

Spike in illegal gold mining alongside Blyde River threatens ecosystems, including Kruger



Water quality difference in the Blyde River outside Pilgrim’s Rest: sediment-heavy, rust-colored water at the upstream section contrasted with clearer water further downstream. Photo: Supplied

Ed Stoddard and Julia Evans

The consequences of this unfolding tragedy are many, with its swirling currents flowing from global markets to transnational organised crime networks preying on the poverty of young men who scrounge for gold. One upshot is critical water systems fouled by a toxic combination of sediment and chemicals.

Last year, Dr Francois Roux detected something unsettling in the Blyde River.

An aquatic scientist with the Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Association (MTPA), Roux has been studying Lowveld large-scale and Bushveld small-scale yellowfish for more than 20 years. But last year, for the first time, Roux found that both species had failed to spawn – an ecological shock linked to a surge of illegal gold mining in the area as zama zamas and their bosses scramble to cash in on record prices. “It’s a monstrous thing, and it happened where we thought it would never happen,”

said Roux. Sediment stirred up by an estimated 2,000 zama zamas has smothered the eggs of the yellowfish, which have become aquatic versions of the canary in a coal mine, their fate a stark warning of what may befall ecosystems downstream, including in the Kruger National Park, and the water that supplies towns and provides irrigation for the area’s burgeoning citrus industry. The UNESCO-affiliated Kruger to Canyons Biosphere Region has detected a surge in zama zama activities over the past couple

of years alongside the Blyde River, near Pilgrim’s Rest – a town with a deep vein of gold mining history. “An aerial survey conducted on the 28th August 2024 detected over 50 active illegal mining sites along the river and its tributaries (above the dam), in contrast to less than 10 found by a similar aerial survey in October 2022,” says a recent technical briefing note by Kruger to Canyons and the South African Environmental Network.

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From the Editors Desk - An open letter : Where are our roads going?

A large increase in vehicle accidents in the region, particularly fatal ones are being attributed to increased traffic densities caused by a rise in the number of heavier and slow-moving vehicles on our roads.

South African drivers, renowned for their impatience when wanting to overtake, are the leading cause of "head-on" collisions with oncoming traffic. Contributing factors like poor road conditions including pot-holes, road surfaces, gradients, alignments, and more; plus speeding and overloaded vehicles add to the carnage.

Why the exponential increase in heavy vehicles?

Most heavy commercial vehicles (HCVs) on the roads in our region are of the side tipper variety that carry product from the Phalaborwa Mining Company (80% owned by a Chinese consortium). The primary product from PMC is a mineral called magnetite, a black, magnetic mineral and one of the most important iron ores that is in high demand in China. Approximately 5 million tons of magnetite is exported via Richards Bay, and 15 million tons via Maputo every year. The majority of this is going by road, contributing to the substantial deterioration of the R40 (Phalaborwa to Nelspruit), the destruction of the R530 and R36 (Mica to Tonnel Plaza), renewed damage to the R36 (Tonnel Plaza to Lydenburg) and R527 (Hoedspruit to Tonnel Plaza) soon after recent repairs.

Mother Truckers

The side tipper industry is notoriously competitive, largely unprofitable (many large carriers are in business rescue) with low entry barriers into the industry. Vehicle utilisation is low as demand fluctuates according to shipment dates, and border and port waiting times are extensive. For obvious reasons vehicles are loaded to capacity, and often beyond with the latest *smart*

trucks, allowed by the Department of Transport to exceed legal combination lengths and gross combination masses.

This makes the trucks slower and longer, and as a result more difficult to overtake. In 1996 the Department of Transport increased maximum axle mass loads from 8,2 tons to 9 tons. Many roads in South Africa were not designed to carry these increases. Even legally loaded axles cause some damage to road pavements, and it stands to reason that the more axles passing over a point, the more the damage.

The Abel Erasmus Pass (R36)

Built in 1959, the 24-kilometre mountain pass includes an altitude rise of 737m and still follows the wagon trails of the late 19th century. The pass has "62 bends, corners and curves of which 12 exceed an arc of 90 degrees". With maximum gradients reaching 7,1%, this road is totally unsuitable for HCVs that are running at gross combination masses of over 56 tons. There is at least one serious HCV crash on the pass every week.

The R40 travels through the densely populated areas of Acornhoek and Bushbuckridge and includes several steep gradients and sharp bends, also making this road wholly unsuitable for heavy commercial vehicles.



What to do?

There is a foreign owned company resorting to exporting its product by road because of the country's dysfunctional rail system. The basic infrastructure is in place, but insufficient rolling stock and locomotives (collapsed Chinese deal for new locomotives) hugely impact its operations.

The question that comes to mind is: Why should our hard-earned tax money subsidise a foreign company's profits at the expense of lives and infrastructure damage? Instead, the national government must restrict ore export logistics to rail only.

If we do not end this wanton destruction of our roads it will continue to drive up costs of all supplies coming into the area and drive away tourists. Traffic law enforcement is at very low levels for HCVs, possibly due to a lack of skills on the authority's side. To protect our road users and roads we need a mind shift to put the transport of ore back onto rail where it belongs. If we cannot, we should not export. The cost/benefit does not make any sense at all.

There have been many fatal accidents on our roads recently (below left).

Magnetite (below), the mineral being mined and transported through our town en route for export (below right).



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Entrepreneurs Powering Ahead in Hoedspruit

In Hoedspruit, business is more than just a job for the Pienaar family, it's a way of life. Sisters, a brother, and their daughters have combined their skills, passions, and hard work to create a diverse network of thriving businesses.

The **Animal Room** is one such business and is Yolandie's passion. This is a facility focussed on educating people about reptiles, arachnids and arthropods from around the world. Yolandie has always had a passion and huge respect for animals. She has chosen to now share her personal collection of these magnificent animals with the public to spread the love and respect for these sometimes misunderstood animals. Not only is it a tourist highlight but something for the whole family, school groups, reptile enthusiasts, veterinary students, nature lovers and more.

Each animals' enclosure is carefully re-

searched, meticulously curated and decorated to each animals needs, making it feel like you are taking a trip around the world, observing these animals in their natural environments. Yolandie is careful to assure everyone that by bringing exotics to a wild-life haven does not to be disrespectful the immediate environment but rather to educate people to understand these amazing animals and to grow the love and respect for animals as a whole, especially the misunderstood and feared ones. "At the end of the day it's about conservation and love - and we need to love and conserve all animals, not just the ones we view from your window". The Animal Room is open 08h00-17h00 Mondays to Saturdays, entrance only R25.00 per person.

The **Pet Shop** is Zelmarie side of the business. This is a one-stop destination for all things 'pets' - from nutritious food and fun

toys to health essentials and accessories. Her knowledgeable advice and personalised recommendations keep customers coming back. The shelves are always stocked with trusted brands, and the atmosphere is welcoming for both pets and owners alike. Spe-

cial orders and custom requests are handled with ease, making every visit a pleasant experience. This is more than just a shop - it's a community hub for animal lovers.



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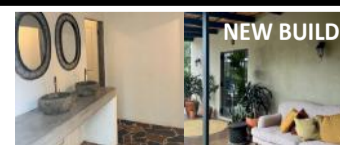
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Spike in illegal gold mining alongside Blyde River threatens ecosystems, including Kruger



Basic gold mining tools used by zama zamas near Pilgrim's Rest, including sluice boxes, pans, and hand-operated equipment, which contribute to riverbank disturbance and sedimentation in the Blyde River catchment.



Sediment entering the Blyde Dam, largely stemming from increased illegal mining and erosion in the upper catchment.



Sediment accumulation and discolouration are visible in the Blyde River near Pilgrim's Rest, linked to increased illegal mining activities upstream.



Cracks and damage to the Pilgrim's Rest main road (R533) on 22 April 2025, caused by destabilisation linked to illegal mining activity adjacent to the road.

All images supplied.

Cont. from page 1

MTPA spokesperson Simphiwe Shungube said the agency had identified and GPS-located illegal mining sites across the Blyde catchment and near Pilgrim's Rest twice in the past three years.

"The illegal mining activities around Pilgrim's Rest have been addressed by the SAPS on several occasions over the last two years," Shungube told Daily Maverick.

The consequences of this unfolding tragedy are many, with its swirling currents flowing from global markets to transnational organised crime networks preying on the poverty of young men who scrounge for gold. One upshot is critical water systems fouled by a toxic combination of sediment and chemicals.

The MTPA, which, together with the SAPS, has taken action against zama zamas since 2017, acknowledged that illegal mining had negatively affected the biodiversity of the area, including the fish populations in the river and the dam. It also noted an increase in alien vegetation around the illegal mining sites within the Blyde River Canyon Nature Reserve and worsening water quality.

"Water quality is being impacted due to the situation, with an increase in the E. coli and total coliforms ... tested in the Blyderivierspoort Dam," it said in an emailed response to Daily Maverick queries.

There are also suspicions that the illegal miners are using cyanide and mercury.

"Toxic chemicals, including cyanide, are reportedly used in open ponds alongside the river, where the risk of contamination is high," said Kruger to Canyon. "In addition, the social impact of an estimated 2,000 zama zamas settling in nearby communities is significant and growing."

The Department of Water and Sanitation said that its monitoring had not detected cyanide and mercury in the water - yet.

Ruined riffles

Ruined riffles - shallow, fast-flowing sections of the river where the water surface is broken by rocks and gravel - are among the red flags.

"The yellowfish eggs are laid in the riffles, but the riffles are now smothered with silt," said Roux. "So these eggs can't develop because they are deprived of oxygen. The riffles are the lungs of a river. But these riffles are no longer riffles because they are filled with sediment."

"The zamas work next to the rivers, and they work with sediments, and these sediments are then loosened into the river, and it is red-brown at present because of the washing of gold."

Nicholas Theron, the senior programme manager at Kruger to Canyons, likened it to "strip mining by hand". The riffles Roux spoke about are upstream from the Blyde River dam, which is filling with sediment at an accelerating pace. Sediment has now filled 20% of the dam, according to the technical report cited above.

Kruger to Canyons has been monitoring this situation with growing alarm. If the sedimentation continues to accumulate at its current rate, the technical report said, "The supply of bulk water downstream of the dam will soon become compromised. The dam currently supports an irrigation scheme for over 8,000 ha of citrus and other crops, as well as the town of Hoedspruit and the SANDF Air Force Base Hoedspruit."

"This sediment does not just cloud the river - it settles in the dam, displacing millions of cubic metres of water and dramatically reducing its storage capacity during the critical dry season."

Vala Umgodi operation

Joint enforcement efforts involving the MTPA, Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS), the SAPS and other government de-

partments are under way to address illegal mining, with the MTPA undertaking targeted operations at sites identified as actively mined.

"Recognising the critical importance of these river systems ... the department is actively engaged in enforcement actions in collaboration with other organs of state," said DWS spokesperson Wisane Mavasa.

Daily Maverick asked for comment from the Department of Mineral and Petroleum Resources on 25 July about its role and interventions in the matter, but had received no response by the time of publication. Minister Gwede Mantashe usually says it is a police matter.

The SAPS, which has been active on the zama zama front in Mpumalanga recently, had not responded to our queries by the time of publication.

The Vala Umgodi operation against illegal mining launched last year by the SAPS - which stirred a hornets' nest with its "surrender or starve" strategy during the Stilfontein siege - has rolled into Mpumalanga, focusing on the Barberton region, with mixed results.

In early August, almost 500 suspected illegal miners in the area were arrested in a joint operation between the gold producer Pan African Resources and the SAPS.

"Illegal mining has been rife in the Barberton area for a long time, and an increasing number of arrests have been made in the past year. Since September last year, some 4,000 arrests have been made," said Pan African.

"It was evident that local police could not cope, and many of the illegal miners, mainly foreign nationals, were found to be repeat offenders. This culminated in [the] week-long operation at Sheba Mine, where mine security teams aided the national police's Vala Umgodi deployment."

Illegal mining is a thorn in the side of all

South African gold producers, and it is often mine security teams that do much of the work to curtail it, but they can only do so much, with most arrests linked to trespassing.

Those arrested often slip through the gaping mesh of state failure. Zama zamas target operational and defunct mines as well as deposits that have not yet been exploited.

Australian-listed Theta Gold Mines has a project in the Pilgrim's Rest/Blyde River area, but did not respond to Daily Maverick's queries about the zama zama issue.

Forestry companies in the area have flagged illegal mining as a concern.

JSE-listed York Timbers, which has plantations in the Blyde River area, cited illegal mining activities in its latest annual report as among the top 10 risks the company faced.

"Illegal mining activities on our properties are limiting access to key areas, causing damage to our plantations and equipment and devaluing our assets," it said.

It also noted that the illegal mining endangered "employees, contractors and local communities, disrupting livelihoods, damaging infrastructure, and contributing to increased crime in the area".

Work stoppages and increased security costs are other challenges cited.

This underscores the mounting costs to businesses inflicted by the scourge of illegal mining, which are spreading across a wide canopy of sectors: mining, forestry, agriculture and tourism.

In a parallel stream is an ongoing ecological disaster. The ripples will have far-reaching consequences, and with gold's price not far off its record peak of \$3,500 an ounce, the criminal syndicates have incentives galore to accelerate their plunder.

This article was previously published by the Daily Maverick/Our Burning Planet/Zama Zamas

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When Science meets Society: Finding common ground for change



Breakaway sessions (above) and K2C's Reshoketswe Mafogo presents on Collaborative Governance of Pro-Nature Livelihoods

Kruger to Canyons Biosphere Correspondent

On a bright veranda surrounded by Lowveld trees at the Wits Rural Campus on 7 August 2025, a traditional leader, a social science professor and a young activist engaged in a vibrant discussion about waste and the lack of waste management services in rural Bushbuckridge. Though they came from very different worlds, they soon realised they were all speaking about the same urgent challenge - how to turn this environmental and social issue into opportunities by unlocking value from what is typically considered just "trash".

Moments of connection like this one captured the spirit of the third annual Science for Society (S4S) Symposium, hosted by the Kruger to Canyons Biosphere Region (K2C BR), the Wits Rural Knowledge Hub (WiRKH), and the South African Environmental Observation Network (SAEON). Bringing together 90 participants from 50 diverse organisations, the event was a rare chance for researchers, traditional leaders, community groups, government officials, NGOs and private partners to share knowledge and spark progressive collaboration. The room reflected the rich tapestry of voices dedicated to shaping the future of the K2C region.

As Anthony Fry from WiRKH reflected "The

coming together of role-players from different domains is so useful for gaining an integrated perspective of the region."

Shared challenges, co-creating solutions

Among the pressing issues discussed, waste management emerged as a critical concern. Studies led by Prof. Schenck from the University of the Western Cape revealed widespread illegal dumping and burning in rural communities like Moremela and Matibidi - practices that pose serious risks to both environmental and human health. Building on this, K2C and its partners conducted studies to assess the current waste management, assess the needs of the communities and possible potential solutions, including the concept of waste beneficiation centres. These initiatives aim to transform litter into valuable products contributing to circular economies and new opportunities.

Water security was another urgent focus. Sediment accumulation has reduced the Blyderivierspoort Dam's capacity by 20% since 1999, threatening water quality and availability for agriculture, domestic use, and wildlife alike. This alarming decline is linked to upstream activities such as illegal mining, spurring both government and community responses to protect this vital resource.

Researchers and restoration managers shared hopeful insights on the resilience of local grass-

lands and the sustainability of livestock farming. Long-term studies show grasslands can recover from drought even under heavy grazing. However, farmers do face complex social and economic challenges, including disease control, compensation disputes and strained relationships with conservation areas that deeply affect their livelihoods and well-being.

Conservation through collaboration

Conservation related presentation topics focused on invasive alien plant management, forest restoration, and supporting predator movement through fragmented landscapes. Presentations also highlighted participatory decision support systems, community and student involvement in habitat restoration, and the use of umbrella species like the Cape Parrot to guide forest conservation. An "umbrella species" is a plant or animal whose conservation helps protect many other species and the wider ecosystem they share. By focusing efforts on preserving the habitat and needs of the umbrella species in this case, the Cape Parrot, conservationists can protect entire forests and countless other plants and animals that rely on the same environment. These initiatives underscore the power of collaborative governance and capacity building as foundations for lasting success.

Across all these issues, one theme emerged: the need for solutions that are practical, community-driven and informed by science. "The S4S Symposium isn't just about sharing data - it's about building trust and understanding between people who often work in adjacent worlds and finding common ground," said Romy Antrobus-Wuth, K2C BR organiser. "When science is made accessible to the public, we open doors to real-world solutions that benefit both our communities and our natural heritage."

From discussion to action

Breakaway sessions sparked lively conversations around gaps in current knowledge and action, from waste and water to economic development and local resilience. Across discussions, a common thread emerged: empowering local people with skills and governance tools is key to lasting change. Group discussions at the end of the day deepened these interactions, and the more casual setting allowed participants to continue conversations and build on ideas sparked earlier in the day, forging connections that could support sustained learning and real-world problem-solving.

"The symposium is helping to consolidate the emerging network of local actors interested in learning together to improve our region," said Fry. "We feel that this process is boosted by the strong NGO presence in the region, whose agility allows them to respond quickly to opportunities."

Looking ahead

Looking ahead to 2026, the team hopes to build on this platform, creating complementary sessions focusing on service delivery and research inside the protected areas as well. And as the veranda conversations showed - when unlikely allies sit together and listen, what begins as talk about trash can grow into plans that change the future of our region.

Why you may need a separate offshore will

Tamryn de Villiers

Many people have offshore assets and don't realise that having a SA Will dealing with worldwide assets may result in delays in your estate, validity issues in dealing with assets in some other countries, your non-SA assets having to be brought back to SA, and could be impractical to implement. A separate will dealing with your non-SA assets may be the solution.

Probate

Probate is the process by which a Will is authenticated by a court-supervised process in countries other than South Africa (SA) and is in essence the equivalent of a letters of executorship issued in SA. Not all overseas assets require a grant of probate to be issued to enable the executor to transfer it to the heirs. Having a separate Will dealing with your offshore assets means that your offshore assets and South African assets can be dealt with simultaneously, with the application for the letters of executorship in SA and the application for the grant of probate outside SA being done at the same time. This will allow for the administration of your estate to be an easier and quicker process without having to go through the process required when you have one will in SA dealing with your worldwide assets and you having to wait for

sealed copies of documents to be issued by the Master of the High Court to deal with the non-SA assets.

Will validity requirements

Different countries have different Will validity requirements, and these might differ from that of SA. Having one Will that deals with your worldwide assets could result in that Will not meeting the validity requirements of another country where your assets are situated and the Will may not be recognised as valid in such country. This could have the effect that the assets in that country are dealt with in terms of that country's laws of intestate succession, and then the assets may not end up with the heirs that you wanted to give it to.

Legal terminology and language

The legal terms that we use in South African Wills are not necessarily recognised in other countries. South African legal terms are primarily based on Roman Dutch law, with some English law influence, while different countries have different laws, based on other legal systems. A legal interpretation may have to be obtained by your executor for legal terms in the SA Will, which can be costly and cause delays, when you have only one Will dealing with assets in other countries. Furthermore, if the Will signed in SA is not in

English, a translation may also be required, again causing delays and costs.

Inheritance taxes

The rules relating to inheritance taxes generally vary from country to country (if applicable). In order to determine whether an asset will be subject to a specific country's inheritance tax rules it is important to establish the "situs" of that asset (where it is regarded as being situated). For example, both the US and the UK levy inheritance taxes on assets which qualify as *situs* assets in those jurisdictions. Wills should be carefully drafted, taking into account which grant of probate/letters of executorship would be most practical when the relevant filings have to be done in those countries for inheritance tax purposes with the respective revenue authorities.

Freedom of Testation vs Forced Heirship

In South Africa we recognise freedom of testation, which means that you can bequeath your assets to whomever you want to in your Will. Some countries, such as Spain and Portugal, have forced heirship rules which generally means that a portion of your assets have to be transferred to certain heirs such as children or a spouse on your death, with often only a portion thereof available for you to freely bequeath in your Will. Most EU countries are

parties to an agreement making it possible for you to make an election in your SA Will that the succession laws of SA (if you are a SA national) will apply to your worldwide assets.

Age of beneficiaries and location of their guardians

A testamentary trust is often set up by parents in their Wills to hold inheritances for minor children. If the nominated guardians to your minor children live overseas it would not make sense for a trust to be set up in SA for the benefit of the minor children if they are relocating to go and live with the guardians in a different country.

Offshore Assets and SA Trusts

A South African Trust may not hold offshore assets directly in terms of current Exchange Control Regulations in SA. If you have one worldwide Will wherein you bequeath your assets to an existing South African Trust, or a Trust that is set up in SA after your death, your offshore assets will have to be repatriated to SA in order for the SA Trust to hold them.

Disclaimer: This article is for general information only and should not be construed as legal or tax advice. If you need any assistance with or more information on any of the above, kindly contact Marteen Michau at marteen@fidelisvox.co.za.



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SOLE MANDATE

NDLOVUMZI NATURE RESERVE

R 4 458 000

Beds 4 | Baths 4 | Floor: 176 m²

This tranquil home on a 21 hectare property overlooks the Olifants river and is surrounded by large riverine trees and rocky outcrops. The open plan living, dining area and newly fitted kitchen are all under high vaulted ceilings that make this home light and bright, adding to the appeal.

Jason Jones - 083 267 4794

Ref: 2152063



SOLE MANDATE

COMMERCIAL: Hoedspruit Wildlife Estate

R 6 950 000

Beds 7 | Baths 7 | Floor: 433 m²

Luxury thatched guest lodge sold as a going concern with all movables. Includes 5 guest rooms, owner's unit, pool, bar, dining areas, fitted kitchen, staff room, garage, and 6 guest carports. Lodge leased until Feb 2028 - rental income in place.

Rob Severin - 083 469 3820

Ref: 2385693



SOLE MANDATE

RAPTORS VIEW WILDLIFE ESTATE

R 6 300 000

Beds 4 | Baths 4 | Floor size: 484 m²

Expansive riverfront home with open-plan lounge, dining, kitchen and scullery with courtyard. Covered patio with boma, pool and uninterrupted views. Air-conditioned bedrooms with private decks, and a guest room or study. Includes traverse rights into 1,300ha Big 4 reserve for exceptional game drives.

Michelle Severin - 083 469 3821

Ref: 2411374



SOLE MANDATE

BLYDE WILDLIFE ESTATE

R 6 950 000

En-suite bedrooms 2 | Floor size: 400 m²

Located in the riverine area with mature trees, this home offers privacy and tranquillity. Featuring an open-plan lounge and dining area, separate kitchen with pantry and scullery, courtyard, pool, sauna, and a built-in braai. The stunning garden and entertainment area is perfect for relaxing or hosting.

Calin Leppan - 082 824 9482

Ref: 2412579



SOLE MANDATE

MODITLO WILDLIFE ESTATE

R 7 000 000

Beds 4 | Baths 4 | Floor size: 324 m²

Newly built, low-maintenance home with open-plan living, kitchen, scullery, and pantry. Covered patio with bar, braai, fire pit, and pool. Air-conditioned study and bedrooms, all en-suite with indoor/outdoor showers. Features include storeroom, water tank, double garage and carport.

Michelle Severin - 083 469 3821

Ref: 2401966



SOLE MANDATE

ELEPHANT ROCK ECO ESTATE

R 730 000

Stand size: 2,400 m² | Estate size: 240 ha

Lovely stand with mountain views, natural shade, and cul-de-sac privacy. Pet-friendly estate with 5-year build window and no transfer duty. Building packages available. Secure eco-estate with outdoor activities and wildlife.

Calin Leppan - 082 824 9482

Ref: 2388805



SOLE MANDATE

COMMERCIAL: Hoedspruit Wildlife Estate

R 8 470 000

Beds 6 | Baths 6 | Floor: 780 m²

Guest house with 6 spacious en-suite guest rooms and owner's quarters. Colonial-style home with a wraparound patio, pool, bar, central lounge, and dining area. Rooms include bath, shower, aircon, minibar, and DSTV. Sold fully furnished as a going concern, without liabilities. Backup power & water.

Rob Severin - 083 469 3820

Ref: 2380743



SOLE MANDATE

KAMPERSRUS

R 3 225 000

Bedrooms 2 | Bathrooms 2 | Floor size: 125 m²

Charming thatched home with open-plan living, scullery, covered patio, and swimming pool in a lush garden. Features include air conditioning, solar system with panels, inverter and batteries, water storage tanks, viewing deck with bar, double carport, alarm, and versatile outdoor room.

Jason Jones - 083 267 4794

Ref: 2411987



SOLE MANDATE

NDLOVUMZI NATURE RESERVE

R 4 860 000

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Riverfront property with stunning Olifants River views. Includes main house, 3 river-facing chalets, pool, braai area, and elevated patios. Features storeroom, staff quarters, borehole, water storage, river pump, and Eskom power. Peaceful setting with possible commercial potential (subject to approval).

Jason Jones - 083 267 4794

Ref: 2369777



SOLE MANDATE

WILD RIVERS NATURE RESERVE

R 8 200 000

Beds 5 | Baths 5 | Floor: 323 m²

Exceptional riverfront bush home on 1 ha stand with open-plan living, plunge pool, patios, braai areas, staff chalet, tool room, and netted garden. Located in a secure 2,500 ha reserve with game and birdlife.

Rob Severin - 083 469 3820

Ref: 2404188



SOLE MANDATE

RAPTOR'S VIEW WILDLIFE ESTATE

R 6 500 000

Beds 4 | Baths 2.5 | Floor size: 272 m²

Inviting bush home overlooking dry riverbed with scenic views, open-plan living, loft, storeroom, solar backup, and shaded patio with pool, boma, and gas braai. Main en-suite opens to a private deck with indoor and outdoor showers. Traverse rights into 1,300 ha Big Game reserve included.

Michelle Severin - 083 469 3821

Ref: 2385364



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R 3 900 000

Bedrooms 3 | Bathrooms 2 | Floor size: 200 m²

Versatile home with main en-suite bedroom, and 2 additional bedrooms. Features open-plan living, separate kitchen, aircons, ceiling fans, covered patio, pool, landscaped garden, and built-in braai. Includes separate building with bedroom, bathroom, storerooms, and triple carport.

Michelle Herb - 071 652 9140

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RENTAL

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R 16 000 pm

Beds 3 | Baths 2 | Furnished

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Michelle Herb - 071 652 9140

Ref: 2406124



RENTAL

MODITLO WILDLIFE ESTATE

R 45 000 pm

Beds 3 | Baths 3 | Furnished

Available from Nov 2025, not pet friendly - Stylish bush home with open-plan living, modern kitchen, separate scullery, and spacious en-suite bedrooms. Expansive covered patio with bar, braai, and seating, plus boma, firepit, pool, and mountain views for relaxed outdoor living.

Michelle Herb - 071 652 9140

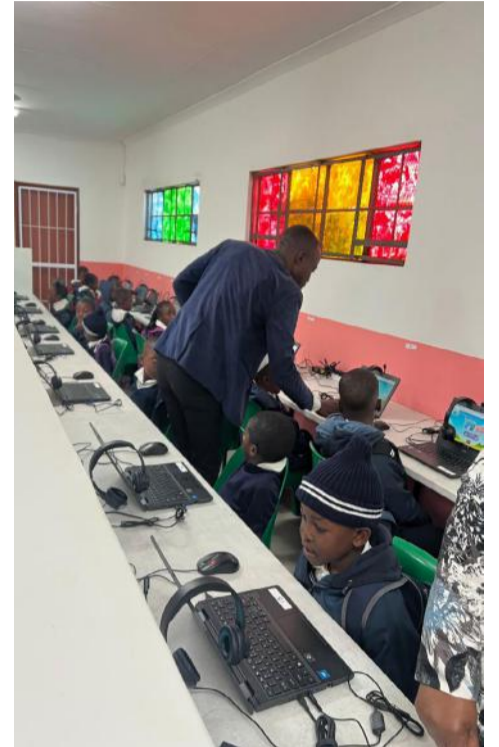
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From Chalk to Click: Nhlengelo Primary School's New Era



The new computer laboratory at Nhlengelo Primary School (top) and celebrations begin at the school

A new computer laboratory has opened at Nhlengelo Primary School in Burlington, Acornhoek - capping a decade-long, community-driven effort that pulled together international funders, and a determined set of volunteers to give rural learners a digital foothold.

Nhlengelo is a no-fee, public primary school serving the Bushbuckridge Local Municipality in the Bohlabela (Ehlanzeni) district. Public records list the school at Burlington New Stands near Madizi Secondary, with roughly 600–700 learners and about 15 teachers on staff.

Nhlengelo School originally started, about 16 years ago, due to a nearby lodge being asked to assist in providing some cement for bricks for toilets being built, with the teaching, at that stage, being basically out in the open under a tree. A local Hoedspruit resident, Dave Jackaman, then became very involved in getting the buy-in from local residents, chiefs and the department of education, and was responsible for getting most of the classrooms built with ARC/Alumier funding.

Things then were put on hold until almost 12 years ago when another Hoedspruit resident joined a mountain-bike ride that led to an introduction to "Mother Teresa" of Acornhoek, Shirley Beretta - known for dai-

ly solo runs delivering antiretrovirals to patients who couldn't reach hospital care and for stocking soup kitchens across Acornhoek and Bushbuckridge. One of those kitchens operated from Nhlengelo Primary, where a chance meeting with then-principal Lyson Mdluli sparked a long-term commitment to the school. (Mdluli has since retired.)

Early donations were modest - paint and large water containers for classrooms - but the push for a lab took shape after contact was re-established with a former South African linked to Alumier's philanthropic work (formerly ARC Foundation), unlocking capital for new buildings. The Kirsty Watts Foundation stepped in to assist and introduced Click Learning, who in turn agreed to activate the literacy lab once reliable connectivity was in place - a process that, in this deep-rural corner of Acornhoek, took two years to resolve.

The new facility - comprising a purpose-built computer lab and attached administration offices - was funded through the Alumier Foundation, the global philanthropic arm of Canadian skincare company AlumierMD. Alumier's foundation focuses on bricks-and-mortar education projects and has raised funds for additional classrooms and infrastructure at Nhlengelo. Project organisers estimate the value of Alumier's recent contribution at about R2.5 million. Alumier

and other funders have also sponsored the other classrooms over the years at Nhlengelo with total contributions estimated at about R10 million. No funding came from the Government.

Furnishings and a large share of the equipment including a large security safe came via the Kirsty Watts Foundation (KWF), together with Click Learning, which confirmed its channelled support for a "Computer Learning Centre" at Nhlengelo in 2024. In total, 52 laptops were purchased alongside a safe and security upgrades, according to the project team.

Connectivity - often the stumbling block for deep-rural schools - was solved in partnership with Click Learning (formerly Click Foundation). Click Learning provides a tech-enabled literacy model built around individualised software and youth facilitators - two previously unemployed local youths have been trained as lab facilitators for Nhlengelo.

Inside the lab, foundation-phase learners will use *Reading Eggs* and *Reading Eggspress* - Australian-developed, evidence-based programmes. Click Learning deploys nationally - to strengthen phonics and literacy/ reading-for-meaning. Recent evaluation work with Click Learning shows extensive usage of these tools across hundreds of

South African schools.

Nhlengelo's setting underscores why the project matters. The school sits at the southern end of Acornhoek, roughly 25 km from the main town, in an area where learners face long commutes, low household connectivity and limited exposure to digital tools. Public listings confirm the school's rural location and status as a no-fee Quintile 1 institution.

Click Learning's model brings both literacy gains for learners and local jobs by training unemployed youth as in-school facilitators who run lab sessions and track learner progress. The approach is designed to be scalable across no-fee government schools.

KWF's involvement at Nhlengelo predates the lab, with earlier furniture donations routed to the school; the foundation - founded by Kirsty Watts during her recovery from a malignant brain tumour - specialises in practical, school-level interventions.

For Nhlengelo's staff and community, the lab is more than a room full of screens. It's a bridge: between a rural school and the wider digital world; between Grade R learners and the confidence that comes from reading with meaning; and between a community's quiet persistence and tangible change.

From Isolation to Inspiration: Eksoda's Journey to Empower Rural Youth with Diabetes

Medical Correspondent

At 35, Eksoda has lived with type 1 diabetes for 17 years. Today, he stands as a pillar of strength in Hluvukani, a rural community where access to healthcare is patchy and awareness of chronic illness is scant. Once a young teenager shackled by fear and misunderstanding, he now dedicates his life to ensuring that no child with diabetes in his village faces the same loneliness he endured. His story is one of hardship, resilience and hope.

As a boy, Eksoda's undiagnosed symptoms - constant thirst, sudden weight loss and erratic energy levels - made him an easy target for bullies. Classmates taunted him, calling him "the thirsty one" and "always tired." Desperate and confused, he began to frequently miss school. By the time he was officially diagnosed, the taunts had left deep scars. Forced to leave school, he found himself cut off from friends and community support, believing he was broken beyond repair.

The teenage years that followed his diagnosis were marked by isolation. Insulin injections, blood sugar monitoring and strict dietary routines set him apart from peers who seemed to navigate adolescence effortlessly. With no local support groups or diabetes education, Eksoda felt as though he were charting unknown territory alone. Erratic glucose spikes led to hospital visits, and the cycle of shame and avoidance only deepened his sense that diabetes was a life sentence of stigma.

Realisation

It was in the face of these struggles that the seeds of his future mission were sown. Determined to turn pain into purpose, he began seeking out any snippet of information on diabetes management. He learned that effective self-care could transform diabetes from a threat into a manageable condition. As his own health stabilized, so did his resolve to bring this knowledge home and dismantle the fear that once engulfed him.

In recent years, Eksoda has emerged as an unofficial community health advocate. He organizes monthly gatherings at the primary health clinic where residents learn about blood sugar testing, healthy food and insulin administration. He navigates resource scarcities - sharing his glucometer with



others more in need. His ability to bridge medical knowledge with local customs has earned him trust among community members, nurses, traditional healers and parents alike.

Koru Camp visit

Last month marked a milestone in his journey when he visited Koru Camp along the Olifants River, organized by the Tshemba Foundation and sponsored by the Timbavati Foundation. Set against the dramatic backdrop of acacia trees and roaming elephants at Koru Camp, nine teenagers with Type 1 diabetes came together for three days of guided workshops, wildlife safaris and peer bonding. For many, this was their first opportunity to meet others who understood the daily balancing act of insulin doses and jam-packed school schedules.

At Koru, the teens broke the silence they often carry. Around the evening campfire, one girl said, "I was too scared to tell my friends why I leave class for injections." A boy confessed, "I almost stopped taking insulin because I didn't want anyone to see the syringe." They all struggle with not being able to eat what their friends can eat

but the camp uncovered an unexpected truth: they were not alone.

With Eksoda's gentle guidance, they practiced testing, shared healthy snack recipes, and learned why checking blood sugar before a game drive is so important. Under the Tshemba Foundation volunteer doctors mentorship, they practiced glucose testing interpretation and action with quiet confidence, learned to know what to do with highs and lows, how to get their friends to help them. The kids used their glucose testing skills to test the Koru Camp and Timbavati Foundation staff for diabetes. The volunteer doctors and the Tintswalo hospital doctor taught the staff how to stay healthy and prevent Type 2 diabetes - an emerging health crisis in the world, and the number one killer of women in South Africa. This is preventable with a healthy lifestyle which is often challenging in a big 5 camp.

Cutting through the stigma

Eksoda's presence at Koru Camp was more than symbolic. He was always ready for low sugars with his bag full of apples and sandwiches, he showed the kids what healthy food is, and how to control the constant

hunger they have due to diabetes. Watching the teenagers nod appreciatively, unburdened by ridicule, he felt a surge of fulfillment. "Meeting others like me changed everything," one teen said. "I know now I can live a long, healthy life." Eksoda nods. He remembers his own fear as a child. He wants every young person with diabetes to feel supported and strong - not ashamed.

Back in Hluvukani, a rural village with few health services, people did not understand diabetes. Friends and neighbours thought it was just "too much sugar." But with the start of Eksoda's diabetes support group, knowledge is shared and more patients and family members come to this monthly group. Each November, during World Diabetes Month, Eksoda organizes an awareness run through the red-dusty roads of Hluvukani. Children and elders jog together, wearing blue ribbons - the symbol of diabetes awareness - while local volunteers hand out water. Under the big tree at the local soccer field the nurses from the clinic volunteer their time to test people for diabetes - early detection is essential to prevent damage from diabetes.

Societal Fulfilment

As the sun sets over the bushveld, Eksoda reflects on how far he has come. From the scared boy who thought diabetes was a curse, he has become a mentor, organizer and unwavering advocate. His story sends a powerful message to every young person with diabetes: life can be full, even limitless, when you have knowledge, solidarity and self-belief. In Hluvukani and beyond, his journey lights the way toward: a future where diabetes is managed with compassion, community and courage. But there is a problem. Many families in Hluvukani cannot afford glucometers or test strips. Without these tools, managing diabetes feels impossible. Eksoda worries that kids will fall back into dangerous habits. In order to make more of a positive impact, Eksoda needs more supplies to keep the village safe and healthy.

Our Plea

Please help us raise funds for more glucometers and test strips. Every device and every strip brings is one step closer to safety - and one step further from fear. Because "living without being able to test feels like walking on a highway blindfolded".



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Moonlit Masquerade



Ben Coley
Celestial Events SA

On the 7th of September, the world will bear witness to a moment of celestial theatre as the Sun, Earth, and Moon take to the cosmic stage.

As the Sun sets, the lights will dim and the curtain will rise on one of nature's most beautiful performances: a total lunar eclipse. It is a show to which we are all invited - and best of all, no tickets are required.

Each month, the Moon performs its orbital pirouette around the Earth, but once every 2.5 years or so, these cosmic characters align in perfect celestial choreography. The Moon's path is normally about 5° removed from the Earth's orbital plane, meaning it passes harmlessly above or below our shadow. But this month, it will pass directly through Earth's umbra, plunging the Moon first into darkness, then bathing it in an eerie orange glow - like a heavenly ember.

The conductor of this performance is gravity, and its predictability allows us to know exactly when this sell-out event will occur. At precisely 18:27, the Moon will enter Earth's shadow, its light slowly extinguished by our cone of darkness. Yet, thanks to our atmosphere, the Moon will not be booed off stage entirely. The gases that surround us bend the longer, red wavelengths of sunlight around the curvature of our planet and project them onto the lunar stage like a diffuse spotlight. In effect, our atmosphere will cast all the world's sunrises and sunsets onto the face of the Moon at the same time.

At 19:31, the Moon will be completely engulfed by our shadow, its face washed a burnt orange until it begins to emerge again at 20:53. By 21:56, the show will be over and the Moon restored to its full brilliance. Lunar eclipses last far longer than solar eclipses since the Earth's shadow is much larger than the Moon's. Solar eclipses rarely exceed seven minutes and

can only be seen from very specific locations.

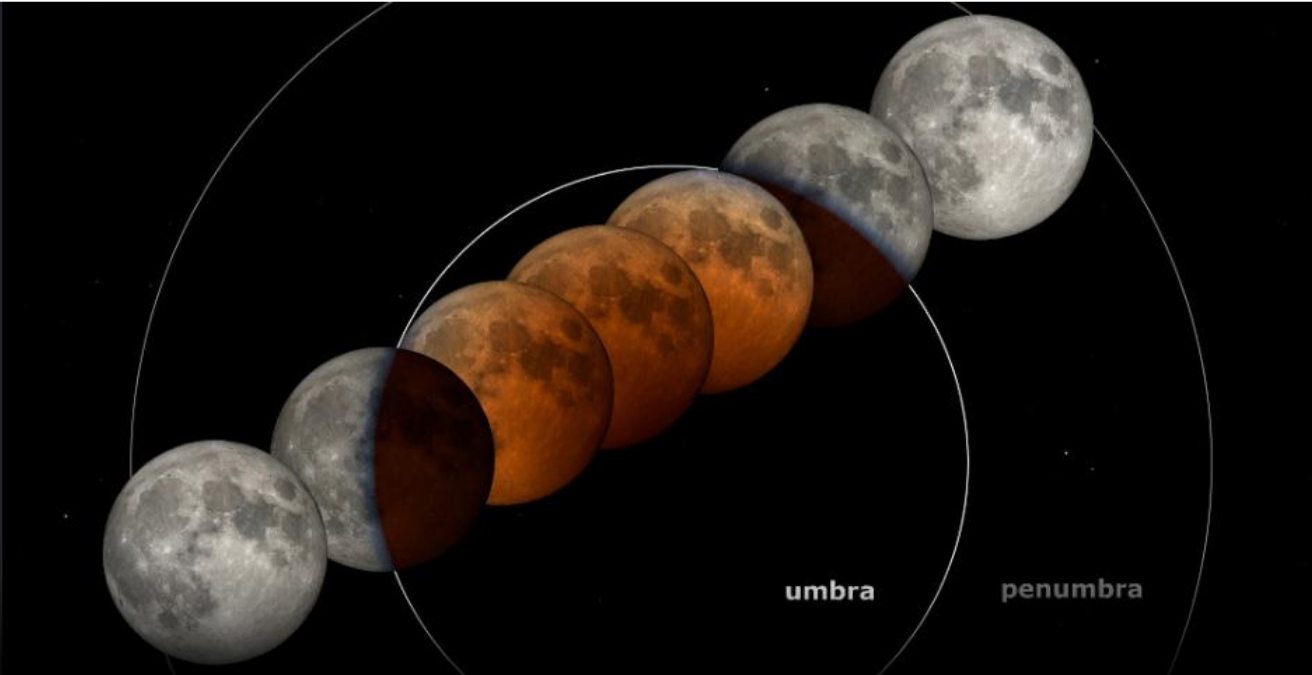
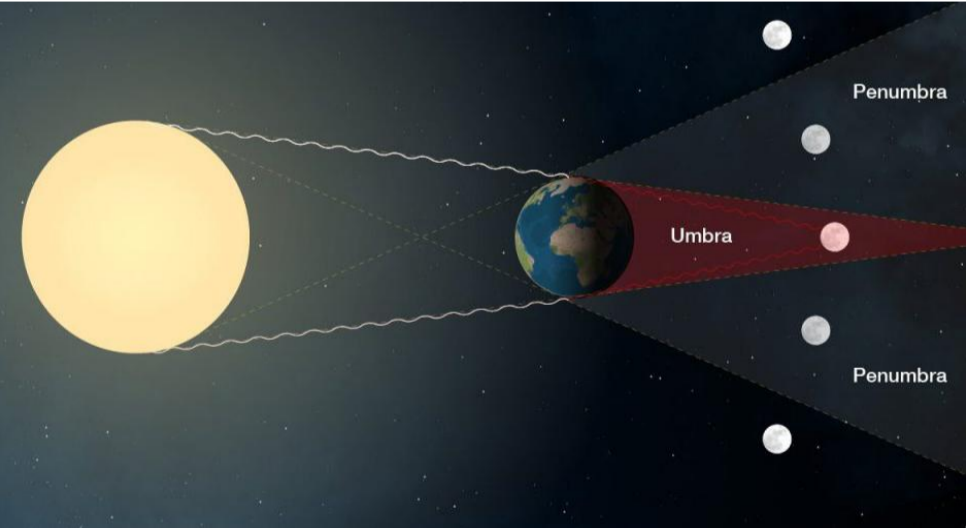
For millennia, our ancestors have watched this cosmological concert - though often with trepidation. Without the scientific understanding we now enjoy, such events were met with fear and foreboding, seen as signs of imbalance in the otherwise perfect heavens. In Tswana and Sotho tradition, the darkening of the Moon was said to be caused by a great celestial lion attempting to pin it beneath its paw, the reddish hue signifying the Moon's blood during the attack. Bushmen stories suggest the lion's paw dulled the Moon's glow to cloak its terrestrial brethren in darkness for the hunt. People would retreat indoors, banging pots and pans to ward off danger, and praying for the Moon's swift recovery.

The theme of the Moon being attacked is found in many other cultures. The Inca imagined a jaguar trying to devour the Moon; for the Chinese, it was a celestial dragon. The Māori of New Zealand call a lunar eclipse *kohu marama*, "the smothering of the moon," in which a jealous spirit lover wraps the Moon in shadow. Its return signified that the spirit's claim had been denied.

These beliefs and stories are more magical than the science itself - a testament to the imagination of ancient peoples and a reminder that our world, for all its knowledge and fact, has perhaps lost some of that mystery. The true reasons for this rare celestial performance may be fascinating, but on the 7th, I encourage you to take a seat in the cosmic theatre and let go of equations and orbital mechanics.

The stage is vast, the actors eternal, and the ticket is free. When the lights go down and the Moon takes centre stage, give yourself over to the **Moonlit Masquerade** - and let the heavens steal the show.

See Celestial Events SA advert for contact details.



079 575 0900

CELESTIAL EVENTS SA

Lions paw on the moon (top left, lunar eclipse (above left) - Image Credit Orbital Today. Total lunar eclipse (above) captured by Celestial Events Astrophotography and an image by NASA of the Earth's shadow (left).

Wings of Change: Women Leading the Way in Avitourism

John Kinghorn
Avitourism Project Manager: BirdLife South Africa

South Africa's avitourism industry is a vital pillar of ecotourism and a significant contributor to the national economy. Recognised globally as a premier birding destination, the country attracts visitors eager to witness species like the vibrant Narina Trogon, endemic Rockjumpers, and Sugarbirds. These visitors bring essential income to local communities, support small businesses, and create jobs where opportunities are limited - all for the love of birds.

Central to this thriving sector is BirdLife South Africa's Avitourism Project and its Accredited (Community) Bird Guide Training Programme, which equips aspiring guides with the skills and accreditation needed to deliver world-class birding experiences that promote conservation and community upliftment. Yet, among the many accredited guides nationally, only nine are women.

These nine women are exceptional. They have overcome systemic barriers and societal expectations to become leaders in conservation, education, and tourism. They serve as community role models to peers and to the youth and as passionate ambassadors for South Africa's birds and habitats.

Women also bring unique strengths to guiding that resonate with visitors. Their empathy, attentiveness, and storytelling abilities transform bird sightings into moments of genuine connection and wonder. Combined with expert knowledge and field skills, these qualities enrich the birding experience long after the tour ends. However, their journeys are not without challenges. Female guides often navigate a male-dominated industry alongside societal expectations around family, safety, and mobility. Working in remote areas adds complexity,



Spending time birding Dlinza Forest Aerial Boardwalk with some of the country's most experienced BirdLife South Africa Accredited Birding Guides L-R John Kinghorn (BirdLife South Africa), Thabile Mthiyane, Mabuy Zungu, Nomusa Ntuli and Lethu Nxele

from logistical hurdles to cultural perceptions. Yet, they persevere, adapt, and support one another, demonstrating resilience as vital as any tool in the field.

The Avitourism Project's impact on these women is profound. Training, mentorship, and accreditation foster confidence and career longevity, opening opportunities where few existed before. Each tour they lead contributes to a broader story where

economic, ecological, and social benefits extend far beyond the immediate encounter.

As the demand for responsible, sustainable ecotourism grows, birding is uniquely positioned to meet it. Birdwatchers are conscientious tourists, seeking authentic and meaningful connections - exactly what these nine guides deliver in abundance. To remain competitive and inclusive, the eco-

tourism industry must expand pathways for more women to join and thrive. BirdLife South Africa is committed to this vision, investing in female guides, communities, and conservation.

In the words of one of these remarkable guides: *"Every bird I show a guest is a reminder that I am not just telling a story - I am part of one."*

Let us ensure that story continues to soar.

Your Summer Guide to Snake and Scorpion Safety

Tim Baynham
Wildlife Safety Solutions

It is hard to believe but spring time is upon us. As temperatures rise, so does the activity levels of snakes and scorpions. For the nature lover it marks the time of plenty as the bush awakens after the long dry winter months.

Snakes are ectothermic, meaning they rely on external heat sources to regulate their body temperature. During the colder winter months, most snakes slow down their activity and spend much of their time hidden in burrows, under rocks, or inside termite mounds. As the weather warms, they emerge to bask in the sun, hunt for food, and search for mates. Increased movement means they're more likely to cross paths with people. While the idea of snakes might

send shivers down the spines of many, it's important to remember that snakes will avoid humans at all costs. If you do come across a snake stay calm and give the snake space to move away and I promise it will move away! If the snake is in your home and you would like it removed, you can contact me 24/7 to come and safely relocate it for you.

Scorpions are nocturnal creatures, emerging at night to forage for food or to look for a mate. Although many can inflict a painful sting, only a few species are considered medically significant and by following a few basic precautionary measures will greatly reduce your chances of being stung. If you are unfortunate enough to be on the receiving end of a sting, remember to take a photo of the scorpion for identification purposes. Knowing which species was responsible for

the envenomation is important to ensure the correct first response and subsequent treatment.

Bite & Sting Prevention

Always pay attention to your surroundings and be careful where you place your hands and feet. Keep all doors and windows closed whenever possible. Use a torch when walking at night and stay on paths or walkways. Wear closed shoes and long pants when walking in the bush and at night time. Avoid walking in long grass and thick vegetation. Keep your gardens neat and tidy to avoid attracting snakes and their prey. Check clothing, bedding and shoes before use. Don't attempt to handle scorpions. Check patio furniture before use. Avoid leaving clothes, towels and backpacks on the ground. Wear gloves when working in the garden and be

especially careful when handling fire wood. Last but not least, never attempt to capture, handle or kill any snakes, leave them alone!

Snakes and scorpions are part of life in Hoedspruit and they play a vital role in the ecosystem. With a little knowledge and care, they don't need to be feared, just respected. So this summer, enjoy the great outdoors with confidence, just keep your eyes open and your boots shaken out!

For more information on scorpions, snakes, spiders and other 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@wildlifesafetysolutions.co.za; www.wildlifesafetysolutions.co.za; FB Wildlife Safety Solutions, Instagram wildlife_safety_solutions



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Mozambique spitting cobra



Olive lesser thicktail scorpion

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	082 683 2835
Hoedspruit Farm Watch	072 310 0032
Hospital Hoedspruit Pvt Hospital	012 000 1111/2/3
Hospital Emergency	012 000 1254
Hospital Nelspruit Mediclinic	013 759 0645
Hospital Tintswalo	013 795 5000
Hospital Sekororo Gvt-The Oaks	015 383 9400
Hospital Tzaneen Mediclinic	015 305 8536
Maruleng Municipality	015 793 2409
Medical Rescue	072 170 0864
Med Centre Emergency No	084 770 1743
Protrack	015 793 2585
SAPS Station Commander	082 565 8253
SAPS General	101 111
SAPS	015 799 4000
SPCA Phalaborwa	071 519 7044
Victim Support Unit	082 940 0651

MEDICAL & VETERINARY SERVICES

Counselling Ronelle Joubert	082 787 4471
Dr J Blignaut	083 410 0190
Dr Ndlovu	015 793 1257
Dr A Polley	015 793 0606
Dr Shivambu	082 465 8114
Dr van Berge	079 531 6582
Dr Dubrowski	081 061 0313
Dr Kirstein	071 746 1059
Dr du Toit (Pediatrician)	082 655 4738
Lowveld Dental (Dentist)	073 597 5174
Dr L van Vuren (Dentist)	015 793 0845
Hlokomela	087 550 0387
Hoedspruit Clinic	015 793 9000
Hoeds Wildlife Est Pharmacy	015 793 1427
Lowveld Pharmacy	072 404 6142
HSP Pharmacy	015 793 2318
J Coetzee (Clinical Psychologist)	015 781 0012
Kyk Oogkundiges (Optometrist)	060 548 5387
ProVet Veterinary Hospital	015 793 0797
Wildlife Safety Solutions	073 934 6156

REAL ESTATE & PROPERTY

Century 21	015 793 1534
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TOURISM & THINGS TO DO

Eastgate Airport	015 793 3681
Harvest House Restaurant	065 574 8374
Maroela Bar	078 179 9293
K2C Biosphere Region	015 817 1838
Skyway Trails	013 737 8374

Lady Godiva and your September horoscopes



Overall Cosmic Outlook

September invites recalibration. With the Sun moving through detail-driven Virgo and then balancing Libra, it's a month for fine-tuning your life - from health and habits to relationships and goals. Expect breakthroughs around the Full Moon in Pisces (early in the month), and a clearer sense of purpose as Mercury goes direct mid-September, lifting the fog of indecision. The Spring Equinox (Sept 22/23) brings renewal, harmony, and a breath of fresh energy across all signs.

Virgo (August 23 – September 22)

It's your season — and the stars are cheering for your comeback. Drop the self-criticism and own your growth. A surprising partnership may shift how you see love.

Libra (September 23 – October 22)

You're dancing on the edge of a big personal transformation. Slow down - the answers you seek will surface in silence. Spring Equinox brings a vibrant reset. Celebrate it.

Scorpio (October 23 – November 21)

Your intuition is on fire - trust the gut over the noise. A friendship may change form - not a loss, but an evolution. Creativity comes with strange dreams. Pay attention.

Sagittarius (November 22 – December 21)

Career or purpose takes centre stage. You're seen - now step up. But don't forget your people - they miss you. Balance ambition with soul food (real and emotional).

Capricorn (December 22 – January 19)

A new opportunity may test your comfort zone - say yes. You're learning to lead with heart, not just strategy. Rest is not a reward. Schedule it.

Aquarius (January 20 – February 18)

Emotional depth is calling - don't run. There's magic in vulnerability. Travel or study sparks something soul-stirring. Follow it. Love grows in quiet, small moments.

Pisces (February 19 – March 20)

The Full Moon in your sign brings clarity and closure. A financial or emotional boundary finally holds - and you breathe easier. Romance may surprise you - stay open.

Aries (March 21 – April 19)

Shake-ups in your routine demand flexibility, but don't resist structure - it's your key to thriving. Love smooths out mid-month, and a health or work breakthrough energises you. Spring fever hits hard - just don't overextend.

Taurus (April 20 – May 20)

A creative streak flares up - perfect for passion projects or romantic risks. Let go of old grudges - forgiveness brings unexpected peace. Money matters steady by month's end. Breathe easier.

Gemini (May 21 – June 20)

Home and family take centre stage - nostalgia may tug at you, but progress needs space. Career ideas bubble - just hold off until after Mercury turns direct. Speak gently, even when you know you're right.

Cancer (June 21 – July 22)

Your voice holds power this month - use it to mend, inspire, or declare boundaries. A short trip or unexpected visitor brings warmth. Writing or journaling unlocks a deeper clarity.

Leo (July 23 – August 22)

The big splash comes early this month - and you're glowing. Finances demand attention, but don't panic - smart steps pay off. Someone's quiet loyalty catches your heart off-guard.



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Is the move to electric energy as green as it seems?

AI perspective ‘correspondent’

As the global push toward clean energy gains momentum, electric energy - often seen as the beacon of sustainability - is increasingly under the microscope. Electric vehicles (EVs), solar power, and wind energy are celebrated as pivotal tools in the race to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. But behind the sleek panels and silent motors, a more complex picture emerges: one that raises important questions about sustainability, environmental justice, and what happens after these technologies outlive their usefulness.

At the heart of the electric revolution are lithium-ion batteries, powering not only EVs but also home energy storage and industrial-scale grid systems. These batteries rely heavily on metals like lithium, cobalt, and nickel - elements that are neither limitless nor without controversy. Much of the world’s cobalt, for example, is mined in the Democratic Republic of Congo, where environmental degradation and human rights abuses are rampant. Lithium extraction from salt flats in South America, meanwhile, consumes vast amounts of water in regions already suffering from scarcity.

The mining and processing of these metals are energy-intensive, with significant carbon footprints and pollution risks. For a technology meant to reduce environmental harm, the reliance on such extractive processes is a stark contradiction. Moreover,

the sheer volume of demand expected over the coming decades - driven by both transportation and renewable grid expansion - raises alarms about the long-term availability of these critical resources.

Electric vehicles themselves offer significant emissions reductions compared to internal combustion engines, particularly when powered by renewable electricity. However, the environmental benefit depends heavily on how the electricity is generated and how vehicles and their batteries are disposed of at the end of life. In many countries, the power grid still includes a large share of coal and natural gas, which dampens the emissions savings of EVs.

What happens when these batteries reach the end of their lifecycle? That’s where another layer of complexity arises. While core battery materials like cobalt and nickel are recyclable, the recycling infrastructure is still in its infancy. Many spent batteries are currently landfilled, shipped overseas, or stored indefinitely. Companies like Redwood Materials in the U.S. and Li-Cycle in Canada are pioneering large-scale recycling solutions, but these remain the exception rather than the rule.

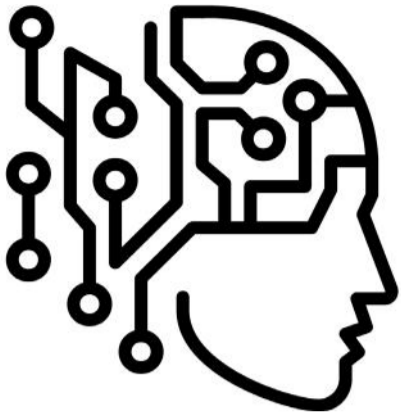
The green energy transition also brings new types of waste: namely, solar panel and wind turbine disposal. Most solar panels have a lifespan of 25 to 30 years. After that, without proper recycling infrastructure, they risk becoming hazardous waste due to toxic elements like lead or cadmium

in older models. The European Union has taken a lead in solar recycling regulation, mandating manufacturers take responsibility for end-of-life panels, while the U.S. and much of the global south lag behind.

Wind turbines, on the other hand, present a unique challenge: the blades. Built from fiberglass or carbon fibre to withstand decades of wear, they are notoriously difficult to recycle. Thousands of blades are being retired annually, with most ending up in landfills. Innovative companies are testing ways to repurpose them as construction material or thermally decompose them to recover fibres, but this is far from widespread.

A growing focus in energy circles is now on “circular design” - engineering renewable technologies from the outset to be recyclable, reusable, or biodegradable. This shift is crucial to avoid swapping one environmental problem for another. Governments and companies alike are beginning to fund ‘RnD’ for next-generation solar, wind, and battery materials that prioritize lifecycle sustainability.

Globally, the approach to green energy waste varies significantly. Europe is advancing policy frameworks and investing in circular economy principles. In contrast, the U.S., China, and developing nations face policy and infrastructure gaps that hinder responsible disposal and recycling. Africa, while poised to be a major participant in renewable energy, still lacks the industrial base to manage



green technology waste independently.

So, is electric energy as green as it seems? The answer, as with many technological revolutions, is: it depends. It depends on how and where resources are mined, how products are manufactured and used, and what happens to them when they reach the end of the road. Electric energy holds immense promise in the fight against climate change - but only if its supply chains, waste streams, and regulatory structures evolve in tandem.

Until then, the green revolution will remain a work in progress - one that needs careful stewardship to ensure it doesn’t undermine the very planet it seeks to save.

This article was generated solely by ChatGPT.com – ChatGPT4.o

My 5 sent

Oupa Bobbili

Kom ons praat ‘n bietjie oor Innibos. Mensekinders was dit nou ‘n lekker naweek saam met duisende ander mense. Kyk die mense wat die fees organiseer moet regtig hare op die tande hê. Hulle het aan so te sê aan alles gedink, genoeg kos en drank, genoeg stalletjies om die krediet kaarte te laat steun en kreun. Genoeg vertonings om die mense aan die gang te hou.

Jy kan glad nie sê jy was verveeld, honger of dors nie. Seker die een ding waarvan ek die meeste gehou het, is jy het jou “spot” gemerk waar jy vir die hoof vertoning wil sit en die ander het dit respekteer. Ons het in Illanga Mall gestop en daar ‘n busie gekry. Die drywers was ook goed in die fees gewees en ons het die hele tyd veilig gevoel. Citibug se manne was inderdaad goeie ambassadeurs vir die maatskappy. Knap gedaan manne.

Die tegniese spanne wat die hoof verhoog gedoen het is meer as net wêreldklas. Ek was verstom met al die ekstras terwyl ons kunstenaars op getree het. Van vuurwerke na die Bokke gewen het tot vlamme wat geblaas het as daar hoë note gesing was. Elke produksie was haarfyn beplan en uitgevoer. Maar een knaap het goed my aandag getrek en dit was ‘n jong met die naam Wian. Hy is ‘n kulkunstenaar, maar sy persoonlikheid het meer my aandag getrek.

Lekker gelag vir Matie Van Graan. Van Boerboel broekies tot haar eie produksies, dit wil gedoen wees. Mel die storieverteller het Weereens die Boma Teater stamp vol gehad. Wynand Van Vollenstee het ons ‘n lewens les of twee gegee, terwyl die lagspiere ook aan die gang gehou was.

Daar was ook ander teaters waar jy kon gaan sit en luister na ons land se talent, soos die Kyk Net en die Cell C tente. Nêrens was ons teleurgesteld gewees nie. Jy kon ook die van die bier deur die blaas ontslae raak sonder moeite. Oorgenoeg toilette en fasiliteite. Matte gegooi sodat die stof die minimum is, en ook nat gespyt. So hulle tot aan die sinusse gedink toe hulle die fees beplan het.

Sal ons weer gaan? Beslis ja. Sal net vroeër slaapplek bespreek wat nader is. en my eie stoel vat. Hulle plastiek stoele bietjie ongemaklik vir die ou lyf. Baie vir mense gelag wat meer tyd aan bier as vertonings gespandeer het. En van die kleredrag was regtig om van te lag. Maar oor die al gemeen, was almal super Vriendelik. Ons het geen aggressie beleef nie. Niemand het baklei nie, en almal het goeie respek teenoor mekaar getoon.

Eenkeer ‘n jaar kom die Afrikaner bymekaar en geniet die taal sonder om geoordeel te word.

Groete.

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