



KRUGER2CANYON

NEWS

March 2022

The Farm House, R527, Zandspruit, Hoedspruit, Limpopo Tel 078 979 6486 email: editor@kruger2canyon.co.za



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Bear a thought...



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From the editor/publisher

It's amazing to think that a year has gone by since we took over the Kruger2Canyon News! It's gone by in a flash ...

We have learnt a great deal, we started with more

pages than ever before, have improved the quality of content and journalism in the publication, become more relevant, and developed partnerships along the way, that have become meaningful additions to the publication. We have had correspondence from as far and wide as the USA, United Kingdom, Ireland, Hong Kong and Australia! Wow! To think of our publication being read by people so far away, and commenting and responding to our content, is quiet amazing.

We are working hard to increase our reach and readership, are busy developing a seamless, solid digital platform for the publication,

we've revamped our website, increased the pages (in this edition, yet again!), and we have now also rebranded it. It has our unique stamp on it now, and we can forge on with confidence in the knowledge that from here onwards it really and truly is our doing!

We have welcomed newbies onto the team, said good-bye to others, mourned those we have lost along the way, and marvelled at life in all its shapes and forms; and we have rejoiced in the happiness of being alive!

Having said that, our thoughts go out to those that are not as fortunate as we are, the underprivileged,

undernourished and homeless. We also have to share many thoughts for those enduring war – more specifically those in the Ukraine. They are enduring the ravages of a maniac, who has lost all sense of empathy, humanity and any inkling of right and wrong. Every Ukrainian is in his forces sights, with total disregard, and evidently until the endgame has been reached – and what is that? Nobody knows – Putin may not either!

The West's seeming reluctance to take a physical stance frustrates many, but it is done in the context of saving lives – whether that pans out to be true, only time will tell. And

we will all suffer from this madness in various ways and forms, from increased petrol prices to increased food prices and in some instances food shortages, and I am sure there are more.

Our front page of this edition will hopefully spark a thought process in all of us, to think about and appreciate what we have that is good, how we can make things better and how privileged we are to live where we do, and how we do – all this despite our frustrations and problems that we face.

These are miniscule when we think of the innocent men, women and children being massacred at the hands of this tyrant. The war

may seem to be very distant from us, we don't hear the rumblings of explosions and the sirens of air raid warnings, but the resultant effects of this war are coming our way, and will still bear heavily on us.

So our thoughts go out to the Ukraine, and all its people, and may this insanity come to a swift end. It is quite sobering to think that one crazed man, suffering from delusions of grandeur, can change the world so quickly and definitively.

Here's a toast to Ukraine, may they persevere and may the tyrant ultimately pay for his transgressions. Our thoughts and prayers are with you all.

Letters to the editor

Letters to the editor – March 2022



Dear Editor

I think that Bruce (Feb 22 edition) is missing the bigger picture as far as the international filming in town goes.

It's not so much about Hoedspruit and surrounding areas appearing in the production. It is far more about the fact that they have come

to our town. Our hospitality, weather, security, airspace, scenery etc., etc., make it a great destination for current and future projects. The financial benefit to town is meaningful - from filling empty lodge beds, catering, produce, fuel - the knock-on effect certainly is giving this cash strapped town a boost.

The whole 'celebrity-watching' world knows that Tom Cruise is in Hoedspruit. People who have never heard of Hoedspruit have now. If we're good enough for Tom Cruise, we're good enough for them.

Amanda

Ed: Here's looking at you Tom Cruise. Lets hope you spread the good word!

Dear Ed

I think that this paper has taken a giant leap into becoming something substantial. Well done and thank you – we all look forward to it at month end. Keep it up.

Fred

Ed: Thank you so much Fred, we are doing the best we can to make it a publication that is substantial, has good content and is relevant. Much appreciated.

To the Editor

Maybe we should not get too excited about the hype of the Deputy Minister of

Tourism visiting Hoedspruit. The rhetoric we have all heard before. Until there is real action I don't think we should get too excited about the potential of Lufthansa (or whoever it may be) landing at Eastgate until it actually happens.

We would all love to grow the tourism in the area and especially around Hoedspruit but until restrictions are done away with, and we can make serious offerings, I am afraid the burst of tourists may not happen.

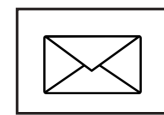
And once again I'm afraid that it will have to be the private sector that gets involved – Government are just simply incapable on so many levels. How long have

we been asking and they have been talking about fixing the roads? If they cannot do that, how the hell are they going to get an international airport up and running?

Sorry for being sceptical, but history tells the story.

Paul and Ilene

Ed: Difficult to argue against you but hopefully our 'wishing wand' bears fruit. Let's be positive because if we get it right, the sky is the limit!



Dear Editor

Wouldn't it be nice to know why Tom Cruise chose Hoedspruit? What he thinks of the place – not sure he's seen too much of it? And what's he doing here – are they filming the whole movie here or what? Some contact would be great.

Just saying.

Lynn

Ed: I agree, it would be great and despite getting in touch with people from Vienna to New York, we have not been able to 'scoop' the interview we would so love to have! If you read this Tom, give us a shout!

Sudoku

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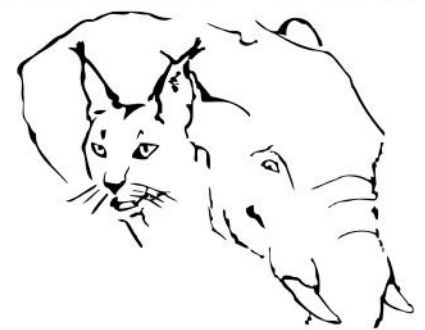
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Beyond its exceptional beauty, Kruger Park is up against the ropes and hurting

Helena Kriel & Don Pinnock

Kruger National Park has a major rhino poaching crisis, but that's just one of many mounting problems – and it's extremely worrying. Part 2 of this saga.

Crags of ancient rock and twisting rivers, thousand-year-old trees and a rug of bushveld the size of Israel... it's been part of South Africa's DNA for generations. And a way of life. Load the car, strap the kids into the back seat and head for the Lowveld where the roads kick dust, thorn trees tangle and the bush smells of animals and earth.

Finally, you're through the gates: Crocodile Bridge, Orpen or further north to where elephants congregate in their hundreds: Punda Maria, Pafuri. In January, the morning blisters, but that's okay because you're in Kruger and there could be lions around the corner. It doesn't get better than that.

But just beyond the fence, it's a different story. Adolescents cluster over a cooking pot in a dismal room with no windows. Both parents are recently dead, maybe from Covid or AIDS, and none have jobs. For the desperate youngsters, a zebra is not a moment of black and white dazzle, something to photograph, it's the possibility of something to eat.

When they look through the fence at the animals inside, they represent sustenance. There are impala and bushbuck to snare, duiker to trap. But the first prize is rhinos with horns that will bring enough money to feed a family all year.

More than two million poor people live up against the Park's border. In Bushbuck Ridge youth unemployment stands at a staggering 60%. With hungry bellies, their days are often about pure survival. Many are from Mozambique, on the other side of Kruger, which is sandwiched between the two countries.

On both sides of the border, some feel the Park is land stolen from their forebears during apartheid, for exclusive white hunting and leisure. Park outreach programmes notwithstanding, 73% of surrounding community residents have never been inside Kruger. With-

out any interest or loyalty, the youths around the fire are ready for something, anything.

So, when poachers roll in along potholed roads in their expensive new 4x4s, with Rolexes on their wrists and money to spend on dishing out food or paying arrears rent, how could they not be seen as heroes? Bushbuck Ridge and the communities that span the length of the Kruger fence, are fertile ground for the swaggering 'middlemen' of the poaching syndicates.

International crime syndicates are targeting the Park with up to seven poaching groups operating daily. In seven years from 2014, there were 19 154 logged poacher incursions, an average of 2 736 a year! You'd think that would demand greater ranger presence, but there are presently 82 unfilled ranger posts, and poorly paid rangers are being lured by syndicate cash.

That's not difficult. Sophisticated organised crime syndicates with deep pockets can coax information via 'drop-off' information from some staff. Inside the Park, it must be so hard for employees to resist the temptation of tipoff money.

Beyond poaching

However, poaching is only part of the Park's problems. The Kruger's operational budget has been cut by 66%, the Covid pandemic has culled tourist bookings, and rhino numbers continue to drop.

For now the dyke is holding, but it's not clear for how long the Park's beleaguered management can keep back the flood. Something needs to be done, and fast.

In a frank discussion with Our Burning Planet, SANparks head of conservation services, Dr Luthando Dziba, and Kruger's Managing Executive, Gareth Coleman, outlined what it takes to keep the sprawling Park afloat. They are frank, they're focused and they're tired – 2021 had been a long, hard year.

These are the country's key conservation officials. They lay out the truth, bare and undisguised. Beneath the successes – and they are there – a disturbing picture begins to emerge with a lot

of unknowns. Plainly put: The Kruger National Park is in trouble.

"If we were to start conservation in the Park today, we'd do it entirely differently" says Coleman, who's been employed to try and change the Kruger and turn it around. It's not an enviable task because many of the problems he's wrestling with are outside his control.

"Kruger exists within South Africa, and what happens in the Park is a microcosm of what happens in the country. I've been doing this for 18 months, which is why I have black rings under my eyes," he half jokes.

The number of rhinos poached has gone below 250 animals – from over 800 a few years ago. In part, this is attributable to some of the interventions SANparks has put in place, but also because there are fewer and fewer rhinos to poach. Despite Kruger having the most advanced anti-poaching mechanisms in the world, the rhino population continues to decline. "How come?" we ask.

The two men sit silently for a moment. "We're doing everything we can," Dziba tells us, "but from a resource point of view we're overstretched, we don't have the resources. To be honest, it gives us sleepless nights."

"Rangers are doing the best they can under very difficult circumstances," Coleman adds. These circumstances include the fact that rangers are poorly paid, and there's no career path. "With not enough rangers, fatigue sets in because rotation systems are not long enough to give rangers time to rest," Dziba says.

The notion that the public feels Kruger is doing nothing to curb poaching disturbs Coleman. "If anything preoccupies us, it's the fight against rhino poaching on one hand, and the deficit of morals and trust amongst employees on the other."

"This is partly as a result of our successes with enforcement actions," Coleman says. "Just climbing over a fence and going to find a rhino is much more difficult now. So the strategy is moving to [an insider] seeing a rhino, giving the coordinates, and then there's money in a bank account."

Another huge problem is revenue. Kruger, together with Table Mountain National Park and a few other Parks like Addo, are the cash cows for SANparks, which help fund the other Parks. In the 2019/20 financial year, SANparks generated a surplus of over R290 million. But by the end of the 2020/21, it registered a loss of over R92 million, despite cutting expenses by nearly R125 million, and having received an additional grant from the Government.

In 2021/22 it was even worse. Notwithstanding belt-tightening, SANparks is already registering a deficit of over R280 million.

"This year the Government is simply not in a position to assist SANparks with additional grant funding due to pressures on the fiscus," says Dziba. "We had hoped for a bumper festive season to close the funding shortfall. However, the picture changed since the discovery of the new Covid variant and the closure of borders."

Kruger clearly requires a major rescue plan. The be-

ginnings of one are starting to take shape. We were given sight of Coleman's internal Turnaround Plan – still provisional – that takes a hard look at the problems that need solving. It doesn't pull punches.

The impact of the pandemic on tourism, it says, has been devastating on the operating environment for SANparks and Kruger, and the Park's management are caught in a cycle of crisis management to "keep the lights on". At worst, some are throwing in the towel, ducking compliance, avoiding making decisions or making private plans.

Delays and cumbersome processes, says the report, have seriously impacted the Park's ability to operate, and have affected performance and employee morale at all levels of the organization, leading to high levels of employee disengagement.

It notes that the ways SANparks is going about maintenance are expensive and not able to meet demand. There are no management plans to deal with existing infrastructure and facilities. This is compounded by several camp maintenance teams who do not have the correct balance of skills, as well as a lack of building materials and supplies because of supply chain failures.

Kruger, it says, needs a holistic plan to upgrade existing accommodation and infrastructure throughout the Park, and "to build sustainable living spaces with a very strong greening component." Without this, it says, SANparks will struggle to access third party funding.

At root, there are inadequate financial resources to effect change, and to secure buy-in and support from employees and stakeholders. This, says the report, has forced a rethink within SANparks on the longer-term sustainability of revenue from a single sector (tourism), and restructuring and recovery plans going forward.

Beyond the boundary fence

Then there's the matter of exclusion. Kruger became South Africa's first National Park in 1926, proclaimed by President Paul Kruger as an animal sanctuary. Its inhabitants, the Tsonga people, were evicted. "We're dealing with that legacy," Coleman notes, "the problem of excluding people from land and the poverty that has arisen from that."

A century later, there are communities surrounding the Park that still see it as an oppressive and exclusionary entity. This feeds into a narrative that legitimizes poaching on 'stolen' land.

"How can we ensure communities feel a sense of ownership of Kruger and the rhinos?" Dziba asks. In a committed venture, Coleman traveled Kruger meeting with 600 small businesses, some of whom are angry. "How do we turn the economy of Kruger outward so we can ensure the people who are closest to the Park can begin to benefit?" he asks. "How can we put rhinos under the protection of communities?"

Cont. on page 5...



Familiar Kruger scenes

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Thornybush – pushing the community initiative

Thornybush correspondent

One of the pillars of focus at Thornybush Lodges, is to offer the guest an experience that goes beyond the ordinary safari, and to show guests what makes the Thornybush Reserve so special.



Beautiful smiles from the Thornybush community women
Image supplied

To do this, the guest has to see behind the brand; meet the people that make their journey so exceptional, and to experience for themselves what Thornybush as a lodge group does, to make a positive impact on them, as guests, the community and the environment. Seeing for themselves and sharing the dust in the communities, makes such an impression on their being, that the encounter remains with them for the rest of their lives.

Thornybush and the community, a nurturing effect

In 2005, Thornybush created the Thornybush Community Project, with the objective of nurturing and uplifting surrounding communities, adjacent to the protected areas of the parks.

The Project is located on the Western Border of the Greater Kruger National

Park, on the boundary of the Northern Sabi Sand Game Reserve. It originally focused its work in two villages, Uthla and Dixie, but in late 2019, a new geographical area was identified in Acornhoek, which has allowed for some exciting additional partnerships.

Over the years, the focus areas have expanded, and the Thornybush Community Project has found itself as a contributor in both the NPO sector and a supporter of various community initiatives. One such initiative offers community tours to guests to allow them to see first hand, the impact these communities have on their luxury safaris.

Community engagement

The word “conservation” rarely brings to mind community outreach and nurturing local communities. It is an easy assumption that conservation is about the well-being of wildlife and the habitat in which it lives. It does however extend further than that – the community is intricately tied to conservation and that is exactly what is expressed to the guests. By first looking after the people within the community, the knock-on effect to ensure the protection of wildlife has a far greater result.

Thornybush has come to

understand that tourists are seeking something more when they travel. They want to learn, grow and engage with the world, and they want to see the impact that they are having in the immediate surrounds.

The community tours were closed to guests during Covid, but these transformative tours for guests and for the community have been resumed. Thornybush is proud of the community programs and are looking forward to seeing guests embrace these daily activities, to visit the Nourish Eco Village, and spend time with the local communities. This is a great way to understand and promote the motive, that contributing economical support to the local communities, inspires greater conservation efforts, and could also inspire future investment into these communities.

Pack for a Purpose

Thornybush is also a member of the Pack for a Purpose Initiative. Tourists booking through direct agents are sent a link to inform them about Pack for a Purpose. Tourists are asked to save a little space in their luggage for essential supplies that

are needed in communities. Various projects are run during the year, which call on specific supplies for local children and families. The list is updated regularly so guests can see, and choose, what items are most in need and where they will go. Thornybush looks forward to guests participating in this fantastic initiative.

Getting to know the conservation efforts

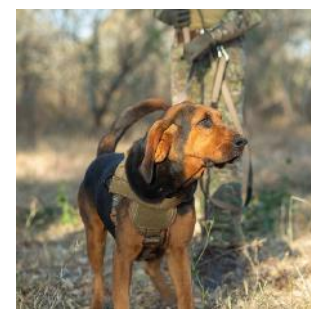
The Tango K9 Anti-Poaching Unit plays a vital role in conserving the wildlife on the Thornybush Nature Reserve. This unit was created to assist in the conservation of endangered species, utilising the specific skills of trained dogs. What was once only a job for armed units on foot, has recently seen the addition of specially trained dogs and their handlers.

Guests can experience the incredible skills of this Unit by attending a demonstration that covers various training exercises, including scent identification hidden under multiple objects, scent hunting in thick bush, and even taking down a ‘pseudo poacher’ (one of the handlers dressed in full protective gear).

This is another reminder of what goes on behind the scenes and of what an important role this plays in conservation on the reserve and the neighbouring reserves.

NGOs do matter

As non-profit operations, Tango K9 and the community programs rely heavily on donations to keep functioning. At all Thornybush Lodges, guests are encouraged to add such experiences to their stay. Thornybush hopes that the awareness that they are building to keep wildlife protected, and communities thriving, will be enough for guests to either donate or to spread the word, and create the impact that Thornybush Lodges strive to impart.



One of the paches in the Thornybush K9 unit
Image supplied

Legal Notices

NOTICE OF S24G PROCESS

Notice is hereby given of the submission of a Section 24G application to Limpopo Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism to obtain environmental authorization for the commencement of listed activities without the required Environmental Authorization in terms of Section 24 G of the National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act 107 of 1998), as amended.

ACTIVITY: The construction of 2 earth dams.

SITE LOCATION: Portion 17 of the farm York 188 KT in the Maruleng Local Municipality, Mopani District, Limpopo Province. SG code TOKT0000000001800017.

The listed activities, as listed below have been contravened in terms of the National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act 107 of 1998):

Listing Notice 1, Activities 12, 19 & 27; Listing Notice 3, Activities 12 & 14.

NOTICE OF BASIC ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Notice is hereby given 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, of the intent to submit an application to carry out the following activity:

THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT OF A PRIVATE LODGE, A COMMERCIAL CAMP SITE, AND A RESIDENCE, INCLUDING ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE. THE DEVELOPMENT WILL ALSO INCLUDE THE CONSTRUCTION OF AN ACCESS ROAD AND THE REPAIR OF TWO BREACHED DAM WALLS.

SITE LOCATION: Portion 3 of the farm Lillie 148 KT located in the Ba-Phalaborwa LM SG Code TOKT00000000014800003, and Portion 1 of Archie 169 KT in the Maruleng LM, SG code TOKT00000000016900001, Mopani District, Limpopo Province.

The proposed development will trigger activities, listed under Listing Notices 1 & 3 of the amended EIA Regulations published in Government Notices 324 & 327 on 7 April 2017.

Listing Notice 1, Activities 19, 27 & 28; Listing Notice 3, Activities 6 & 12.

APPLICANT: Oak Park Trading (Pty) Ltd. – Ms C Rademeyer.

Project EAP: Elize Osmers; Tel: 074 834 1977; Fax: 011 604 0533; E-mail: projects@eszro.com.

Date of publication of this advertisement is Friday 31 March 2022. 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 3 May 2022.

Sudoku

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Beyond its exceptional beauty, Kruger Park is up against the ropes and hurting



Spectacular Kruger views we know so well (above & below)
Images courtesy of Canva

All the problems Kruger faces are exacerbated by distrust among employees, fueled by previous integrity testing which was badly managed. There was no follow-up. An integrity test minus consequences is useless, and poaching, says Coleman, is devastating workplace trust. Relationships between people who have lived and worked in the same environment for decades, have broken down.

"My view is very clear," Coleman says. "We need to improve and implement integrity testing. Parliament has been informed that Kruger is targeting a July 2022 implementation date, but this is dependent on funds. There's also a process of consultation with unions which needs to be concluded."

Its about the creatures

The heart of Kruger's mandate is to preserve its bushveld biodiversity and all the creatures within it. One species, in particular, is at a tipping point. The Park's 2019/20 Annual Report lists the rhino population at 3 592, this year's report put it at 2 809. That's 783 rhinos less. Only 250 deaths are poaching related, but the

mortality numbers are dire. What happened to the rest is an open question. When questioned in Parliament, Environment Minister Barbara Creecy said counting was not an exact science, and talked about count confidence levels, observer bias, sampling error and drought, but 533 'missing' rhinos is hard to swallow.

At this rate, the world's greatest rhino population could go locally extinct in as few as three years. It means Kruger would no longer be a Big Five game reserve. The consequences of that are chilling for the Park's international reputation.

SANparks is presently exploring private/public partnerships around rhinos, and there are discussions with the Wilderness Foundation to find land to create sanctuaries away from poaching danger zones.

Kruger has also embarked on a massive, ongoing de-horning exercise at tremendous cost. This might stem the tide of poaching. But, because poachers operate at night, the lack of a horn is not easy to see.

With the scourge of poaching sweeping South Africa at the moment – 24 rhinos were poached, mostly on private land, over two weeks in December – many

owners are running out of personal funds to look after their animals.

"There's a concern there will be disinvestment in rhino," Dziba says. "We will then have to assist some of the private owners who say it is too costly to look after rhino. This is on our minds now."

The discussion turns to elephants. How are they faring? Much better, although there's been some poaching. When culling ceased in 2000 there were around 7 000. The latest Annual Report now lists elephants at 31 527.

"We need to consider what the options are for a growing elephant population," Dziba tells us. "It's a good problem for a change! We're looking for where we can increase suitable habitat for elephants in the country. We also need to look at sharing our success with African elephant range states, provided the translocated elephants can be adequately secured."

The lion population has increased by 12%. When measured against the decline by 66% in central and west Africa, that's something to be pleased about. But in the northern sector of the Park, some lions have been found poisoned, which could signal the beginning of an uptick in

lion poaching.

Where to from here?

To summarize: Kruger Park has critical revenue problems, tourist revenues have crashed, international criminal networks are targeting its rhinos, there aren't enough rangers so job fatigue is inevitable, ranger pay is insufficient which has made 'drop-off' tips tempting.

There are over two million poor people just outside the Park's fences. While most have no problems with the Park and many support its proximity, there are also those with no sense of ownership, and for whom the animals the Park is tasked to protect are simply food.

Before us are two men passionate about conservation who face the mammoth task of conserving some of Africa's iconic species with dwindling resources. But they also face socio-economic challenges that the broader community has to deal with: poverty, poor service delivery and transnational crime. It's simply not sustainable. In fact, it's outside their mandate.

South Africa's flagship National Park is among the best known and most visited attractions in the country, and until Covid lockdowns, was

one of the most profitable National Parks in the world. It attracted more than one million visitors a year. It cannot be allowed to fail. What it needs, for a start, are:

1. sufficient funds to operate efficiently, internationally sourced if necessary, to finance operations and to upgrade infrastructure to remain competitive in the tourism industry,
2. SANparks to be more open to new funding, developmental, business and conservation models,
3. enough trained rangers to do the job,
4. bringing on board private sector partners,
5. continuing to grow collaboration with neighbours and their clients,
6. the end of international demand for rhino horn and ivory,
7. an end to finger-pointing between the different interest groups, be they Park visitors, the private sector, communities, conservation lobby groups and different branches of Government,
8. collective responsibility is taken to find sustainable solutions which work, and to mobilise a large amount of concern and goodwill towards the Park.

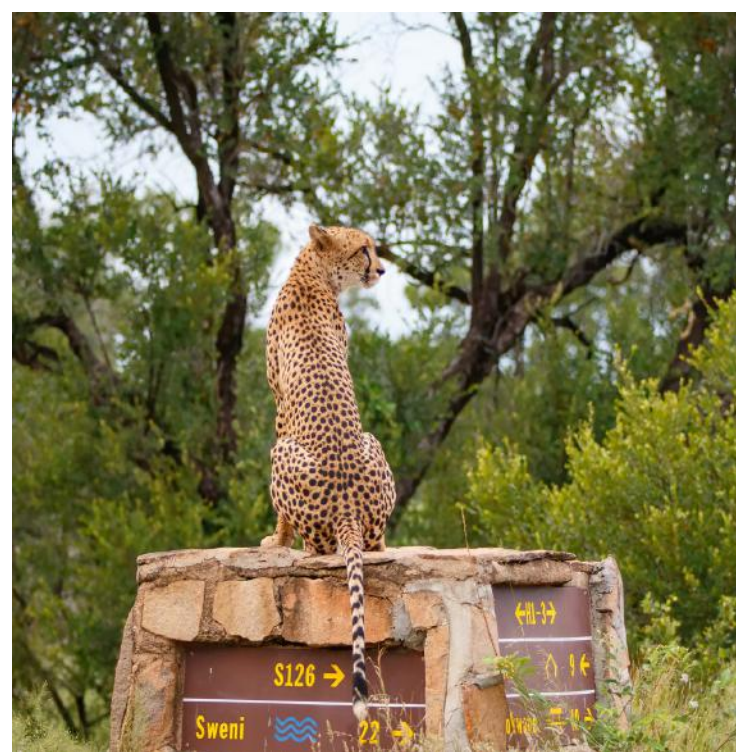
We all need the Park

Visiting Kruger Park is a magical, unforgettable immersion in the African wilderness. For the city-weary exhausted by phones, deadlines and incessant social media chatter, the Park is an opportunity to just stop and bathe in an ancient, timeless place. It's where to be reminded of the legacy Earth offers us.

As the dawn sun filters through the mopane trees, a lilac-breasted roller in flight flashes turquoise. In the shade of a thorn tree, a cheetah licks her paws, the rug of her tongue a sudden pink. A dragonfly hovers over a waterhole adding a dash of orange. Hundreds of buffaloes churn the water in a milky brown pan as they wade through, like Viking ships on the move.

This is how it's been for millions of years in South Africa's Lowveld. What will it take to keep it this way?

Note: *This article was previously published in the Daily Maverick. Since this article was first published, Gareth Coleman has completed his 2-year contract with the KNP. His departure will only be in September, to enable him to finalise his strategy, and to smoothly hand over the reins to his successor.*



Conserving kinship – a Honeyguide story

Brenden Pienaar

I was moving quickly, following a faint flash of white through the lush broadleaf woodland, spurred on by the insistent chattering of a Honeyguide. This game of follow-the-leader stirred a primal joy deep within me. Nothing else mattered except catching up. Then something changed. The chattering stopped. I stopped.

In the sudden stillness, I could hear the drone of bees. There was the hive in a large tree trunk just off to my right. "What are you waiting for?" I could hear the Honeyguide's question, as it stared at me from a nearby perch. "We have a deal, you and me. Don't you remember?"

The Greater Honeyguide is the only bird in the world, known to lead humans to beehives regularly. They are not physically capable of opening the hives to get to their preferred source of nourishment; bees, larvae, and wax. They trust us to help them. Except for the most part, we've forgotten how.

I looked at the expectant bird. My lack of action felt like a betrayal, and I dropped my head in shame. What have we become? Have we forgotten our place in Nature? And if so, what terrible consequences await us? When I looked up again, the bird was gone.

Symbiotic relationships such as mutualism, where both participants benefit, are recognised as a selective force behind evolution. Many species have a long history of interdependent co-evolution. It has become widely accepted that the mutualistic relationship between the Greater Honeyguide and humans results from direct co-evolution between those two species.

It is the most developed relationship between any bird and any mammal on the planet. We are not exactly sure how far back the relationship stretches, but 77 000-year-old rock art from Tanzania depicting honey hunters following Honeyguides, can be considered recent evidence.

Their guiding habits are inherited (not learned) and extremely well developed — adults of both sexes guide

at any time of the day and year. The birds generally initiate the guiding by calling from a nearby perch with a distinctive soliciting call (chattering). As a human approaches, the Honeyguide flies off with its typical, fast, and exaggerated undulating flight. Their white outer tail feathers stand out and create a distinctive 'follow-me' signal. They fly towards a known hive, often perching on an exposed spot on a tree, waiting for the human to catch up. They constantly chatter to keep our attention, and even come back to fetch us if we take too long.

At a beehive, the Honeyguide changes its behaviour, altering its call or falling silent, and patiently watching while the human calms the bees with smoke and extracts the honeycomb. The Honeyguide then feeds on the wax combs left behind by the human.

It is a widespread traditional belief, that if you don't provide honey to the Honeyguide after a harvest, it will lead you to a venomous snake or dangerous animal such as a lion, the next time you decide to follow it. Perhaps this acts as an incentive for humans to fulfill their duty to the bird, given the role of honey in our evolution. As hunter-gatherers, we derived a large proportion of our calories from this wild resource, perhaps as much as 80% per month in some areas.

In some parts of Africa, there are records of two-way communications between humans and these free-living wild birds. The human's special honey-hunting call is a loud, deep trill, followed by a short grunt. This signals to the Honeyguide that a human is looking for a beehive to harvest and that they are willing to follow. In other parts of the continent, specific whistles attract the bird's attention.

But there are also regions where birds have never guided and others where the frequency of guiding has decreased or ceased, possibly because fewer humans are following Honeyguides than in the past. Some 'Protected Areas' showcase prime examples of decreased interaction as humans have been removed from the ecosystem and cannot use its resources.

Except for a mere 0.01% of

WANTED: HONEYGUIDE SIGHTINGS

Have you seen a Greater Honeyguide?



1. Record its location



2. Adult or juvenile?



JUVENILE



ADULT MALE



ADULT FEMALE

3. Did it guide you?

tjrr-tjrr-tjrr



4. Anything else to add? (optional)



Honeyguide Research Project

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our evolutionary passage, humans have lived in a natural environment and largely owe their existence to the relationships they previously established within that ecosystem.

As I walked away from the beehive, I knew that in losing our relationship with these birds, we'd lost more than a taste of wild honey. We'd lost our sense of kinship with the natural world, and with it, the wild part of our identity, that recognizes all living things as kin to be valued and appreciated far beyond our modern, utilitarian proclamations around biodiversity protection or climate regulation.

In framing the living world as a 'machine' for energy and matter processing, or a natural 'factory' that produces services, we have taken humans out of Nature, and placed them above everything else. But Nature's

intrinsic value is independent of the potential usefulness of biodiversity for human beings.

The Honeyguide had reminded me that Homo sapiens are simply an expression of Nature. Just like the Honeyguide (and all other species), our evolutionary success is the consequence of our ecological history. Therefore protected areas are a living stage and an example of humans' unique evolutionary heritage and culture. A protected area without a small band of nomadic humans is incomplete.

Kincentric Ecology refers to the manner in which indigenous people view themselves as part of an extended ecological family that shares ancestry and origins. Reviving our kinship with Nature offers a way of connecting to the landscape, which acknowledges our need to use plants and animals, but con-

structs relationships beyond use. Interactions that result from this kinship – like working with Honeyguides to harvest wild honey – enhance and preserve the ecosystem.

With this in mind, Lowveld Trails Co. is undertaking one of the most significant re-introduction programs in Protected Areas throughout Africa. They use 'Primitive Trails' to facilitate direct human-nature interaction in savanna ecosystems for personal, social and wilderness benefits.

For the past 15 years, they have witnessed how direct interaction with these landscapes deepen peoples' relationships with non-human Nature, and motivate a shift in how humans relate to, and behave in, our environment. These immersive experiences often lead to a heightened consciousness amongst participants that everything is

connected. We are merely the human expression of Nature - its conservation is fundamental to our survival and identity as a species.

As long as the Honeyguide calls us, there is hope. They remind us of kinship and that a sustainable conservation model requires direct human interaction with wild spaces. It not only improves the ecological integrity of a landscape, but also has a positive impact on our well-being and lends support to their conservation.

Note: Get involved. Your Greater Honeyguide sightings are valuable to the research team working on the ecology and evolution of the Honeyguide-human relationship. Find out more about the **Honeyguide Research Project at the University of Cape Town** www.honeyguiding.me

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This lovely family home, on a large stand; is conveniently located in the estate, in a quiet location and in close proximity to the nature based, Southern Cross School. Ideally located for quick access to the school and other amenities.

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SOLE MANDATE

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Situated halfway up the North Drakensberg mountain, the property consists of a main home with 2 en-suite bedrooms, 170 m² in size, as well as a cottage with 2 en-suite bedrooms, 60 m² in size. Both units have backup water storage.

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Spectacular home on Leadwood Big Game Estate. If you want a panoramic mountain view whilst watching the elephants and lions from your patio, then this is it! Space, good finishes, lovely kitchen & stunning mountain views. Sold fully furnished.

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SOLE MANDATE

JEJANE R 2 900 000
Bedrooms 4 | Bathrooms 4 | Floor size: 400 m²

20% share in a 5-Star, modern decorated private lodge open to the Kruger National Park. You will have access to traverse 2500 ha of prime Big 5 game viewing. The Nature Reserve is a well-managed share block with only 47 shareholders.

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Bedrooms 4 | Bathrooms 2.5 | Traverse: 2651 ha

N'tsiri Nature Reserve is an exclusive, private use, Big 5 reserve where wildlife roam freely across the unfenced borders with the Kruger National Park, Klaserie & Timbavati Private Nature Reserves. Membership is limited to 65 homes.

Yvette Thompson - 083 655 7176 Ref: 1450349



SOLE MANDATE

RIVERSDALE, MODITLO R3 995 000
Bedrooms 3 | Bathrooms 3 | Floor size: 400 m²

Moditlo is 3,200 hectares in size and is a Big 4 nature reserve with only buffalo absent. There are excellent game numbers and game comes to the water hole daily. The home is well-maintained with many extra features.

Michelle Severin - 083 469 3821 Ref: 1457481



SOLE MANDATE

LISSATABA R 1 500 000
Bedrooms 2 | Bathroom 1 | Floor size: 107 m²

This lock up and go two-bedroom bush home has a lot of potential! The perfect spot where you can come relax, away from the stresses of city life. The reserve is 2,500ha in size and has only 54 sites. There is an excellent network of game drive roads.

Jason Jones - 083 267 4794 Ref: 1449027

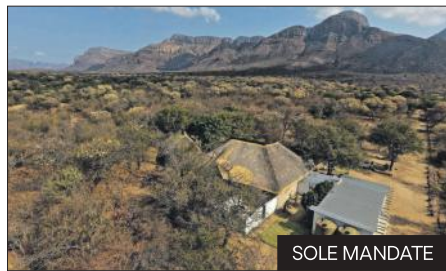


SOLE MANDATE

JEJANE R 2 000 000
Bedrooms 4 | Bathrooms 4 | Floor size: 426 m²

By purchasing this 17.5% share, you will have access to traverse 2500 ha of prime Big 5 game viewing in Greater Kruger. There are several dams and game hides on the reserve, a large communal pool and a well-maintained network of roads.

Rob Severin - 083 469 3820 Ref: 1449006



SOLE MANDATE

RECREATIONAL GAME FARM R 7 150 000
Bedrooms 5 | Bathrooms 4 | Farm size: 441 ha

Located midway along the Northern Drakensberg mountains, and 25km from Hoedspruit, this 441-hectare game farm has stunning scenery. The buyer will be the majority land owner of Canyon Game Reserve.

Rob Severin - 083 469 3820 Ref: 1444594



SOLE MANDATE

MAFUNYANE, KARONGWE R 15 000 000
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: 1443333



SOLE MANDATE

NDLOVUMZI RESERVE R 3 300 000
Bedrooms 3 | Bathrooms 3 | Floor size: 352 m²

Situated in a 1,000 ha reserve with plains game, this property has awesome bush and mountain views. It is ideal for permanent living or a holiday home, long term rentals are allowed. The reserve is pet friendly and permits dogs.

Rob Severin - 083 469 3820 Ref: 1432803



SOLE MANDATE

FULL TITLE FARM R 13 500 000
Bedrooms 4 | Bathrooms 4 | Farm size: 133 ha

The farm is situated only 35 minutes from Hoedspruit. The home is ideal for a family and it has the potential to be turned into a boutique guesthouse. There are stables, carpools, a dam, storeroom and viewing deck. So many options...

Delaine Muller - 072 117 1133 Ref: 1427931



SOLE MANDATE

HOEDSPRUIT WILDLIFE ESTATE R 4 250 000
Bedroom 4 | Bathroom 2 | Floor: 267 m²

This home has a spacious patio area overlooking the wilderness area; making it very private. The home comprises 4 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms and an open plan lounge and kitchen area with guest toilet, with the potential for B&B operation.

Mike Dodds - 082 906 7004 Ref: 1323091



SOLE MANDATE

SILONQUE, PHALABORWA R2 950 000
Bedrooms 2 | Bathrooms 2 | Floor size: 160 m²

Easy to maintain bush home located on a 21 ha farm portion within a conservancy and 3 kms from the Kruger Park fence. It's located 7 km from the town of Phalaborwa and within a conservancy with a boomed security gate & a large variety of game.

Mike Dodds - 082 906 7004 Ref: 1317289



SOLE MANDATE

LISSATABA R 2 200 000
Bedrooms 3 | Bathrooms 2 | Floor size: 180 m²

This unfenced well-maintained camp has a true bush feel. The buildings are built with solid rock and thatch which keeps them insulated and cool in summer. The thatch patio has spectacular views of the Drakensberg Mountains.

Jason Jones - 083 267 4794 Ref: 1408817



SOLE MANDATE

HOEDSPRUIT WILDLIFE ESTATE R 4 400 000
Bedrooms 4 en-suite | Floor: 240 m²

This well-maintained property is currently run as a B&B and all bedrooms come fully furnished. The home has a sparkling pool and a large entertainment area. It has an open-plan living, dining and kitchen area leading out to a patio and pool.

Yvette Thompson - 083 655 7176 Ref: 1455624

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Bushwise Field Guides to host Safari Guide of the year

Local Correspondent

Once again the Safari Guide of the Year (SGOTY) is upon us! It seems like it was only yesterday when we were all excited about the event that was to be held at the NJ More Field Guide College in Marataba.

That event proved to be a sensational success, and this year its now the turn of Bushwise Field Guides to host this prestigious event.

The Field Guides Association of Southern Africa (FGASA) – an NPO that sets the standards for the

guiding industry - powers this event, which is the most prestigious event of its kind in southern Africa. This event is limited to FGASA qualified guides that are nominated by their peers, employers, guests, companies, and lodges from all over southern Africa.

Each year, Safari Guide of the Year brings together incredibly talented, knowledgeable, experienced and professional individuals, who showcase the art of field guiding. In the end, only one guide will walk away with this prestigious title. Despite the impressive competition, this event often creates a feeling of camaraderie and friendship among the finalists. This prestigious event is a significant recognition of all the guides accomplishments, training and skillset.

To compete, a guide has to go through a grueling nomination process. To be nominated, guides must have a minimum of five years guiding experience, FGASA Field Guide (NQF4) qualification, FGASA Trails Guide qualification, be a paid-up member of FGASA, and be currently working at a lodge, training provider, or as a freelance

guide.

Once through that process, the finalists are chosen. All credentials and criteria are checked, and each nominee is then interviewed. Part of the judging panel then chose the lucky finalists.

The competition itself will occur over one week, where the five finalists will showcase their skills and knowledge to qualified judges and guests. The finalists are evaluated in eight categories: birding, track and sign identification, guided game walk, guided game drive, guided photographic experience, storytelling, rifle handling, and hospitality and professionalism.

Each category is scored according to a points system, and the finalist who accumulates the most points overall at the end of the week, is crowned the Safari Guide of the Year 2022.

The event itself runs for one very tough week. The impact of this recognition on the winner and fellow finalists has a lasting impact on the rest of their lives. The individual awarded with SGOTY, as well as their lodge or employer, will proudly wear this badge for the rest of

their career. The competition helps drive the world-class quality of southern Africa's field guides, which in turn leads to superior standards maintained at lodges, and an enhanced focus on skills development in wildlife conservation.

As part of SGOTY's policy to take this competition to different areas around southern Africa, this year it finally makes it way to the Lowveld! The attraction of potentially having the competition within the bounds of the Great Kruger Park, finally secured Bushwise Field Guides the opportunity to be the host sponsor for this years event. The exact location will be announced closer to the event date.

Bushwise Field Guides is thrilled at the opportunity of hosting this event, which will be held from 27th June to the 3rd July. This will be the 11th annual hosting of this event. All nominations close at the end of March, and the finalists will be announced mid April.

Bushwise Field Guides specialises in providing the acclaimed FGASA guide training. Their programs include various wildlife and nature conservation

courses tailored for the African safari industry. Bushwise has over the years built a commendable reputation in the safari industry by training high-achieving guides, both practically and academically.

Students attending this training will be fully equipped to enter the industry and will be ready to contribute to conservation efforts from the get-go. This is ensured through the wildlife courses, wildlife training programs, and nature conservation courses that are offered and conducted by professional trainers.

Besides Bushwise Field Guides being the host sponsor for this significant event, the other main sponsors are Ruggedwear and WildEarth, with additional sponsors including FGASA, Sapmok, Kruger-2Canyon News, Accident Angels, as well as some private donors.

SAFARI GUIDE Of The Year
27 JUN - 3 JUL '22

Host sponsor
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Why are so many small nocturnal predators black and white?

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

Genets, polecats, striped weasels, honey badgers, white-tailed mongoose and civets are all small nocturnal predators that use glands under the tail to secrete defensive fluids that enemies find offensive. The weasels, for example, are able to squirt these secretions up to a few metres or so. Not only are these secretions foul smelling (a deterrent in itself), but they may have the potential to irritate eyes, skin and sensitive membranes. Owing to their relatively small size, this group have a diverse assemblage of enemies, including mammals, reptiles

and birds. They advertise their defence mechanism by means of contrasting colouration (black-and-white markings) called **aposematic** or **danger colouration**. These colours have become universally recognised and indicate that nocturnal animals have either defensive glands, powerful weapons in the form of claws or teeth or sharp quills in the case of porcupine. If the colouration itself fails to deter attack, then they can put up very impressive and aggressive threat displays before using their weaponry.

Because these animals are active at night, there is no need to contrast the black with a brighter colour because at night colours cannot be seen. Many dangerous day-active species of insects (stings or bites) or frogs and snakes that could

be attacked by day-active birds have black contrasting with red, orange or yellow to advertise danger in the same way.



Purchase your copy for a discount of 30% at

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Black and white nocturnal animals

Images courtesy of Canva



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The Restaurant at Khaya Ndlovu Manor House



Food and Lifestyle Correspondent

There is no doubt that Khaya Ndlovu Restaurant has to have the best view of the mountains in Hoedspruit – its quite jaw-dropping, as one marvels at this breath-taking view of the Klein Drakensberg mountains. The alfresco restaurant that operates from the decked terrace at the Khaya Ndlovu Manor House, a luxury lodge on the outskirts of Hoedspruit, is not the ‘sole tenure’ of those privileged enough to stay at the lodge, but is in fact accessible to us all!

This is the perfect spot to celebrate an occasion, or to come and enjoy a delicious meal, high-tea, tapas, sundowner, or to simply just get away. Besides the unparalleled view of the mountains, the dining area overlooks a wetland that serves as a natural playground for many bird and game species, and it is not unusual for a visit to the restaurant to turn into an exciting game viewing experience.

However, the territorial leopard tom, Xivati that reigns supreme at Khaya Ndlovu, is inclined to disrupt the easy relaxed mood more than necessary, when he stops over for his version of a sundowner!

The experience starts when one arrives at the Manor House. Magnificently restored, it is decorated with panache and comfort. The space is wonderfully and sparsely adorned with art and persian rugs that gives it a very comfortable bush ambience. As you enter, you are greeted by superbly presentable, happy, and knowledgeable staff. In extremely rare cases (in my experiences here), when the staff are not sure of something, it is always reassuring to see how quickly they go and find out, to ensure clarity and understanding for themselves and of course, the guests.

The whole place is about taking advantage of the beautiful lowveld weather, the peace and tranquillity of the lush Khaya Ndlovu garden, the sparkling infin-

ity pool and the romance of the filtered, shifting light that seeps onto the deck through the overhanging branches of the Marula and Wild Pear trees and that view!

The restaurant kitchen is a marvel, and is under the control of Executive Chef Vandi. Bursting with personality, she adds a presence and signature to all she produces. Being a vegan, I tested her on many occasions and on all counts she has come out with flying colours. She imbues her passion on all her culinary creations that is reflected in her cooking, her presentation and of course the tastes. It truly is a journey of the senses, and you will not be disappointed.

Vandi's signature dishes such as seared butter-thyme salmon and salsa verde add a distinctive option to the traditional bushveld menu. She throws an astonishing twist on her desserts with her signature burned caramel and buttered popcorn ice cream, molten vanilla and lemon cheesecake

and death by chocolate ganache, all served with equal measures of bliss, by a friendly and enthusiastic group of waitstaff. The service is fantastic and the waitstaff are so well trained that they will gladly indulge your every need.

By her own jovial admission, Vandi is happiest when preparing for a high tea. She nails the classics such as fluffy cream scones, colourful and decadent crispy macaroons, Amarula mocha cups, petit fours and chocolate profiteroles.

The restaurant happily caters for all culinary quirks from full-out carnivores to pedantic vegans! Being the latter I can vouch for outstanding delights, my personal favourites are the beetroot carpaccio starter, the vegen vegetable curry with a Malay twist, and the chocolate torte that truly was to die for.

Importantly, the bar is fully stocked with a sumptuous selection of beers and wine, spirits and cocktails, and cool drinks for all the others. Again knowledgeable

staff will guide you in the process of selection should you require.

At the fully child friendly Khaya Ndlovu Manor House, the days are planned to thrill you with exceptional food, exciting wildlife encounters, relaxing spa treatments or lazy, ginkgohazed hours spent around the sparkling infinity pool; whilst the evenings will delight you with romantic sunsets, softly lit dining tables and starry, starry skies.

This is a dining destination not to be missed for any of

the meals in a day – and its just around the corner! Make your next dining experience a very special one at this restaurant. Bookings are essential, and if you go for dinner (you may opt for a game drive option beforehand), ensure that you have your torch for your walk back to your car – this is Big 5 bush! Enjoy, have fun and suck in the view.

Restaurant hours:
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2KM SOUTH OF HOEDSPRUIT, R40 | BOOKING ESSENTIAL

The historical division that plagues conservation efforts



Boundary fences around game parks have come to represent the historical divide between 'the haves' and the 'have nots' in South Africa
Picture MaxPixel.net

By Fred Kockott,
Roving Reporters

A 'big war' rages in Southern Africa between those who can legally harvest natural resources and those who can't, says environmental educator, Vusi Tshabalala

Conservationists must move beyond textbook knowledge if they are to address the conflict and historical divide created by protected areas. So says Vusi Tshabalala who manages an environmental monitoring programme in one of Southern Africa's biggest biosphere regions.

about the importance of rhinos and the need to conserve them. "At one meeting, an old man stood up and asked, 'Really, what is the importance of this animal? The only thing it does is eat grass and poo. What's the worst thing that can happen if it gets finished?'" recalled Tshabalala

"We answered, 'It's part of the Big Five (lion, leopard, rhino, elephant and buffalo). The man replied, 'Five is just a number. If we go down to four, so what? If you love five so much, why don't you replace the rhino with the hippo. It's bigger and more aggressive.'" "We waxed on about tour-

Another old man stood up, animated and angry. "He asked, 'Out of all you guys here in this community, how many of you have seen a rhino?' There were 42 people. Only four raised their hands," said Tshabalala.

"Then another person turned around and asked, 'What future generation are you talking about when the current generation has not interacted with it. We are living here. We have not seen it. We have not touched it. We are okay. Our kids will be okay. Really, what's the worst thing that can happen?'"

"I said, 'Ja, but they have ecological importance . . .' A young man immediately interjected. He said, 'But wait, to have rhino is expensive because of anti-poaching (measures) and all that. There are many reserves that now don't have rhino. They still have tourists coming in. Their bush and trees are still doing well, as well as all the grass animals eat. Ecologically the reserves are fine.'" "We did not know what to say. We had run out of answers," said Tshabalala. "I learned an important lesson that day. Every answer we had given them, I had learned at school, at university and in an office working environment. None of it talked to their realities. We said we would come back."

"We did not know what to say. We had run out of answers," said Tshabalala. "I learned an important lesson that day. Every answer we had given them, I had learned at school, at university and in an office working environment. None of it talked to their realities. We said we would come back."

In the days that followed, Tshabalala thought deeply about an appropriate answer to that question: "What is really the worst thing that can happen?", especially when seen from the perspective of people in communities, who have derived little benefit from protected parks and game reserves.

The darkest side of the illicit wildlife trade gave him the answer. Dangerous international networks have entered communities, and today, wildlife and animal parts are trafficked much like illegal drugs, arms and even people.

"So, when I went back, I asked, 'Where will it stop? When rhinos get finished, they are going to move onto something else, and something else, and something else. Just like rhinos, people living with albinism get killed for the muthi trade, and kids for their private parts. Who will be next?'"

"Guess what? It worked!" said Tshabalala. People related to concerns that a criminal gang culture has emerged in communities, that gangsters had become role models for children who say, 'Why go to school for 13 years when this guy, in over just two weeks, can get a nice big car'.

Tshabalala also mentioned lively debates he has had about bushmeat poaching and legal hunting. Officially, he said, a legal hunter was someone with a permit, granting him the right to kill an animal on a game reserve, either for the pot or for a trophy. More often than not, these private reserves are on land that people from neighbouring communities consider part of their heritage, places where their forebears once hunted freely.

If such a person happened upon a porcupine on a road outside a reserve and killed it for meat, that person would be classified as a poacher, said Tshabalala. Yet owners of game reserves could kill any animal on their properties pro-

vided it was not a protected species.

"So people see a great disparity between what a ranch owner can do, and what they are not allowed to do," said Tshabalala.

Tshabalala also does not subscribe to the term subsistence poacher, when referring to a person who kills an animal to feed his family. "Poachers are criminals but traditional hunters are providers," said Tshabalala.

"So we have commercial poachers, who are criminals, and traditional hunters, who are not criminals," said Tshabalala. He believes that those who hunt to feed families should be given more legal opportunities to do so, especially in game reserves and protected parks where culling takes place.

He said this issue came to the fore on a recent trip to map out the Sabi area in Mozambique as part of an expansion plan for the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park. "People there live in deep bush close to the park, and depend on game for food," said Tshabalala. "If you push them out, it will spark a never-ending cycle of conflict of the kind that has marred the conservation landscape in Southern Africa ever since protected areas were declared," he said.

He mentioned a discussion he had with an old man who has survived on hunting in the Sabi area his whole life. "There is a fence between me and the duiker I used to hunt," the man told Tshabalala. "That is the only thing that stops me. I can get around the fence, or wait for it to get out, and I kill it, I am seen as a poacher."

"Basically, at the end of the day, there is a resource that belongs to all of us," said Tshabalala. "But it is only allowed to certain people, those who have money, who are educated enough to go to the department to get a permit, and to go through all those processes. And then there is the villager, a hunter, who has not

been taught about all these processes, and who, anyway, does not have money to pay for a permit."

"So, there is a big war, a big fence, between who can and who can't," said Tshabalala.

He said behaviour defined as illegal by authorities, was frequently not viewed as bad or wrong by people living in or near conservation areas. This issue of "contested illegality" extended way beyond the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Conservation Area, said Tshabalala, referring to the case of a KwaNibela fisherman, 25-year-old Thulani Mdluli, who is presumed dead after a clash with authorities on Lake St Lucia in the iSimangaliso World Heritage Site late last year.



Thulani Mdluli, the KwaNibela fisherman has been missing since the November 12 clash with authorities last year. Rangers allegedly shot and killed Thulani's brother, Celimpilo Mdluli, on 16 September 2020, while he was out fishing with two others on Lake St Lucia. His family want answers.

Photo: Nomfundo Xolo

Tshabalala agreed that officially proclaimed protected areas and private game reserves were vital for conserving wildlife, but felt a more inclusive approach was needed. And to win support of people who felt excluded, a new approach was needed. Community engagement, he said, must tap into realities that define people's existence – the real stuff of life not found in textbooks.



The bust of Paul Kruger, President of the Transvaal Republic, stands near a main entrance to the national park that bears his name. Nearly 120 years after Oom Paul left office, and a few years short of a century after the park was proclaimed, conservationists are still struggling to win support from many people in communities bordering the park.

Photo courtesy Flickr.com

The Kruger to Canyons (K2C) biosphere covers 2,5 million hectares, and includes two key tourism sites – the Kruger National Park and the Blyde River Canyon, as well as an international floral hotspot, the Wolkberg Region. More than 2 million people live in or near these extensive conservation areas.

Tshabalala completed a National Diploma in Nature Conservation in 2010. He reckons the book learning he acquired, cannot compare with the lessons he has learned from engaging directly with people in rural communities, in and around the Greater Limpopo Transfrontier Conservation Area.

He referred to a rhino awareness campaign, visiting communities, talking

ists coming to South Africa to see rhino and how this helps the economy, brings in a lot of money and all that. The man stopped us again," said Tshabalala. "He asked, 'Who are the tourists coming to? They are not coming to me. All that money ends up in the reserves. I don't get anything. I still go to bed hungry, without even a loaf of bread. This economic empowerment you are talking about; I am not feeling it; I am not seeing it; I am not benefitting from that thing being alive.'" "So we said, 'No, no, no, wait a bit. We also want to preserve the rhino for future generations.'" Tshabalala had hoped that tapping into feelings of customary heritage would finally settle the debate. It didn't.

"So we said, 'No, no, no, wait a bit. We also want to preserve the rhino for future generations.'" Tshabalala had hoped that tapping into feelings of customary heritage would finally settle the debate. It didn't.



So, why should we care if rhinos are wiped out? That might seem an easy question for a conservationist to answer, but environmental educator Vusi Tshabalala had to do some head-scratching, when he faced this and a barrage of other tough questions during a meeting with people living near the Kruger National Park. They told him they did not benefit from the park, had never ventured inside it, and only four of them had ever seen a rhino.

Photo: Alexandra Howard



Two residents of KwaNibela in northern KwaZulu-Natal rest on a self-built boat at the edge of Lake St Lucia. They sell fish and mats made of grass drawn from the lake, at a market in nearby Hluhluwe. Photo: Nomfundo Xolo

Bush sculpting hits Arabia !



Jean Meintjes on his throne, made for him by dad
Image: Mark Bishop



One of the trophies sculpted for the Dubai International Arabian Horse
Championship 2022
Image: Mark Bishop

Mark Bishop

I thought to myself ... “this guy has to be one of the tallest people I have ever met!”

I had journeyed out on the Gravelot Road to meet with a very interesting sculptor, Jean Meintjes. He had been contracted to sculpt all the awards for the Dubai International Arabian Horse Championship 2022 in the United Arab Emirates!

To put this into perspective, the Dubai International Arabian Horse Championship is the most prestigious competition of its kind in the world. It is a beauty competition for purebred Arabian horses, from the very young to the elderly statesmen of the Arabian equine world. Prize money totals into the millions of US Dollars and there are over 400 horses from 25 different countries around the world. The show takes place under the patronage of H.H Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, the Vice-President and Minister of Defence of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai.

I arrived on the farm at his workshop. Jean was busy with a project that he extracted himself from, and almost literally unfolded himself out of the door to greet me on my arrival. A

very tall man with a beaming smile and bright eyes, he welcomed me like a long lost brother. Dressed in his work clothes, boots, t-shirt, baggy shorts and a canvas/leather type apron – this clearly was not a ‘clean’ career option.

Jean has been sculpting for over 20 years and 5 years ago started his own foundry. It all began on his farm Mazunga, where I was, which has been in the family for over 80 years. His speciality is metal sculpture, but he has no fixed genre and is therefore very versatile in terms of subject matter.

He very knowledgeably and openly showed me around his workshop, surrounded by lush green lawn on the banks of the Selati River. There were some half finished projects, and machinery was abundant; from steel guillotines, shaping and bending rollers, plasma cutters, welding machines, furnaces, mixing pots, shelves of past works and moulds, hammers, anvils, power tools, scrap metal and off-cuts, and so the lists goes on. His workshop is almost open air, to give him light and obviously air – it can get pretty hot in these parts. A piece that caught my eye was a chair that had been made by Jeans’ Father, Frans, which has two huge elephant bones as the back

legs and support, and was on wheels (one of which had gone missing) – a huge throne fit for a ‘bush king’!

Whilst being shown around his operation and viewing some of the pieces he had ‘in residence’, I was absolutely amazed at his versatility, but most of all at his precision, sense of dimension and total love for what he does. One can feel it as one touches the pieces, and you see the depth of patience and devotion that he has put into making each and every one, a true piece of art.

I had come to find out about his contract with the UAE – what was ‘an okie’ from a farm near Gravelot doing making all the trophies for the most prestigious Arabian horse championship in the world? How could this happen?

Jean explained that he had tendered for the project for three years, and it was a matter of third time lucky – and persistence on his part. He had submitted his drawings of what he wanted to do, and bar for some minimal changes, the organisers welcomed him on board.

The total project was to mould (very different to his other steel works involving welding) 92 trophies (of about 25cm in height) and 22 large trophies (about half a meter in height!).

Moulding sculptures is another animal - it takes time and patience, and also involves a team of able and willing helpers, something that Jean was lucky enough to have. The process to create a moulded sculpture takes between three to four weeks – there are no short cuts in this business!

Firstly Jean has to create and hand mould a small clay ‘Marquette’ (a mini clay sculpture) from which he fine-tunes the proportions, dimensions and scale. This he does for most of his sculptures – in steel he may just draw directly onto the steel without a Marquette. But in this instance two Marquettes were essential.

Jean then sculpts a clay sculpture of the size of the final product. Once that is made to his satisfaction, he paints on a silicone rubber coating onto the clay piece in about five layers, that eventually end up in this rubber covering of about 1cm thick. Once that is dry he then covers this rubber with about five coats of a fibreglass ‘shell’ – made up of fibreglass cloth and resin.

Once the fibreglass is dry, he disassembles the whole work, to take out the original clay sculpture, after which he reassembles the mould. He then melts wax and pours that into the mould; and turning the

mould around and around, he hopes to leave about a 5mm layer of wax across the entire inside surface of the rubber mould. This wax mould is hollow and only 5mm thick! He then disassembles the mould again, removing the rubber and fibreglass, and being left with a hollow wax sculpture!

He then adds to this sculpture ‘runners, raisers and a pouring cup’, which allows for the molten metal – in this instance bronze – to be evenly poured into the mould. Before that however, the wax mould with ‘runners, raisers and pouring cup’, is dipped into a ceramic mix and coated with fine ‘chamotte’ sand. This process is done three times, and then the grain of the sand is changed to coarser sand for another three coats, and always being dipped into the ceramic mix between coats.

Once dry and hardened, this ‘ceramic mould’ is then heated to remove the wax (this is known as the ‘lost wax process’), and then the molten metal (up to 1300°C) is poured into the ceramic mould. This then is left to cool (30+ minutes). The ‘runners, raisers and pouring cup’ are then cut off, and the ceramic mould broken, to reveal the bronze sculpture. Of course the pouring may not have gone

well, and when this happens the whole procedure has to be repeated – but if successful, and all is well, then there is a process of grinding, welding and polishing, and making sure the sculpture is as envisioned.

Once that is complete, the sculpture is chemically treated to bring out a ‘patina’ – a thin layer on the metal that enhances its colour. It is finally covered in an antique wax coating, the base is installed, and it is wrapped, packed, crated and shipped! And all this happens in weeks!

I feel exhausted listening to the process – this is hard labour, passionately and carefully carried out, to allow us mere mortals, the privilege of enjoying the spectacle that is a beautifully hand-made bronze sculpture! It’s humbling to see the finished product, understanding the patience and pain, and what the artist has to go through to produce the final piece.

This is the unbelievably creative world of Jean Meintjes, a humble, gentle giant, quietly putting his stamp on the world, from a farm in Gravelot!

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www.jeanmeintjes.co.za,
jean@jeanmeintjes.co.za

The Final Act



Icterine Warbler Image Canva



Magpie Shrike Image canva

Mike Meidlinger

For those of us who are fortunate, and who have wildlife literally, and metaphorically, on our doorstep, the past two weeks have brought in subtle but distinct changes. The hue of twilight arrives a good thirty or forty minutes earlier each day than only a fortnight ago. Similarly, there is a slight nip of a chill in the air, which is itself less heavy and with a noticeable crisp bite, especially at night and in the early morning.

Another thing to be noticed is the overall subdued intensity of insect life. The 'tymblid' action of cicadas and stridulations of grasshoppers are becoming more sporadic, while the humming of sleep-arresting mosquitoes disappears, as if by magic. The skies become seemingly barren and less filled with swathes of dragonflies, dung beetles, flies, bees and butterflies. Emergences have emerged, life has regenerated, and populations have bred and are now beginning to thin out. Also, there are visibly less birds around.

The coin has spun and turned, and we are now on

the other side of the coin. As we head into a slim glimmer of what is called autumn, the abundance of life we have enjoyed since October, is coming to a close. As we absorb the last of our migrants, some of whom gather in large groups and can be visibly seen going north in numbers, to others, which just simply vanish literally overnight, we take in each one as if it is the last.

Species like Barn Swallow, Amur Falcon, European Bee-eater and other hawkers are often noted in abundance as they spend the day feeding, before gathering in the afternoon to fly north during the night. Most individuals will make this northerly journey in a much shorter time than during their journey southwards a few months ago.

There are a number of reasons for this; while traveling south, birds had finished breeding, and they just didn't have the time to refuel, especially if crossing any large water bodies like seas or oceans. They also didn't have time to moult, so ragged feathers just had to make it. Once they hit the Sahel, they spend weeks feeding and reener-

gising themselves, building up the sustenance to finally drift down south to get here. On the way north however, they have had a good summers feeding and more along the way. Now traveling north, birds which are looking brand spanking new having moulted, just out from the paint shop, will want to get to courting grounds without too much damage being done and in as quick a time as possible – some in 7-9 days! Most of our migrants go north and east through the continent and either through Eilat, seen in many palearctic migrants, or stopping in East Africa like our intra-african migrants. A minority, mostly waders, use the west coast to reach north west of Europe and Scandinavia.

Food sources are rapidly running out here to support large numbers of social species, and food is becoming more abundant on the breeding grounds, so why wait! Finally, the pressures of raising young dictate that the more time spent attempting to breed, is likely to yield in more success for the proverbial early bird.

A final cherry on the top that occurs, as we start to

see the throngs of migration stripping away layers of communities who leave for better pastures, is the sudden appearance of warblers. Between late March and mid-April, a major point on many SA birder's avian calendar is the sudden explosion of singing warblers. Just before heading north, difficult species like River, Olive Tree, Marsh & Icterine Warblers, as well as Thrush Nightingales practice their singing voices in the savannahs of the north east and north west. Each species occurs in varying degrees of density, with some being quite rare.

Even for seasoned local birders, warblers strike fear into the hearts of many. However, knowledge of their long twisting, scratching, whistling and winding calls plus reading up on what to listen out for, helps a lot in locating these varied, and sometimes secretive, tree or reed-bed dwelling species.

For others, the beauty of migration is that once where there was much, now there is less. Resident birds begin to become more ecologically dominant once again, while there is also a

noticeable shift in the dynamics of which species can be seen in each local spot. Variations can be significant, with birds like Southern White-crowned & Magpie Shrikes being found more readily as Red-backed & Lesser Grey head for the Mediterranean. Another example is that of Lilac-breasted Rollers, which will replace the numerous Europeans that dominated perches and power lines in savannah areas for the past hundred or more days. Even the plethora of cuckoos that were vocal until just a month ago are now silent, as birds depart returning only towards the end of the year.

During the next two weeks there are still great opportunities for birding. A visit to the coastline of the west coast, or into Mozambique in the east, can yield flocks of thousands of shorebirds. Various Sandpipers & Plovers, Red Knot, Common Whimbrel and Bar-tailed Godwit are just a few species that form huge mixed flocks. The potential for vagrants is huge and this is very much an underappreciated time in the national birding scene.

Inland, signs are more

subtle, and most people will simply realize one day that regular summer birds like Klaas's Cuckoo, Woodland Kingfisher and Spotted Flycatcher are just gone. Upon this realization, a fresh look at one's surroundings often yields other signs of the oncoming dry season, a loss of vibrancy, some yellow grass patches, gaps in the previously impervious thickets or the changes in temperature between the diurnal and the nocturnal, are a few more of these observables.

Simply by saying hello & goodbye, adieu & aloha, to our migrant birds has helped mankind prepare for annual events, such as the sowing and harvesting of crops for thousands of years. Bird migration is no less obvious today than it was in those times; it is just a matter of tuning in. During these short times of year, when avian movements are at their greatest, the processional nature of the seasons can be noted on a daily basis.

This month, keep an eye out and see if you can notice any changes in your local birds while out in the field or when relaxing at home in the garden.

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The Sickle Bush - *Dichrostachys cinerea*



Dichrostachys cinerea - The Sickle Bush tree & flower (right) and seed pods (above)
Image: Brett Heasman

Brett Heasman

'SSSSSSHHHHHHH' the unwanted sweet whispers from your brand new set of tyres, screaming "You idiot!" from beneath your vehicle. This is nothing new to those living and working in areas where the infamous Sickie Bush occurs.

Although this might be met with many expletives from the driver and passenger, on a lighter note it is also a

great way to find a second opportunity to stop and have another G&T in the African bushveld regions of Southern Africa.

This tree is often the cause of much pain, frustration and suffering, due to its incredibly hard modified branchlets known as spines, that pierce and rapidly deflate tyres (these also protect the plant from its natural enemies).

The Sickie Bush is often referred to as a fast growing menace of the bushveld, so

why did I decide on a write an article for our prestigious Kruger2Canyon News about this particular plant, if its such a problem?

Well, sometimes the big pricks have a lot to offer, and it is an incredibly important plant in the rehabilitation phase of overgrazed and disturbed areas. Its unnoticed importance of managing the soils nutrients cycling process, and the beautiful relationship it has with nitrogen fixing bacteria,

known as Rhizobium beneath the Earth's soil surface, is far more critical than chopping it down for 'lekker' firewood.

These amazing little organisms (Rhizobiums) invade the roots hairs where they multiply and stimulate the nodules, where the magic of science takes place. Here they convert atmospheric nitrogen into ammonia, using the enzyme nitrogenase, and then provide organic nitrogenous compounds such as glutamine or ureides, to the plant.

The plant in turn, provides the bacteria with organic compounds, but some will also be spilled out into the soils, enabling the free living bacteria within these areas to take this opportunity to convert it into different nitrogen compounds, like nitrates and nitrites. These again are highly beneficial for the plants in the surrounding areas.

The crux is that if one wants to get the land back into a climax or ultimate condition, one needs to manage this rather fast rapid growing indigenous species, and if not it might do more harm than good, if left to encroach in an area where the pros outweigh the cons.

The name Sickie comes from the Sickie shaped pods that the tree has, often used by local traditional healers as anti witchcraft charms. These clusters of pods are often the only thing seen on the tree after the leaves have dropped. These pods only split open when they detach from the tree.

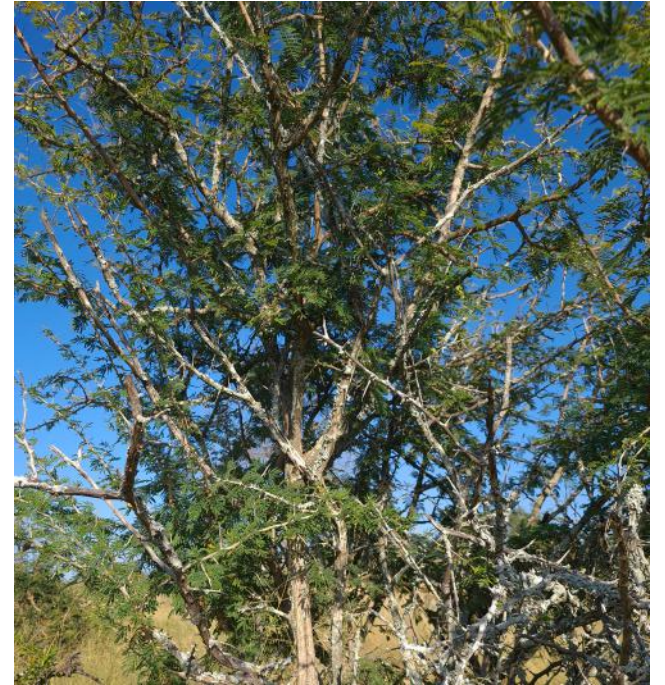
Another key identifying feature is the stunning yet intriguing, bi-coloured, cylindrical flower that

resembles a Chinese lantern, that are long and fragrant. The upper part of the flower is sterile, and are of a lilac or pale purple colour, and the bottom yellow portion is the fertile part.

This is a truly fascinating design, with many theories as to why this is the case. One such theory suggests that considering the ultra violet light the pollinators can see, that the flowers are signaling landing

zones, like a runway on the flowers. Regardless of the common opinion that the Sickie Bush is a menace, we should view it as a beautiful plant, with so much to offer.

Maybe next time we should look into the abundance of traditional medicinal uses that are garnered from this tree, from soothing tooth aches to snake bites - it carries a multitude of properties used daily for the natural healing process.



Cancer - Constellation of the Month

Ben Coley

Mythology

Cancer is the smallest and faintest of the Zodiac signs. Not much mythology exists, but accounts suggest that Cancer represents a crab sent by Zeus's wife, Hera, to distract Hercules from his 2nd labour of slaying the Lernaean Hydra.

The Hydra was a monster that had poisonous breath and blood and that had many heads that regrew when decapitated! The crab nipped at Hercules's feet but was crushed by his sandal. Hercules defeated the Hydra by systematically removing its heads and cauterizing the wounds with a torch to prevent them from growing back. Hera honoured the (unsuccess-



ful) role of the crab by immortalising it in the sky as Cancer.

Hydra itself in a large constellation, situated just above Cancer in the night sky, that snakes from close to Canis Minor all the way to Centaurus in the south.

In the time of the Ancient Greeks, the summer solstice, the highest point of

the Sun in its annual journey, coincided with the Sun being in Cancer, and thus this line became known as the Tropic of Cancer. Since then, the wobble of Earth's orbit (precession) has seen the solstice move through Gemini and is currently in Taurus.

Deep Sky Objects - The Beehive Cluster (Messier 44)

Messier 44, also known as the Beehive Cluster, is one of the largest Open Clusters in the Sky. It shares motion with the Hyades cluster in Taurus, suggesting the 2 groups of stars may have come from the same molecular cloud.

Due to Cancer's faintness, the Beehive Cluster manifests as a cloudy spot between Gemini and Leo, and is best viewed with binoculars. Within the cluster, over 1000 young stars are embarking on their stellar journeys.

Its alternative name is Praesepe, meaning 'manger'. It is situated between 2 stars in Cancer whose names translate as the 'Northern' and 'Southern Donkey Colt', and represents the store of hay for these celestial asses.

The donkeys are revealed



Cancer mythology (left) Cancer chart and Beehive cluster (above) Image supplied Ben Coley

for their role in a great battle between the Greek gods and the giants. The giants had never seen or heard a donkey before, and when some gods arrived riding

on the back of donkeys, their harsh braying frightened the giants so much, that they fled, effectively ending the battle!

Southern Cross Schools step boldly into the future

Education Correspondent

The pandemic, which dominated our lives in 2021, forced many of us to adapt to a 'new way of life'. Southern Cross Schools College (SCSC) was no exception but was undaunted by the unknown, and in response catapulted education into a new and exciting space.

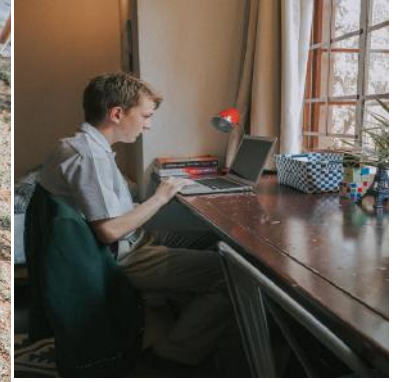
January 2021 marked the implementation of a new 'hybrid learning model' at SCSC. The model focused on an educational programme that would develop core values and attributes, grow the academic skills, knowledge and independence of learners, and support their venture into ever-changing futures. All this, whilst maintaining the traditions and social interaction that a school environment offers.

SCSC collaborated and partnered with Brainline Online, an IEB-accredited online schooling platform, and introduced their own hybrid-learning model. With the world moving into the 4th industrial revolution, and people like Fred Swaneke influencing tertiary education across Africa, SCSC created a space where academic support, guidance, mentorship and the

inclusion of technology in education, was embraced. This move allowed the College to offer a greater variety of subjects, a technological environment, and systems that mirror tertiary institutions.

The school setting provides various learning spaces, from quiet outdoor spaces, to breakaway rooms, to a familiar classroom-type environment, all with the goal of balancing collaboration and independent learning. The new hybrid model equips learners with skills to be flexible and adaptable in a constantly changing world. The reality is that there is no idea of what the Grade 8's of 2022 will encounter when they enter a semi-adult world in 2027.

2021 presented challenges that were addressed and which resulted in a more refined and streamlined model in 2022. The model now offered is a progressive, exciting and affordable one. Learners attend school as per normal. The day starts at 07:15 and finishes at 15:15. Other than the scheduled academic time, it includes a sport and a cultural extra mural programme. The week incorporates traditional events such as assemblies, Learner



Southern Cross Schools students enjoying their chosen work station for the day

Representative Council meetings and various committees, which allow the development of confidence, leadership, passion and life lessons, that come with being part of a group or team. A 'normal' school timetable, including a tea and a lunch break, evolved as the new partnership developed.

Learners wear a uniform, they enjoy inter-house and inter-school sport, performing on the stage for productions and are afforded the opportunity to be recog-

nised for academic, sport and cultural excellence.

The decision was also made to utilise the Brainline recorded lessons rather than live lessons, as this gave teachers the space to recap, support, enhance and plan efficiently. The new learning style evolved into a fantastic blend of online teaching and interaction, with the added value of an academic support teacher being in the classroom for every subject. The role of the support teacher or mentor is to

assist and guide the learners through their academic programme, encourage them to challenge themselves and ensure they are performing at their highest academic level.

Lessons are projected onto screens in the classrooms, and learners, with the support teacher, work through the content that is being delivered. This learning method results in learners having more time to focus on problem areas, whilst being in a fun and creative academic

setting.

Every day at the College is an 'Open Day', and members of the community are invited to visit this exceptional school where a model has been created that embraces differences in learners, and where the uniqueness of each individual in their care is the focus. Learners are motivated to capitalise on their strengths, discover their potential and develop skills and strategies to tackle all that lies ahead as they step into the unknown.

Lemonade for Pangolins



Naledi, Estelle, Lilly and Seana proudly showing off their lemonade table whilst enjoying a sip or two too! Well done girls. Image supplied

The Kids

Anyone venturing out to the Pick n Pay on Friday 25th March would have been met by a table staffed by four enthusiastic youngsters, all doing their part in the fight against Pangolin poaching.

What an amazing effort by these children going through the whole process of making the lemonade, getting the cups and straws, and creating the 'poster' tablecloth to advertise their intentions. The lemonade stand was in aid of raising awareness to the plight of

pangolins, which are being hunted to extinction.

Naledi, Estelle, Lilly and Seana (all in the photograph), from Baobab Montessori raised more than R1800 in lemonade sales! All the sale proceeds will be donated to ProVet Wildlife Services and Animal Hospital.

The intrepid four would like to thank everyone who came to support the initiative by buying a glass of refreshing lemonade or donating to the cause and stopping by to have a chat. The girls did an amazing job – well done!



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Raptors donates bulletproof vests to Farmwatch



General Manager of Raptors View Wildlife Estate, Mr James Cary, handing over two bulletproof vests donated by the Estate, to the Farmwatch representative, Ms Debby Thompson

K2C News Correspondent

Farmwatch was created to focus on crop theft on farms, but this service has morphed into a variety of management services for a wide range of incident occurrences in and around the Hoedspruit area. Their phenomenal community support ensures Hoedspruit and its surrounds, remains safe and secure, through a safety support service.

This service will respond to emergency calls from any of its members (and really the community as a whole) to any situation that threatens life or property. The organisation responds to a diverse range of incidents from criminal activities, vehicle accidents, fires to poaching. This is managed through regular patrols and a standby reaction unit.

Farmwatch can only exist through membership payments and donations from the community – there is no other way to ensure in-

come to offer the services. With this in mind, the GM of Raptors View Wildlife Estate, Mr James Cary, recently handed over two bulletproof vests donated by the Estate, to the Farmwatch representative, Ms Debby Thompson, to assist the organisation in their important protection initiatives.

Farmwatch encourages residents to become members of the organisation, which can simply be done by depositing a nominal monthly or annual fee into the Farmwatch account.

To enquire about membership, volunteering and/or services please call 072 310 0032 for more information.



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 Perspective Training College 082 787 4471
 Southern Cross Schools 015 793 0590

EMERGENCY – HELP LINES

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 Air Force Base Hoedspruit 015 799 2911
 Africa Safe -T 010 590 6313
 Ambulance AFB 015 799 2065
 Alcoholics Narcotics Anonymous 082 258 4602
 Ambulance Airforce Base 015 799 2065
 Ambulance Services Limpopo 015 793 1581
 Ambulance Tintswalo 101 77
 Ambulance Services Swift 060 528 2784
 Farm watch/ Plaaswag 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

TO LET OFFICE SPACE Hoedspruit Office Park Main Street, Hoedspruit

Building 5A – 47 square meters
 3 lockable offices, own main entrance and a shared staff entrance, shared kitchen, each office has an air conditioning, wheel chair friendly, lease term negotiable, special renovation requests considered

Building 5B – 54 square meters
 1 lockable office, spacious reception area, open plan office, own main entrance and a shared staff entrance, shared kitchen, air conditioning, wheel chair friendly, lease term negotiable, special renovation requests considered
Contact Ricu on 015 793 0921 or 082 728 5078.



Southern Cross

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

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Junior FGASA & Kids In The Wild



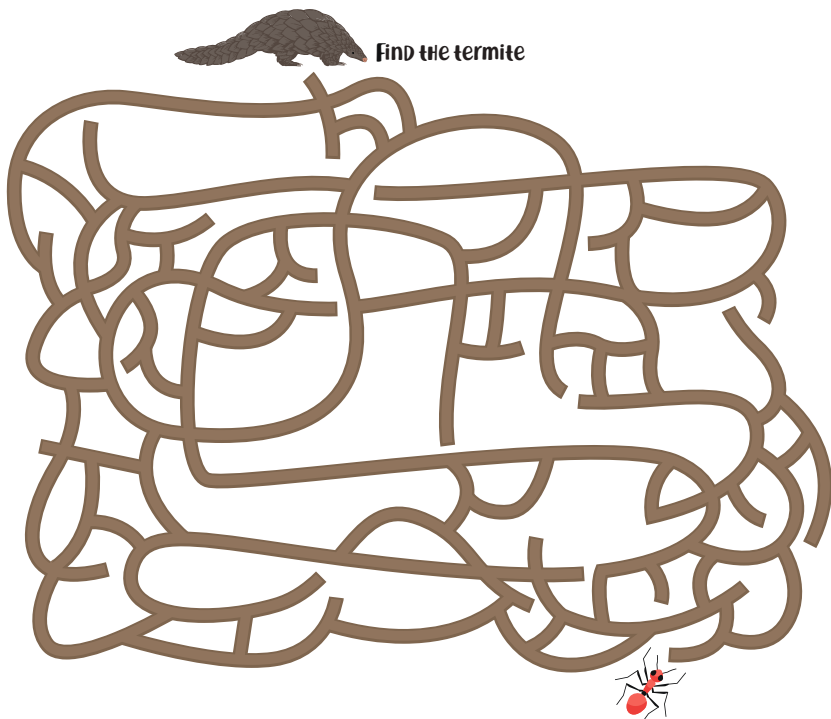
The LAUNCH of the PANGOLIN!

FGASA Junior and Kids In The Wild are proud to announce the official launch of the FGASA Junior Pangolin course.

A year in the making, the manual and revised workbooks will finally hit our bookshelves this APRIL. The Pangolin course is a self-study option for learners aged 8-12 that will be adopted in many homes and schools. It has been a very exciting journey and FGASA has been privileged to work with Tarry Myers, owner of Kids In The Wild, who has created the fabulous content and images in the manual and workbook.

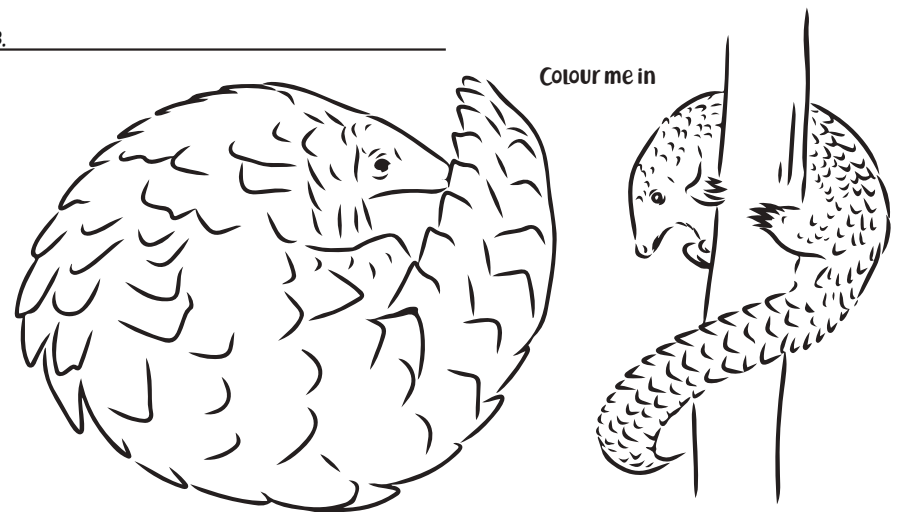
The 12 modules will take junior FGASA learners on a wonderful journey with the hope that they will be curious and responsible in contributing to making a difference in our natural world. We also hope this will generate an interest in pursuing a future in Tourism, Guiding and Conservation.

Hi, I'm PANGA, the Pondering Pangolin. I will be with you throughout the FGASA Junior Pangolin Series. I will help you navigate your path and learn as much as you can throughout this journey.



Write down 5 facts ABOUT the PANGOLIN:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____



If you love the wilderness, and are passionate about conservation, then we have the perfect thing for you. FGASA Junior in partnership with Kids In The Wild bring you the new and improved Pangolin Course available in April 2022. The Pangolin Series will include an interactive platform for kids to reconnect with nature and the incredible wilderness that surrounds us on a daily basis. We will be offering online live lectures as well as on-demand courses that will encompass many different modules and will also include games, quizzes, homework and so much more.

www.fgasa.co.za | +27 (0) 11 886 8245 | admin@fgasa.org.za | www.kidsinthewild.co.za | +27 (0) 66 485 1956 | info@kidsinthewild.co.za



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