



KRUGER2CANYON

NEWS

March 2023

The Farm House, R527, Zandspruit, Hoedspruit, Limpopo email: editor@kruger2canyon.co.za

Kruger Park ensnared in corruption linked to criminal syndicates – report



Above left, the Numbi Gate of the Kruger National Park on 18 October 2022 in Mbombela, South Africa. Photo: Felix Dlangamandla



Above right, a rhino that was dehorned by a veterinary surgeon and rangers to prevent poaching, is seen with its calf at the Kruger National Park in Mpumalanga province. Photo supplied

Don Pinnock

Widespread corruption at Kruger National Park linked to criminal syndicates in Mpumalanga and the murder of honest rangers are its greatest threat.

At least 40% of Kruger Park’s law enforcement employees are corrupt, and up to 70% of other park employees may be assisting poachers who have decimated the rhino population.

This is according to researcher Julian Rademeyer, citing senior Kruger Park officials in a report for the European Union-funded crime response organisation Enact.

In just one section in the south of the park, he found 14 of its 20 rangers had been linked to poaching networks. “Investigations by private auditing firm KPMG and the Hawks focusing on the IPZ (Intense Protection Zone), home to most of Kruger’s rhinos, have uncovered evidence of payments from syndicates to at least 50 staff from all walks of life. And these numbers are likely to increase.”

According to the park’s head ranger Cathy Dreyer, referring to poaching, “it is impos-

sible for someone to come into Kruger now without some sort of inside link or inside information”.

Landscapes of fear

The report, *Landscapes of Fear*, found the internal corruption, breakdown of trust and staff cohesion plus worsening organised crime in Mpumalanga, to be of greater threat to the future of the park than poaching.

The report is the outcome of interviews with senior wildlife law enforcement officials, security consultants, SANParks officials, conservation managers and provincial specialists on organised crime and corruption.

The corrosion was kick-started by rhino poaching. Between 2011 and 2020 the Kruger’s white rhino population fell by 75%, from around 10 600 to 2 607. But it has metastasised, says the report, into “toxic politics, deep-seated inequality, corruption and embedded organised criminality” which have profoundly affected the park and surrounding communities.

This has not taken place in isolation. Crime and corruption in the park, says Rademeyer, have been impacted by “organised crime in

Mpumalanga, including kidnappings, cash-in-transit heists, ATM bombings, illegal mining, extortion and corruption.”

According to the report, “relations between staff and management have become strained and increasingly toxic, poisoned by mutual mistrust and suspicion. Morale is low. Accusations of racism and unfair treatment – some real and some in a cynical effort to stymie disciplinary proceedings and investigations – have fuelled tensions.”

To be effective, short-term, reactive policing tactics must be replaced with a long-term strategy to counter and disrupt key criminal networks

A key issue has been integrity/polygraph testing. According to the report, integrity testing works well, but faced problems in Kruger, not the least being union opposition. It is also expensive and, to be effective, the entire staff needs to be tested. During Covid, SANParks operational budget was cut by 70%, and it claims to not have the funds to do this.

However, SANParks financial results for the six months up to 30 September show a surplus of R172-million compared to a deficit of R188-million the previous year. After

extensive negotiations with unions, in November last year the board approved integrity testing, with envisaged implementation by the fourth quarter of the 2023 financial year.

Employees at risk

Kruger employs around 2 500 staff and supports an additional 4 500 jobs, mostly in surrounding communities. About 400 staff are field rangers, most of whom are from Mpumalanga and Limpopo, with their families living in villages and small towns surrounding the park. They are at enormous risk from coercion and threats.

“You work in the park, your wife is alone at home with the kids, and this is where the kids go to school. You make the choice,” Rademeyer was told. “The ranger begins to provide information to the syndicate. He receives his first payment of R25 000 in cash or into a bank. Nothing happens to him. And then he helps, again and again, pocketing the money and protecting his family.” Then one day the poacher asks for a favour. He can’t refuse.

According to Cathy Dreyer, “there are 52 vacancies in ranger services alone and no money to fill them. Cont. on page 3.

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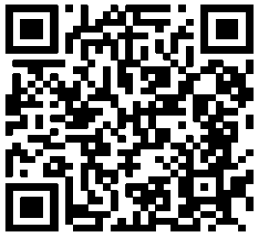
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From the editors desk... Letters to the Editor



Hello again everyone! Time really does fly by when you're having fun.

Well, we're into April now – seems like only yesterday that we were celebrating New Year! Already so many things have happened – summer is now on its way out and I think we will welcome a little cooler weather, we've had the edge of Freddy (and a lot of rain!), our social media efforts with the publication are now well underway and bearing fruit, new restaurants are popping up, people are fixing potholes, more people are coming to town, we now have a Minster of Electricity(!), prices go up, load shedding continues and water issues are becoming more serious, but so much more is on the horizon in a positive way.

More and more the amazing residents of Hoedspruit astound us all with their efforts and commitment to making our little town (not so little anymore) the wonderful place it is. All their efforts are much appreciated, and we all need to support them (and they know who they are) as much as possible, and in any way possible.

There was so much going on this past month that we did not get to do the Spotlight, and the Picky View is still on holiday, and there were some pieces that we just did not have space for in this edition! I want to thank all those wonderful people that contribute to the publication, and that make it the publication that it is.

Conservation and wildlife are always front of mind for us here at Kruger2Canyon News. This is a continual ongoing issue, and there are many out there that do not understand the critical space and time that these efforts occupy. We must all continue to drive this home because our grandchildren's children are doomed to view a barren landscape with few animals and few forests – and our earth is in dire danger. As David Attenborough in the *Life on Earth* stated:

"The fact is that no species has ever had such wholesale control over everything on earth, living or dead, as we now have. That lays upon us, whether we like it or not, an awesome responsibility. In our hands now lies not only our own future, but that of all other living creatures with whom we share the earth."

Let's share this outlook across all walks of life and to as many people as we can. We must create a surge, otherwise I am afraid our endeavours may well be for naught. To those out there continually putting their lives on the line, working long hours, giving of their time in the pursuit of conservation of living things, thank you.

Here's to a wonderful, fun filled April.

Dear Ed,

Your lead story last month on the cheetah leg surgery was quite incredible – and the fact that it happened in Hoedspruit is just fantastic. There are amazing things happening around this town.

I wanted to ask about your digital paper – I find it a little difficult to read it on my phone. I can read it on my laptop with no problem. Is there a way that you can improve on this or am I doing something wrong?

Thank you for my monthly read, most interesting and informative.

James

Ed: Thank for your letter James and for the compliments. You are doing nothing wrong – you should download the publication but reading it on a phone is difficult. We are in the process of testing a new platform that would make it so much easier to read, article by article; but this will only be put in place once we are satisfied that it is what we want. Everyone will be advised when this is launched and hopefully reading the publication on your phone will be a lot easier. We will announce this once it gets put in place.

Dear Ed,

In the January edition of the Letters, it made mention that the developers were going to do a press release – where is that? Was it done? I personally just don't have a good feeling about this development.

Thanks Lisa

Ed: Thanks for your letter Lisa. I was told by Robert Hare in my conversation with him in January, that there would be a press release in about two weeks from chatting to him. I certainly have not received anything of the sort to publish – there was a 'sod turning' ceremony, but apart from that I have heard nothing. I also have had no calls from the Municipality on this matter either.

I have had numerous calls and emails from people expressing their concerns (and sometimes disgust) at the perceived lack of transparency in this 'mall process'. You may want to call Nanki Hoaeane (sp?) SPED New Municipal Manager, the local Councillor or Robert Hare himself and one of them may shed some light on this matter. I will certainly follow-up.



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Citizens action pothole repair



Community in action

Local Correspondent

It is always an issue when travelling on South African roads. The total disregard to the good and proper maintenance of roads is well-nigh non-existent. This is such a sad state of affairs, but some roads have seen no maintenance in 30 years! The couple of roads that are 'hanging in' are testament to the good workmanship of construction/maintenance operations in the past. But no longer.

The frustration of the citizens of this wonderful country is at boiling point. Some roads are downright dangerous and in some cases are nothing short of death traps – but seemingly the local councils or road maintenance operations (if they exist) do not seem to care less.

Such has been the frustration of the residents in and around Hoedspruit – and with a co-ordinated effort they actioned a repair program. Driven by the Ward 1 Committee, Christine du Preez, Chris Hanekom, Farm-watch and other community member, a team of locals got to work on the stretch of road between Hoedspruit and Kampersrus. On this stretch some 120 potholes were counted!

The residents swung into action on Tuesday the 21st March 2023 – Human Rights Day. Some might even argue that it is a right of a citizen in South Africa to have decent roads! That's another story.

The first part to be repaired was between Agri Park and the Moria T-junction. A total

of 40, 25kg bags of tar (one ton of tar!), were used to repair a number of potholes on this section. The pictures do little justice to the time and effort of the volunteers and supporters in getting the job done!

Jahara Rehab Centre were kind enough to send a team to help, as they had some material left from a recent similar exercise in which they were involved. Abdul from Abdul's Shop donated cold drinks to the volunteers to quench their thirst on the hot day.

There are still some potholes to repair, and this gritty group of volunteers will once again take to the road on the morning of Wednesday 28th March from 08:00 to 13:00, to complete the task and fill the balance of the potholes.

This effort has only been possible through the donations of so many people and organisations – to which thanks must be extended.

Anyone wanting to contribute should consider joining the Hoedspruit Chamber/Sakekamer. The fees start at R50.00 per month for residents, and R200.00 per month for businesses. This membership contribution assists with projects like this, and many others. Help is appreciated in terms of skills, labour, transport and any other worthy assistance. Please contact Ward 1 Councillor, Christine du Preez (083 300 2933) to co-ordinate this. Any financial donations can be made to the *Hoedspruit Chambers, FNB, 63040356148* with reference of your name and description of payment or donation. Email the POP to hoedspruitcs@gmail.com.



Trivia Time - test your general knowledge

- Which land snake has the most toxic venom in the world?
- Who produced a series of oil paintings in 1943 known as "Four Freedoms"?
- Which sport is the haka dance associated with?
- What are the names of Popeye's for nephews?
- Which European country's national flag features three vertical stripes in the order blue, white and red from left to right?
- On which river did a pilot by the name of Sully make an emergency landing in 2009?
- Which 2016 song was an international hit for Major Lazer ft. Justin Bieber and MØ?
- Can you unscramble the following word to reveal an act of betrayal: RASENOT?
- Which film series stars 'thunder buddies' Mark Wahlberg and the voice of Seth MacFarlane?
- How many degrees do the interior angles of a triangle always equal?
- Who wrote 'The Canterbury Tales'?
- What was the title of George Michaels first solo single?
- Sarah eats 5 sweets in January, 8 in February, 11 in March, and 14 in April. If this pattern continues, how many sweets will Sarah eat in October and November, of the same year, combined?
- Which multinational corporation developed the PlayStation?
- What famous statue was originally named 'Liberty enlightening the World'?
- Chris Martin is lead singer of which famous British rock band?
- How many countries in the world begin with the letter 'Z'?
- Maundy Thursday commemorates which final event that took place between Jesus and his disciples?
- What do the latest DC stand for in the United States capital Washington DC?
- Which Shakespearean play is based on the short reign of a British king, who was responsible for numerous deaths?

Kruger Park ensnared in corruption linked to criminal syndicates – report

Cont. from page 1

According to Cathy Dreyer, “there are 52 vacancies in ranger services alone and no money to fill them. But even if we had the money tomorrow, we are certainly not going to recruit 52 people and put them into what is not a nice work environment at the moment.”

The report, *Landscapes of Fear*, found the internal corruption, breakdown of trust and staff cohesion, plus worsening organised crime in Mpumalanga to be of greater threat to the future of the park than poaching.

“If you bring anyone in now, you’re just going to break him or her. How do you create a safe space in this world of no loyalty, no trust anymore?”

According to Rademeyer, Kruger’s field rangers, particularly the first responders dropped by helicopter into armed “contacts” with poaching gangs, face enormous psychological and physical pressures that inevitably sap morale. This has led many of them to question the militarised tactics being used, and whether they are fair or moral.

The militarised response to poaching has come at a terrible human cost in the lives of rangers, police, soldiers and poachers. Between 2010 and 2015, the worst years of poaching, up to 200 suspected poachers were shot and killed in Kruger, and seven South African National Defence Force soldiers lost their lives. Many were grievously wounded.

Kruger a strategic pawn in service delivery protests

More than 2,9-million people live within 50 kilometres of Kruger’s western boundary fence, and most are poor. At the end of 2022 average unemployment in the area was 46,5%.

Amid rising discontent over poverty and inequality, Kruger’s significance as a tourist destination, says the Enact report, has made it a strategic pawn in protests against poor service delivery and inadequate housing, electricity, water and roads. Some of this is fuelled by internecine feuds between rival ANC factions.

Around the park, illicit markets abound, and violence and murder are common. Honest officials fear for their lives. Violent organised crime was behind the assassinations of Directorate for Priority Crime Investigation (the Hawks) investigator Lieutenant-Colonel Leroy Bruwer in 2020, and Timbavati head ranger Anton Mzimba in 2022.

Poaching syndicate boss’s coffin arrives at his funeral by helicopter – draped in leopard skin

Poachers become heroes. In 2021 Petros

Mabuza (“Mister Big”), a notorious cash-in-transit and rhino-poaching syndicate boss, was killed in a hit as he parked in a mall in Hazyview, Mpumalanga. At his funeral his casket arrived by helicopter, draped in a leopard skin and crowds sang his praises.

Local police stations, says the report, are riddled with corruption. “They are deeply in the pockets of organised-crime groups involved in poaching, cash-in-transit heists, car and truck hijackings, armed robberies, ATM bombings and illegal gold mining. Thus, they offer little meaningful protection. Sometimes they even serve as escorts for contraband.”

“The more honest police and those who feel a sense of dedication to their communities have little option but to turn a blind eye to the activities of their colleagues for fear of being killed.”

Crime province

Mpumalanga is considered one of South Africa’s most corrosively corrupt provinces. Over the past decade, its murder rate has increased by 42%, and between April and June 2022, there were 234 kidnappings – including those involving ransom or extortion.

The report quotes veteran Mpumalanga journalist Sizwe sama Yende, who describes it as “a province crippled by a succession of corrupt actors and administrations.” It is “blinded by the glitter of public resources it holds in its hands, and unable to resist the urge to become rapacious as if government was closing shop in one hour.”

“It is quite common to find an official who was fired or demoted for corruption a few years back now, occupying a position at the apex of a department without any rehabilitation or punitive process having taken place,” he writes.

The geopolitical context within which Kruger operates has been exposed in a series of investigations by Our Burning Planet journalist Kevin Bloom. In an article What happens when an ecosystem collapses and State Capture collide? he outlined how land rights scams and illegal hunting have been linked to the highest rungs of local politics. This has come to light in the legal clash between the conservationist Fred Daniel and then Deputy President David Mabuza, over Daniel’s attempts to establish a conservation sanctuary.

‘Slush fund’ for buying and selling hunting rights

Court proceedings disclosed a hunting scam involving private individuals, in collusion with the Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency, cashing in on selling shoot licences for the hunting of so-called “problem animals” that escape from Kruger Park. Investigator Paul O’Sullivan found the Problem Animal Fund had become “nothing



3 members of the Black Mamba’s female anti-poaching unit walk along the perimeter during training on September 26, 2015, in Kruger National Park, South Africa. The group is made up of mostly female anti-poachers and currently have 23 armed guards that operate along the Balule boundaries. Photo by Gallo Images/Beeld /Alet Pretorius

more nor less than a slush fund” for buying and selling hunting rights.

A year earlier, Bloom had uncovered the sudden transfer of land rights from the Mthimkhulu community on the Letaba River and bordering Kruger – which had dropped its fences with the park – to a chief 50 kilometres away, and not recognised by the local people. The Mthimkhulu community, which had been deriving a steady income from legal hunting, found these revenues now went elsewhere. As a result, they took to bushmeat poaching, with devastating results.

Some successes

Kruger Park has notched up some successes. Rademeyer notes renewed efforts to combat corruption, coupled with “a refreshing openness about the extent of the problem and a desire to address it.”

Successes include the arrest of two rangers and 11 alleged accomplices implicated in poaching networks, corruption and money laundering. Long-running financial investigations have identified payments to dozens of Kruger staff and helped pinpoint key actors, giving further cause for hope.

In April 2022, the Mpumalanga Hawks’ serious corruption investigation team arrested two veteran Kruger field rangers based in the park’s Stolsnek ranger section. Daniel Chikwa Maluleke (60) and Solly Ubisi (56), had spent most of their working lives in Kruger.

They were charged with corruption, money laundering and fraud linked to poaching and wildlife trafficking, the first case of its kind in the park. A Hawks spokesman said they had allegedly “provided tactical information to rhino-poaching syndicates in exchange for large sums of money.”

According to Rademeyer, Kruger’s challenge is immense. “Turning it around will require addressing corruption in the park and mending deeply fractured relations be-

tween staff and management. Any efforts to counter corruption within Kruger needs to be coupled with carefully targeted efforts to address broader criminal ecosystems in Mpumalanga.”

“To be effective, short-term, reactive policing tactics must be replaced with a long-term strategy to counter and disrupt key criminal networks.”

Prosecutions of high-level actors should be a priority, and possible amnesties for low-level offenders who cooperate with investigators. An independent whistle-blowing mechanism should be set up with all necessary protections and rewards, through which corruption can be reported, evaluated and investigated.

The Kruger Park Management Plan 2018-2028 says the park’s ideal is to “conserve, protect and manage biodiversity, wilderness qualities and cultural resources, provide a diverse and responsible visitor experience, contributing towards social, ecological and economic resilience and well-being, whilst strengthening constituency within a unique regional landscape. Its objective is to restore and maintain the benefits of species of special concern by managing threats as far as possible.”

The Enact report shows how far the park needs to travel to get there.

Kruger Park Communications Officer Isaac Phaahla was asked to comment on the report.

He replied: “It is not necessary for KNP to respond because this is Julian Rademeyer’s document and we are not privy to how he sourced his information and how he reached his conclusions.”

Phaahla had, however, previously commented extensively to *The Mail & Guardian*, agreeing with parts of the report.

This article was previously published in the Daily Maverick.



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Veggie Diva launches her Lasagne

Lasagne is such a versatile dish. "I don't like lasagne!" – said no-one ever! Whether it is a meat or a vegetarian lasagne, served with a crispy green salad and garlic bread, this really is a crowd pleaser of a meal.

Vegetarian lasagne ingredients

- 5 tbsp olive oil
- 2 aubergines sliced lengthways approx 1cm thick
- 1 red onion, finely chopped
- 2 red pepper sliced and de-seeded.
- 3 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 1 x 400g tin chopped tomatoes
- 250g passata
- 1 tsp sugar
- ½ tsp dried Origanum
- ½ tsp dried red pepper flakes
- A handful fresh basil chopped
- 12 lasagne sheets (you may need 1-2 more, depending on the size of your dish)
- 250g ricotta cheese
- 300g Mozzarella cheese
- 400g Pecorino cheese
- Sprigs of thyme leaves
- Salt pepper

Prepare the grilled vegetables

Brush the aubergine on both sides with olive oil and grill until tender, set a side. Grill the red pepper slices until the skin turns black and blisters, place in a bowl and cover for 10 minutes, allow to sweat. Once cool peel off the blistered skins and set aside.

Make the napolitana sauce

Heat the olive oil in a saucepan, add the chopped onions and sauté for a few minutes until translucent. Add the garlic and cook for another minute. Add the tins of crushed tomatoes, passata and half cup of water. Cook for 5 minutes. Season with a generous amount of freshly ground salt and pepper, dried Origanum, sugar, and red pepper flakes. Bring to a simmer for 20 minutes. Turn off the heat and add the chopped basil.

Assemble the lasagne

Place a thin layer of napolitana sauce on the base of the dish. Place a layer of lasagne sheets down over the tomato sauce, slightly overlapping. Place a layer of grilled aubergine on top of the pasta sheets. Sprinkle half of the ricotta cheese over the aubergine and a good grating of pecorino. Add a layer of lasagne sheets and a generous layer of napolitana. Repeat the layers... This time layering the grilled red pepper instead of the aubergine. Add the remaining pecorino cheese and grated mozzarella cheese on top. Cover with foil. Bake at 180°C for 25 minutes, then remove the foil and bake uncovered for an additional 15 minutes. Take the lasagne out of the oven when done and let it rest 10 minutes, garnish with a few sprigs of fresh thyme and serve.



Arugula – the new leaf on the block



Culinary correspondent

Just when we all thought a new dynamic restaurant would never appear on the Hoedspruit map, bang! And here it is – situated at the Farm House (behind Campfire Properties), Zandspruit Estate. The location is great, and the owners, Trevor & Caroline Carnaby, have fully refurbished the old restaurant to create a more practical and spacious area.

Nestled under the trees on the lawned front garden, I spoke to Trevor and Caroline about their vision and ideas in establishing the restaurant.

They have been in Hoedspruit for about 13 years and have always worked in hospitality. Both are very service orientated, enjoy good food, and through his "other" pastime as a guide, Trevor has always had access to top end lodges, hotels, and the like. He has always been intrigued by the menus and culinary trends. Both he and his wife love the Cape and the culinary influences there, and the trends which are often at the cutting

edge of culinary delights in southern Africa.

Having had a property and a restaurant in the Cape for some years, but living in Hoedspruit, they have discussed opening a restaurant here for some time. Drawing on past experience, it became evident with the boom in Hoedspruit, and the evolution to a more mature environment, that this was the perfect time to launch such an undertaking. This will also afford Trevor more time to spend with his family.

Trevor and Caroline have always loved restaurants and with the experience and understanding of the business that they have, this project, although exciting, is not entirely new for them. They believe that there are enough people in town that every now and then want more than just a burger or pizza, and this restaurant will therefore be a little different from all the others in town. The location provides a tranquil, protected outdoor environment, just out of town, away from traffic noise and there is a children's play area as well.

Scrumptious Calamari taco (above left), the Feel good salad (above) and the Garden Images: Arugula

"We would like to try and raise the bar for restaurants in town".

The restaurant name is **Arugula** – a place that people can come for something different with breakfasts, lunches, and dinner (in time). They are going to close on Tuesdays – a pleasant surprise (usually restaurants close on Mondays) so that they can catch up, deep clean, work on menus, train, and ensure that their vision is working. They are always open to feedback, with a simple, healthy menu, great cakes and desserts, and are looking all the time for what actually works, with a focus on consistency in service and meal quality.

Arugula also does not experience load-shedding and has Wi-Fi, which allows people to come and work, and catch up when the power is down (in most places).

Open for coffee from 07:00 with break-

fast by 07:30 every week day (except Tuesday when only drinks, coffees & take-away quiches and pies will be available) and from 08:00 on weekends, and with the kitchen closing at 15:30 weekdays and 16:00 weekends, they will still however be flexible with times if patrons call ahead of time with a reasonable request. There is undercover and outdoor space to accommodate all eventualities – which does also lend itself to functions. 'Emi' is the restaurant Manager and will be the main face of the restaurant on a day-to-day basis.

Let's look forward to this experience and we wish Arugula all the best going forward.

Please call 078 434 9542 for enquiries and follow on Facebook at 'The Arugula Experience'.

Arugula – a nutritionally potent superfood, commonly known in South Africa as Rocket

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SOLE MANDATE

INGWELALA, GREATER KRUGER R 5 950 000
Beds 6 | Baths 3.5 | Floor size: 450m²

50% Share - There is no better investment than Big 5, Greater Kruger properties. This is one of the largest homes at Ingwelala which can accommodate up to 12 people. The house comes furnished and equipped and includes a 50% share in the Land Rover game-viewer.

Yvette Thompson - 083 655 7176 Ref: 2102135



SOLE MANDATE

HOEDSPRUIT WILDLIFE ESTATE R 4 850 000
Beds 4 | Baths 4.5 | Floor: 181m²

This is your opportunity to purchase this newly renovated home on the greenbelt for you and your family. There are spacious living areas that include 2 private patios, looking out towards the greenbelt, an established garden, pool, fence and motorised gate. B&B/Guesthouse potential.

Mike Dodds - 082 906 7004 Ref: 2103300

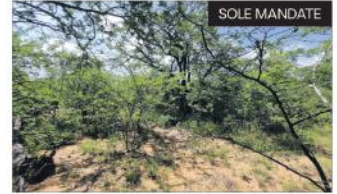


SOLE MANDATE

MODITLO ESTATE R 4 800 000
Bedrooms 3 | Bathrooms 2 | Floor size: 354 m²

This well-kept home is located in the Riversdale portion of Moditlo. The property is located on a quiet street with beautiful mountain and bushveld views. The living area leads out onto the patio, creating a wonderful indoor/outdoor living experience. A walkway leads to the boma area.

Michelle Severin - 083 469 3821 Ref: 2103103



SOLE MANDATE

MODITLO WILDLIFE ESTATE R 635 000
Stand size: 1 hectare

This carousel stand is located in the Moria portion of Moditlo. The stand is dense with lush bushveld and trees. The stand is located close to the main gate which is in close proximity to the Eastgate airport and Orpen gate of the Kruger National Park. The stand is serviced with power and water.

Michelle Severin - 083 469 3821 Ref: 2105760



SOLE MANDATE

GREATER KRUGER, BIG 5 R 17 000 000
Bedrooms 5 | Bathrooms 5 | Floor size: 550 m²

This beautiful safari home is privately situated on the seasonal 'Tsiri river with a deep pool right in front of the house which holds water for most of the year. Sold fully furnished and equipped and the sales price includes a Land Cruiser game viewer, Total traverse areas 2,850 hectares.

Yvette Thompson - 083 655 7176 Ref: 2109365



SOLE MANDATE

KARONGWE - BIG 5 R 8 900 000
Bedrooms 4 | Bathrooms 4 | Traverse: 8,000 ha

Be one of 14 private owners within Karongwe Nature Reserve which offers pristine game viewing with 4 seasonal river systems. The home is situated on a dry riverbed and comes fully furnished. Harvey tile roof for lower maintenance.

Rob Severin - 083 469 3820 Ref: 2063307



SOLE MANDATE

MAKGOKOLO PRIVATE GAME RESERVE R 5 000 000
Floor: 297m² | Stand: 1.5 ha

This site is situated in a 2,500 ha reserve. The property has infrastructure which can be converted to a spectacular private lodge at modest cost. The reserve has a private airstrip, photography hide, lookout & picnic spots.

Rob Severin - 083 469 3820 Ref: 2086781



SOLE MANDATE

NDLOPFU PRIVATE NATURE RESERVE R 7 600 000
Site: 10,000 m² | Reserve: 2,500 ha

This vacant site in Big 5, Greater Kruger allows you to build your own exclusive bushveld getaway with traverse over the reserve and a neighbouring farm. Membership is limited to ensure the exclusivity of the Ndlopfu Share Block.

Yvette Thompson - 083 655 7176 Ref: 2072996



SOLE MANDATE

INGWELALA, GREATER KRUGER R 5 000 000
Beds 2 | Bath 1 | Floor size: 150 m²

Full share - This house comes with traverse rights over all the associated farms, giving you over 3,000 ha of pristine bushveld to traverse over. It is sold furnished and equipped with two game viewers. The house has a great outdoor space with covered patio, bar, gazebo and boma braai area.

Yvette Thompson - 083 655 7176 Ref: 2100334



SOLE MANDATE

GREATER MAKALALI R 20 000 000
Bedrooms 5 | Bathrooms 5 | Farm size: 640 ha

This farm is within Greater Makalali Nature Reserve, which has the Big 5 and 20,000 ha of traverse. Approvals in place for 10 commercial beds. There is a main 2-bedroom home and 3 guest chalets. Ideal for syndication, families, or convert to boutique commercial lodge.

Jason Jones - 083 267 4794 Ref: 1459112



SOLE MANDATE

NDLOVUMZI R 4 950 000
Bedrooms 9 | Bathroom 5 | Stand size: 21 ha

This bespoke tented camp is perfectly nestled on an elevated ridge within a 1,000 ha nature reserve. The property consists of two luxury tents with commercial licences, a 4-bedroom owner's house and a 2-bedroom manager's cottage. The commercial aspect will be sold fully furnished.

Jason Jones - 083 267 4794 Ref: 2079842



SOLE MANDATE

NDLOPFU - Greater Kruger R 13 000 000
Bedrooms 4 | Bathroom 3 | Floor size: 350 m²

This large home is situated in the exclusive Ndlopfu Private Nature Reserve. The home is privately located overlooking the 'Tsiri river. Sold fully furnished and including a game viewer. Solar power backup and recently redone thatch.

Mike Dodds - 082 906 7004 Ref: 2063033



SOLE MANDATE

LISSATABA R 5 160 000
Bedrooms 5 | Bathrooms 5.5 | Floor size: 500 m²

The main building has an open plan kitchen, dining and two lounge areas, pantry, scullery, guest toilet and main en-suite bedroom. The double storey guest unit is privately located and it has 4 en-suite bedrooms. The large patio and pool deck lets you enjoy the mountain views.

Jason Jones - 083 267 4794 Ref: 2099048



SOLE MANDATE

NDLOVUMZI R 3 750 000
Bedrooms 4 | Bathrooms 3 | Floor size: 380 m²

This 21-ha Olifants river property has a 2 bedroom main home and a separate 2-bedroom cottage, all located under large indigenous riverine trees. The outdoor entertainment area has captivating views of the garden, pool & river.

Jason Jones - 083 267 4794 Ref: 1459005



SOLE MANDATE

MAFUNYANE, KARONGWE R 14 000 000
Bedrooms 4 | Bathrooms 4 | Traverse: 8,000 ha

This property is stunning and has a wow factor that will take your breath away! Very exclusive, modern bush home, overlooking a seasonal river bed, located in a Big 5 reserve with 8,000 ha traverse. Sold furnished & including game viewer.

Rob Severin - 083 469 3820 Ref: 2107650



SOLE MANDATE

OLIFANTS RIVER PROPERTY R 4 500 000
Bedrooms 4 | Bathrooms 4 | 50% share

By purchasing this 50% share in Parsons Nature Reserve you will have access to 2080 ha of prime Big 5 game viewing in Greater Kruger. This quaint bush home also has a lapa, pool and lush garden. The sale includes the use of a game viewer vehicle.

Mike Dodds - 082 906 7004 Ref: 2048251

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Help a local fly-fisherman achieve his dream



Luke in action midstream (left)
The prize (above right)
Photo's supplied

Sports Correspondent

We have in our midst a budding world champion! Yes, here in Hoedspruit, local 18-year-old resident Luke Fairhead, is making waves.

Luke attends Stanford Lake College in the Magoebaskloof valley, in Limpopo. In his spare time after school, he takes to the lakes and streams and goes fly fishing. He also manages to find the time to coach the Limpopo Youth Flyfishing

Team. He also leads the flyfishing club at Stanford, where he teaches other kids to tie flies and fly fish effectively.

A very level-headed young man, Luke is quick to state that: "As a matric in boarding school, I am very busy. I am also trying to maintain my distinction average this year to get financial support from a decent university to further my studies".

Luke has been flyfishing since he could walk, and flyfishing competitively since 2019. Last year he made the SASACC flyfishing team and competed in the Czech

Republic. He has competed in every Youth National Championship since 2019 and has also competed in the men's division.

This year, Luke has been selected to represent South Africa at the Youth World Flyfishing Championships in Bosnia and Herzegovina in June 2023. This will be his last eligible year to wear a Protea Badge as a youth angler.

Despite his time-consuming school life, he ties custom fly orders to raise money to support his fishing. However, this in-

come generated will not be enough to raise the money he needs for the World Championships. As such Luke is hoping to generate donations (any amount), that will help him, and his family get him to the Championships in June.

Being the proactive young man he is, Luke has set up a 'backabuddy' account for fundraising for his endeavour. As he has said, any donations would be welcome, and these can be made on the following platform: <https://www.backabuddy.co.za/champion/project/>

'Love the Hoed' lands in the Hoed



Colourful bespoke kaftans on display at Chicshak during the launch (above left). Gorgeous Glen (above) and Lovethehoed fans wearing their gorgeous Kaftans (above right)

Fashion Correspondent

After months of planning and expectation, the Love the Hoed range of bespoke clothing was finally on show for the first time, and for the lucky people invited to the launch.

The launch happened on the Friday, 3 March, and was put on in collaboration with Chicshak Design, in the garden at the Farm House on the R527.

It turned out to be a fantastic afternoon with very many attendees, scrumptious food supplied by Arugula, lovely bubbles and wine, and an excited ambience all-

round.

On show for the first time in Hoedspruit was the LTH Collection of bespoke kaftans – both long and short. Each one of these pieces of art, is individually made (there are no two the same!) of sari crepe silk and other selected soft fabrics, with individual trimmings. Colour and comfort is the name of the game, and it is quite clear that these items are professionally made, and every care has been taken to ensure quality and precision detail in every piece.

Some 60 items were shown of both the long and short kaftans. Everyone attending the launch was blown away by the workmanship and colours, and many were sold

on the day. That excitement has carried through after the launch. The kaftans can be viewed at Chicshak Design throughout the week and on Saturday mornings. It is also possible to discuss and make up your own unique design (material dependent). These items are wonderfully cool, very attractive, bright and light, but at the same time elegant, and are well suited for the Hoedspruit climate.

Make sure to find your way to Chicshak Design at the Farm House and feast your eyes on these wonderful works of art – I certainly have two in the cupboard already!

'Love the Hoed' is a trademarked design house that specialises in easy-wear clothing, but they also have a more rugged range that is more suited to the day-to-day life in the 'Hoed'. Make sure you find your way to Chicshak Design on Saturday 1 April, for a peak at the more extensive range, from elegant to the more casual 'T's'. See you there!



Hacks vs Boffins - Bridging the divide



Science stories need a human touch, says award-winning environmental journalist, Elise Tempelhoff.

Photo: Johann Tempelhoff

Roving Reporters

Journalists and scientists often speak at cross purposes – even a “different language”. Are there ways for them to understand each other better in the interests of the public good?

Amid the gutting of newsrooms, and what is now being called a post-truth world, there is greater onus on scientists to help keep the public well informed.

But communicating science presents inherent difficulties due to its complexities. At the same time, contemporary media, largely through social media, has become characterized by fake news. This has eroded trust between the science fraternity and journalists.

So says leading science communicator, Rob Inglis, who facilitated a Tipping Points webinar, hosted by Oppenheimer Generations Research & Conservation.

It was the 10th in a series and the first of 2023. The Tipping Points meetings provide a platform to discuss issues affecting development and the environment in Africa.

The panelists were award-winning environmental journalist, Elise Tempelhoff and Dr Nehemiah Latolla, a Phytochemist at Nelson Mandela University.

Latolla last year won the FameLab International Competition. Dubbed the “Pop Idols of Science”, it is intended to inspire and develop young scientists and engineers to engage with the public. His award-winning FameLab presentation provides insight into using indigenous medicinal plants to treat diabetes.

Tight deadlines

Facilitating the discussions, Inglis spoke about scientists and journalists having very different priorities, and how, in a sense, they spoke a “different language”. Yet they needed to find ways to work together to “get good science out to the public”.

He asked Tempelhoff about the difficulties she faced dealing with scientists as well as deadline pressures and other headaches of her job.

“You are always fighting with someone,” said Tempelhoff, of the contested terrain her reporting traverses. (She covers everything from conservation and the endangered wildlife trade, to environmental degradation, and oil and gas exploration.)

The former Netwerk24 staff journalist turned freelancer, seemed cheerfully resigned to the adversarial nature of her work, but told of how tight daily newspaper deadlines, the demise of in-house specialist beat reporters, and the competing demands of a “torrent” of stories, meant there was no time for pouring over lengthy research papers. She limited herself to reading in full only the executive summary, and the conclusion; the rest of the paper she scanned.

But the burden of care could not be escaped, and Tempelhoff stressed it was vital science reporters understood what they were writing about; they should never view themselves merely as a conduit.

“I am not just communicating; I must be critical. I can’t just copy and paste and just translate (into Afrikaans). I have to look at the different sides of the story,” she said. To help her with this task, particularly when working against the clock, she prized scientists who could send her explanations of their work in terms so lucid, that Grade 10 pupils could grasp it.

Fact checking

Inglis wanted to know about Tempelhoff’s fact-checking routines. “Do you give your interviewees a chance to look at the material? A lot of scientists feel they were misrepresented in the final piece,” he said, referring to the changes that happened in the news and copy-editing processes, after a reporter has filed a story.

Tempelhoff said she does not usually share her stories before publication. “I will talk a lot (with the interviewee) and make sure ... I am very careful. If it is a very difficult story, and I am not sure, I will send it to the scientists,” she said, but noted that some academics exceeded fact-checking and began fiddling with the semantics of a story.

She said building trust was important and off-the-record briefs must remain sacred. However, journalists should find ways to work background – which provided valuable context – into their stories, “without compromising the trust”.

She wondered why South Africa’s climate scientists were “very quiet at the moment”, instead of sharing their work, and questioned why journalists were sometimes excluded from important scientific get-togethers, despite a clear public interest. Here she mentioned an annual week-long meeting of researchers at the Kruger National Park. “We are not allowed there. We need to know what is going on. Sometimes we don’t even know the scientists who are working there,” she said.

People connection

She said scientists also needed to appreciate that journalists were always on the lookout for science stories that people could personally relate to. “How will the drug improve my life? Why does it matter? Will the research improve the human condition?”

“Why do scientists do science?” Tempelhoff asked, grappling with a question from Inglis about how communicators could make a human connection in their writing about sometimes very technical science. “Don’t they do it to improve the human con-

dition? And if something can improve the human condition you write stories about that ... stories that grab the imaginations of a reader.”

Although there was plenty of research that fitted this bill, “scientists don’t know who to contact”, she said.

The solution lay partly in scientists getting to know specialist journalists better. They should send news and tip-off to the specialists directly, she said, rather than to harried news editors and managers, where “it disappears in a big bin, a big email inbox”.

Self-promotion

Similarly, Tempelhoff felt journalists get over any qualms they might have about self-publicity.

She said as much as she loathed self-promotion, it puts her on researchers’ radars. And, with time, as they develop mutual trust, there was a better chance of important findings reaching the public.

To improve the odds of this happening further, Tempelhoff suggested scientists simplify their communication.

Latolla agreed but said this was often easier said than done. “We are trained to make the findings speak for themselves” and to communicate “without bias and personal opinion”. He appreciated this often fitted poorly with the media’s efforts to “tell the human story”.

Larger context

Then there was the problem of scale and context.

“Science looks at small areas of a larger context. But the media is interested in the context. The media goes straight to the ‘so-what question’, which puts scientists in a tight position,” said Latolla.

Scientists could appear frustratingly diffident (from a media perspective) too. But Latolla said they spoke about “we”, rather than “I” for good reason: they were wary of claiming the credit for what was often a team effort.

Certainly, scientists were well aware of the possible bigger implications of their research but were anxious “not to overstate or oversell”. With experience they came to be mindful of their own ignorance, having learnt that everything “could change tomorrow based on a small factor” and they may have to retract.

On the other hand, he quipped that, “We (researchers) have no problem stating implications when applying for funding. We should sit back and think of that!”

Latolla also acknowledged that some scientists found dealing with necessarily interrogative journalists daunting. This was especially true of early-career scientists who worried about their own plausibility.

Misinformation

Drawing on his own observations of science communication during the Covid-19 pandemic, Latolla said; a “great deal of misinformation” arose because “scientists were not effective in telling their stories”, and this had left the public podium to politicians.

A relatively recent convert to Twitter, Latolla spoke about how the medium was useful for scientists to get their messages to the

public. It also created networks of researchers and others, including journalists, who followed particular subjects.

Inglis pointed out “science is changing, and knowledge is changing” and he wanted to know how scientists and journalists should communicate to a public that sought certainty. He also spoke about how scientists took pains to guard against “overstatement”. Research or medicine approval processes, for example, take years but journalists focus on the immediate.

Latolla said a research project was generally focused on a small part of a very complex system. Other research in different areas might expose small contradictions, “but that’s fine”. “We need to move out of the idea of wanting certainty,” he said, “as we learnt from the Covid experience. We need to become comfortable with uncertainty.”

He suggested communicators take a nuanced line: “At this point we know this. This might change but these are the measures we are taking now.”

Due process

Before Covid many in the public were ignorant of the systems of pre-trials and trials that preceded the roll-out of medicine. And in the context of his own work, developing treatments for diabetes, people – journalists included – were frequently unaware of the money that was required, and the bureaucracy that must first be surmounted before one takes a plant with medicinal properties and puts it on a pharmacy shelf.

“We can do a better job, maybe, talking about the process,” he said. And there is a lot of work needed to be done by the media and scientists to build trust, Latolla added. “Trust is the key going forward to a better engagement.”

The monthly Tipping Points webinars are covered by a team of young Roving Reporters and scientists enrolled on an environmental journalism training project supported by Jive Media Africa. To join the project, contact Roving Reporters Director, Fred Kockott via WhatsApp on +27 83 277 807 or email fredk@rovingreporters.co.za.

The next Tipping Points webinar on March 30 will consider what makes a good proposal for young scientists who want to apply for the annual \$150 000 Jennifer Ward Oppenheimer (JWO) research grant. The grant is awarded to an early career scientist whose research facilitates solutions to African challenges with a strong link to biodiversity and conservation.

Also read: *Food for Thought for 2023; Changing the narrative on conservation.*



Phytochemist, Dr Nehemiah Latolla. Photo: Supplied

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Southern African Python

Johan Marais
African Snakebite Institute

Movies like Anaconda have many people believing that there are an abundance of giant snakes measuring well over 20m in length, and that many people are killed by them. The longest venomous snake in the world is the Reticulated python from Asia, and that reaches close on 8m in length, while the bulkiest snake is the Green Anaconda. It rarely reaches a length of 6,5 m.

People often speak of the African Rock Python but that refers to an East African Python (*Python sebae*). The Southern African Python (*Python natalensis*) used to be a subspecies of *Python sebae* but was elevated to full species status many years ago. Our python inhabits bushveld regions and does not favour rocks. While the literature mentions a maximum length of close on 6m, such large individuals are exceptionally rare, and in all my years of working with snakes in Southern Africa, I have never encountered a Southern African Python of over 5m in length.

Python attacks in Southern Africa are very rare, and on the odd occasion when a python does bite someone, it is always quick to release and move off, leaving teeth punctures that bleed profusely. The Southern African Python has around 84 sharp recurved teeth, and in cases where snake handlers get a good bite and pull the snake off, they often need to be stitched up. Fatal bites are unheard of, and the last recorded fatal python attack in South Africa was back in the 70's, when a young man who was looking after cattle was attacked and the snake coiled around him. His friend ran off to call for help and by the time they returned 20 minutes later, the young man had died.

Pythons are ambush hunters – they find a good spot where mammals and other warm-blooded prey pass by and hide in dense vegetation or grass where they wait patiently for a meal. This could take days or even weeks. When a prey animal like a monkey, large bird or small antelope passes within striking distance, the snake latches out, grabs its meal with its recurved teeth and quickly throws a few coils around it. The animal is not crushed nor is it slowly suffocated. The tight coils prevent the heart from functioning and death is quite quick. Bones are seldom broken in this process. This is also the only snake in South Africa that has heat sensors on the upper lip. It is like infra-red vision and enables the snake to detect warm-blooded prey in pitch darkness.

Prey is swallowed whole and head-first. If it is an antelope with horns, the antelope is swallowed head-first and the head is not left to rot off, as is often believed. Once a large meal is consumed the snake will move off to some dense bush where it will remain for a week or two while the meal is digested. If disturbed, it usually regurgitates its meal, and this could be problematic when an antelope with sharp horns was swallowed.

Should you ever be fortunate enough to come across a python swallowing an antelope or any other large meal, remain at least 50m away, otherwise the snake may regurgitate its meal. Horns, hoofs, and hair is not digested but passed out with faecal matter.

Females get much bulkier and longer than males, and mating takes place in winter or early spring. A large female will lay 30-60 (or more than one hundred eggs) every year or two. The eggs are roughly the size of a tennis ball and are soft and leathery. Upon laying the female python loses more than a third of her body mass, and she then remains coiled around her eggs for the next three months.

Females with eggs go very dark in colour as they bask during the day and then share the heat with their eggs. Pythons favour aardvark holes and may return to the same hole year after year to lay their eggs. When the young are fully developed, they cut the shell from the inside with an egg tooth, that is situated in the front of the premaxillary bone, stick the head out of the egg and shed the egg tooth, and then absorb as much yolk as possible to keep them alive for the first few weeks while they seek their first meal. Hatchling pythons measure 50-70cm in length, and may remain with the female for a few days before they move off to find suitable habitat with sufficient food. Female snakes do not look after their babies.

The Southern African Python in a protected species in all provinces – it is usually protected by provincial laws, but is also covered by the Threatened or Protected Species Act. It is not endangered or threatened in any way, and is locally abundant, but many individuals are killed while crossing roads and sold to traditional healers.



1. Southern African Python
2. Heat sensory pits visible on the upper lip.
3. The python's sharp teeth
4. Pythons are often found in or near water
5. Breeding site of a Python near Dinokeng

Images: Johan Marais

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The Cape Vulture Lodge



Travel Correspondent

The name of the lodge is deeply engrained in the ethos of this place. Besides ensuring responsible, sustainable tourism, everyone here is dedicated to the conservation of more than 650 breeding pairs of the endangered Cape Vulture. These wonderful creatures nest on the towering cliffs of the northern Drakensberg range, right above the lodge. It's all part of the 1800ha Cape Vulture Conservancy, just 26km from Hoedspruit.

Lodge Open Days and the one year celebration

At the beginning of March 2023, the first Open Day at Cape Vulture Lodge was arranged. Guests had a chance to view the majestic Cape Vultures soaring above them. Thereafter they were spoilt at the beautiful lodge with homegrown, organic food, straight from the Permaculture Farm.

The lodges' one year anniversary dawns on the 10th of April this year. What a year it has been! There have been so many things that the lodge is grateful for, and so many

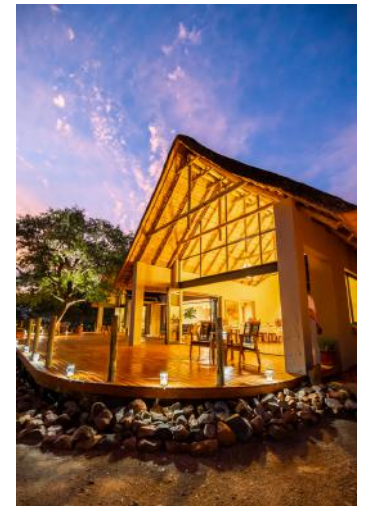
things still to look forward to. This has only become possible with the help of a great team!

Permaculture farm

The permaculture farm has grown tremendously through the summer season. The soil fertility program is in full swing and is now able to facilitate the production of an ever-increasing array of exciting plant species. An example is one incredible plant – the indigenous Wild Ginger. This has expanded unbelievably since the inception

and will be ready to be dug up in winter. This powerfully potent, and critically threatened southern African gem, is going to have production increased for a few years, after which the Farm will become a sustainable supplier of this precious plant to indigenous healers and lay people alike.

Be sure to visit the lodge to see the vultures and the weird and wonderful plants they are cultivating.

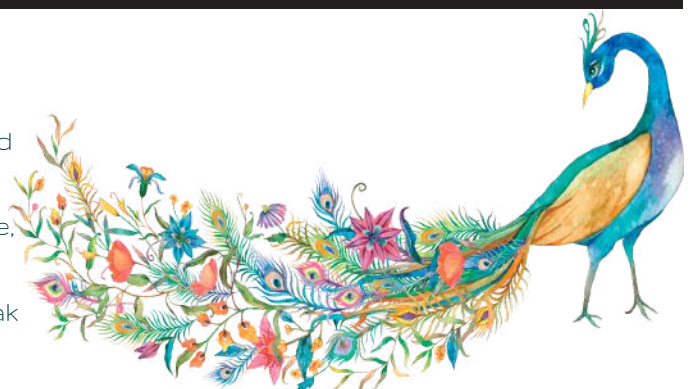


A vulture's eye view of the Cape Vulture Permaculture farm (above left) and the team harvesting bananas (middle).

The lodge (above) | Images supplied



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Mocambique – a birding jewel, especially after Freddy!



Racket-tailed roller

Image : eBird

Mike Meidlinger

With the rains in full force this month, 2023 held an unusual twist for us in the northeast of the country. A ten-day period of almost solid downpours was the result of cloud burst conditions. These were held in place mercilessly by tropical systems pushing in from the east, which met a blockade of cold fronts from the west, culminating in record amounts of rainfall for the region. A dry end to the month was sorely welcomed by all.

Days were undoubtedly at their darkest, with the anticipation of yet another, now almost annual cyclone, this year named as Freddy. This large tightly wound low pressure system hit Madagascar broadside as a world-news-worthy Category 5, before limping across the island to the Mozambique Channel. On its way, it gained strength as it passed right over isolated atolls, and the tiny Europa Island, before making landfall on continental soil as a severe tropical storm. This true force of nature hit our resilient white-sand and palm tree laden neighbour, with little to no effect on locals, but it did bring a number of top-class rare birds to those few who happened to be in the country for the storms arrival.

Rafts of aerial kite-like Greater and Lesser Frigatebirds, with their two-metre wingspan, and half metre long forked tails, caught the currents for hours on end as the winds howled. These incredible kleptoparasitic birds (they steal food from others) dropped in, in small groups or passed a select few dune banks, where tallies of mixed flocks at one site reached into the high 80's. These species are normally true vagrants at best to any part of the South African coastline, only showing up during these horrendous conditions. Occurrences like these are some of the one-hit wonder spectacles offered for the lucky few along the underexplored, and relatively underbirded, Portuguese-speaking nation's untapped coastline.

Another iconic species, that was seen by several lucky individuals in vast numbers on the fringes of Freddy, was the large and stunning Sooty Tern. A species of the tropical Indian Ocean, this bird is one of those that send pulses racing for novice, and experienced birders alike. On the morning that Freddy moved inland there were two reports of crazy numbers of these birds, one of 500 at one site, and at least 200 to 300 at another nearby! Hundreds of these incredible pelagic birds, unfamiliar with true land as they were, were seen already making their way back out to sea, and towards their sandy spit of a colony that lay several hundred kilometres away.

Vagrant-chasing in the face of a major storm is not encouraged or advised, but one thing that is worth mentioning is the wealth

of birds that can be found in Mozambique. This is especially true for those who already travel to this rural but charismatic nation for breaks or holidays.

The southern part of the country, which is surprisingly large, is still safe from troubles high up towards the Tanzanian border and offers a range of unique and special species. Many of these are sought-after birds only found within South Africa at isolated sites, but are much more readily and reliably seen here, plus a few true isolated and often threatened gems.

For many, the unknown conditions of roads, slow borders and corrupt traffic officials have all been reasons advocating other destinations. However, largely and in most cases, these are things of the past. The Lebombo Border Post at Komatipoort is now open 24 hours a day, all week, with freight vehicles being separated into a different system from cars, coaches, and minibuses.

Weekend days and peak times can be very busy, but for the most part, if in a lull, it can take an average of an hour or less to pass through and enter the immediately different landscape. Main arterial roads, having had foreign investment, are now excellent with adequate sign boarding and several relatively cheap toll gates.

These tolls are numerous but cheap and take a number of currencies at a set exchange rate. By joining organisation's like DriveMoz, by knowing what equipment is nationally required to be within a private vehicle, and by adhering to speed limits indicated, there is little to no trouble with the local law enforcement officials who are in plain sight and wear their uniforms with pride.

So that's the background and ease of travel within the country.

Food supplies are often basic, and it is advised to bring from South Africa when coming in for a stay of several days, but fuel is easily accessible, as are local sim cards and internet data.

With that all in mind, one is now set and prepared for a road trip through the best birding spots that this region of our sub-region has to offer. Building knowledge of these places, the species they hold, and the absolute top-class specials to focus on, is highly valuable when busy driving between major hotspots.

These top areas include the Maputo area, the zone around and north of Inharrime as well as on the way to, and adjacent to, Vilanculos. To reach and give due attention to these areas, at least four or five days would be adequate, with a week being optimal. If looking for a sneaky slice of ocean air and the sound of waves breaking over sandy beaches, along with some good birding, Maputo and its surroundings can be covered well, over a weekend. Here busy mornings and evenings of birding can be

matched with a little time carved out for relaxation and recuperation for those of us who enjoy things like that.

Around the capital city, a modern-day Delagoa Bay as it were, a mere two and half to three hours reach from Nelspruit, there are several great sites for adding some exciting species to one's list. The top spot is surely that of Macaneta, a tourist resort popular with South Africans, and just to the north of the ring road round the city. With lovely sandy beaches on the ocean side, the best birding is to be had inland of the coast itself, in the saltmarsh areas leading up to the resort. Common, but mouth-watering species that can be found here include Rosy-throated Longclaw, a special that is normally tricky in South Africa, as well as Black Coucal, Rufous-bellied Heron, Rufous-winged Cisticola, African Marsh Harrier and Red-headed Quelea. Blue-cheeked Bee-eaters are all over the place in summer, while Collared Pinnacoles are plentiful alongside a wide range of other waterbirds. The other major regions close to the city include Inhaca Island, serviced by a daily ferry, that holds a breeding colony of Olive Bee-eaters around the dunes of the hotel on the island. If explored well, species like Sooty Falcon and Mangrove Kingfisher can also be found here. The Special Elephant Reserve offers pristine sand forest and its range of Zululand-like species, but this is an intrepid destination with 4x4 being essential for any access at all.

The bustling rather rudimentary town of Inharrime, lying squarely between Xai Xai and Inhambane, lies in the middle between two relatively essential stops for those on the hunt for new birds. Firstly, around 60km north of the town lies the ever-diminishing miombo-like woodland around the rural village of Panda. This area has long been famed by birders for its one true beauty, the rare and localized, almost warbler-like, Olive-headed Weaver, as well as a range of birds that are highly localized in South Africa. Quality species like White-breasted Cuckooshrike, Neergaard's Sunbird, Southern Hyliota, Red-faced Crombec and Racket-tailed Roller, are all common here and are usually found while searching for the rare and elusive Weaver. Wetlands on the way to Panda offer a reliable chance to see the highly prized and incredibly cryptic, thus rarely seen Great Bittern! This, as well as offering other wetland birds like herons, waders, rallids and even Swamp Nightjar during hours of darkness.

North of Inharrime lies the excellent accommodation provided at Dunes De Dove-la, which lies around 20km from town. Solid chalets sit on a private dune looking out over the vast ocean, and these are surrounded by a small patch of forest. The birding here is excellent with breeding African Hobby in palm trees leading up to the lodge. This area is also excellent for Sooty Falcon, Dickinson's Kestrel and the elusive Collared Palm Thrush. The forests trails here support a relict population of the beautiful Black-headed Apalis. These birds are no less than 1000km from other members of their species further north towards the Zambezi. Here too are other species such as Livingstone's Flycatcher, Plain-backed Sunbird, Little Green Woodpecker and Eastern Nicator.

Lastly the region around Unguane towards Vilanculos is worth serious effort and time for the only chance at the elusive and highly sought after Green Tinkerbird, while other species at this stop include hirundines like Mottled and Bohm's Spinetail. Vilanculos, and more correctly the infamous San Sebastián Peninsula, Rattray Point, and the beautiful ocean reserve that are adjacent to it, is a mecca for birders. This small area is a great place to find several top specials found nowhere else in the region. The reserve is best accessed from the base that is The Sanctuary. This typically tropical loca-

tion lies two hours drive from the highway, towards a remote sandy precipice of land jutting out awkwardly into the blue beyond. Birds found here around the lodge include Mangrove Kingfisher, Olive Bee-eater and Collared Palm Thrush. A chartered boat trip to Rattray, as well as offering a chance to glimpse the rare Dugong, often yields the only reliable Saunder's Tern, Crab Plover, and Eurasian Oystercatcher the whole of Southern Africa has to offer.

Despite its remote nature in some ways, Mozambique is truly a fantastic place to spend some time. Birding here can be challenging but can be extremely rewarding for those who are inspired by some of the top species available.

For travellers who enjoy adventure, taking the unbeaten path and who are rugged by nature, birding in Mozambique offers a great way to enjoy a proper road trip. For those of us that like to take the uncertainty out of birding, and have the best chances at finding tricky specials, it is also worth considering joining a birding tour group. These have set departure dates, operating with South African clientele in mind, and are run by two major companies, namely Bustards Birding and those run by Etienne Marais.

Whether popping in for a weekend, on a holiday break with mates, in search of a rugged into-Africa adventure, or simply heart-set on seeing the birds the country has to offer, Mozambique is more than just a beach or fishing destination. It has much to offer those of us bitten by the birding bug, and who need exciting new species. Birding itself can be a totally new way of experiencing a country that some may have visited many times before.

This month, while flicking or having a look through books and apps, watch out for birds that excite and send the pulses racing, whether they be found locally or over borders. Chances are they are all within reach for those willing to try.



Sooty Tern

Image: observation.org



Rosy-throated Longclaw

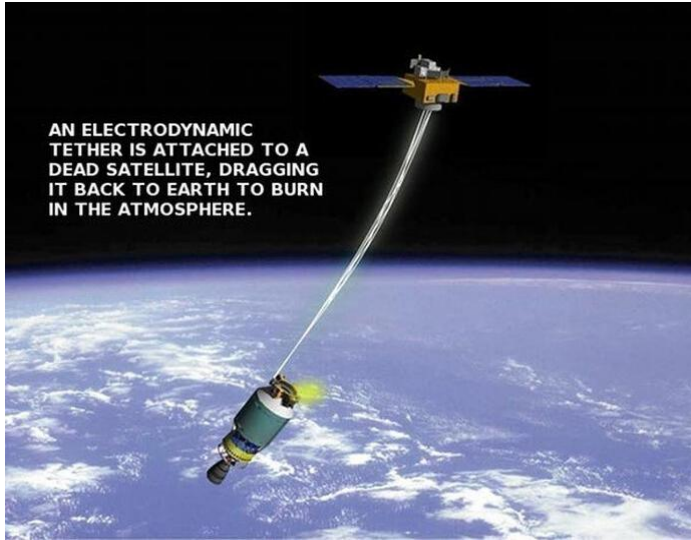
Image: African Bird Club



Crab Plover

Image: eBird

The conservation of space



Ben Coley

Traditionally, conservation concerns and practices have focused on terrestrial issues. We are all well aware of the plight of many species, great and small, due to human activities such as pollution, urbanisation, industry and a general lack of ethical consideration. However, as our technology evolves, the human race's influence is expanding well beyond the classic biosphere of the Earth.

The first satellite, Sputnik 1, left the Earth's atmosphere on 4th of October 1957. In the 70 years since its launch, mankind has slowly added to this once monumental achievement, by populating Earth's orbit with thousands of satellites, their uses as varied as their form. Currently, there are in excess of 9 000 satellites circling the Earth, performing all manner of tasks from monitoring weather and climatic conditions, facilitating communications, to aiding in navigational systems.

Some of the most famous examples, many of which are visible from Earth as pin-pricks of light moving across the sky, include old rocket boosters, the Iridium Constellation (responsible for satellite phone communications), the Hubble, and other space telescopes, the International Space Station, and of course, the ever-growing number of SpaceX 'Starlink' satellites, intended to provide worldwide internet coverage.

While it is an unavoidable reality of modern day life, the continuing launches and growing number of man-made objects in low Earth orbit comes at a price. Not only do they play havoc with research telescopes and cameras, but satellites do not live forever, and once defunct, they can become a liability for current and future space ventures.

Objects in low Earth orbit are circling our planet at around 30 000 km/h. That is close to ten times faster than a typical bullet! At this speed, even a tiny object can become a lethal projectile, capable of causing catastrophic damage to anything in its path. As our orbit becomes more congested, the risk becomes more palpable, and incidents are on the inevitable increase.

In 2009, two communication satellites, one from the United States and one from Russia, accidentally collided with each other travelling at an otherworldly 42 000 km/h! The impact destroyed both bodies, turning the two objects into a mass of over 2 000 fragments of potentially lethal debris.

In 2021, the Russians tested the capabilities of their anti-satellite defence system by destroying an old satellite with a guided missile. The test was successful, but its aftermath created a debris field of hundreds of thousands of hypervelocity projectiles, orbiting the planet every 90 minutes! A

few months later, the International Space Station was forced to take evasive action to avoid this debris cloud, with authorities ordering the onboard astronauts to shelter in their docked spaceship, in case the hull was damaged and a quick escape was necessary.

Only days ago, the ISS had to fire its thrusters in order to change its position to avoid a rogue satellite in a decaying orbit. Since 1999, thirty two evasive manoeuvres have had to be performed in response to potential collisions. As the number of orbital objects increases, the likelihood of a catastrophic event also multiples.

Perhaps the deadliest scenario is known as the Kessler Syndrome. This hypothesises the very real probability, that multiple collisions set off a chain reaction of events, that will ultimately render vast swathes of Earth's orbit unusable. Any of you that have watched the movie 'Gravity', will have witnessed the worst case scenario, as their shuttle is completely destroyed by space junk hurtling along their orbit like a barrage of supersonic artillery shells.

In lieu of this threat, the United States Department of Defence tracks over 27 000 items over four inches in size, keeping a careful eye on their trajectories! Currently, there are estimated to be in excess of 100 million objects over one millimetre in size racing around the globe every 90 minutes or so! Whilst this size may sound insignificant, this is more than capable than chipping the reinforced window of a space shuttle or space station. Remember the words of Dalai Lama ... "If you think you are too small to make a difference, try sleeping with a mosquito".

The following photograph is a simulation of what happens to a block of aluminium when hit at orbital speed by an object the size of a pea!

The problem then is simple. If we do not make an effort to alleviate and caution against this new world threat, vast tracts of our orbit will become unusable. Unfortunately, mankind's history in utilising resources sustainably is not good, and as we continue to cast our net of influence wider into the surrounding neighbourhood, it is imperative that we protect it. Some of these objects will slowly fall towards our upper atmosphere and burn up, but this can take years, and is hardly a proactive measure. There is hope however, that we have learned from our previous mistakes, and that we can pre-empt these problems before they become too great to alleviate.

Such is severity of this issue, NASA and many other organisations, governments and scientists have called for an international treaty, to protect the sanctity of the space above our planet in order to safeguard future space missions, and continue to enjoy the current benefits we receive

WHEN EAST MET WEST

At 5pm on Tuesday the satellites crash above Siberia travelling at at least 15,000mph. A cloud of debris is created threatening other craft and the International Space Station

THE RUSSIAN SATELLITE

- Cosmos 2251
- Military communications
- Weight: 1 ton
- Launched: 1993
- Stopped working: 1995
- Orbit: 490 miles above Earth
- Velocity: 15,000mph

THE U.S. SATELLITE

- Iridium
- Civilian mobile phones
- Weight: 1,500lb
- Launched: 1997
- Orbit: 485 miles above Earth
- Velocity: 16,842mph
- One of 66 launched

Both were in polar orbits circling Earth every two hours

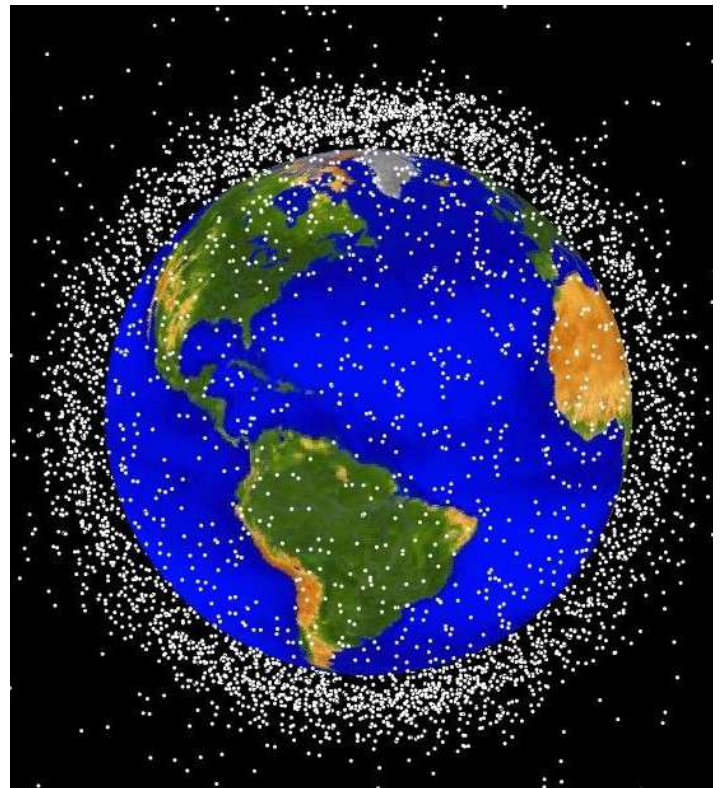
from today's satellites, be they related to health, communications, security, information or the economy. Whether or not an official accord will be reached remains to be seen, but it is heartening to know that proposals are being made and hopefully step will be taken.

In addition to these bureaucratic proposals, various companies are experimenting with innovative new technologies to combat the current problem. JAXA, the Japanese Space Agency, is testing a space whip that is designed to grab objects from orbit. Other proposals include nets, magnets and even harpoons, as well as small crafts that can grab pieces and relocate them to safer

or decaying orbits.

If we have learned anything from the past few centuries, it is that humans make a mess, and just because space is large and uninhabited, it is no reason for nonchalance. Out of sight should not be out of mind, and for the first time in our history, the conservation of space can be implemented before the situation becomes dire. Space is our next frontier, and respecting the narrow band above our atmosphere is vital for our future technology, endeavours and exploration.

See *Celestial Events SA* advert for contact details



- Space Whip (top left) Image supplied
- Satellite Collision (top right) Image: Daily Mail
- Space Junk (above) Image supplied
- Space projectile (left) Image supplied

More on our local small Lycaenid butterflies

Ian Sharp

The Lycaenid family of butterflies (commonly called 'Blues' even though not all display this colouration) is the largest, with great variety and a host of different life history types. In this short piece, I will continue to highlight certain species that have peculiar aspects in their life histories or are just particularly interesting from some behavioural points or aesthetical colouration.

The predatory behaviour of the Woolly Legs larvae is unusual for a group of organisms that are generally considered to be herbivores in their larval stages. The adult female will deposit her eggs in close proximity to groups of bugs from the Hilda spp. (Tettigometridae) of nymphs. The Woolly Leg larvae that hatch take on the predatory method of foraging by actively hunting the Hilda spp. nymphs that are feeding on the sap of, for example, the Potato Bush (*Phyllanthus reticulatus*).

The yellow-coloured Spotted Pentila (*Pentila tropicalis*), a reasonably rare find, was only believed to occur in KwaZulu-Natal with another subspecies found in the Soutpansberg Mountain area. In this area the Pentila was first found at Franklyn Park in 2010, and then further sightings were made on the Eden farm, Fleur de Lys farm (along the Klaserie River), and then at the Otters

Den Lodge and Blyde Botanical Reserve, both along the Blyde River. During this time, on a visit to the Lowveld Botanical Gardens, a Spotted Pentila was the first butterfly spotted. Since these discoveries, the Pentila has been recorded at a number of localities along the foothills of the Drakensberg Mountain all the way to Barberton.

The larvae of the Spotted Pentila feed on cyanobacterial algae that are part of the symbiosis with fungi forming the lichen. Eggs are laid near lichen growing on tree bark, and the well camouflaged larvae then feed on the lichen and hide in the crevices of the tree bark. Other of cyanobacteria-feeding butterfly species that may be seen locally are Pennington's Buff (*Cnodontes penningtoni*) and Yellow Zulu (*Alaena amazoula*). A more well-known species of cyanobacterial feeders is the rare Wolkberg Zulu (*Alaena margaritacea*) found at only two localities around Haenertsberg.

The Hutchinson's High-flier (*Aphnaeus hutchinsonii*) is an exquisite small butterfly with striking colouration and patterning. The males of this species are often found active on high lying areas hence the term 'hill-topping'. The females are more prevalent around the larval host plants and will fly up to the top of hills where the males are located. After getting the attention of a male, they fly-off to mate, the female returning to the larval host plant locations.

Woodhall (2005) describes hill-topping as

follows: 'a well-known butterfly behaviour associated with male location. Males compete for hilltop territories, then perch on prominent features such as twigs. Females ascend the hills to seek out the dominant individuals'.

The wild fig trees (*Ficus* spp.), a common feature of the Hoedspruit area, provides of fruit bounty to many wildlife species. A variety of Lepidoptera species have these trees as larval host plants including the striking Fig-tree Blues. The larvae of the Common Fig-tree Blue (*Myrina selinus*) are colourful but very well camouflaged and often difficult to spot due to the cryptic colouration. But the pièce de resistance, is the adults in their splendid coat of vibrant colour! Wings tipped with chestnut-orange and the remainder filled with iridescent blue, and with the hindwing ending in a long, slightly twisted broad tail, complete the colourful package. The males also have the tendency to hill-top, occupying prominent locations that they defend against other males.

Another one of the brightly coloured hill-toppers is the Bar butterfly group. The Natal Bar (*Cigaritis natalensis*) is one of the more common Bars found in our area. The forewing has intricate patterning of dark brown and orange covering most of the forewing, while the hindwing is dominated by iridescent blue. The trailing edge of each hindwing has a pair of small tails and, combined with an eyespot nearby, give an impres-

sion of a false head - a mechanism to fool predators into attacking the wrong end of the butterfly. When at rest the butterfly will continuously move the hindwings, imitating the movement of antennae enhancing the 'false head' effect.

A butterfly considered a rare find, Juanita's Hairtail (*Anthene crawshyi juanita*) was for many years considered to only occur along the Olifants River at the Manoutsa Resort below the Strydom Tunnel. Having *Senegalia polycantha* (white thorn) as its larval host plant, meant that it was also restricted to riverine habitats. However, as recent as 2011, a colony of this species was discovered in the Lekgalameetse Nature Reserve, a discovery that probably secures the future of this species that was considered critically endangered. Considering how many Lepidopterists have visited this reserve over many decades, it is amazing that this species has only been recorded so recently.

Many of the Lycaenids (for example the coppers and skollys) may be considered drab, with no dramatic colouration or intriguing life history aspects. However, they all form part of some ecosystem somewhere in this naturally diverse country of ours. Respect these creatures as they contribute in a big way to the pollination of wildflowers primarily and, even though often destructive in the larval stages (from our humanistic perspective), require that we attend to their preservation just as much as what we may do for a rhino.



Balanites maughamii – the green thorn or y-thorn torchwood

Brett Heasman
Guiding Naturally

Pre-paid electricity is something I have removed from my monthly expenses because you can't be spending the units if there is no supply! This month's tree may be the real alternative to sitting in the dark. A certain Mr Maugham, a British Consul in southern Mozambique, discovered this specimen in the early 1900s – a man that discovered a possible bright future for us and our modern-day needs.

The green thorn or torchwood, is a particularly easy tree to identify. These impressive trees can grow to 20m tall and have an amazing upright, buttressed trunk, which is easy to recognize, and are in most cases easy to set them apart from other trees, just on the shape of the fluted trunk. The other very recognizable way to identify this tree, is the zigzag branchlets that have an impressive armoury of unequally forked spines, that look like the y-shaped fork of the tongue of a snake. These forks have a brown colour change towards the sharp end.

During the months from July to November, one may be lucky enough to see the amazing star shaped flowers that are occur in small clusters on the leaf axils. The flowers have 5 sepals, 10 stamens and the ovary is 5-chambered, with one seed in each chamber. These flowers are scented and are an easy identifiable feature of this tree.

The drupe is a distinctly grooved acorn-shaped fruit, hence the Greek genus name Balanites. The fruit is green and hairy when unripe, and then turns to the brownish yellow colour between May and July. The bitter flesh covers a large, hard, stone kernel.

The tree can be found in small colonies in the bushveld, sand forest, on sandstone outcrops, along riverbanks, near springs and around pans.

The common name 'torchwood' is derived from the impressive bright flame that the dry kernels produce when burnt and was/is commonly used as a torch. The drupe yields a colourless oil that burns well, that can light the house up when 'EeishKom' decides to flick the switch in the most impractical time of our lives - a natural cost-effective way to see the future!

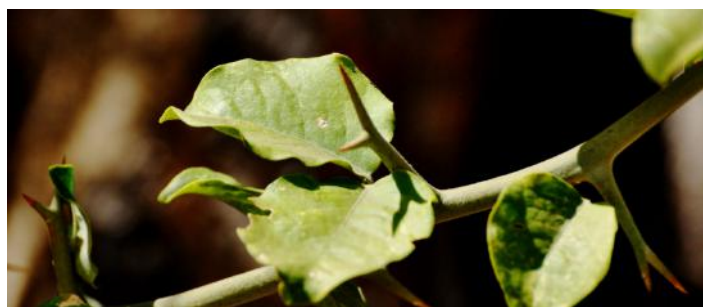
Elephants love eating the fruits along with other animals such as monkeys, baboons, warthogs, porcupines, kudus, and other antelope. The fruit is edible, but not a favourite commodity.

Like most plants, traditional and medicinal are used in a variety of ways within different cultures. The roots are used as an enema in a variety of methods, but that can't be that fun. Some traditional 'sangomas' and witch doctors use the roots and bark together with other plants, such as the potato bush. These are soaked in water and beaten to a froth. The froth is then gulped and swallowed to help improve one's sight. The froth can also be tossed into one's house three times daily to ward off evil spirits. I can't wait for the future of traditional medicine, perhaps one will be able ward off corruption, and the electricity will then return!

The green drupe also yields a powerful poison (harmless to humans) which is lethal to freshwater aquatic animals like fish, tadpoles, and snails. Farmers have planted these trees to reduce water snails that can carry bilharzia.

Because of its oily and lubricative qualities, some cultures soak the tree in water for a rejuvenating and refreshing bath. One could also light the torch with the oil and enjoy a good soak whilst waiting for the power to come back on.

This is a very green tree, with a bright future.



Torchwood tree (top)

Image: Bev Oscroft - Own work, CC BY-SA Wikimedia

Thorns and leaves of the torchwood or green thorn (above)

Image: Tree SA

How do baby animals develop skills and compete with each other?



Hyena mom and cub
Image : Ganva pro

The young cubs or pups of predators are very entertaining to watch as they chase one another around, harass and attack other members of the group, and stalk and pounce on inanimate objects. This playfulness is nature's way of ensuring that the youngsters develop muscles and dexterity, practise and hone reactions and techniques, and gain confidence in their abilities - all of which will come into use when they learn to hunt. Initially, before they accompany the adults on hunts and have the chance to learn by observation, they rely on the instinct to pursue movement. In all predators the urge to stalk, hunt or chase a moving object is innate and entirely removed from the urge to eat. At this stage,

and as they mature, youngsters will stalk, chase and pounce on one another, their parents, insects, vegetation moving in the wind, tortoises, the flicking ear or tail of an adult, or anything else that is moving and offers a challenge. This instinctive urge to subdue anything that moves close to them is vital for later survival. Once they start to observe hunts in action, they mimic biting techniques on one another or unamused adults. These skills develop rapidly as they get a chance to participate in the hunt. Playfulness, which varies according to species, is also a vital form of bonding between siblings and adults.

The young of herbivores generally learn by observation and develop defence and fight-

ing skills through play-fighting. In most species, competition between siblings does not lead to injury or death, but in some species aggression leading to death of one or more babies is the norm.

Siblicide is the behaviour of siblings killing each other - usually one dominant animal killing one or two siblings. It was formerly called canism, the name derived from the biblical story where Cain killed his brother Abel. It is thought to be a way of one sibling proving its superiority and survival capabilities for not only itself but, more importantly, for the species as a whole. Once the 'test' has been passed and the sibling (or competitor) removed from the equation, then all parental care and energy is bestowed upon only the one individual. Because this places less pressure on the parents (in terms of supplying food and having time to teach the youngster survival skills), the chances of the youngster being successfully raised with the necessary life skills are greatly improved.

In spotted hyena, competition is very intense, and because they have a matriarchal society, this intensity is greatest between two sisters (they usually only have two cubs). One sister invariably kills the other in the quest for dominance. Hyena cubs or unusual carnivores in that they are born with fully erupted front teeth (incisors and canines), so they have some serious weapons and powerful jaws from day one with which

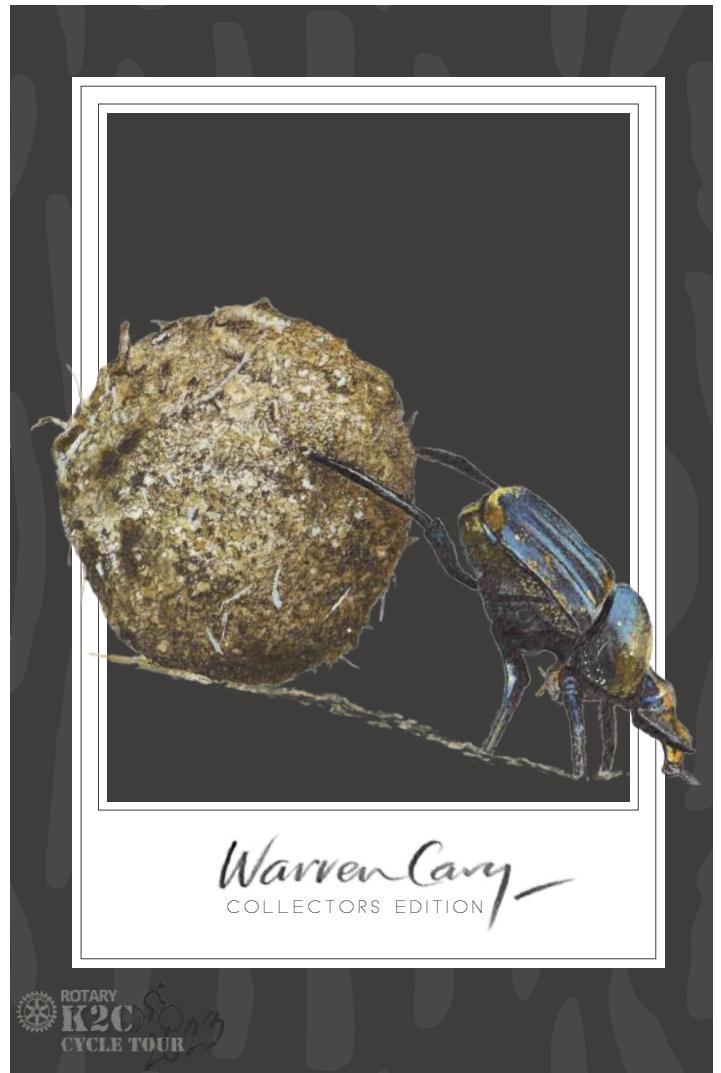
to attack siblings. Siblicide is common in many birds of prey (raptors) and other large birds such as ground hornbills.

In mammals, this behaviour tends to be **active siblicide** where the stronger and more dominant sibling physically attacks the weakest sibling, directly resulting in its death through injury. This is opposed to **passive siblicide** where there are food shortages and the dominant sibling steals what is offered - indirectly leading to death of the weaker sibling through starvation. This is far more common in birds where food is being brought back to the nest and the bigger and older chick, having hatched a few days earlier, is easily able to dominate the food source. In mammals, however, there is firstly no initial marked size differential between siblings as both are born at the same time, and secondly, they drink milk so there is no food being brought back to fight over.

As is the case with spotted hyena, there are two teats, and therefore a minimal chance for the one sibling to dominate the food source. They can, however, try to prevent their siblings getting to the teat area. As a result you will usually see spotted hyena siblings suckling with one at the belly area and the other accessing a nipple from between the hind legs of the mother.

Excerpts from 'Beat about the Bush – Mammals and Birds' by Trevor Carnaby, Published by Jacana Media, Second Edition reprint 2018.

Artist Warren Cary launches Collector's Edition K2C Cycle Tour Apparel



Lovelle Henderson

The Rotary K2C Cycle Tour has been raising funds for conservation and social upliftment programmes for the past 8 years. This year the Rotary Club is very excited to have collaborated with award winning wildlife artist Warren Cary, to design the first of the Collector's Edition Cycle Apparel for the 2023 K2C Cycle Tour. He has

agreed to design an exclusive set of cycle apparel for the Collector's Edition for the tour for the next 5 years.

The tour is limited to 100 riders, who will spend one day traversing 100km on the Timbavati, Thornybush and Kapama Big 5 reserves. The tour starts and finishes in Timbavati and follows a thrilling new circular route through pristine bushveld, where riders could encounter elephant and even

buffalo. Each rider will be presented with a designer cycle jersey and jacket. Designer shorts, technical t-shirts and other kit items are also available. The collection is also open for purchase to the riders' family and friends as part of additional fund raising for the event.

For this first year the *dung beetle* has been chosen to appear on the apparel and it also appears on all the stunning advertising

posters which Warren so painstakingly designed to match the gear. He has also created a lovely poster depicting a dung beetle rolling its dung ball, which will be made available for sale to all participants and supports of the event.

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Quote K2C News

SCS Djembe Drummers: beating beyond the bush

Local Correspondent

The African djembe drum originated in West Africa – ‘Dje’ means gather, and ‘be’ means everyone, which gave the drum used in these calls to order, its name. It resonates tradition, and is at the heart of many ceremonies and celebrations.

Similarly, the rhythmic drumming at Southern Cross Schools (SCS) runs through the ‘school’s blood’. On most days, if you are anywhere near the SCS premises, you will hear the sound of the drums reverberating through the surrounding bush.

Towards the end of 2004, Glynis Brooke and her husband made the ‘Great Trek’, leaving their farm on the outskirts of Johannesburg, and moving to Hoedspruit. Shortly after their move, Glynis was approached by the then headmaster, Jumbo Williams, to teach music at the school.

Although she had studied music at university level, Glynis had no teaching experience of any kind, but happily jumped into the deep end, and took up the position of part-time music teacher.

She was just beginning to find her feet teaching ‘normal’ music when Jumbo called her and presented her with a djembe drum, and asked her how much she knew about traditional ethnic drumming practices. Her answer was short and to the point. “Nothing!” Jumbo had plans and wanted to establish a core of musical practice at the school,

strongly centred around ethnic music. A whole new challenge lay ahead.

The First Beat

Glynis went to visit the ‘Drum Café’, in the old Bus Shed complex near the Market Theatre in Johannesburg and it was here that the lessons really began! Here she set her mind to learn as much as she could.

“It’s simple,” they told her. “Nothing to it – this is how it works ...” and they proceeded to demonstrate how to play djembe drums. The rules are simple - establish a beat, then break it up, get louder and softer, syncopate and innovate. There really is nothing that you can do wrong. In short, anything goes as long as you work within the beat.

Armed with her newly acquired insights, she began working with a small group of learners at SCS. There were only eight drummers to begin with, and what they lacked in experience and technique, they made up for in enthusiasm and energy.

Slowly the reputation of the drummers began to build, and today they were asked to perform at banquets, weddings, lodges, music eisteddfods, and regularly at Founders day and end of term functions.

The drummers became the idols of the school, and it was incredibly special to see the way the younger children looked up to them and aspired to be part of the drumming squad.

The SCS drummers began to earn a reputation in the area for their skilful drumming.



They were always well received at performances and competitions where they shared the great rhythms of Africa with enthusiasm and passion.

The squad continued to grow as the school grew, and soon there were two squads, one in the Prep School and one in the College, with the senior College team retaining a somewhat celebrity status amongst the learners.

is a prestigious ‘club’ to belong to. Auditions take place, and the best candidates became part of the senior squad where they develop from bass players to intermediate and finally to the centre seat, as leader.

Today, our brilliantly talented senior djembe drummers are a squad of fourteen, with a total of twenty eight in the College, and forty three up and coming drummers in the Prep School. Graeme Wuth, who was once a professional drummer himself, is now overseeing the senior drummers and focuses on pushing the technical aspect of the squad.

The traditions that were started almost 20 years ago remain deeply instilled in all the drummers, and they continue to grow and learn.

Amongst great excitement, they are about to embark on their first tour of Johannesburg where this story all began. Now is the time to share their beat beyond the bush.

Passing on the drum

Mrs Sandy Schulze took over the senior drumming squad in 2011, and suddenly it grew from a mere five drummers to as many as twenty one drummers. Their talent, passion and pure determination for perfection was contagious – something that filtered through from one drum leader to the next.

It grew so much that soon it was time to split the College drummers into two groups: junior drummers and senior drummers.

The reality is that the SCS drumming squad

Southern Cross Schools drummers beating to the rhythm of nature.

Images supplied



A Pre-school, IEB Preparatory School and College nestled in Hoedspruit, South Africa



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Tops @ SPAR	015 793 2069		
Vehicle License Department	015 793 0838		
CONSTRUCTION & INDUSTRIAL		REAL ESTATE & PROPERTY	
BUCO	015 793 0560	Century 21	015 793 1534
Build It	015 793 0116	Fine & Country	083 377 6622
Creek Plumbing	078 870 7993		
Coastal Hire	015 793 0971		
Mopane Group	015 781 1571		
SCHOOLS & EDUCATION		TOURISM & THINGS TO DO	
Drakensig Laerskool	015 793 3756	Eastgate Airport	015 793 3681
Drakensig Pre-primar	015 793 2401	Hds Endangered Species Centre	015 793 1633
Hoedspruit Christian School	015 793 2067	Jabulani Elephant Interaction	015 793 1265
Lowveld Academy	015 793 3750	K2C Biosphere Region	015 817 1839
Marieskop Laerskool	079 529 6071	Sky-Way Trails	013 737 8374
Marieskop Pre-primar	082 880 7069		
Perspective Training College	082 787 4471		
Southern Cross Schools	015 793 0590		
EMERGENCY - HELP LINES		NOTICE OF BASIC ASSESSMENT PROCESSES	
After Hours Emergency Doctors	084 770 1741	Notice is hereby given of the intent to carry out the following activities:	
Air Force Base Hoedspruit	015 799 2911	The submission of an application to Limpopo Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism in terms of section 24 (2) of the National Environmental Management Act number 107 of 1998, and Regulation 41 of the EIA Regulations published in Government Notice 326 of 7 April 2017, for:	
Africa Safe - T	010 590 6313	THE PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION OF AN 8-BED VILLA.	
Ambulance AFB	015 799 2065	LISTED ACTIVITIES : Activities 12 and 48 of Listing Notice 1, Published in Notice 983 of 4 December 2014, as amended on 7 April 2017.	
Alcoholics Narcotics Anonymous	082 258 4602	Activities 12, 14 and 23 of Listing Notice 3, published in Notice 985 of 4 December 2014, as amended on 7 April 2017.	
Ambulance Airforce Base	015 799 2065	SITE LOCATION: Portion 16 of the farm Rome 185 KT in the Maruleng Local Municipality, Mopani District, Limpopo Province. SG code: TKT000000000185000016.	
Ambulance Services Limpopo	015 793 1581	APPLICANT: Pondero Holdings (Pty) Ltd. - Mr. Robbie Prehn.	
Ambulance Tintswalo	101 77	Project EAP: Elize Osmers. Tel 074 834 1977 - Fax 011 604 0533 - E-mail projects@eszro.com.	
Ambulance Services Swift	060 528 2784	Date of publication of this advertisement is Friday 31 March 2023. If you wish to be identified as an interested and/or affected party, please submit, in writing, your name, contact information and interest in the above-mentioned project to the contact person given above on or before 5 May 2023.	
Farm watch/ Ploaswag	072 310 0032		
Fire Brigade AFB	015 799 2172		
Fire Brigade Maruleng	015 793 0536		
Fire Dpt Hoedspruit	015 793 0728		
GKEPF Greater Kruger Enviro Protection Foundation	065 743 2224		
Hoedspruit Clinic	015 793 2342		
Hoedspruit Medical Rescue	072 170 0864		
Hoedspruit Paws	078 431 3161		
Hoedspruit Town Watch	072 812 2172		
Hoedspruit Farm Watch	082 883 2835		
Hospital AFB Drakensig	072 310 0032		
Hospital Nelspruit Mediclinic	015 799 2065		
Hospital Tintswalo	013 759 0645		
Hospital Sekororo Gvt-The Oaks	015 383 9400		
Hospital Tzaneen Mediclinic	015 305 8536		

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Climate change

It's important to keep an eye on changes in Earth's climate. Keeping track of Earth's sea level is one way that we can know how quickly the climate is changing. As Earth's climate warms, ice in Antarctica and Greenland is melting. This causes the level of the oceans to rise.



Over millions of years, Earth's climate has warmed up and cooled down many times. However, today the planet is warming much faster than it has over human history. Why is this?

Extra greenhouse gases in our atmosphere are the main reason that Earth is getting warmer.

One of the key signs that climate is changing is the rapid melting of snow and ice. This causes sea levels to rise, higher temperatures on land as well as the sea, causing extreme changes in weather patterns, with drought in some areas and violent weather storms in others.



HAPPY EASTER



Easter Word Search

S	E	A	S	T	E	R	R	C	H	I	C
C	E	E	E	A	G	O	A	A	N	T	A
S	H	H	C	M	G	A	A	R	C	R	G
F	P	O	C	O	S	O	C	R	L	A	R
B	T	P	C	F	I	R	T	O	E	B	A
U	H	S	H	O	I	S	T	T	R	B	N
N	E	E	E	E	L	V	A	P	R	I	L
N	R	N	T	V	N	A	X	N	T	T	M
Y	V	B	A	S	K	E	T	C	H	R	A
P	P	I	E	O	S	N	S	E	E	R	H
A	H	O	L	I	D	A	Y	G	R	R	E
S	H	U	S	T	H	T	E	H	U	N	T

- | | | | |
|------|--------|--------|-----------|
| HOP | CHIC | EASTER | CHOCOLATE |
| HUNT | RABBIT | BASKET | HOLIDAY |
| EGGS | APRIL | BUNNY | CARROT |



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Trivia Time Solutions page.2

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Inland Taipan | 11. Geoffrey Chaucer |
| 2. Norman Rockwell | 12. Careless Whisper |
| 3. Rugby | 13. 67 sweets (32 October, 35 November) |
| 4. Peepeye, Pupeye, Pipeye, Poopeye | 14. Sony |
| 5. France | 15. The Statue of Liberty |
| 6. The Hudson River | 16. Coldplay |
| 7. Cold water | 17. Two countries: Zambia and Zimbabwe |
| 8. Treason | 18. The Last Supper |
| 9. Ted | 19. District of Columbia |
| 10. 180 degrees | 20. Richard III |

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