



Indian Runner ducks, a fast-jogging but flightless domestic breed, are defending vineyards from snails and slugs

ALAMY

## Quack squad defends vineyard's prize grapes

Jane Flanagan, Cape Town

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One of South Africa's oldest vineyards is relying on feather power to protect it from impostors.

Columns of Indian Runner ducks, a fast-jogging but flightless domestic breed, are being deployed at Vergenoegd Low to defend its vineyards from snails and slugs and maintain its cellar's production.

Sandwiched between the Helderberg mountains and False Bay, in Stellenbosch, the wine farm, founded in 1696, is plagued by white dune snails that feast on the grapevine buds.

Leaving the greedy gastropods unchecked would devastate the farm's crop, Marlize Jacobs, a winemaker at the estate, said.

"Snails come in huge numbers, all at the same time, at a specific

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