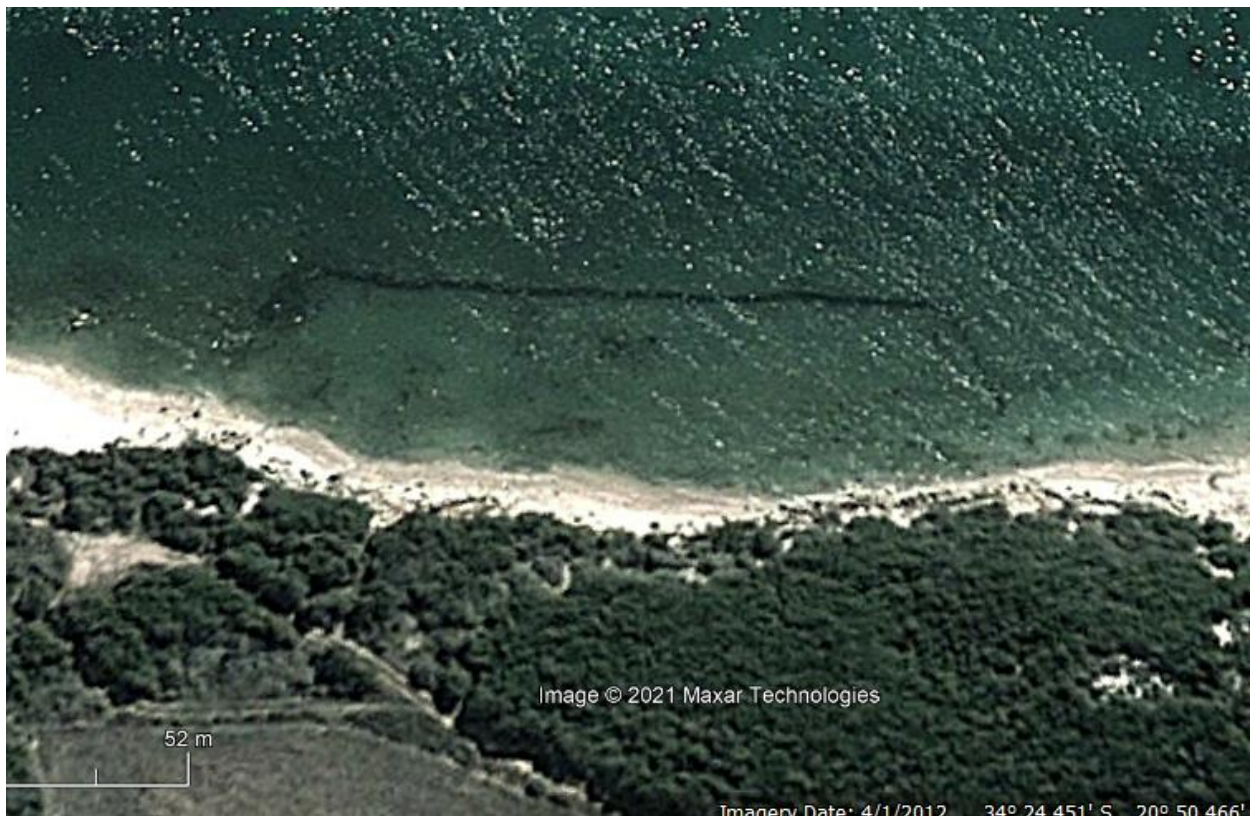
This fish trap is the only one of the traps described in this chapter, which is located in a river mouth. It is, thus, subject not only to waves and tides, but also to the river level fluctuations and relatively strong currents in the flood channel (up to 3 knots, or 1.5 m/sec) (Figure 4).



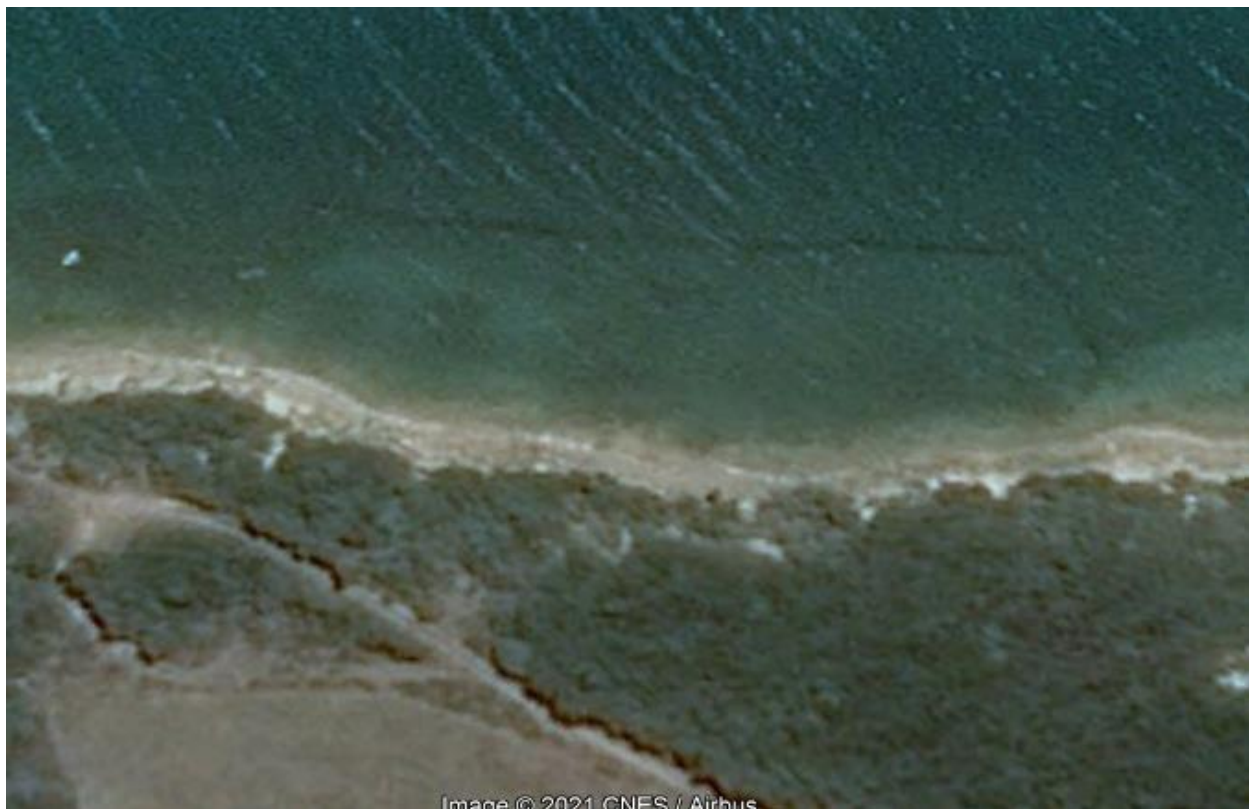
**Figure 4. Map of the Breede River Mouth. Arrow points to the location of the trap.**  
Source: B Flemming and K Martin, 2021.



The trap walls are quite low and protrude the water only in low tide springs. In most available satellite images, the trap is submerged (Figures 5 and 6).



**Figure 5. Satellite images of the fish trap on the south bank of the Breede River Mouth (top - 2011, bottom – 2012).**



**Figure 6. Satellite images of the fish trap on the south shore of the Breede River Mouth (top- 2014, probably taken at very low tide; bottom – 2016).**



The trap is very shallow (Figure 7).



**Figure 7. Views of the trap. Top – view to the northwest; bottom – view to the east.**

A very small, triangular fish trap can be discerned from a satellite image about 100 m east of the east wall of the trapezoid fish trap (Figure 8).



**Figure 7. The tiny trap. Top – satellite image (2016); yellow arrow points to the tiny trap; white arrow points to the trapezoid trap. Bottom – view to the north. The east wall is partly damaged.**