



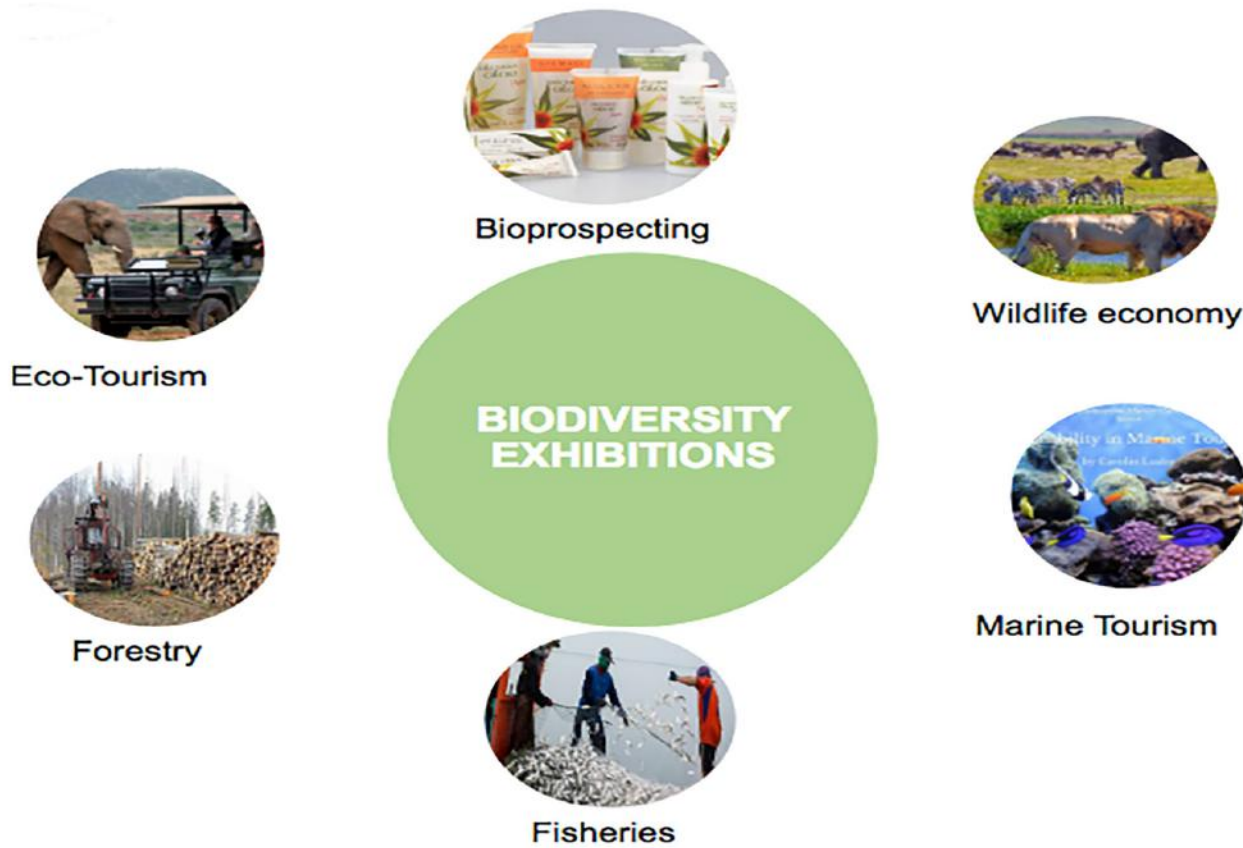
KRUGER2CANYON

NEWS

March 2024

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

Government trying to slam through plan that will result in massive exploitation



Schematic for a government plan for the creation of mega-landscapes

Don Pinnock

By Friday, 22 March, the public was expected to have commented on a detailed plan by the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment to massively exploit and monetise South Africa's wildlife. The public was given just 14 days to respond.

The Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE) has released a 48-page plan to create integrated "mega landscapes" on land and sea encompassing extensive areas where hunting, bioprospecting and tourism would monetise wild animals and plants for "consumptive

use".

To do this, the government will attempt to mobilise state and private resources, starting with an indaba in Gauteng from 24 to 26 March. The Birchwood Hotel and OR Tambo Conference Centre have been hired for the event at a cost of R3 698 859.

The plan was released on 8 March and gave the public until 22 March to comment, a 14-day deadline that many see as a box-ticking exercise to claim that the public has been consulted before the plan goes on show at the indaba.

The proposal is to grow areas under conservation — called mega living conservation landscapes — from 20 million hectares to 34 million hectares by 2040, an area equal

to seven Kruger National Parks. Five mega landscapes are suggested, with proposals including:

- iSimangaliso/Ezemvelo/uMkhanyakude in KwaZulu/Natal;
- Waterberg/Limpopo River/Makapan Valley in Limpopo;
- Lekgalameetse/Wolkberg/Thabina in the Tzaneen area;
- Addo/Camdeboo Corridor and Grasslands National Park in the Eastern Cape;
- North West; and
- Northern Cape.

What happens within the new areas, however, would be nothing like Kruger's wilderness but would involve "biodiversity

business".

"Consumptive use" of wild animals within these landscapes is predicted by the plan to increase from R4,6-billion to R27,6-billion by 2036, bioprospecting and plant trade from R1,85-billion to R11,6-billion and marine and freshwater exploitation to rise by 10% a year. This represents a massive monetisation of South Africa's wild ecosystems.

Included in the figure of R4,6 billion is R1,8 billion from 6 242 international clients who killed 36 500 animals in 2022. Since the local hunting market is unlikely to grow, the planned increase would need to come from international hunters. This will require an increase of 155% more international hunters to 15 900 hunters killing 93 000 animals. Where these animals will come from is not explained.

The strategy envisages an increase in the number of Big Five animals available for fair-chase trophy hunting, an expansion of recreational and traditional hunting, wild meat harvesting and fishing, and the increased use of indigenous plants, and of insects for food.

The plan says that until the international sale of ivory and rhino horn is favourable (though it's unclear why the department thinks this will ever happen), domestic trade could be stimulated.

"For example, health clinics to administer traditional remedies using rhino horn for health tourists from the Far East or ivory carving done locally for sale and export for personal use."

What is being suggested appears to be linked to the Game Meat Strategy published in 2022 which seeks to 'agriculturalise' wild animals.

A document supporting the plan that was supplied following a request to the DFFE this week says game meat has not been efficiently utilised for livelihood and economic growth, and has been identified as an alternative, cheap and readily available source of protein, especially for rural communities.

Cont. on page 3

Image: Supplied

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From the editors desk



At the outset let me wish all those that celebrate Easter, a happy easter! For the little ones – may the bunny’s bag be filled with treats aplenty!

Kruger2Canyon News has dedicated itself to delivering trustworthy news over the past three years, striving to elevate the publication to new heights. However, faced with rising printing and distribution costs, which surged by 42% in the last year and a half, the publication acknowledges the need to adapt to the changing media landscape driven by the digital revolution.

The transition to a digital platform presents numerous advantages. It would alleviate financial strain, allowing resources to be redirected towards enhancing content quality, investing in investigative journalism, and broadening coverage. Digital publishing enables news to be accessible 24/7 on any device, offering instant updates and multimedia elements like videos and interactive graphics to enrich understanding. For advertisers, digital ads offer dynamism

and interactivity, enabling instant updates and creating immersive experiences that surpass the limitations of print. The digital format ensures unparalleled accessibility and convenience, enabling readers to stay informed regardless of location or time.

While recognizing the value of print, Kruger2Canyon News plans to produce a limited number of physical copies for those who prefer them, available at select outlets. However, a digital-first approach promises to reach a wider audience, engage in innovative storytelling, and uphold quality journalism for the future.

Throughout this transition, the publication remains committed to journalistic integrity, credibility, and community engagement. It invites feedback from readers to navigate this change together and shape the future of Kruger2Canyon News.

In the months ahead, the publication will explore the possibilities of digitization while valuing input from its audience. Together, they aim to embrace the future with optimism and evolve to meet the evolving needs of readers.

Further work on making Hoedspruit special



From left Sbonelo Ngomane and Terrence Mabaso

Love the Hoed® Titbits

How inspiring this was to see two artists busy in the midday sun, making sure the waste bins at the Pick n Pay/La Bamba intersection looked different and great! The painting was a pattern like that at the Kamogelo centre. So, a worthy shoutout and thanks must go to Sbonelo Ngomane and Terrence Mabaso for doing their part in making ‘the Hoed’ beautiful. Thank you.

The Radisson fire

This was kept pretty hush hush, suffice to say it seems that there was a lightning strike that caused a fire over the conference area. We were still trying to ascertain the exact details and whether the full launch would still go ahead in April or if that had been delayed – no news at the time of going to press unfortunately. Watch our website for the news.

The ‘Work It’ dance production in aid of Farm Watch

Presented by The Barefoot Dance Academy and the Body Language Dance Studio – this was a night of fun, dance, laughter, and happiness. Maureen Lahoud was once again a catalyst and together with Jamie-Lee Language put on a dance spectacle for all to enjoy. Really about two dance ‘teams’ going head-to-head and the intricacies and relationships between the members, made for a wonderful evening. It was colour, music, dance, and fun all thrown into one. It was well attended, and all proceeds went to Farm Watch – a fantastic cause. Well done

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to all the dancers, producers, choreographers, helpers, and everyone involved – a truly great night out.



From left, Maureen and Jade

Biker embarks on epic journey: A ‘Mammoth Ride’ for elephants

In a quest that merges adventure with altruism, Kyle Malyon, a seasoned motorcyclist, is circumnavigating South Africa in a breathtaking solo effort to raise awareness and funding for HERD (Hoedspruit Elephant Rehabilitation and Development) Trust, an elephant orphanage just outside Hoedspruit, in Limpopo, South Africa.

HERD’s mission is to safeguard and nurture orphaned elephants, effectively giving them a second chance for survival. Embarking on this daring expedition, Kyle’s journey is not just about the thrill of the ride; it’s a heartfelt endeavour to raise crucial funds for the HERD.

Setting off from the bustling streets of Johannesburg, with 30 – 40 fellow bikers riding the first 50 km as a support ride, Kyle’s journey is a testament to the power of individual action in the face of environmental challenges. With the wind in his hair and the roar of his motorcycle echoing through the countryside, he has begun his journey through some rugged terrain, all in the name of a noble cause. Day 3 found him in Hoedspruit (via Thoyandou from Musina), somewhat tired but chirpy, nonetheless – the light beer easily caressing his parched throat.

This epic ride will see Kyle follow the closest tar roads to the country’s borders, covering all 9 provinces (he will do a detour at the end of the ride to travel through the Free State!).

It will take 21 consecutive days with little respite in between, as time is of the essence and a full-time career beckons at the end of it all. Rustenburg, Pongola, Salt Rock, Port St. Johns, Cape Aghullas, Springbok and Kuruman as just some of the towns that he will pass through.

The decision to embark on this odyssey was deeply personal for Kyle, who has long harboured a passion for wildlife conservation. “Elephants are not just symbols of Africa’s natural heritage; they are integral to its ecological balance,” he remarked, reflecting on his motivation. “Their survival is intertwined with the health of entire ecosystems.” The undertaking has seen Kyle engrossed in six months of fundraising and planning – no stone has been left unturned, down to the exact distance to be travelled each day (averaging 350km/day).

Elephants face numerous threats, including habitat loss, poaching, and human-wildlife conflict. With every kilometre he conquers, Kyle’s determination to make a difference grows stronger. Along his route, he stops at local communities, schools, and conservation centres, spreading awareness about the plight of elephants and the urgent need for their protection. Through these interactions, he not only raises funds but also fosters a sense of stewardship towards wildlife among the people he meets.

Kyle’s journey is not without its challenges. Thankfully accommodation *en route* is supplied by family and friends, BnB’s, backpacker lodgings and lodges. All have supported him in some way or another along the way. From unpredictable weather conditions to mechanical setbacks, every twist and turn in the road presents its own set of obstacles. Yet, fuelled by his unwavering commitment to the cause, (water and two tins of tuna *en bord*, just in case) he presses on, drawing inspiration from the resilience of the very creatures he seeks to safeguard.

Powered on this journey by his trusty Honda NS 700, he has been on many of the roads he will traverse, but not all. The Eastern Cape and Northern Cape are totally unknown to him and will present their own challenges.

As news of Kyle’s endeavour spreads, support pours in from far and wide. Donations come in from individuals, businesses, and organizations, all eager to contribute to the conservation efforts spearheaded by HERD. Messages of encouragement fill Kyle’s inbox, serving as a reminder of the collective goodwill behind his solitary ride. His target is a humble but essential R 25 – 35 000. He feels that if he can achieve that, then it would be a substantial input into the fund-raising coffers of HERD.

What began as a solitary quest is slowly becoming a movement, uniting people from all walks of life in support of a common cause.

“It will be an incredible experience, filled with moments of challenge and triumph,” he remarked, gazing out at the sun-drenched road stretching before him. “But the real reward lies in knowing that together, we’ve taken a meaningful step towards securing a future for the elephants.”

With his motorcycle roaring beneath him

and the African sun blazing overhead, a co-founder of a social motorcycling club, Fiery Octopus, Kyle rides on, a beacon of hope for the elephants and a testament to the power of one individual’s determination to make a difference.

Kyle’s supporters can follow his journey on social media (Instagram: the mammoth ride), where he’ll be sharing regular updates, breath-taking photos, and insights into the realities of his expedition. He’s also encouraging donations, no matter how big or small. Every contribution brings him closer to his fundraising goal and makes a difference for HERD’s vital work.



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Government trying to slam through plan that will result in massive exploitation

Cont. from page 1

“The implementation of the strategy will ensure safe and sustainable harvesting of game meat, job creation and rural economic development... There will be new business, investments, jobs and value chain opportunities that will have secondary benefits related to the commercialisation of this commodity. These benefits far outweigh the costs.”

Alarm bells

The plan puts forward a form of extractive conservation, based on the idea that what you consume you will conserve. This type of thinking is essentially a farming ethic, ranging from sacrificial animals being hunted to provide funds for the conservation of a species or biome, to cattle feedlots and chicken and pig batteries.

It makes sense in relation to a puzzling proposal in 2019 when there were attempts to list more than 30 species of wild animals, including lions, giraffes, white and black rhinos, lions and cheetahs, under the Animal Improvement Act. This would have effectively rendered them farm animals subject to manipulation and consumption. It was overturned following a court challenge by the Endangered Wildlife Trust.

Shortly afterwards, 98 more species were proposed to be listed under the Meat Safety Act, including rhinos, hippos, elephants, and crocodiles. According to the Act, they could then be “slaughtered for food for human and animal consumption”. At the time, the reasons for these reclassifications by the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development were unclear, but they are now obvious.

The plan has rung alarm bells at environmental NGOs.

According to Dr Ross Harvey, the director of research at Good Governance Africa, a plan to commodify wildlife “ignores the biological reality that trophy hunting removes prime males (never ‘surplus’ males, which is a convenient myth). It also ignores robust research which shows that the opportunity costs of trophy hunting in SA render the practice unsustainable.

“All this comes on top of providing no proper time for public participation. This makes the whole thing look like a foregone conclusion that the government wants the public to rubber-stamp without really engaging.”

Taylor Tench, a policy analyst at the US Environmental Investigation Agency, said the idea of developing a market for domestic trade in animal parts such as carved ivory or rhino horn as traditional medicine for Asian tourists was particularly shocking. It would stimulate the export of objects and substances illegal under Cites regulations and which are merely aspirational and have no discernible medical value.

“If such markets and products were to take hold in South Africa,” he writes, “it would result in severe negative impacts for rhinos, elephants, and potentially other species. The proposed creation of domestic markets for rhino horn and ivory targeted at international tourists contradicts — and would undermine — South Africa’s reputation as a



A herd of elephants at the Numbi Gate of the Kruger National Park in Mbombela, Mpumalanga
Photo Gallo Images, Daily Maverick, Felix Dlangamandla

destination for sustainable wildlife tourism.”

The environmental lawyers Cullinan & Associates, acting for the EMS Foundation, have served notice on the DFFE for a 45-day extension to submit comments on the plan, failing which it will take legal steps.

“A comment period of at least 30 days, but more often 60 days, is accepted as being the minimum to allow meaningful and effective public participation,” the notice says. “No reasons are given for deviating from accepted practice.”

The timeframe has also been questioned by Wildlife Ranching South Africa.

Trophy hunters

The plan appears to favour the conservation of wildlife and massively extends areas under a form of protection, which is a definite plus. But by embracing consumptive use it seems to cut across the considerable advances made by Environment Minister Barbara Creecy and her department regarding the welfare of wild animals, her stand against captive-bred lions, the progressive findings of the high-level panel on lions, elephants, rhinos and leopards, and the White Paper on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity.

It would also make South Africa one of the world’s top destinations for trophy hunters at a time when that practice is coming under increasing disapproval internationally. This could have a negative impact on brand South Africa and international tourism.

There is also a problem with expecting hunting revenue to increase within the new mega landscapes when it is declining as a sport.

An article in Africa Geographic quoted research showing that between 1991 and 2016 the number of hunters in the US fell by 18,5%, from 14,1 million to 11,5 million. In France, it dropped by half in 40 years.

South Africa saw a 60,5% drop in eight years, from 16 594 in 2008 to 6 539 in 2016.

The number of trophies exported fell from 5 049 in 2014 to 1 993 in 2018. Lion trophies during this time dropped from 1 160 to 259.

According to the EMS Foundation, “South Africa will be attempting to turn the country into a trophy hunting destination ... for a privileged few trophy hunters.”

The plan also raises questions about the future of captive-bred lion farming, which Creecy has vowed to close down and has appointed a team to plan this. There are an estimated 10 000 to 12 000 lions on these farms. Will they be euthanised or offered to hunters within the new mega landscapes?

The proposal may be a reaction to huge pressure from the hunting fraternity, or incongruity between her department and the Department of Agriculture, which has been accused of dragging its heels on a draft Animal Welfare Act. There have been suggestions that it’s the wrong department to be doing this, particularly with regard to wild animals.

Connectivity

Much is made in the plan about ecosystem connectivity, the halting of species extinction and leveraging natural systems to alleviate rural poverty among formerly disadvantaged people. This would be funded, it says, through tourism, hunting, bioprospecting, and funds from the government plus local and foreign grants.

It would also leverage public/private partnerships linked to communities for the rehabilitation of degraded land. The plan also envisages a Biodiversity Trust Fund for community conservation and development of resource use.

To do this, it says, would require the removal of barriers to entry into game ranching for emerging black entrepreneurs and an expansion of benefits to previously disadvantaged individuals and rural communities.

Unfortunately, the redistribution and pro-

tection of reclaimed areas and redistributed land has not fared well in South Africa and often devolves into squabbles between claimants and rural groups. It tends to be insufficiently policed and is often plundered.

A big problem with hunting — as many countries in Africa that allow it have found — is that it permits poaching to be laundered within the legal framework. As for bioprospecting, South Africa doesn’t have a police force knowledgeable or large enough to prevent it from leading to rare plant poaching. There has also been poor performance in the curbing of marine poaching.

Update:

Following public pressure, Environment Minister Barbara Creecy has extended by 14 days the period for comment on a plan to massively exploit and monetise South Africa’s wildlife.

The extension means any comment or objection to the plan must be delivered to the Department Forestry, Fisheries and Environment by April 12.

According to a departmental notice, “the extension is in recognition of the fact that some stakeholders are requesting more time to comment, and we welcome this interest.”

Public comment can be submitted to the Director-General: Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, attention Mr Khorommbi Matibe, Private Bag X447, Pretoria 0001, by hand to Environment House, 473 Steve Biko Street, Arcadia, Pretoria, 0001, or by e-mail to kmatibe@dffe.gov.za

To access the link to the Gazette notice, click on the following link:

https://www.dffe.gov.za/sites/default/files/legislations/nemba_draftbiodiversityeconomy

This article was previously published in the Daily Maverick – Our Burning Planet





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numiknow™ - a program gaining momentum

Last month, the competition, its results, and some challenges and solutions to improve mathematical proficiency were discussed. There was also evidence of a lack of progress of some participants linked to self-confidence, personal motivation, and a lack of basic division knowledge and skills.

This is the feedback about the 'diva' intervention and a look at some of the additional motivation being implementing to encourage participants to improve their mathematical proficiency.

The discussion of division and mastering the counting in decimal multiples to play 'diva' with a set of double 10 dominoes with the 48 groups went well. 'Long division' was used to convince learners of the correctness of the answers in the 'diva' table (see table). Assistance was then provided to participants to help them memorising the values in the table.

It's quite simple to use the table: using it horizontally (across the table) take the number 1 for example in the first column. Going across the table, 1 would be divided by the number at the top of the vertical columns from 1 to 10 – the answers are reflected in the horizontal column e.g.: 1 divided by 3 equals 0.33. Using the table vertically, take the number 7 and proceed down the table from 1 – 10 in the far left column e.g.: 2 divided by 7 equals 0.29 and 8 divided by 7 equals 1.14.

The explanation and memorising of the 'diva' table were followed with a detailed explanation about how to work towards an 80% goal for the last assessment in June 2024. Most participants agreed that it is possible, and they look forward to achieving more than 80% for an evaluation – a potential first for many participants!

The monthly assessment showed an increase of 5.5% to 35.2% in proficiency amongst participants, 8% below the average target of 43%. Activity on the numiknow™ application increased, and an average score of 38% was recorded. A more detailed analysis again indicated that some participants are improving continuously, but it is not a general tendency and will be addressed.

On March 19th and 20th, the numiknow™ school competition was held. This competition motivated the community, teachers, parents, and learners to participate in the game and improve their mathematical proficiency. This competition was also linked to International Pi Day, and some of the games were related to pi or π , which is the ratio of the circumference of any circle to the diameter of that circle.

The winning teams in the Senior Phase were from Maahlamela High and German S Chiloane Secondary Schools. The teams from Makgaung and Mahlambandopfu Primary Schools won the Intermediate Phase competition.

To motivate the learners further, the participants of a school competition held between Thorometsane and Matlabong Primary Schools on the 28th of November 2023 will have a second chance this month, where they will compete to see who can improve their mathematical proficiency in the shortest possible time. The difference is that for this competition, specific numiknow™ standards were set, and the first person to achieve the standard before the 31st of March 2024 will win R 1000.00 in cash and two boxes of dominoes for their school.

Next, the research project at German S Chiloane Secondary School continues where

÷	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	1	0.5	0.33	0.25	0.2	0.17	0.14	0.13	0.11	0.1
2	2	1	0.67	0.5	0.4	0.33	0.29	0.25	0.22	0.2
3	3	1.5	1	0.75	0.6	0.5	0.43	0.38	0.33	0.3
4	4	2	1.33	1	0.8	0.67	0.57	0.5	0.44	0.4
5	5	2.5	1.67	1.25	1	0.83	0.71	0.63	0.56	0.5
6	6	3	2	1.5	1.2	1	0.86	0.75	0.67	0.6
7	7	3.5	2.33	1.75	1.4	1.17	1	0.88	0.78	0.7
8	8	4	2.67	2	1.6	1.33	1.14	1	0.89	0.8
9	9	4.5	3	2.25	1.8	1.5	1.29	1.13	1	0.9
10	10	5	3.33	2.5	2	1.67	1.43	1.25	1.11	1

The 'diva' table: one of the unique contributions by numiknow™ to improve mental mathematics and mathematical proficiency.

eight participants are playing the numiknow™ Games with one each of the Grade 8 and 9 classes two afternoons per week for the first and second terms, to determine if and how their playing of the games influences their mathematics marks. The first Term's best-performing players will also participate in a fun holiday program and have the chance to play numiknow™ as an application on a tablet or a smartphone.

Lastly, as some of the SEF participants have improved significantly, the Champion of Champions competition was introduced to find the great mathematicians in the Kruger to Canyons Biosphere among all participants and learners in June 2024, where valuable prizes will be at stake for the top participants. To qualify to participate in this competition, a player must join numiknow™ 91 by getting all 91 questions correct. The members of numiknow™ 91 will be introduced to more games and compete in 20 games at the June 2024 event.

Next month, we shall look at the other components of the SEF project and the unexpected interest some parents are taking in their children's mathematical proficiency.

A big thank you must go out to the prize sponsors: SPAR Hoedspruit, SUPERSPAR Acornhoek, Koru Camp, Trophy Toyota, Blydvallei Boerdery, BBI and the Landman Group.

To contact Thias Taute about numiknow™ you can do so through the Hoedspruit Hub: 079 502 4727 or on email thias@hoedspruithub.com

Navigating identity: how today's teenagers define themselves in society

AI perspective 'correspondent'

In the ever-evolving landscape of societal dynamics, the role of teenagers stands as a crucial intersection between tradition and innovation. As we traverse the corridors of 2024, the mirrors reflecting teenage identity reveal a complex mosaic, coloured by technological advancements, socio-political currents, and shifting cultural paradigms.

Today's adolescents grapple with questions of self-identity against a backdrop of interconnectedness unparalleled in human history, shaping not only their individual perceptions but also redefining the contours of the greater social network.

The digital tapestry

At the heart of contemporary teenage identity lies the digital tapestry that intertwines their lives with the virtual realm. Social media platforms, once mere tools for communication, have morphed into digital amphitheatres where the performance of self takes centre stage. From curated Instagram feeds to TikTok trends, teenagers sculpt their online personas, navigating the fine line between authenticity and the allure of validation.

"Social media is like a canvas where I paint different versions of myself," remarks Maya, a 17-year-old high school student. "It's a space where I can experiment with different identities and find where I fit in."

Yet, behind the glossy veneer of filters and hashtags lies a paradoxical landscape where connection coexists with isolation.

The relentless pursuit of likes and followers can foster a sense of inadequacy, perpetuating an endless cycle of comparison and self-doubt.

Identity politics

In an era defined by social movements and ideological polarization, teenagers are not passive bystanders but active participants in shaping the socio-political discourse. Identity politics, once relegated to academic debates, now permeate the everyday lives of adolescents, as they grapple with issues of race, gender, and sexuality.

"I feel like our generation is more aware of social injustices and inequalities," reflects Samir, a 16-year-old student. "We're not afraid to speak out and challenge the status quo."

From climate activism to LGBTQ+ advocacy, teenagers are harnessing the power of social media to amplify their voices and catalyse change. The digital sphere serves as a battleground for ideological clashes, where hashtags morph into rallying cries and viral campaigns galvanize global solidarity.

Cultural collage

The kaleidoscope of cultural influences shapes the mosaic of teenage identity, reflecting the multicultural tapestry of contemporary society. In an age of globalization, geographical boundaries blur, giving rise to a hybrid cultural identity that transcends traditional binaries.

"I'm Vietnamese-American, but I also feel connected to Korean pop culture and Japanese anime," shares Emily, an

18-year-old college student. "My identity is like a collage of different cultures, and I'm proud of that."

Music, fashion, and cuisine serve as conduits for cross-cultural exchange, fostering a sense of belonging in a world marked by diversity. Teenagers embrace cultural fluidity, forging connections that transcend borders and challenge monolithic narratives.

The quest for authenticity

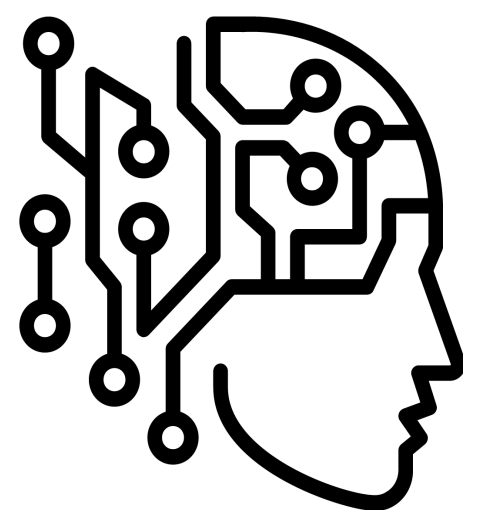
Amidst the cacophony of competing voices, teenagers embark on a quest for authenticity, seeking to reconcile the myriad facets of their identity in a fragmented world. Beyond the curated personas and virtual facades lies the raw essence of self, waiting to be unearthed amidst the noise of societal expectations.

"I think authenticity is about being true to yourself, even when it's difficult," muses Liam, a 15-year-old student. "It's about embracing your flaws and imperfections, rather than trying to fit into someone else's mould."

In a society that often prioritizes conformity over individuality, authenticity emerges as a radical act of self-affirmation. Teenagers carve out spaces of self-expression, whether through art, activism, or personal relationships, forging connections rooted in genuine human connection.

Looking ahead

As we peer into the looking glass of teenage identity in 2024, we glimpse a kaleidoscope of intersecting narratives, each as unique and multifaceted as the individ-



uals who inhabit them. In a world marked by uncertainty and flux, teenagers serve as beacons of resilience and hope, navigating the labyrinth of self-discovery with courage and conviction.

As Maya aptly puts it, "Our generation may be shaped by technology and social media, but at the end of the day, it's our humanity that defines us."

In the grand tapestry of society, the threads of teenage identity weave a vibrant mosaic, reflecting the diversity, resilience, and boundless potential of the human spirit. As we chart the course of tomorrow, let us heed the voices of the next generation, for in their stories lie the blueprint for a more inclusive and compassionate world.

Credit: ChatGPT, chat.openai.com

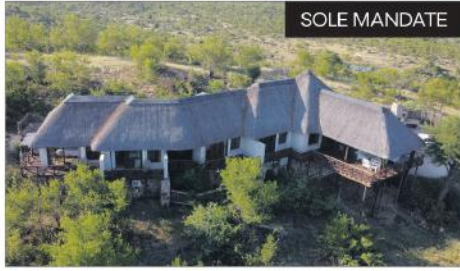
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NDLOVUMZI NATURE R 4 458 000
RESERVE Beds 4 | Baths 4 | Floor size: 300 m²

This tranquil home is situated overlooking the Olifants River and is surrounded by large riverine trees and rocky outcrops. The open plan living, dining and newly fitted kitchen are all under high vaulted ceilings that make this home light and bright, which makes the home appealing.

Jason Jones - 083 267 4794 Ref: 2152063



SOLE MANDATE

RAPTOR'S VIEW WILDLIFE R 5 950 000
ESTATE Beds 4 | Baths 4 | Floor: 389 m²

This large home is set deep in the estate in a quiet location with beautiful bushveld and mountain views. The open plan living area comprises lounge, dining area and loft. Leading off the living area, is a TV room as well as a spacious study. The covered patio area overlooks boma and pool.

Michelle Severin - 083 469 3821 Ref: 2217025



RAPTOR'S ESCAPE R 3 550 000
Bedrooms 3 | Bathrooms 2 | Floor size: 197 m²

This beautiful, modern townhouse is close to town and all its amenities. It is currently run as self-catering accommodation - you have the option to continue with the business, or enjoy a full title, pet-friendly home in a safe complex. Furniture can be negotiated and is not included in the price.

Michelle Severin - 083 468 3821 Ref: 2221908



KHAYA NDLOVU GAME R 10 900 000
RESERVE Beds 4 | Baths 4.5 | Floor: 450 m²

Beautiful home set on the banks of the dry riverbed. The large open plan entertainment area consists of a dining room, lounge and open plan kitchen. Khaya Ndlovu is a low density residential reserve with only 35 stands on 1,305 ha; it is home to 4 of the Big 5 animals.

Yvette Thompson - 083 655 7176 Ref: 2209629



SOLE MANDATE

OLIFANTS GAME RESERVE, R 6 800 000
BIG 5 Beds 4 | Baths 4 | Traverse: 9,000 ha

50% share in a furnished bush home with full ownership of a Land Cruiser. Spacious lounge and living area leading to covered patio deck with phenomenal views! Braai and boma area set off the deck. A well-designed kitchen with a breakfast nook also enjoys the views. Excellent condition!

Rob Severin - 083 469 3820 Ref: 2211900



SOLE MANDATE

GUESTHOUSE IN LIVERPOOL R 3 800 000
Beds 6 | Baths 3 | Floor: 289 m² | Land size: 21 ha

This property is now commercially rezoned and operational presenting an array of possibilities. The property boasts a prime location, with the guesthouse overlooking a perennial water source attracting wildlife, complemented by a tranquil garden with expansive lawns and large trees.

Jason Jones - 083 267 4794 Ref: 2206695



SOLE MANDATE

HOEDSPRUIT WILDLIFE R 4 550 000
ESTATE Beds 3 | Baths 2.5 | Floor: 240 m²

This home features a double volume, open plan kitchen with lounge and loft. The covered patio looks out onto the fenced garden and pool. There is a double garage with staff bathroom and two store rooms. The estate offers secure living with state-of-the-art access control.

Yvette Thompson - 083 655 7176 Ref: 2209653



SOLE MANDATE

MODITLO WILDLIFE ESTATE R 4 500 000
Bedrooms 3 | Bathrooms 3 | Floor size: 275 m²

This family home is well located with lovely bushveld and mountain views. The home features a dining area, lounge, kitchen with scullery, and bar area. The living area leads out to the covered patio, deck and swimming pool. A braai area is tucked away in the corner of the garden.

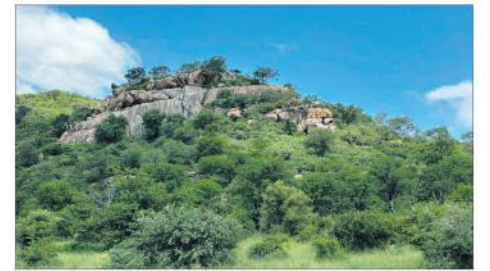
Rob Severin - 083 469 3820 Ref: 2203063



MODITLO WILDLIFE ESTATE R 5 700 000
Bedrooms 3 | Bathrooms 3.5 | Floor size: 251 m²

This newly built home offers bespoke design and tranquil surroundings. The spacious open-plan living, kitchen, & dining area overlook the covered patio, swimming pool, and boma area. Features include air-con in the bedrooms, ceiling fans throughout, scullery, courtyard & double carport.

Jason Jones - 083 267 4794 Ref: 2222185



SELATI PRIVATE GAME R 22 000 000
RESERVE Beds 7 | Baths 6 | Farm size: 1,038 ha

This 1,038 ha farm is positioned amongst granite outcrops. The reserve features the Big 5 and bountiful plains game; with traversing over 28,000 ha. Infrastructure includes a 4-bedroom farmhouse, 2 cottages, viewing deck, shed and storeroom, to name a few. Sold furnished.

Michelle Severin - 083 469 3821 Ref: 2219422



RENTAL

ESCARPIA ECO ESTATE, R 20 000pm
KAMPERSRUS Beds 3 | Baths 2 | Floor: 209 m²

Available from 1 April 2024, not pet friendly - The house consists of an open-plan lounge, dining room and kitchen, which has plenty of storage and a breakfast nook. Wrap-around patios, one with a built-in braai allow for a wonderful year-round outdoor lifestyle.

Michelle Herb - 015 793 1534 Ref: 2222189



RENTAL

RAPTOR'S VIEW WILDLIFE R 23 000pm
ESTATE Beds 3 | Baths 2 | Floor: 230 m²

Furnished rental, available from 1 April 2024 to 30 Nov 2024, not pet friendly - This home features a large and comfortable open plan living room, dining area and kitchen with scullery. The spacious covered patio and deck area overlooks the wilderness area.

Michelle Herb - 015 793 1534 Ref: 2139348

Concerned about your current rental agreement?

At Century 21 we aim to keep our landlords and tenants protected.

Michelle Herb - 015 793 1534
Rental Agent (Candidate Property Practitioner)



The Tshemba Foundation: enhancing general healthcare to the Acornhoek area



The Tshembe Foundation team hard at work in the Acornhoek area, attending to the community in need of healthcare
Images supplied

Mark Bishop

In the heart of Mpumalanga province, South Africa, lies the town of Acornhoek. This is a bustling cauldron of humanity – some may even say an overflowing cauldron. Many of the million or so residents of the town and surrounding areas are unemployed and due to a floundering, albeit committed public health care service, they have limited access to quality and essential healthcare. This is exacerbated by a rough estimate that 84% of South Africans depend on public healthcare, only 30% of doctors work in public healthcare and of that only 12% work in rural areas! This is where the Tshemba Foundation steps in, acting as a vital lifeline for historically disadvantaged communities in conjunction with the Department of Health.

Founded on the principle of volunteerism the Tshemba Foundation, bridges a gap in rural healthcare by bringing skilled local and international medical professionals from across the globe to serve the Acornhoek and surrounding areas.

“The lack of doctors and specialists in rural areas like Acornhoek is a significant problem, and the volunteer program allows us to address this by bringing experienced doctors to the region, offering a wider range of services for patients,” says Godfrey Phillips, Director, and Co-Founder of the Tshemba Foundation.

The foundation boasts a continual turnover of a diverse team of volunteers, including surgeons, specialists like ophthalmologists, general practitioners, physiotherapists, dietitians, and occupational therapists. This breadth of expertise allows them to tackle a multitude of healthcare issues prevalent in the community.

The Tshemba Foundation’s success hinges on these dedicated volunteers, many of whom return time and again, driven by the desire to make a tangible difference. For some it’s a life changing experience, incredibly inspirational and the gratitude and appreciation seen in the eyes of patients always leaves an indelible stamp on those that experience it.

Volunteers are sourced in multiple ways – through LinkedIn, on Google search, and because of the volunteer’s life changing experiences, networking by past volunteers recommending coming to Hoedspruit, has become quite effective now! Volunteers come from all over the world, Australia to the Netherlands, and from Singapore to Brazil. All medical volunteers are registered

through the Health Professions Council, allowing them to work as a volunteer in the medical field.

Home base and partners

Based at a local health facility in Acornhoek, the focus of operation is channelled through the surrounding primary healthcare clinics – currently seven in all (Hlokomela, Dwarssloop, Hluvukani, Brooklyn, Buffelshoek, Murhotso and Cottendale) – and schools. The foundation injects much-needed expertise, bolstering existing services and tackling critical healthcare challenges. There is also some collaboration with Hlokomela in Hoedspruit.

The foundation is now working closely with the One Sight Foundation – an NGO with whom they have recently formed a partnership. This foundations’ core focus is to improve vision, especially refraction to glasses. They are a very large international foundation, part of Essilor Luxottica (possibly the largest manufacturer of glasses worldwide) – and they have a presence all over the world. This partnership was recently established, and this month was the kick-off of the collaboration and setting up efficient screening events of scale. The collaboration leans on the fact that Tshemba Foundation has the local area knowledge, and One Sight has an almost limitless supply of glasses (frames and lenses) – so glasses can now be given to children.

Projects and programs

There are numerous programs that the Tshemba Foundation has in operation, from the outreach program, the primary healthcare clinics, the Woman’s Clinic, and other projects.

The outreach program operates in parallel to all the other help, and consists of vision screening, but also dental and audio screening – part of which consists of health talks and medical education across the spectrum of speciality – an important focus of the foundation.

Another area of focus is women’s health, some of which is in collaboration with the Breast Health Foundation. Cervical cancer, breast cancer, and sexually transmitted diseases are major concerns for women in Acornhoek. Through the dedicated women’s health program, volunteer specialists provide essential care and education, promoting early detection and preventative measures.

Interestingly the most common ailment in this area in children is vernal keratoconjunctivitis or VKC – this is like an allergic reaction

on the external ocular surface. It expresses itself as very itchy eyes, photophobia, mucous discharge, and blurred vision. If the eyes are rubbed too hard it can cause cornea deformity and even blindness. About 50% of children in the area suffer from this condition.

The foundation goes beyond simply providing a wide range of medical services and treatments. Recognizing the language barrier as a potential hurdle, they’ve implemented a “nurse communicator” program. Local nurses bridge the gap between patients and volunteer doctors, ensuring clear communication and fostering trust. This not only enhances patient care but also empowers local nurses by providing valuable on-the-job training.

Foundation impact and challenges

The foundation’s impact extends beyond the walls of hospitals and clinics. Their holistic approach to healthcare allows them to work closely with the community to address social determinants of health, with the view of creating a healthier environment for everyone.

The story of the Tshemba Foundation is one of resilience, collaboration, and unwavering dedication to improving lives. By harnessing the power of volunteerism and fostering a spirit of community, they are etching a brighter future for the healthcare landscape in Acornhoek, one consultation, one surgery, and one life touched at a time.

However, challenges remain. The foundation is constantly striving to expand its volunteer network (currently constrained by accommodation availability, and the capacity of hospitals and clinics) – the target is twelve volunteers at a time. There is also a drive to secure funding, something that has not been a real focus for the foundation. Of course, there is always a continual requirement for vital medical equipment and infrastructure upgrades, which demands extra funding which is fast becoming a restriction to growth. Some mistakes have been made along the way, but the foundation has embraced those and battled their way through them, and come out stronger, wiser, and more effective.

Despite these hurdles, the Tshemba Foundation embodies the spirit of Ubuntu – “humanity towards others.” To date the foundation has achieved over 11 000 healthcare professional days, welcomed over 309 global volunteers, has done 3218 theatre procedures, over 57 372 patients have been treated and over 2 110 school screenings have been done. Last year the foundation



surpassed their 1000th cataract procedure performed, keeping in mind that during covid they could not continue these procedures. To date they have performed 1116 cataract procedures! This is a testament to the transformative power of collective action, and an inspiration for others seeking to bridge the healthcare gap in underserved communities.

If anyone or organisation is interested in helping to try and address the many community health needs, donations in terms of money or medical equipment are always very much appreciated. The person to contact in this regard is the CEO Barbara Mcgorian at barbara@tshembafoundation.org.

THE most delicious carrot cake EVER!



Veggie Diva

This is the best and most delicious carrot cake you will ever eat, and as you can see by the pictures it had already been half devoured before I had a chance to photograph it. The key ingredients are the pineapple, chopped nuts and the carrots, which are cooked before being added to the cake mixture. This recipe makes a large cake, I often halve the ingredients and bake it in a ring tin.

Ingredients

- 750ml brown sugar
- 375ml sunflower oil
- 4 eggs
- 12,5ml vanilla essence
- 5ml salt
- 750ml cake flour
- 12.5ml bicarbonate of soda
- 5 ml ground cinnamon
- 5ml ground ginger
- 5ml all spice
- 5ml ground cardamom
- 375ml chopped walnuts or pecan nuts
- 375ml desiccated coconut
- 400ml carrots, cooked and chopped
- 200ml crushed pineapple drained

Icing

- 2 cups icing sugar
- 250g cream cheese (Philadelphia works the best)
- 50ml soft butter
- 5ml lemon juice and 5ml lemon zest

Method

1. Preheat oven the 180°C and grease two 20cm cake pans.
2. Beat the sugar, oil, eggs, vanilla essence and salt together in a large mixing bowl until beautifully smooth and creamy.
3. Sift the flour, bicarbonate of soda and spices into this mixture and blend thoroughly.
4. Add the rest of the ingredients and mix. Pour the batter into the cake pans and bake for 45 to 60 minutes. When a skewer inserted into the cakes comes out clean, it is ready.
5. For the icing, combine the icing sugar, cream cheese, soft butter, lemon juice, and lemon zest.
6. Beat the mixture with a hand beater for 2-3 minutes to create a fluffy light icing.
7. Ice the cake and decorate with crushed walnuts

Chaîne des Rôtisseurs International hosts the Young Chefs Competition in South Africa, spotlighting macadamia nuts

In a celebration of culinary talent and innovation, the renowned Chaîne des Rôtisseurs International gourmet organization is gearing up for a thrilling young chefs competition set to take place in South Africa. Partnering with the Macadamias South Africa (SAMAC) and local macadamia nut factories, the event aims to not only showcase the culinary prowess of young chefs but also highlight the versatility and luxury of macadamia nuts as a premium ingredient.

The competition specifically targets chefs under the age of 27, encouraging them to participate and infuse their menus with the unique flavours of macadamia nuts. By doing so, they not only elevate their culinary creations but also gain recognition in the global gourmet scene through membership with Chaîne des Rôtisseurs .

With approximately 340 lodges in the

Hoedspruit area, the competition presents a significant opportunity for these establishments to enhance their prestige by becoming members of Chaîne des Rôtisseurs , thus tapping into a network of culinary excellence spanning the globe.

South Africa boasts the largest macadamia nut industry worldwide, with farmers and factories leading in both innovation and sustainability practices. Macadamia nuts, often dubbed the "Rolls Royce" of the nut world, offer a buttery crunch and exquisite flavour profile, making them an ideal ingredient for sundowner snacks and high-end catering.

Moreover, macadamia nut by-products, such as oil and vegan paste, provide chefs with versatile options to add luxury and depth to their dishes, catering to a wide range of dietary preferences.

The competition itself follows the tradition of Chaîne des Rôtisseurs, aiming to promote

cultural diversity in food preparation and presentation while adhering to a traditional approach. The competition will be open to all chefs subject to qualifying criteria. Competitors, carefully selected, will showcase their talent and creativity through a meticulously crafted three-course menu.

Each chef will receive an identical black box, from which they must compose a menu for four people within a strict time frame. The competition, divided into regional, national, and international levels, offers competitors the chance to vie for top honours and prestigious prizes, including cash awards, training opportunities, and membership benefits.

In addition to recognizing culinary excellence, the competition also acknowledges kitchen proficiency, with special awards presented to those demonstrating exceptional skill and technique.

As preparations unfold for this exciting



event, the culinary world eagerly anticipates the emergence of new talents and the celebration of culinary innovation on the international stage.

For more information and entry requirements contact Llewellyn Buckley-Marais on email: baillidelegue@chaine.co.za

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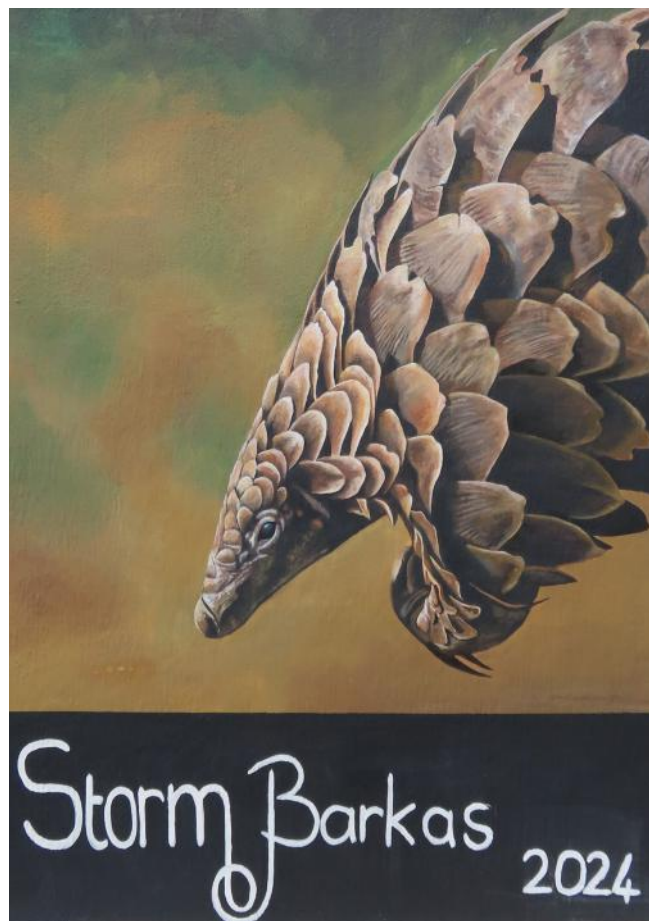
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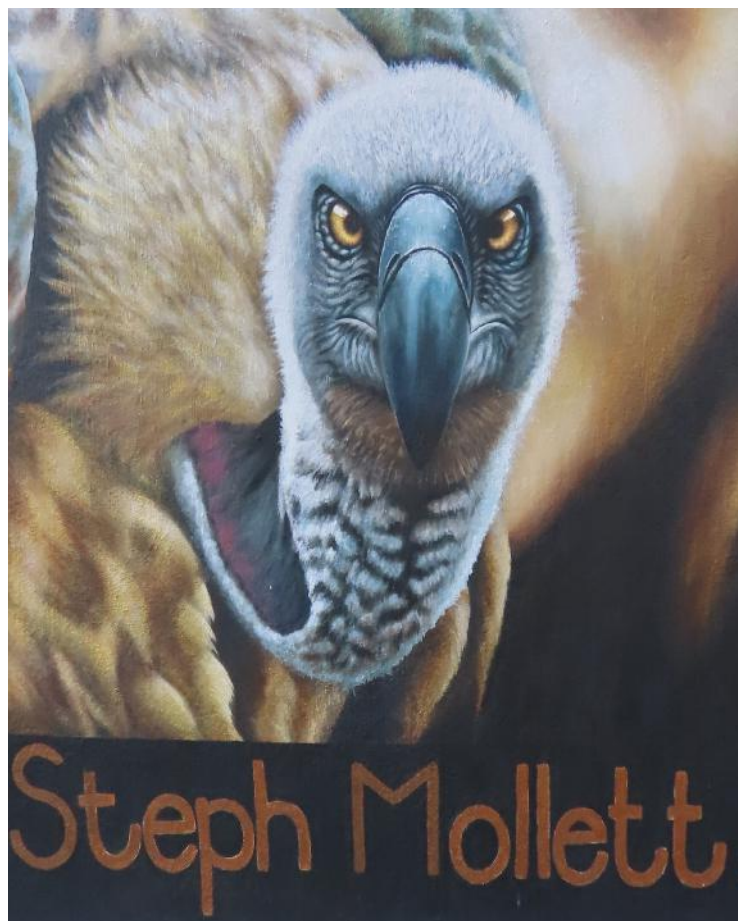
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Love our town – the murals



Storm Barkas 2024



Steph Mollett



Sbonelo Ngomane

Local correspondent

Local artists untied in an effort to lighten up a drab wall at an intersection at the entrance to the town. Eight artists put their brushes up, and produced a set of awesome murals that are eye catching in colour, magnificent in subject, and fantastic in production. We salute those that put in of their time and effort, under the blazing sun (we know what the temperatures have been like over the past month) to produce the set that must be the best murals in the Lowveld for all to see, all thanks to the sponsors, helpers, artists and the unwavering co-ordinating prowess of Arda van Dongen, the project director, who said:

“My key learning about the whole project is that it is done by the community for the community. If we get together as a town we can do great things. Everyone involved volunteered their time and enjoyed doing so and all materials were donated for free by local businesses. When I took on this project, I had some ideas, but didn't really know where to start. Yet everyone I approached responded positively and every step naturally lead to the next. For the murals, my idea was to create these different blocks of art and talking with Warren Cary the suggestion to have different artists involved was quickly agreed to. I had no idea we had so many artists in Hoedspruit and it was wonderful to see all of them involved, creating all these beautiful images in their own style. They are the eye-catchers of the project, and combined with the garden have created a wonderful landmark for the town”.

And here they are (in no particular order) ... our champion artists.

STORM BARKAS - Pangolin

Storm is a Hoedspruit born artist that grew up in the lowveld bush with a family who dedicated their lives to anti-poaching. Her obsession for animals started off at a young age, when tracking animals through the bush and finding snares. Protecting wildlife became a priority and art was a passion, so naturally the two came together.

Storm went off to boarding school in the North West where her art teacher, Jody Olen, introduced her to many mediums and techniques, and so her passion grew.

Having settled back home in Hoedspruit after school, Storm works in the local community teaching children art. Her father always explained that conservation is not just the work on the ground, but also the teaching of people around us to love and appreciate animals, which she does through art.

She hopes to bring positivity to these children's lives through art. Storm primarily works with oils but loves to experiment with different mediums.

WARREN CARY - Leopard

Warren Cary is a well-known and celebrated South African wildlife artist. He was born in 1969 in Johannesburg, South Africa and pursued a career in the printing industry.

Over the years Warren dabbled in his passion for art and with a desire to be surrounded by wildlife, Warren abandoned the rat race and relocated to Hoedspruit in 2011, to become a full-time wildlife artist.

Warren specialises in drawing the amazing nature and wildlife of the Greater Kruger National Park that he is so passionate about. This passion is reflected in his award-winning work which has been described as having an individual style of precision, power, and eloquence!

As a self-taught artist the detail of the work that he produces is exceptional, and breathtaking. Every hair, every feather is perfect, making his work so accurate that it looks almost lifelike.

Although Warren is experienced in all mediums, his medium of choice is graphite pencil

and pastels.

Warren is a person who believes in “giving back” and is willing to share his knowledge and experiences freely, which is evidenced in the mentorship he gives to emerging artists.

Despite having won worldwide acclaim for his artwork he is not content to rest on his laurels and amongst other pursuits opened the spectacular Warren Cary Wildlife Gallery in Hoedspruit where he showcases some of South Africa's renowned wildlife artists and has created a platform for up-and-coming wildlife artists.

When Warren is not at his drawing board, keeping up with his numerous commissioned artworks, you will find him beating around the bush photographing, analysing, and studying his next subject!

STEPHANIE MOLLETT - Vulture

Stephanie was born in Cape Town in 1970. She was raised and schooled in Johannesburg, where she excelled at art. With a passion for art and an eye for aesthetics, space and design, and a desire to create, Stephanie pursued her studies in the field of interior design.

She built a successful career as an account manager and designer of restaurants and

clothing stores such as Spur, Hard Rock Cafe, Milady's, Stuttafords, Nino's and Wimpy (including Hoedspruit's first “African” themed Wimpy).

Her sense of adventure and a passion for life, on occasion pulled her out of the corporate design world, where she explored different ventures from teaching scuba diving in Zanzibar, to joining the Africam wildlife web camera team, and finally to relocating from Johannesburg to Hoedspruit.

Here she felt a yearning to return to her original passion for art, and she discovered a hidden talent for wildlife and portraiture art in the medium of pastel pencils. In early 2019 Stephanie joined the Warren Cary Academy of Fine Art with celebrated South African wildlife artist, Warren Cary, as the Art Curator and Consultant at the Gallery. It was here that she honed her artistic skills to such an extent that the detail in her works means that they take an average of 2 months to complete.

With a strong aesthetic sense and an eye for detail, Stephanie creates unique and striking pieces that reflect her deep connection to each subject. Her artworks are infused with vibrant colours and intricate details that perfectly capture each subject's character and beauty.

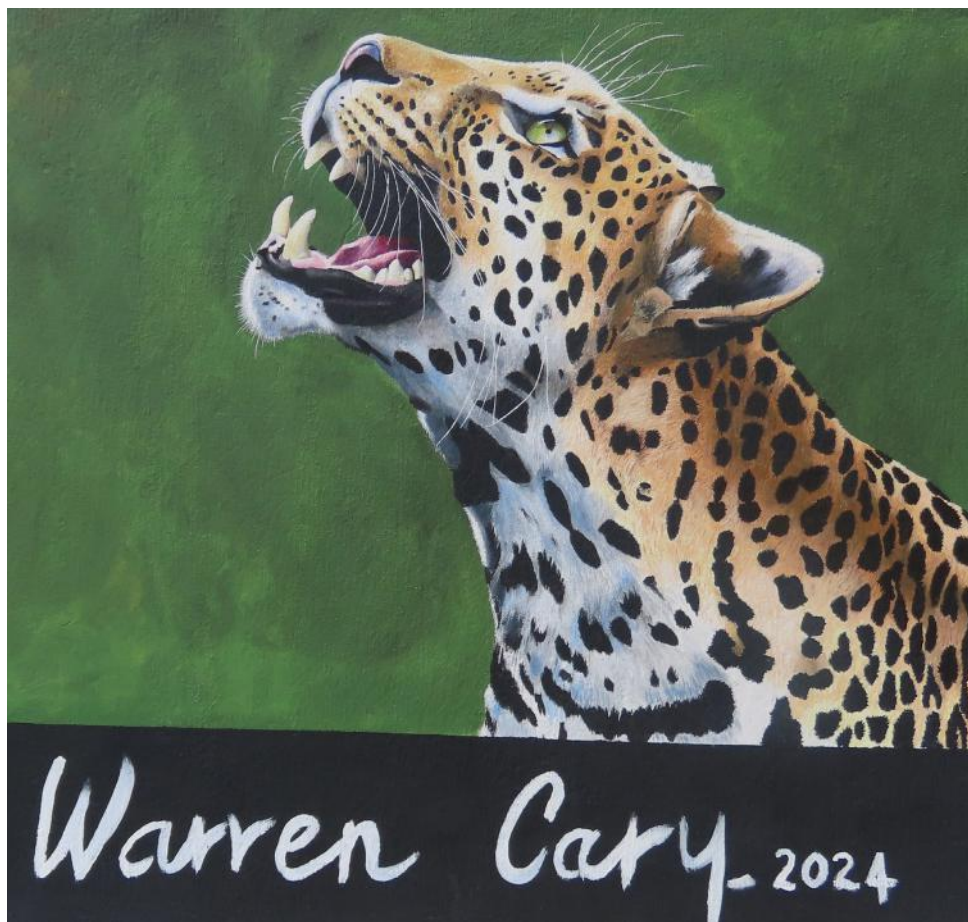
SBONELO NGOMANE – Bush snake

Growing up Sbonelo had a passion for art and drawing but never had a chance to embrace it at that time. The first time he did his best art, was a picture of three women on the beach, which made him realise his talent. This drawing was made for his high school principal and after completing school he worked as a painter and in construction. In 2016 he met an inspirational friend, Simbi Zulu, who then created a platform for Sbonelo and taught him everything he knows today.

Sbonelo started selling his work through various platforms and channels and started exhibiting his work. In 2020 he became a model for provincial designers and his work was featured at the South African Traditional Music Awards, and later that year he won an award for the best young artist.

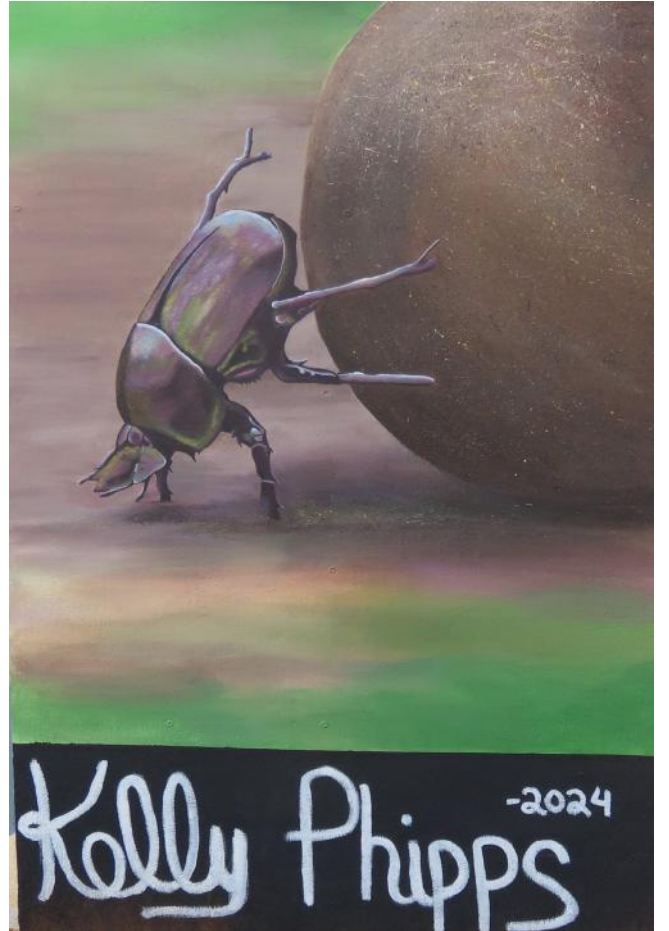
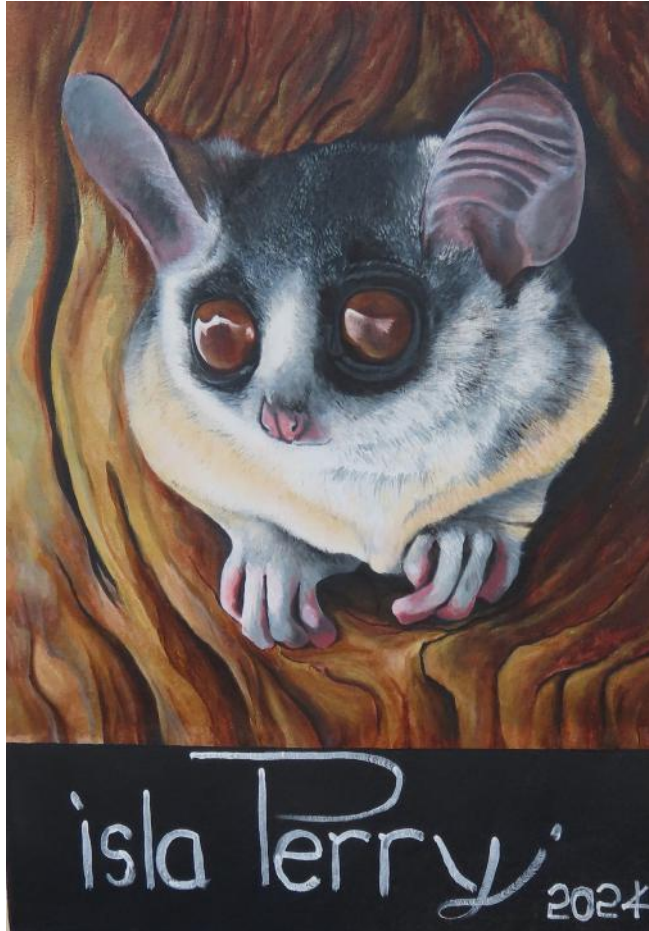
In the same year Sbonelo returned to Acornhoek and joined the Kulani Collective community, where he started teaching art. With 38 students enrolled in the programme that year, it was a huge success. Here he found an environment of gentle people and was inspired to continue expressing his talent.

One of the big successes to date was in 2022 when Sbonelo moved to Hoedspruit, where he met people and clients from all over the world who loved and celebrated his talent and understood his work.



Warren Cary - 2024

that set Hoedies alight



SOPHIE NIEMANN - Warthog

Sophie is a self-taught artist, who has lived and worked in Africa for the past 20 years. Art and wildlife have always been a passion for Sophie. During her time in Africa as a zoologist, she had the privileged to spend most of her days in nature working for a conservation and community organization setting up programmes across Africa.

She uses her experience with wildlife as an inspiration and hopes to express the beauty and wonder of nature in her work, touching a wider audience to educate them about the significance of conservation and the issues facing our vanishing species. She enjoys the more creative side of her art by using the vibrant African fabric, Shweshwe, and a machine embroidery technique called 'thread painting', to give her wildlife pieces a unique texture and appeal.

ISLA PERRY - Bushbaby

Isla was born in 1962 in Zimbabwe and was raised on a farm, where her love for nature developed at a very young age. During her high school years, Isla realised that among academics and sports, art was by far her favourite subject.

After leaving school, Isla studied textile design and applied arts in Bulawayo, and then moved down to Cape Town to study interior design at "The Whitehouse" in Rondebosch. Having received awards in both fields, Isla entered the design industry in Cape Town.

Isla and her family moved up to Jwaneng in Botswana, where she designed and painted tablecloths, cushion covers and T-shirts. Much of her inspiration was drawn from memorable holidays spent in the Okavango.

The family returned to South Africa and lived briefly in Rustenburg and Steelpoort, where Isla's husband was diagnosed with motor neuron disease, which necessitated a move to Johannesburg. There, Isla returned to the design industry, specialising in designer kitchens, bars, cigar lounges and dressing rooms, working with clientele, both locally and up into Africa. Isla was involved in design, sales, marketing, and project management.

After much encouragement from her daughter Meghan, Isla moved to Hoed-

spruit in April 2019 where she worked briefly in the hospitality industry. Isla joined the Warren Cary Art Workshops in October 2019, where she was introduced to the pastel pencil medium. Isla is now a full-time artist who is exploring her creativity and passion for art and wildlife.

KELLY PHIPPS - Dung beetle

Unfortunately at the time of going to print no bio had as yet been received – we'll pick up on Kelly next month.

VANROOY SONDLANE – Kingfisher and Chameleon

Vanrooy is a self-taught artist residing in Acornhoek. He started drawing at an early age encouraged by his mum who was working as a domestic worker. His mum forage for crayons at a dump because Vanrooy didn't have access to art materials.

Years later he got sponsored by a company called Pugs Landscaping for him to study art. He also got an opportunity to work on a farm. In 2013 Varooy started displaying his art near Nelspruit, along the road to Barberton.

His art is inspired by life experienced by African people and wildlife. His art portrays a viewpoint of life and nature through emotion and colour, inspiring people to reduce waste, reuse, recycle, and respect the environment.

His medium of choice is acrylic paint oils and exploring watercolours, chalk, pastels, and other mediums.

In 2017 he worked with a high school art teacher in Shobiyana High School. In 2018 Vanrooy was introduced to an NGO called Seeds of Light where he started attending workshops coordinated by Butterfly Art Project, Wild Shot Outreach and Ann Watts.

In 2018 he started a company called Khanda Panda which means 'creative mind in hustling' - his company continues to inspire people to use their creativity to survive.



Time Travel



Ben Coley
Celestial Events SA

I have been involved in astrotourism for more than five years, and delivered hundreds of astronomy-based events. During this time, one of the most common questions asked is 'How do we know how far away objects are?', and 'How do we measure these distances?'

For most of us, it is almost impossible to truly comprehend the vastness of space. The distances involved are, quite literally, astronomical. Our brains are programmed to think on a human, earth-bound distance scale, whereby a long-haul flight is considered 'far'. Having just returned from doing some work in New Zealand, I can certainly attest to this!

But travelling from one side of the Earth to the other does not even register on a cosmic scale. When appreciating the distances between planets, stars and galaxies, we need new units of measurement to make the numbers more manageable.

There are various units of distance used in space but by far the most common, (and well known thanks to sci-fi movies), is the 'light year'. Despite using the word 'year', the first thing to remember is that a light year is a measure of distance and *not* a measure of time. Simply put, it is the distance that light travels in one year.

This figure should not be scoffed at however. Light is the fastest thing in the Universe - a pretty bold claim! It travels at a mind-boggling 300 000kms per second. Just think about that for a minute If you were travelling at the speed of light, you could travel around the world 7,5 times in just 1 second! So, if light can travel 300 000kms in 1 second, imagine how far it could travel in a year. The answer is far; very far - a whopping 9,5 trillion kilometres!

Already we are entering the realm where these figures do not mean much to us, so let us put it in more relatable terms - if you travelled 1 light year in an Airbus passenger plane, it would take you 1,2 million years!

Many of you may have heard of the Voyager space probes that were launched in

1977 and have been sending back information about space for nearly half a century. Despite hurtling through space at around 60 000km/h, they have not yet travelled 1 light DAY!

The table shows how long it would take to reach some of the well-known objects in the sky by an Airbus passenger plane:

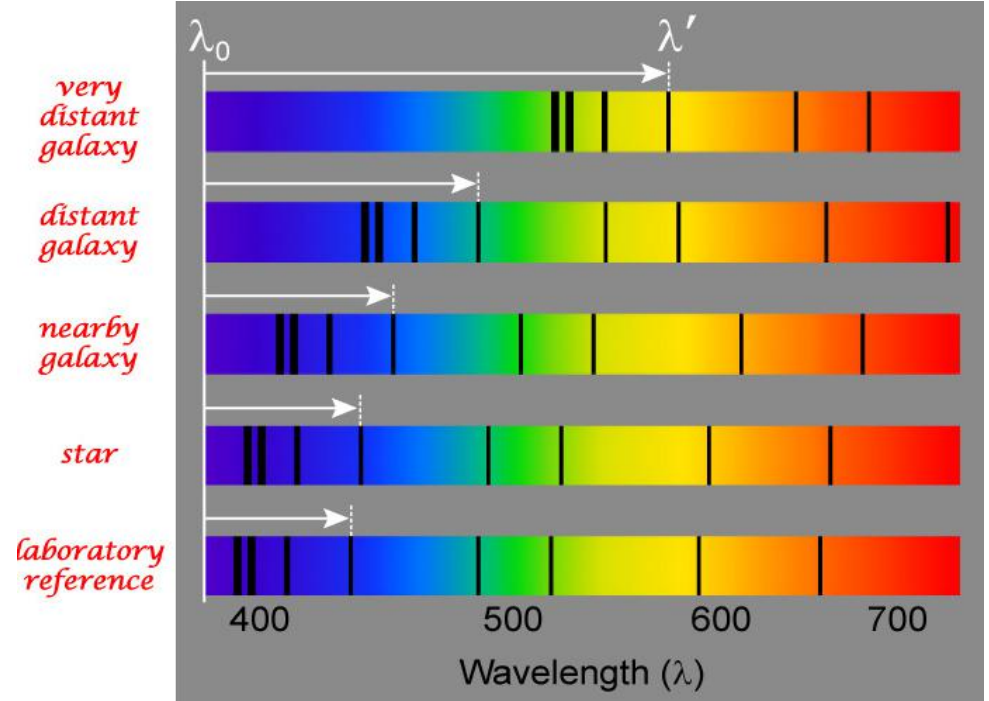
Object	Description	Distance (Light Years)	Approx. Time (Years)
The Sun	Our parent star	8 mins	13
Alpha Centauri	Our closest star after the Sun	4,3	4 000,000
Betelgeuse	Red supergiant star in Orion	650	600 000 000
Omega Centauri	Brightest globular cluster	17 000	15 000 000 000
Large Magellanic Cloud	Dwarf galaxy	170 000	150 000 000 000
Andromeda Galaxy	Closest large galaxy	3 000 000	3 000 000 000 000

How then do we actually measure these vast distances? To objects in our solar system, we can use radar imaging. We can bounce radio waves off these objects and measure how long it takes for the signal to return. This method is effective up to around 1 billion kilometres. Despite the magnitude of this number, a billion kilometres is a mere stone's throw in the abyss of space. Beyond this, astronomers use slightly more mathematical based techniques:

Parallax

Parallax uses the same basic trigonometry that many of us studied at school—and many school children wonder where this sort of mathematics could be used! Our eyes do it for us every day and allow us depth perception. Hold out your hand, close one eye and place it over a distant object. Now close that eye and open the other. What you will notice, is that the object appears to shift against the background. The further away the object is, the bigger the difference. Our brain knows the distance between our eyes, and combined with how much the object moves, calculates the distance!

So how does this work in space? Astronomers look at a star at six month intervals, when the Earth is on opposite sides of the



Light speed (above left), red shift (above), parallax (below left) and the standard candle (bottom right)
Images supplied: Ben Coley

Sun, and measure its movement against the background stars. From this information, trigonometry can tell us the distance to the star. Europe's Gaia satellite has used parallax to measure the distance to over a billion stars to date. The movement is small, but our equipment is so sensitive, it is effective up to around 500 light years.

Standard candles

Certain objects in space are always the same brightness. If we know the intrinsic brightness of an object, we can compare how bright it appears from Earth, and then work out how far away it must be. Imagine standing at one end of a 1 km runway at night time, and at the other end is someone holding a 100 watt lightbulb. The light will be barely visible to you, but because you know how bright it is, some simple maths can work out how far away it must be to look so faint. Examples of objects used by astronomers include Type 1a Supernovae (white dwarf stars that always explode when they reach a specific mass) and a class of star known as Cepheid Variables that pulse at very specific rates based on their brightness.

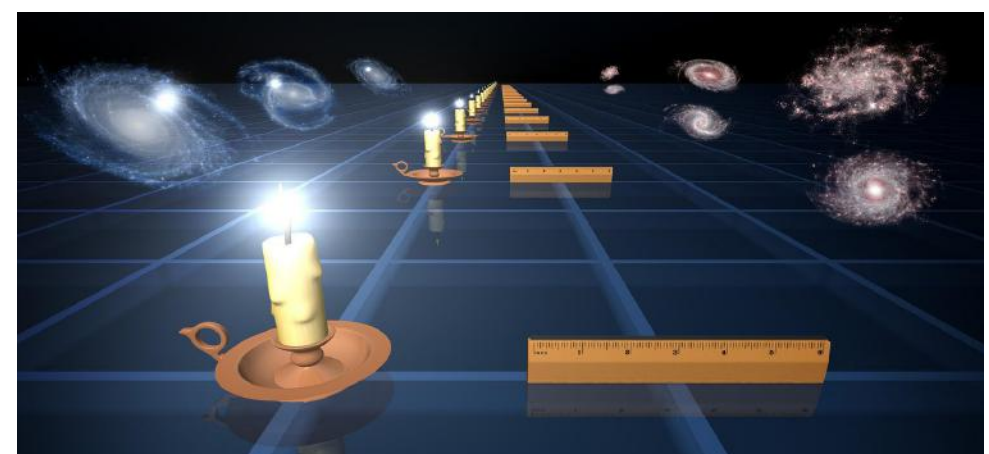
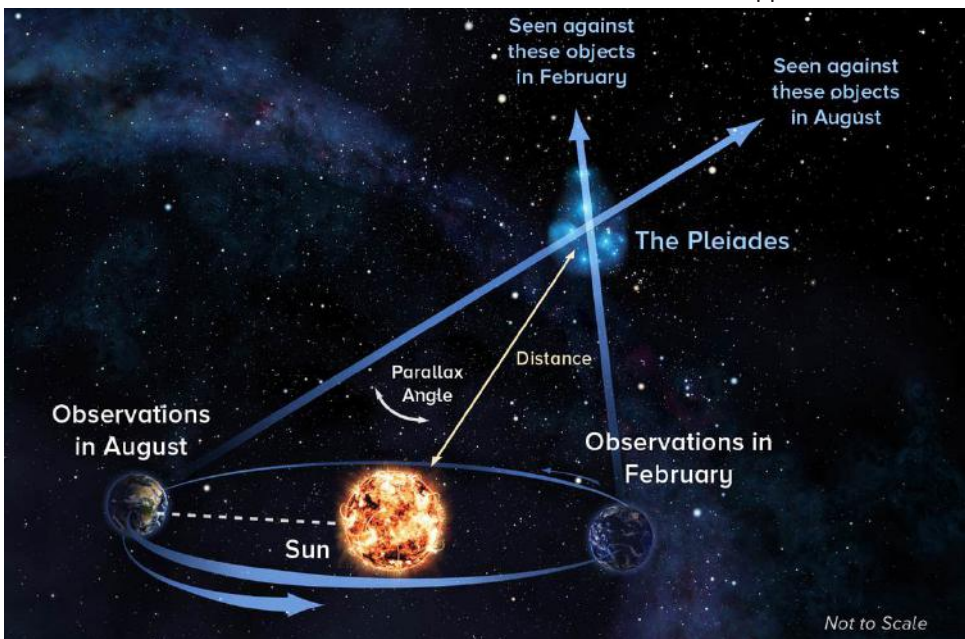
Red shift

But what about distant objects that do not possess any standard candles? The Universe is expanding, and as it expands, it 'stretches' light. Because we know this rate of expansion, we can measure how far an object's light has been stretched and cal-

culate how far it therefore must be. Every element produces a very specific pattern of light, or spectra, that looks a little bit like a barcode on a rainbow. Distant objects are expanding away from us and thus have their lines shifted towards the red end of the spectra. The further the object, the more the 'redshift', and the more the lines have moved. The gaps between the lines remain the same, but the *pattern* has moved. By measuring this movement, its distance can be calculated.

Perhaps the coolest thing about looking into space is that you are also looking back in time! Light takes so long to reach us that we are not seeing the stars in real-time. This is how telescopes like Hubble and James Webb can see some of the earliest stars in the Universe. They can see objects billions of light years away and are therefore seeing what they looked like billions of years ago. Knowing this is allowing us to recreate the origins of the Universe and trace the steps of the earliest stars that formed after the Big Bang, some 13.8 billion years ago!

Scientists tell us that time travel is not possible (yet anyway!) but it is available to each and every one of us, every night. Many of the stars in the sky may not be there anymore... They may have blinked out of existence or exploded, hundreds, thousands, or even millions of years ago - but we will only know when the information arrives. Not only is Space beautiful and mysterious, it is 'Back to the Future's cosmic DeLorean: the ultimate time machine'!



Ingwe Leopard Research: partnering for conservation success



Images of two beautiful leopards

Images: supplied

Wildlife correspondent

The Kruger to Canyons Biosphere Reserve (KtoC) is thrilled to welcome Ingwe Leopard Research (ILR) as a new partner in the reserve. The ILR's innovative citizen science project is rapidly becoming an important tool for leopard conservation across South Africa's Limpopo Province.

Citizen science on the rise

Launched just over a year ago, ILR has become the biggest citizen science leopard project in South Africa. This exciting initiative was developed by Marine Servonnat, who brings to the table five years of research and conservation experience, along with three years in the safari industry. Marine's time working in the Okavango Delta as a camp manager sparked her vision for ILR, a project that harnesses the power of citizen science to achieve its ambitious goals.

Empowering people, protecting leopards

ILR's core mission is two-fold. Firstly, the aim is to demonstrate the value of citizen science in monitoring and conserving carnivores. This project directly engages residents of Hoedspruit and the surrounding areas, lodge guides and managers, and even tourists visiting the region. By collecting data from camera traps and direct observations, citizen scientists contribute to vital information on leopard density, distribution, and movement patterns. This data helps identify potential threats to leopards, allowing for the development of mitigation strategies. Furthermore, ILR in conjunction with KtoC strives to create safe ecological

corridors that connect fragmented habitats, promoting leopard connectivity across the landscape. Perhaps most importantly, by involving the public, ILR fosters a deeper connection between people and wildlife, promoting coexistence and understanding.

Impressive Growth and Initial Findings

The scale of the ILR project is truly impressive. With over 30 reserves participating, covering about 200 000 hectares around Hoedspruit, both within and outside formally protected areas, their impact is undeniable. Since its inception, the project has yielded incredible results. Over 4 984 leopard images have been uploaded to the African Carnivore Wildbook, a platform that utilizes artificial intelligence to aid in individual leopard identification. These images represent 3 390 unique leopard encounters reported by over 200 citizen scientists. A total of 151 leopards have been identified but 52% of the images still do not have an ID.

While full data analysis is still underway, some preliminary findings offer insights into leopard behaviour. Based on 4 572 sightings, ILR has confirmed that leopards are most active at dawn and dusk throughout the year, aligning with existing research. Interestingly, a slight seasonal shift exists, with peak activity occurring around 07:00 in summer and between 05:00 - 06:00 in winter. Further analysis will account for environmental factors and data collection methods to provide a more comprehensive understanding.

Looking ahead: filling research gaps and expanding collaborations

ILR's partnership with KtoC reflects a



shared commitment to leopard conservation in a critically important landscape. Significantly, 95% of leopard research in South Africa has historically focused on protected areas, despite a substantial portion (63%) of suitable leopard habitat lying outside these boundaries. Furthermore, published research on leopards has often leaned towards basic research themes, with a gap in applied research that informs management strategies and policy decisions.

Future collaborative camera trap surveys in non-protected areas within KtoC aim to address this critical gap. This survey will enhance the understanding of leopard populations outside protected areas and identify key ecological corridors linking the Greater Kruger National Park to the Blyde River Canyon Nature Reserve. Securing and managing these corridors is essential for maintaining leopard (and other wildlife) connectivity across the landscape. The success of this survey hinges on secur-

ing a bursary, but alternative options are also being explored that involve citizen scientists directly. Residents within the KtoC Biosphere will have the opportunity to contribute by lending or renting camera traps for the duration of the survey, directly assisting with this crucial research.

Get involved!

There is great excitement about the future of ILR and its potential to revolutionize leopard conservation in South Africa. To learn more about ILR, how you can contribute and log all your leopard sightings, please contact Marine Servonnat at marine@ontrackfoundation.org. Stay connected with the latest developments by subscribing to the On Track Foundation newsletter (search "Substack On Track Foundation" on Google) and follow Ingwe Leopard Research on social media. Together, we can ensure a brighter future for leopards and the ecosystems we call home.

The rough burrowing scorpion - *Opisthophthalmus glabrifrons*

Tim Baynham
Wildlife Safety Solutions

This month's featured scorpion species is the rough burrowing scorpion. This is one of the larger scorpion species found in the area. Typically, they average around 100mm in length with the tail extended. However, in some regions they have been known to reach almost 140mm in total length. Colouration can be quite variable. Typically, most specimens are orange to orange-brown in colour, with the pincers having darker tips. In some populations they are overall a darker brown with pale legs.

These are solid stocky scorpions, equipped with large bulbous pincers and a relatively thick tail with a strongly curved sting. The females have larger and more rounded pincers than males. Proportionally the males have much larger tails.

This species is most often found in woodland habitat in rocky areas and along rocky ridges. However, they do also occur on flatter ground with no rock and in parts of their range they are found in grassland habitat. In South Africa they are found throughout much of Limpopo and Mpumalanga provinces, northern Gauteng and into the eastern parts of the North West province, extending southwards to Kimberley.

They live either under rocks in shallow burrows or deeper burrows in open ground. Open burrows often have piles of freshly excavated soil at the entrance as well as scatterings of dried millipede rings, remnants of past meals.

Females and immature scorpions are largely sedentary in their habits and seldom wander far from their burrows. Males on



the other hand do wander further afield in search of a female. They become active from around October through to January and are most seen on evenings before thunderstorms. Females have their young in January and February.

These scorpions are large and assume a rather intimidating defensive posture if threatened. Their stings are very painful. In most cases the pain subsides after an hour or two. However, in more serious cases the pain and swelling may persist for several days. No systemic symptoms have been recorded and these scorpions are not considered to be medically significant.

As always please see below for a few useful tips on how to minimize your risk of having a painful encounter with one of these fascinating creatures.

Sting prevention

- Always use a torch when walking around at night and wear closed shoes.
- Shake out shoes before putting them on, particularly if they have been left outside for any length of time.

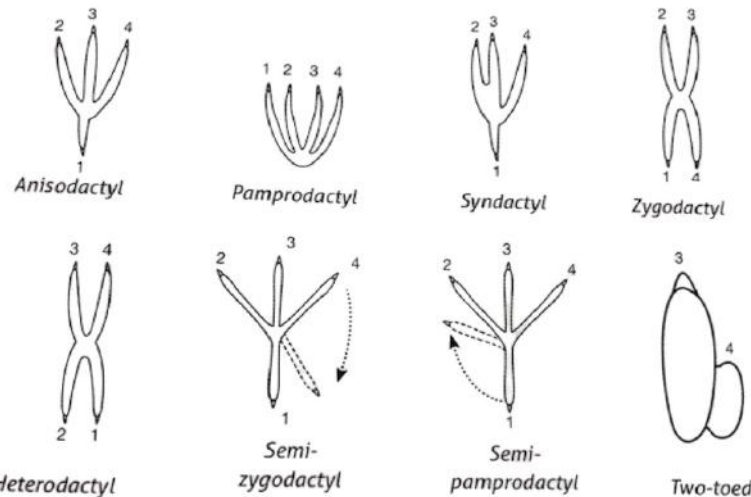
- Always be conscious of where you are placing your hands. Whether it is grabbing some wood off the wood pile for your Friday afternoon braai or moving those storage boxes in the garage, wearing gloves when performing these kinds of tasks will offer an additional layer of protection.
- Remember to shake out any items of clothing, towels, bags, or any other kind of materials that may have been left lying on the ground.
- Keep doors and screen doors closed particularly at night to prevent scorpions from entering your home. There are often gaps under doors and it is beneficial to fit aluminium door seals (draft stoppers) with the rubber strip to prevent scorpions and snakes from entering under the door.
- We live in an area where many homes and lodges have outdoor entertainment areas. It is advisable to always check patio furniture thoroughly before use.

For more information on venomous animals, awareness training and talks, as well as a professional 24hrs problem snake rescue service, contact the author at Wildlife Safety Solutions: 073 934 6156; info@wildlifesafety.co.za; www.wildlifesafety.co.za, FB Wildlife Safety Solutions, Instagram wildlife_safety_solutions

What are the reasons for different foot designs in birds?

Foot designs or adaptations to finding food in different habitats. Each bird needs to be slightly different in order to avoid competition. As with all animals that have an internal skeleton, birds have a maximum of five toes on each foot. Toes are numbered from 1 (inside) to 5 (outside). Because many birds have feet adapted for grasping and all have thin legs resulting in them having to balance on their toes, they are different from other animals by having the inside toe move to the back of the foot. This toe basically serves the same function as an opposable thumb in primates.

Most birds have the common design of one toe at the back and three toes in the front of the foot. This basic design allows perching for resting and sleeping and for hopping or walking on the ground. The outer 5th toe has in most birds being lost over time, most probably because it gets in the way and there is no need for it. An important advantage of this is that it makes the bird lighter, essential for efficient flight. In some ground birds, such as spurfowls, it has been retained as a small, pointed spike or spur at the back of the leg. It is probably used mainly for fighting (being more pronounced in males) and for stimulating or calming females during mating.



Some birds have two toes facing forward and two toes facing backwards, and this design is an adaptation to walking or clinging to vertical surfaces, such as tree trunks, where the extra back toe provides bracing support (e.g.: woodpeckers, parrots). A few birds have the back toe at the front of the foot (so all four toes are in the front), either permanently (swifts) or when needed (mousebirds) and this is an adaptation to hanging from vegetation or from vertical surfaces for roosting. A number of species

have the front toes joined for part of their length to provide extra support when they spend most of their time perched while looking for food (e.g.: rollers, hornbills, bee-eaters).

Birds that swim or need to walk on soft mud often have webbing (some waders and all ducks and geese) or flattened or lobed toes (grebes, coots) to enlarge the surface area of the foot, increasing resistance so that they can push against the water like a boat oar to move forward. Webbing also

stops sinking into mud. Webbing usually only links the front toes, but in some species (cormorants, pelicans, darters) the back toe is also included, and this allows these birds to use the feet as a warm sheet to incubate the eggs - most other birds use the belly skin.

Jacanas and crakes have very long toes to increase the foot size and distribute the body weight over a larger area so that they can walk on floating vegetation without sinking through - this enables them to feed and nest out on the water without competition, being free of most enemies.

Ostriches only have two toes because they need to run fast (they are the fastest animal on two legs) and extra toes would slow them down by creating resistance with the ground. Most ground birds don't need to run as fast as the ostrich, but to be more efficient they have lost the back toe completely and only have three forward toes - this makes it impossible for them to perch in trees and they need to sleep and nest on the ground.

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

'Evil' trivia

- 1 Emperor Claudius passed a law legalising what at banquets?
- 2 There are more than 14 000 species described of what?
- 3 What city has the most bookshops per capita?
- 4 Chase and Sandborn first sold what in tins?
- 5 What is the opposite of plenum?
- 6 Strontium 90 was the original name of which spin off band?
- 7 Whose last published novel was Murder from the Past?
- 8 If an Australian had a bingle what would it be?

- 9 Where is David Livingstone buried (two places/countries)?
- 10 Sunglasses were invented in China to do what?
- 11 The Italian date is a common name of what fruit?
- 12 Graham Kerr became famous under what nickname?
- 13 What was the name of the last silent movie made 1930?
- 14 Which US President said "I promise" instead of "I swear" at inauguration?

- 15 What is just not done in Japanese restaurants?
- 16 What is measured in Scoville Units?
- 17 What country issued a banana shaped stamp?
- 18 Who was the first male to appear on the cover of Playboy?
- 19 What colour are an American porcupines' teeth?
- 20 8% of people in the world have an extra what?

The reticulated centipede-eater - *Aparallactus lunulatus*



Reticulated centipede-eater

Copyright :Johan Marais

Luke Kemp
African Snakebite Institute

There are four species of centipede-eating snakes in southern Africa. These are small snakes, usually under 30 cm in length. They live under logs, rocks, or leaf litter, especially in soft sandy areas and may also be seen on the move at night, especially after rain. They are often hit by vehicles whilst crossing roads at night. They are also frequently caught by cats and brought into houses or fall into swimming pools.

These snakes are specialist hunters, feeding almost exclusively on centipedes. Bites are not common to humans, but they may bite in a slow movement if handled. They are considered mildly venomous to humans, the bites sometimes causing mild swelling or discolouration that fades in a day or two. In centipedes, the venom from the snake is potent and causes death rap-

idly and the snake then swallows the centipedes headfirst. Reticulated centipede-eaters feed largely on centipedes, but have also been recorded eating small scorpions, even the highly venomous Transvaal thick-tail scorpion (*Parabuthus transvaalicus*). This is the only southern African snake that has been recorded eating scorpions.

The reticulated centipede-eater is a common species in the lowveld, especially in the greater Hoedspruit area. It averages 30-40 cm in length but can reach a maximum length of 54 cm. It is a light grey to beige coloured snake with dark-centred scales. This makes it very easy to confuse these snakes with the highly venomous Mozambique spitting cobra which also has dark-centred scales. Mozambique spitting cobras have a larger, bulkier head and light eyes with a distinct pupil. The reticulated centipede-eater has a small head with small, dark eyes. The Mozambique spitting cobra also

has black bars on the throat that are visible on the side of the neck whilst the snake is slithering.

The juvenile reticulated centipede-eaters have a dark band behind the head and dark blotches down the neck that become reduced down the body. These dark blotches will fade as the snake ages and grows, becoming almost absent in adult snakes. Females produce around 3-4 elongate eggs in early summer which will take between 70-90 days to hatch. The hatchlings measure around 12 cm.

These little snakes are a special sighting due to their secretive lifestyle, but they can be abundant in the right areas and under the right weather conditions. They are easily mistaken for the venomous Mozambique spitting cobra, and it is important to become familiar with both species if you live in the area, in order to be able to differentiate them.

Check out the website on www.africansnakebiteinstitute.com – get your FREE App on the link <http://bit.ly/snakebiteapp>



Juvenile reticulated centipede-eater (above) and a comparison between the reticulated centipede-eater (left) and a Mozambique spitting cobra (below)

Copyright :Johan Marais



Cyclists in the pink – the Rotary K2C Cycle Tour



FRONT



BACK



FRONT

Warren Carey designed K2C gear for the cyclists in this years race

Images supplied

Lovelle Henderson

The Rotary K2C Cycle Tour pelotons are getting ready for the adventure of a lifetime - the 2024 tour cycling 100 kms through the pristine African bush, in the private reserves of Timbavati, Thornybush and Kapama.

Along the route participants will be fed and watered in the most carefully selected spots where they can admire the Drakensberg mountains and the surrounding veld. Cyclists will most likely encounter some of the 40 different mammals and the big five living here in the wild, and all from their mountain bike saddles. Every year there are some exciting close encounters,

but participants are accompanied by their 'peloton crew' for protection.

Riders in their pelotons of friends, colleagues, and family groups, have chosen some interesting names for their teams - Super Ballies, Jemca Mense, Lombard Insurance, Vanguard Group, Provet, Cradle Crew.

This year the riders will again be wearing stunning gear presented to them in their goody bags and designed for Rotary by Warren Cary and his team. Warren, the well renowned Lowveld artist says, "I am also a rider, so I know exactly what the riders enjoy wearing and feel comfortable in. They also like to look fashionable and smart." Last year's dung beetle branded apparel was a huge success with cyclists.

This year the apparel will be adorned with one of South Africa's most endangered, secretive mammals, the adored but little understood pangolin.

There are 24 places still available for this amazing event. The beautiful coral attire with the tough looking pangolin is suitable for everyone, so join the excitement and adventure. The most interesting and fun names will be selected for prizes and the top prize will be a pangolin print designed by Warren, matching the riding gear artistically framed by local specialist, Jane Frampton.

Hazel Partington, Rotary Hoedspruit President says, "Go to the Rotary K2C Cycle Tour website and register before you lose out. Explore the accommodation sec-

tion of the website where you can choose to all stay close together, and perhaps benefit from some of the attractive discounts that the lodges are offering."

Funds raised go to anti-poaching activities, community upliftment and smaller community projects all overseen, and project managed by Rotary Hoedspruit - for sure the pangolins will benefit.

Come and join the fray for a wonderful day of true comradery.

For information or to register, contact Tony Patten: tony@k2c-cycletour.co.za

'Evil' Trivia answers

- 1 Farting – due to his concern for public health
- 2 Mushrooms
- 3 Buenos Aires – 25 per 100 000 people
- 4 Roasted coffee
- 5 Vacuum/void
- 6 The Police
- 7 Agatha Christie
- 8 Collision – especially automobile
- 9 Westminster Abbey /Tanzania
- 10 To mask judge's emotions when questioning witnesses

- 11 Tamarind
- 12 The Galloping Gourmet
- 13 The Poor Millionaire
- 14 Franklin Pierce
- 15 Tipping
- 16 Spiciness/heat of Chillies
- 17 Tonga
- 18 Peter Sellers – April 1964
- 19 Orange
- 20 Rib

NOTICE 1 OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Notice is hereby given that an application is intended to be lodged with the Limpopo Economic Development, Environment & Tourism in terms of Regulations 41(2)(c(i)) of the regulations published in the Government Notice No. 326 of 07 April 2017 published under section 24(2)(c) of the National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act 107 of 1998) of intent to carry out the following activities:

THE DEVELOPMENT OF A LODGE

Description of proposed activity: The applicant wishes to build a 9-unit luxury tented camp with a reception area, manager's house and associated lodge infrastructure

including the staff accommodation, services, wastewater treatment works and pathways between the facilities. This activity triggers listed activities 6 and 12 under Listing Notice 3 of the amended Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations published in the Government Gazette No. 324 of 7 April 2017 under the National Environmental Management Act (Act No. 107 of 1998). Where triggered listed activities are

Activity #6: The development of resort, lodges, hotels, tourism, or hospitality facilities that sleep 15 people or more. Activity #12: The clearance of 300 square metres or more of indigenous vegetation except where such clearance of indig-

enous vegetation is required for maintenance purposes undertaken in accordance with a maintenance management plan. The proposed lodge is situated on the farm portion 32 Parsons 155 KT (SG Code TOKT0000000015500032), within the Maruleng Local Municipality, Mopani District Municipality, Limpopo Province.

Name of Applicant:

18 Portfolio (Pty) Ltd Jesse Lemmer

Name of Consultant:

Emross Consulting (Pty) Ltd, PostNet Suite #522, Private Bag x4, Sun Valley 7985

Contact Person:

Anthony Emery
Cell No.: 082 467 8868
email: a.emery@emross.co.za.

The date of Publication of this advert is the 28 March 2024. To ensure that you are identified as an interested and/or affected party, please submit your name, contact information and interest in the above-mentioned project to the contact person given above within 30 days of publication of the advertisement.

NOTICE 2 OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Notice is hereby given that an application is intended to be lodged with the Limpopo Economic Development, Environment & Tourism in terms of Regulations 41(2)(c(i)) of the regulations published in the Government Notice No. 326 of 07 April 2017 published under section 24(2)(c) of the National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act 107 of 1998) of intent to carry out the following activities:

THE DEVELOPMENT OF A LODGE

Description of proposed activity: The applicant wishes to build a private lodge to accommodate less than 15 people. This

activity triggers listed activities 5 and 12 under Listing Notice 3 of the amended Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations published in the Government Gazette No. 324 of 7 April 2017 under the National Environmental Management Act (Act No. 107 of 1998). Where triggered listed activities are Activity #5: The development of resort, lodges, hotels, tourism, or hospitality facilities that sleep less than 15 people. Activity #12: The clearance of 300 square metres or more of indigenous vegetation except where such clearance of indigenous vegetation is required for maintenance purposes undertaken in accordance with a mainte-

nance management plan.

The proposed lodge is situated on the farm portion 101 Parsons 155 KT (SG Code TOKT0000000015500101), within the Maruleng Local Municipality, Mopani District Municipality, Limpopo Province.

Name of Applicant:

Simplify The Way Forward (Pty) Ltd Patrick Murphy

Name of Consultant:

Emross Consulting (Pty) Ltd, PostNet Suite #522, Private Bag x4, Sun Valley 7985

Contact Person:

Anthony Emery
Cell No.: 082 467 8868
email: a.emery@emross.co.za.

The date of Publication of this advert is the 28 March 2024. To ensure that you are identified as an interested and/or affected party, please submit your name, contact information and interest in the above-mentioned project to the contact person given above within 30 days of publication of the advertisement.



and others making their way en (right) Riders relaxing (above)

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	Fire Dpt Hoedspruit 015 793 0728	DR Werner Muller (Dentist)	015 793 1894
	GKEPF Greater Kruger Enviro Protection Foundation	Hlokomela	072 698 6538
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Mopane Group 015 781 1571	Hoedspruit Town Watch	Kyk Oogkundiges (Optometrist)	060 548 5387
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Hoedspruit Christian School 015 793 2067	Hospital Nelspruit Mediclinic	Century 21	015 793 1534
Lowveld Academy 015 793 3750	Hospital Tintswalo		
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Mariepskop Pre-primer 082 880 7069	Hospital Tzaneen Mediclinic	Eastgate Airport	015 793 3681
Perspective Training College 082 787 4471	Maruleng Municipality	Hds Endangered Species Centre	015 793 1633
Southern Cross Schools 015 793 0590	Medical Rescue	Jabulani Elephant Interaction	015 793 1265
	Med Centre Emergency No	K2C Biosphere Region	015 817 1838
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The Hoedspruit Chamber – recognising its importance

Local correspondent

A chamber of commerce serves as a vital and essential catalyst for economic growth and community prosperity.

There are many benefits that a local chamber offers. Firstly, it provides a platform for networking, allowing businesses to connect and collaborate, fostering partnerships that can lead to mutual growth and success. Secondly, chambers advocate for the interests of businesses, representing them on local, regional, and national levels, influencing policy decisions that affect the business environment. In our instance, in a small community like Hoedspruit, it also has a vital role to play for residents' wellbeing within the community as a whole.

This advocacy helps create a more favourable regulatory and legislative landscape, reducing barriers to entrepreneurship and important residential matters, by promoting business-friendly and residential-friendly policies. Moreover, chambers often spearhead community development initiatives, enhancing the overall quality of life

and attractiveness of the area for residents and businesses alike. Chambers give your voice more weight with local authorities. Ultimately, a chamber of commerce serves as a unified voice for the business and residential community, driving economic development and fostering a vibrant and thriving business and residential ecosystem.

The Hoedspruit Chambers plan for 2024 is to greatly increase its membership and volunteer help. Although realising the critical role it plays in our community, there is absolutely no way that it will make a noticeable difference for us, businesses, and residents alike, in the next year. This is purely and simply because a handful of people that are involved, do not have the mental and physical capacity to go at it alone, whilst struggling to keep their own businesses afloat in a gruelling, competitive environment.

If the expectation of residents and businesses is that the Chamber can be fully functional, totally efficient, and being at the 'beck and call' of the community then there is far bigger problems in Hoedspruit than we thought.

The frustration is that this means that we

are failing as a community and the egocentric thread of our society is unravelling the close-knit culture that we once knew and loved. A small town is not defined by its physical size, it is defined by the one or two degrees of separation between its residents and their unwavering sense of community - something that is unfortunately vanishing rapidly – a sad, but not inevitable downside of growth.

If you are currently contributing the Chamber in any way, you are a town hero!

If you don't want to pay for a service that you feel you deserve, or that your tax rands are already paying for - that is a fair comment - in a first world country. But here in Hoedspruit, we all pay extra for the life that we live. What is free that will make a difference? Nothing!

Why can we not, as a community, show up for the next public participation meeting with regards to rates or budgets, sewage and water problems, or developments, or attend other general town meetings? Its either apathy or no interest – either way it's a

lost cause. Residents of Hoedspruit need to get out of the 'ignorance is bliss' bubble and do something. The integrity of our town is fading fast, and we need action fast!

If you do not want to become a member of the Chamber and do the hard yards by yourself, you can – but at least do something. The Chamber can help with that and do a lot on your behalf. Community organisations are the glue that holds like-minded individuals together to work towards the same goal.

The Chambers' goal is to protect our town, its people, and businesses from endless possible threats that can easily encroach on your seemingly guaranteed liberty when you least expect it.

If this is also your goal, then join the Chamber now and make it a force to be considered in 2024.

For more information go to www.hoedspruitcs.com

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