



KRUGER 2 CANYON

NEWS

April 2022

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

More rhinos are being killed for their horns — and it's not just the poachers who are to blame

Georgie Pearce,
Freelance Environmental-
ist Journalist

Poverty around protected parks is not the main reason rhino poaching thrives, argues researcher Ian Glenn.

Conservation critics often overlook a key driver of endemic rhino poaching in South Africa: the complicity of those meant to uphold the law.

So says Ian Glenn, author of a soon-to-be-released research paper titled, *Framing the Kruger National Park*. And he reckons endemic poaching will continue unabated until this is "ruthlessly addressed".

Glenn remembers childhood visits to Kruger with more than a little nostalgic fondness, even if the game was sometimes hard to see from the squashed backseat of the family sedan.

A lifetime later, the writer and scholar's affections for what he calls "the most significant national park in Africa" remain undimmed. His views on its critics and those who take pot-shots at the country's approach

to conservation and wildlife crime are, however, another matter.

"Most of the critiques from foreign academics, in particular, are repetitive, riddled with errors, sociologically naïve, methodologically suspect, and ideologically driven," he says in the opening salvo of a learned paper, *Framing the Kruger National Park*, which he expects to see published this year.

I met Glenn over Zoom to talk about why he feels the academics got it wrong – and failed in some cases to acknowledge as much publicly when presented with evidence. We also spoke about some of the difficulties facing Kruger as it deals with a poaching crisis and, on a happier subject, discussed his new book, a homage to the sub-continent's pioneering wildlife filmmakers.

Antidote

The book, now at an advanced stage in the publishing process, has been a mammoth undertaking. Glenn has spent hundreds of hours interviewing filmmakers and watching more than

200 wildlife films, from monochrome glimpses of the natural world in the 1930's, to overt warnings of a looming environmental crisis in the 1980's.

"Film and conservation are strongly allied," says Glenn. There is, he adds, a sense of purpose behind wildlife films: to instil an awareness of the wilderness, with calls to action that offer real optimism – an antidote to all the doomsday media out there.

So how does this former head of the University of Cape Town's English Department, later founder of its Film and Media Department, and now Research Fellow in Communications Science at the University of the Free State, come to be writing about conservation and poaching?

Glenn, 73, a wiry 6'4", leans toward the camera and settles himself in a storyteller's manner.

'Magnificent classic'

Growing up, Glenn's family moved frequently, from his birthplace Pretoria, to time in Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia), to the KwaZulu-Natal South Coast. He saw a fair

bit of country along the way and at Estcourt High School came under the spell of headmaster Reg Pearce, esteemed author of the "magnificent classic" *Barrier of Spears*,

about the Drakensberg mountain range. Pearce inspired a lifelong love of the wild in many of his young charges, but for Glenn this took a somewhat different direction.

Tremendously bookish as a youngster he pursued a career as a literary and communications scholar, and so came to conservation from a humanities perspective. **Cont. pg.12**



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From the editors seat...



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From the editor/publisher

It's almost mid-year – where has this year gone to? As they say, time waits for no man. How true, and even though we live in Africa, time still moves on – quickly. As time moves on,

so does life. Excitingly (for some) part of moving on means that there must be change – and an old saying that I cannot attribute to any one person states that 'change is the law of life'. And so it is that we have re-branded and put our stamp on the Kruger2Canyon News – it's often what happens; a new broom sweeps clean. It's part of moving on, and part of life – hopefully most of you out there will move with us.

During this month is Mother's Day. From all of us at the Kruger2Canyon News to all the Mothers, happy Mother's Day. They are all those special women out there that give of

themselves selflessly every day, thank you.

I received a letter, almost a plea, from a concerned lodge owner (Annon) that really made me think. I thought that it warranted being published in this section of the newspaper, because it is so relevant and real. It questions our community spirit in a way and rings true regarding my comment above on change.

Here's the letter in part:

"What I have sadly noticed and been subjected to, is a community that needs to bond more together in terms of marketing ourselves. There are so many

of us that are out there, trying to do the same or similar thing, but we all seem to be pulling in our own directions, selfishly for ourselves only. Think of what 'unity is strength' means – if we all pulled in the same direction as a cohesive unit, oh what power we could produce.

What I am talking about here is all the lodges and tourist establishments – all doing their own thing for themselves. We create a small ripple in the river of tourism. Can you imagine the tidal wave that could be produced if we all got together and pulled together in the same direction? We would be awesome! We are now faced with the require-

ment for change – like it or not. The major tourist centres in South Africa do just this, and they are very successful. It does not matter if A gets the booking and B doesn't – at least someone out there is getting the booking and bringing the tourist to our town or area. We are competing with other areas in South Africa – and they pull together big time! So what I am saying to all of you out there, come on Hoedspruit, change your outlook, change your attitude, change and work together and this will result in a massive change for the positive. Come on people, pocket the ego's and let's get down to business!"

Thanks for the letter 'Annon' – I hope that you can achieve what you are looking for, and maybe some comments will come through that I can add to the pot and discussion.

Here's to a great month ahead – happy Mother's Day, until next time.



Letters to the editor

Letters to the editor



Dear Editor

Of late I have either read about or heard people wondering why Tom Cruise chose Hoedspruit as a setting for filming. An actor does not get to choose the setting for a film. Even if he is a celebrity, he is basically an employee of a film production company. Reading movie credits will give us a

glimpse of what happens during filming and the enormous amount of organisation that goes into producing a movie.

Before any filming is started there is a flurry of activity to deal with. It is therefore not any actor who has the say as to where to shoot the film. That decision is made by the producers while the actors and film crew are merely a small, albeit extremely important, part of the organisation.

So, that said, we are happy that we have been graced by an unusual event that is good for our town. (We are rather used to celebrities in Hoedspruit: Elton John, Prince Harry to mention but a few...)

Sandra de Roubaix

Ed: Well said, totally agree. Of course if the actor is one of the producers, or better still, owns the production company ... well then I think their say probably has a certain weight behind the setting choice.

Dear Sir,

I am extremely sorry you have changed the Kruger2Canyon logo. The new set up is horrible, dead, cold, featureless, spiritless and ugly. The newspaper now looks like just another small town or city coarse newspaper with no special character. The previous logo was pretty, full of life & warmth as well as full of bushveld spirit.

Regards, Margaret Grafton

Ed: Dear Margaret, how unfortunate that you should feel this way. It is a difficult choice when one is trying to positively establish a reputable, trustworthy brand, and to put a new 'stamp' on it. It is true that one cannot be everything to everyone, and sadly there will be those that do not like what you do. But this does bring to mind a quote by The Honourable Winston Churchill, who once said: "To improve is to change; to be perfect is to change often."

Dear Editor,

I was at drinks with some friends the other night, and it was brought to my attention that there is a suggestion or application for an

informal settlement to be established right next to the runway in town. It seems that there is already allocated land for this to the east of the runway! Who put this forward and when was this approved – if indeed it has been approved?
Regards, JA

PS: Thanks for a great publication that is now well worth the read.

Ed: Dear JA, I am not aware of this but it is worthy of an investigation, and let's see where it leads us. Thanks you for the 'tip off' and for the compliment. See Mayors article on page 7.

Dear Editor
I find your articles on birds

by Mike Meidlinger quite fascinating. Has he published a book?
Yours, Janine

Ed: Janine, sadly he has not, but he is a wealth of information and knowledge that he is only too pleased to share. We are lucky to have him on board.

Dear Editor
Please can I have the details of FGASA for my kids to sign up on the kids course?
Best regards, Corlia

Ed: Sure thing – they are at The Farmhouse, on the R527 behind Campfire Properties. Their telephone number is (011) 886 8245 and speak to Ashleigh (the number is redirected to Hoedspruit).

Word search

F	R	R
O	P	O
F	I	E

How many words of three or more letters, each including the letter at the **centre** of the square, can you make from this diagram?

Abbreviations accepted but no plurals or conjugations. We've found 17, including one nine-letter word. Can you do better?
Answers on page 15

Siyafunda Slog 17 – 18 June 2022

Test yourself whilst experiencing the vastness of the Greater Makalali Nature Reserve
60km from Hoedspruit in a Big 5 reserve
24 daylight hours to walk 95km : Start time 06h00 : Cut-off time 17h35

A once in a lifetime challenge to raise conservation awareness and highlight what the brave men and women face, risking their lives for the conservation and protection of animals
Participants will be accompanied by armed guides and APU members

All participants required to raise money for a conservation charity or trust of their choice

Entrance R 1000.00 for two days covering reserve conservation and dinner

Certain requirements have to be met including fitness, food, kit, personal first aid and bedding

SIYAFUNDA



Wildlife and Conservation

For more information contact Mike Job via WhatsApp on +27 (0)82 781 8394 or at michaeljamesjob@gmail.com

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Our war on wild animals

Don Pinnock
Environmental Journalist

If you want to kill animals for fun, South Africa is the place. Topping the list of favourites by trophy hunters are lions, baboons, southern lechwes, caracals and vervet monkeys.

South Africa is one of the world's greatest suppliers of wildlife trophies, many of them from captive-bred animals. The greatest number are shot by people from the United States. From tigers to vervet monkeys - it's all legal.

A report by Humane Society International/Africa (HSI/Africa) - Trophy Hunting by the Numbers - quantifies a global industry dedicated to the 'sport' of accumulating wild animal parts for bragging rights by largely non-African hunters. It was released to coincide with World Wildlife Day on the 3rd of March.

South Africa is listed as the world's second largest exporter of hunting trophies (after Canada), with most going to the United States, trailed by Spain, Russia and Denmark.

The report is, as it says, about numbers and coincides with the latest hunting quotas for this year, released by the Department of Environment: 10 critically endangered black rhino, 150 endangered elephants - which will mostly be hunted in the Associated Private Nature Reserves (APNR) and thus be from free ranging Kruger Park herds - and 10 leopards, listed as vulnerable and with no known population estimates to back the al-

loca

This is concerning news, says the report, especially preceding World Wildlife Day which was intended to celebrate our collective natural heritage each year on that day, and draw attention to the plight of threatened and endangered wild animals.

Between 2014 and 2018 (the latest complete data set from the UN trade organisation CITES), South Africa exported 21,018 trophies, an average of 4,204 a year. Of these, 4,176 were lion, 1,337 were elephant, 1,295 were hippo, 675 were rhino, and 574 were leopard.

One in three trophy kills were of animals captive-bred for hunting, including most of the lions. However, nearly all elephants, rhinos and leopards hunted were wild-sourced.

Smaller species included 2,729 baboons, 2,422 southern lechwe, 1,693 caracals, 1,453 vervet monkeys, 496 civets, 410 blue duikers, 385 servals, 229 Barbary sheep, 250 honey badgers and a brown bear.

Critically endangered, endangered and vulnerable non-native species, were also sourced and hunted in South Africa, including tigers, Indian hog deer, Arabian oryx and addax.

By far the largest importer of trophies was the United States (54%), followed by Spain (5%), Russia (4%) and Denmark (3%). Other countries included Hungary, Mexico, China, Australia, Poland, Germany, the UK and France.

During the period, 2,227 trophies were imported to South Africa, mostly el-

phant, Hartmann's mountain zebra, leopard and hippos, mostly from Namibia, Zimbabwe and Mozambique.

"The results of this study" says the report, "demonstrate that South Africa is a major player in the international trophy hunting industry. This is something that the South Africa trophy hunting industry and the Government of South Africa have promoted."

[They] further proudly claim that "trophy hunting contributes to conservation." The truth, as revealed in this study, is that trophy hunting as practiced in South Africa is based on highly managed and manipulated animals, as opposed to wild animals.

"In South Africa, hunted animals are bred, bought, sold, transported and otherwise processed and ultimately delivered to a property where a trophy hunter can kill them, and where the kill is often guaranteed." It is all about the money that can be made by industrializing, managing and manipulating wildlife for economic gain.

"This has significant negative impacts on animal welfare, provides opportunities for illegal wildlife trade, and seriously undermines claims that trophy hunting contributes to conservation."

Although largely statistical, the report also noted some hunting methods suggested by hunt outfitters:

- "Baboon are similar to a human in physiology, so a chest shot will suffice."
- "If you aren't

hunting aardwolf in Africa, but the opportunity to take one comes while on a different hunt, then whatever rifle you have at the moment will do the job. Try to place the bullet just behind the shoulder, about one third of the way up the body."

- "Hunting blue duiker is most likely best done using a shotgun. Classic shot placement of course would be on or just behind the shoulder. However, when hunting blue duiker, one may have to settle for a hit wherever it can be made."

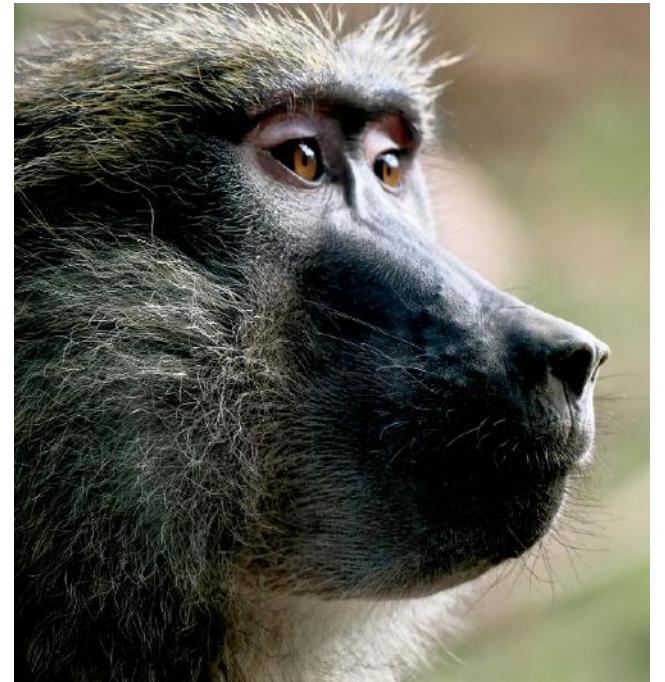
- "Hunting serval with dogs is usually conducted in the mornings. After lunch you can nap and then go out after dark spotlighting."

- "This outfitter utilizes a live camera system that allows the honey badger bait sites to be monitored 24 hours a day from the hunting lodge. You can actually watch the bait sites while you are eating or relaxing at the lodge!"

- "African wildcat hunting mainly takes place during a hunt for other animals. Should the African wildcat be facing away, then what's commonly called 'The Texas Brain Shot' - aiming at the base of the tail where it joins the body, will put it down."

- "When hit well, the vervet monkey won't go very far. They leave a poor blood trail because they bleed out rapidly. Unless the monkey goes down and stays down, wait about 15 minutes before doing a follow up."

An economic review in eight countries in Africa, in-



2 729 Baboons hunted according to the last CITES dataset Photo courtesy of Canva

cluding South Africa, demonstrated that the total economic contribution of trophy hunters was a mere 0.03% of gross domestic product in those eight countries. Conservation experts and professionals have critiqued trophy as it "yields low returns at household levels, with only a fraction of generated income reaching local communities."

"We are terribly disappointed that the DFFE is failing in its duty to protect our threatened and endangered wildlife species," says Dr Audrey Delsink, Wildlife Director for HSI/Africa. "It's unacceptable that we allow people to hunt endangered and critically endangered animals for the purpose of collecting their remains as trophies."

"The claim that trophy hunting contributes to con-

servation cannot be justified in light of the evidence demonstrating that one-third of South Africa's hunting trophies are captive bred animals, and many are non-native or species not subject to science-based population management."

"The captive breeding and intensive farming of wild animals in South Africa for profit, often harms conservation efforts, with negative impacts on biodiversity when protected landscapes are carved up into breeding camps and predators are targeted as competition."

"Killing animals for 'fun' is part of the archaic 'if it pays it stays' concept, that demands immediate change. Killing animals for pleasure has no place in conservation."

Previously published in the Daily Maverick

Why do warthogs run with tails up?

This probably allows them to follow one another in long grass. A secondary function may be that it alerts other animals of all species to the presence of danger. Having such a low shoulder height in the savannah environment can have its drawbacks. In long grass, warthogs cannot see

clearly, and the only way the piglets can follow the mother is if they have a 'taller' physical beacon as a guide. As such, they have evolved the ability to automatically raise the long thin tail with its small terminal tuft when they are running. It is an involuntary action, dictated and controlled by flexing the muscles of the forelimbs, neck and back, and hence only occurs when the animal is alert, tense and at work (running). The most vital function is obviously that of a following mechanism for piglets, but the persistence of this behaviour in all individuals, regardless of age, has the same advantages for adults in social units.



Warthogs rooting

Photo courtesy of Canva

Why do they feed on their knees?

This is most common in winter when most of their food is underground and needs to be dug up. The disc (at the end of the nose) and the tusks are used. The **rooting** behaviour is more easily accomplished while the warthogs are on their wrists (knees), as more leverage and resultant dig-

ging efficiency is obtained, especially in harder soils. This is achieved because the body weight is then directly behind the direction of digging, effectively pivoted over the shoulders. Warthogs are the only 'pigs' in Africa to exhibit this phenomenon, and the reason for it may lie in the fact that they are the only ones that live and mostly graze in open savannah, an area that has comparatively fewer nutrients than forest. The other species, such as bushpig, live in the forest and generally have enough food in the form of fallen fruit and other items in the winter. Rooting at this time takes up less of their day, and the litter and soil are generally softer

than on the sun-baked open areas where warthogs live. In winter, warthogs rely almost entirely on rooting to find adequate and sufficient food, and spend most of their time doing this with the result that the wrists developed heavy callouses.

An excerpt from 'Beat about the Bush - Mammals and Birds' by Trevor Carnaby

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A canine anti-poaching superhero

Wildlife Correspondent

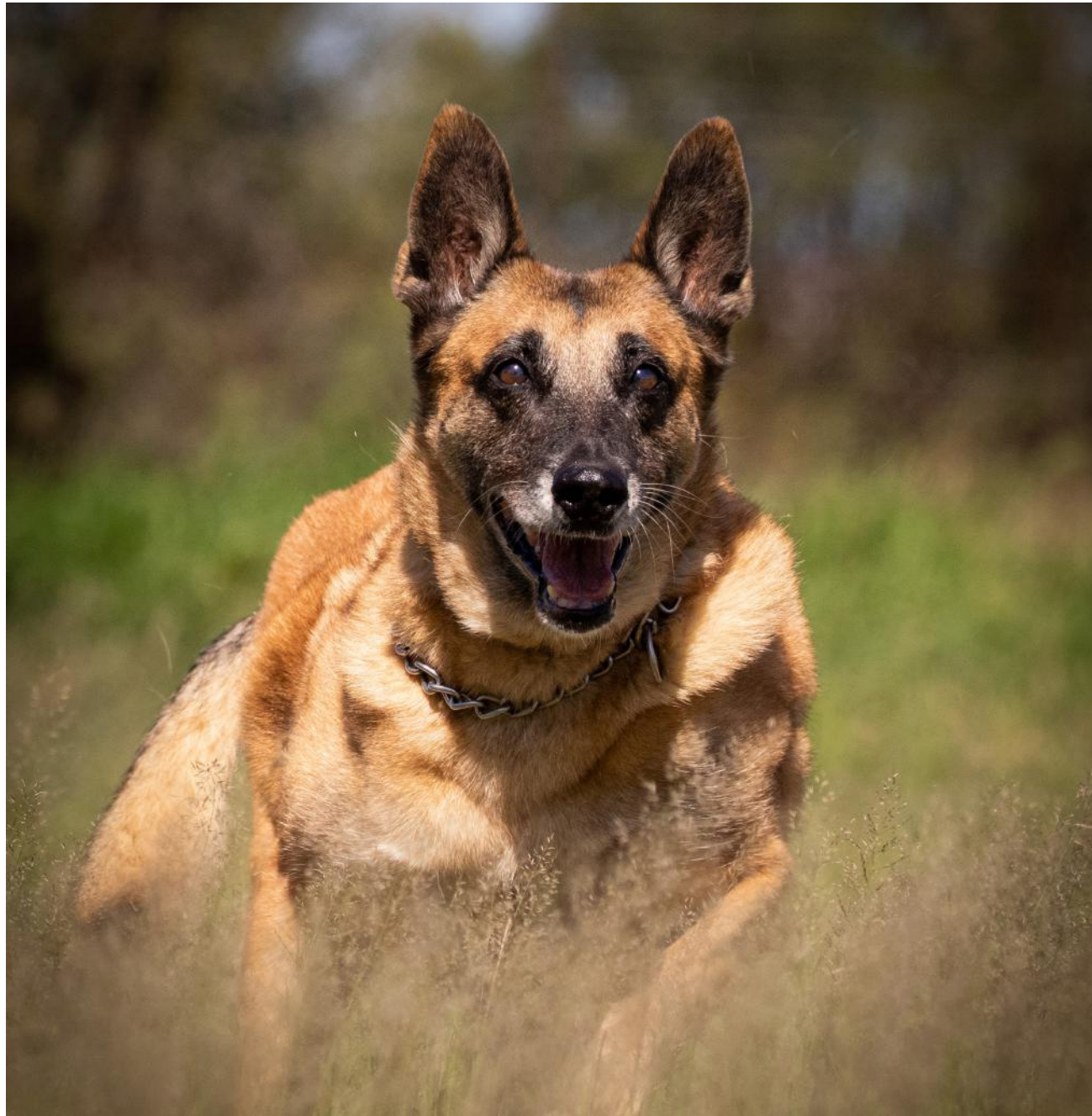
K9 Anti-Poaching Units (APU) are considered game changers in the fight against poaching within the Kruger National Park. Meet Mitzi, a pure-bred Belgian Malinois from a distinguished line of service animals.

Malinois are chosen for anti-poaching work because of their superior agility, intelligence and bite strength. Mitzi has spent almost a decade in wildlife protection services and in that time, she has saved the lives of her human handler and team, and countless at-risk animal species.

Mitzi's success can be attributed to several factors. First is the incredible bond that she shares with her handler, a mutual love, trust and respect that makes them a strong and cohesive team. Second is a potent work ethic and impeccable training regime. Third is the X-factor, Mitzi's alertness and her inherent sensitivity and awareness. These attributes aid in her ability to keep calm under intense, dangerous and highly pressured situations. This is all coupled with her intelligence and willingness to charge headlong into battle to do what is right and what is expected of her.

Usually, specially trained dogs are experts in either tracking humans or detecting wildlife contraband like rhino horn and ivory as well as ammunition. But Mitzi is a master of all of these skills, making her a triple threat and a formidable ally in the fight against poaching. In favourable conditions Mitzi could also alert her handler to the presence of a poacher up to one kilometre away! This meant her anti-poaching team was much better equipped to track at night, and cover greater ground too.

Mitzi has shown her value a thousand times over. Undoubtedly the lives of hundreds of rhinos have been saved because of Mitzi and her handlers tracking and



The magnificent Mitzi, master tracker and detector of humans and wildlife contraband
Photo supplied

apprehension skills. She was and still is a highly effective member of the APU, with a fearsome reputation among men with nefarious intentions. Mitzi is, in her nature, a hero.

Due to the sensitivity of her work, security risk and the danger posed to herself and her handler, Mitzi has never been able to stand and shine in the spotlight for her acts of bravery and heroism. She has gone far beyond what is needed or required in order to perform their duties. She did her duty without any expectation of recognition, re-

ward or praise. Few human beings give of themselves as much as Mitzi has given to conservation.

Mitzi began her career in March 2013. She was deployed with a Special Ops Anti-Poaching Unit handler in the Nwanetsi Section of Kruger National Park. She quickly proved that she was a force to be reckoned with within a week of deployment. Whilst still considered to be in training, Mitzi and her handler got called to a contact in Tshokwane and her skills were tested with an all-day follow-up. At around 2pm that day she

made contact with 4 poachers. During that contact, her vigilance and alertness in the field enabled her handler to avoid certain death. Within her first week on the job, she had saved the lives of a rhino and her handler, and so she began her illustrious career.

Since her introduction into the Kruger National Park, Mitzi has been involved in the detection, tracking and capture of over 120 groups of poachers - about 500 individuals! Her handler stopped counting when she reached that milestone. Even though these are huge numbers

that have had a far reaching impact on wildlife crime, the numbers don't necessarily reflect the dedication and diligence she showed in the field. She is a highly driven dog with an exceptional attitude, mindset and passion to do her job.

Mitzi's exceptional track record has not been without its trials and tribulations. Mitzi had to put her skills to use in extreme weather conditions. She would be a part of all day follow-ups in the Lowveld heat and humidity, battling temperatures of up to 45°C. She would run at speed to

keep on the tracks of poachers, through dangerous Big 5 territory, knowing that at the end of it she would come up against armed poachers with a shoot to kill mentality. Few humans are asked to perform feats like this, to exhibit this much bravery and dedication to their job.

Another of her achievements was the part she played in the arrest of 9 field rangers who were shooting rhinos. Although they were law enforcement officers who knew how to hide evidence, they couldn't fool K9 Mitzi and she was fundamental in finding evidence that led to their arrests.

In 2020, Mitzi's endurance started to deteriorate, so she was slowly phased out of contacts and follow-ups. She was still used as a detection dog for ammunition, firearms, and contraband at contact sites. Her exceptional detection skills have even led her to locate a firearm hidden and buried underneath 60cm of soil.

Towards the end of 2020, Mitzi began experiencing problems with her pack of APU dogs that she lived with. As she was no longer leading the pack on patrols, she was being challenged by the other dogs and ganged up on. She was therefore relocated to a new home at a private lodge and joined their conservation team.

Mitzi is now an animal ambassador that raises awareness around conservation activities. She does sniffing and tracking demonstrations for private guests and her efforts will hopefully lead to some meaningful contributions to anti-poaching funds. In the meantime, she happily accepts a piece of biltong as her reward for a job well done. In fact, it is joked about that she can now add "Biltong Sniffing Specialist" to her already impressive CV.

Superheroes come in many different forms – in this case the superhero is hairy and has 4 paws.

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RAPTORS VIEW R 3 200 000
Bedrooms 4 | Bathroom 3.5 | Floor size: 200 m²

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

Michelle Severin - 083 469 3821 Ref: 1456317



CANYON GAME RESERVE R 2 500 000
Bedrooms 4 | Bathrooms 4 | Floor size: 250 m²

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

Rob Severin - 083 469 3820 Ref: 1456236



NDLOVUMZI R 3 950 000
Bedrooms 4 | Bathrooms 3 | Floor size: 380 m²

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

Jason Jones - 083 267 4794 Ref: 1459005



LISSATABA R 3 500 000
Bedrooms 3 | Bathrooms 3 | Floor size: 220 m²

Stunning Olifants river views! This newer home has been well constructed, is in good condition and is perched on the hillside overlooking the river. There is an open plan kitchen, dining room & lounge, leading out to a patio with gorgeous views.

Rob Severin - 083 469 3820 Ref: 1458608



N'TSIRI NATURE RESERVE R 7 000 000
Bedrooms 4 | Bathrooms 2.5 | Traverse: 2651 ha

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

Yvette Thompson - 083 655 7176 Ref: 1450349



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

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

Michelle Severin - 083 469 3821 Ref: 1457481



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

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

Rob Severin - 083 469 3820 Ref: 1449027



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

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

Rob Severin - 083 469 3820 Ref: 1449006



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

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

Rob Severin - 083 469 3820 Ref: 1444594



MAFUNYANE, KARONGWE R 15 000 000
Bedrooms 4 | Bathrooms 4 | Traverse: 8,000 ha

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

Rob Severin - 083 469 3820 Ref: 1443333



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

This commercial property forms part of the Greater Makalali Nature Reserve, which is home to the Big 5 & there is 20,000ha of pristine traverse. Approvals in place for 10 commercial beds. There is a main 2-bedroom home and 3 guest chalets.

Jason Jones - 083 267 4794 Ref: 1459112



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

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

Delaine Muller - 072 117 1133 Ref: 1427931



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

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

Mike Dodds - 082 906 7004 Ref: 1323091



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

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

Mike Dodds - 082 906 7004 Ref: 1317289



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

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

Rob Severin - 083 469 3820 Ref: 1408817



ELEPHANT ROCK ECO ESTATE R 1 500 000
Stand size: 3300 m²

This stunning stand is located overlooking the Olifants river. Bushveld & river is the perfect combination. Big trees, birdlife and plains game can be found on the reserve. The estate is pet friendly and short term letting is allowed.

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Say goodbye until next time ...



Curlew Sandpiper
Image canva



Greater Striped Swallow
Image canva

Mike Meidlinger

As the nights draw cold and the days short, we prepare ourselves for the beauty and starkness of winter. With the last few Woodland Kingfisher, Levillant's Cuckoo and Lesser Striped Swallow as well as others drifting off silently, we bid a warm "aloha" to our migrants and look forward to their speedy return in a few months.

Given that a few are still left, mostly drifting overhead, this month we pay a fitting tribute or a homage of sorts, to migration. We also will investigate a few underlying principles of the phenomenon that delivers us the famed bounty of the austral summer. Some of these principles are poorly understood and still being studied.

Take the few "unsuited stragglers" we are seeing now. What is truly fascinating about these last remaining birds, is that they are exhibiting one of the most under-rated traits of the trans-equatorial migrating species. A concept known as leapfrog migration, acts on a principle basis and in fact explains where these last few birds are most likely going to end up. Leapfrogging states that birds in the northern hemisphere that breed further south, closer to the equator, actually migrate a shorter distance and thus winter closer to the equator, as compared to birds that breed further north.

This means that those in the very far north of the species range, also end up traveling the furthest south of any individuals of the population. Why this happens is actually

rather logical. As birds leave their breeding grounds, which they do within a week or two of each other, those that are closest to the equator are also closest to suitable wintering grounds and thus arrive there first. This means that when the more northerly birds arrive, spaces are already taken and this forces them to continue further south to find their own slice of subtropical paradise.

Birds that migrate long distances often possess long pointed wings with long primaries, even when comparing subspecies of a single species. Entire species or individual populations, that are resident or short distance migrants, tend to have shorter primaries that can be more rounded in shape. This rule is not golden however, rather forming an overall average. The reason for traveler's who venture further having developed lengthier wings and flight feathers, is the fact that these are better equipped to handle the journey. In other words, the wings of long-distance migrants effectively push through a journey that could tally hundreds to thousands of kilometres.

It is an odd few weeks when thinking on a global scale, as right now, simultaneously, some birds are busy arriving at breeding grounds whilst others are still straggling over our savannahs and coastlines. Barn Swallow, Great Spotted Cuckoo, European Roller and White-rumped Swift are all species that today have some birds, currently already pairing up and breeding, after having completed their journey. Others however,

are still on their way, and are still as far south as our region!

Before leaving, the last few weeks are spent feeding in a frantic effort to "bulk up" for the journey, and many species will add on 30-50% to their body weight. This can be even more pronounced for those species that don't stop to feed along the way, and who need to fuel on a one way blitz. Food types vary, with bill-shapes dictating and being adapted for almost anything. From plant matter which needs snipping, to insects which need to be gleaned or hawked, to seeds which need to be cracked; all must be done in sufficient quantities to store and build fat. This fat is then used to sustain the expensive undertaking that is continuous, flapping flight. Despite the somewhat benign nature of this fact, biologically speaking, this is a truly incredible feat. It's a bit like entering a regional pie-eating contest each day for over a fortnight. The result, in twelve days or less, would be a gain in twenty to forty kilograms efficiently converted and stored as 'travel handles' or 'holiday weight' in lay terminology.

Shorebirds like Common Whimbrel, Bar-tailed Godwit, Curlew Sandpiper and Little Stint, are special. These migrate along the coast and thus have the luxury of feeding each day along their route. But important wetlands are few and far between. Many important stop-over sites, as they are known, along Africa's east coast and in fact around the world, require much more protection and conserving than

is currently legislated. Without these vital estuaries, such as those found at Inhambane and the San Sébastien Peninsula in Mozambique, many waders species would be at serious risk of extinction and strife.

The delicate balancing act that many species live on, or the knife-edge upon which their existence depends, is one which often goes by unnoticed by birders on day to day basis. It is also humbling to ponder how important human beings can be in the success or failure of many species - even those which, to all intents and purposes, appear to be in a surplus.

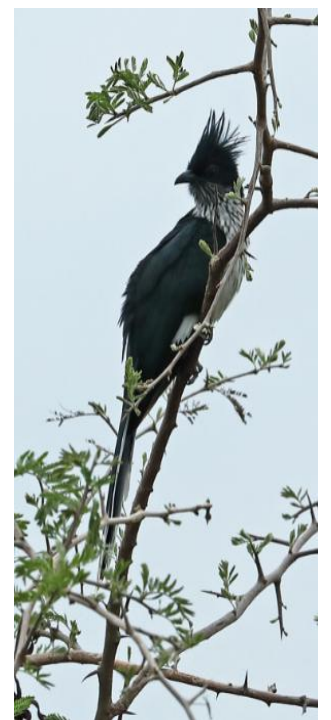
The conservation of what are known as "global flyways" is a relatively recent concept, an undertaking spear-headed by large broad scale bodies such as Birdlife International. These lobby and cooperate with governments in an effort to identify, and then protect, as many of these vital Ramsar sites and other unclassified wetlands as possible. This is particularly vital at certain waterbodies, those that are needed by literally hundreds of thousands of hungry bills. Globally, there are eight recognized flyways which are used by a wide variety of species. These eight flyways consist of three between North & South America, three between Africa & Europe and/or Asia and two confined within Asia or between it and Australia. Despite their relatively solid appearance there is still much we don't know about these pathways or what factors are important to the many species that use these

wide brush strokes of the globe. What is valuable is that as efforts continue to conserve, especially in undeveloped nations, the more complete a picture we are getting.

These broad, imaginary lines over the earth, do little to explain how individual birds navigate, and even today much is still unknown. What we do know is that birds find their way with intimidating accuracy, through a combination of using their senses, as well as relying on experience. Visual cues like mountain ranges, coastlines, lakes and seas are often vital, while birds also possess the unusual ability to read Earth's magnetic field. These are just two important examples. Despite all their adaptations, perils remain plentiful, and thousands of birds become disoriented or perish along the way.

One major event that celebrates this new global form of collaboration, is a bird race known as 'The Champions of the Flyway Competition'. Each year this birding-centric festival occurs over a week, usually in the last days of March and first days of April. This is the peak period for avian passage, and where better to be placed, than within the southern corner of Israel and the land-bridge migration mecca of the Eilat region. Many teams, made up of four to five members, compete in an all out, wacky-racers-like, attempt to see more birds than any other team, and thus be crowned champs.

The very capable local birders take the race very seriously, with maximum effort being put in to locate good spots for birds



Levillants Cuckoo
Image canva

that are mostly moving through, and could be gone by the next day. Fund-raising of this kind, as teams raise money to enter, as well as private donations, all benefit birds and their conservation along the East Africa - Asia Flyway. As a whole it offers an exciting, social and festive atmosphere, that celebrates the beauty of birds and migration. Teams from all over the world arrive and take part, including several intrepid South Africans, such as some of the guides at Birding Ecotours, Rockjumper and others. *The Champions of the Flyway* offers a shining example of how the birding community can come together for a greater cause.

With deeper understanding of what drives them, comes a deeper appreciation for the trials and tribulations experienced by our avian contemporaries and their cohorts.

This month, while out in the field, enjoy every last bird on the move - we await their return.



A couple of minutes with the Mayor of Hoedspruit

Local Correspondent

This column is an exclusive reach-out by the Mayor, to become closer to the populace within Hoedspruit town and the surrounds. We met at the Mayor's office:

How long have you been in the Mayors seat?

It's been two months now. You've got to hit the ground running. There's no time to learn – you can't learn to fly if you're sitting in the captain's seat of an aircraft! I've been a resident here, so I knew the challenges and where the town needs to go, and the direction the municipality has to take.

Waiting to speak to you I noticed that you seem to be accessible to the public – a fresh new approach for a civil servant?

Inaccessibility is not how things should be, we are elected to serve the people and it's those people that we are here for. That's why I've allowed whoever to come and raise whatever issue they have, and we will attend to it immediately, because that is what we have committed to do. It seems that the more problems pile up, the more irrelevant the people become. Even if we cannot do certain things we have to communicate that

to the public.

What is happening with this question about "Berlin"? What is the idea there?

Remember the Integrated Human Settlements (IHS) that Government introduced, we ought to have completed the consultations that started way back ,and we have resurrected this. The reason for this is that we have to develop that area to accommodate the middle/low-income earners. I was told that about 7650 people commute between the villages and town. Some workers can afford to buy expensive houses, but others cannot, so we want to implement the IHS to get people off the roads, and make them more productive – they don't rush out of places of work early to get transport to get home. But we are also going to make the necessary amendments, so that the people living in town are not going to be inconvenienced by the new developments. We are planning a consultation with the residents at an information evening, where people can ask questions and raise objections. We will listen to them. We want to try and accommodate everyone's view in the grand plan to develop that area.

What about service delivery

to this area as we already have issues? Is it not important to sort out the squatter issues at "Plastic View" the camp near Build-it, before we get onto other things?

That's correct, we are dealing with all the issues concurrently. Remember the middle- and low-income housing units that we are planning to build are primarily planned to get rid of "Plastic View" – this is where we are developing. We are going to put up a big four lane road interchange on the R40 and an extension to the bridge (also with four lanes) on the R527 into Hoedspruit. This will have the first robot in the municipality, on the overhead bridge on the R527, which will go over the R40. The R40 and R527 will no longer be one road. The R40 will be below the R527 and be continuous with no stop street. There will be on and off ramps on the R40, so "Plastic View" has to go – but the people need to be accommodated somewhere. We have engaged with the Housing Development Agency and South African National Road Agency Ltd which is the implementing agent for the road. We are making progress in that regard.

With respect to Portion 39 – we have obtained fund-

ing from the Department of Cooperative Governance, to build the roads and infrastructure in that area, including the upgrade of the facilities to accommodate the increase in numbers. We are planning to change Hoedspruit for the better.

How many units are planned?

We are still at the consultation stage at this moment, we are unable to make a commitment. But we hope the number that is built will accommodate all the people at "Plastic View". The place can accommodate a number of just over 500 – but remember this is still at a consultation stage so we cannot commit to a particular number.

What is your immediate vision for Hoedspruit? What is prime on your agenda?

Hoedspruit is one of the most visited areas in South Africa. We compete with the Waterberg Area and Cape Town. A hurdle and competition is the Kruger Mpumalanga International Airport. Many tourists are from the west and arrive in Hoedspruit via Cape Town and Johannesburg. I have consulted with the MEC for Transport and the MEC for Economic Development, and said that plenty bed-nights are lost in Johannesburg and Cape Town - be-

cause that is where tourists stop over. My argument to Government is that we have an international license in Polokwane that is not being used, and I would be glad to have international carriers flying direct to Hoedspruit. We have agreed in principal that that should happen, and that will increase the tourist numbers in this area. I'm even suggesting a new route to bring in Vilanculos in Mozambique and Victoria Falls in Zimbabwe, which will stop the tourists having to go back to Johannesburg. Fly the tourists in directly and out directly to and from their point of departure at their home country. I'm engaging these people so that tourist numbers can increase.

We are also thinking of an annual wildlife festival, that we need to host. Everybody goes to the Indaba in Durban every year – why can't they come here? Profile Hoedspruit and put it on the map!

We will try every month to touch base with the Mayor to find out what he's doing, and what has been achieved within his Municipality.

Comment:

It was very refreshing being able to secure time with the Mayor – none of that "well ... we'll see if we can get an appointment for you" stuff. He was very open about the

fact that he had inherited a municipality with issues and was quick to point out that the appointment as Mayor, does come with matters that cannot be swept under the table, and need to be dealt with.

Hoedspruit town is really the hub of safari in South Africa. There is easy access to the all the lodges and reserves forming the Greater Kruger – and of course the Kruger Park itself. A mere 40 minutes drive and you are at the gates of one of the most prestigious names in national parks world-wide.

We are in total agreement with the Mayor that Hoedspruit and the surrounds loses bed nights to the stop over points (Johannesburg and Cape Town), and it is imperative that he concentrates on securing the international license for the airport, to have international flights coming in directly. It is also fantastic that connections to the Victoria Falls in Zimbabwe and Vilanculos in Mozambique, might be options on the travel menu. This would certainly be a paradigm shift in the tourism offering of Hoedspruit.

Things seem to be looking up and are very exciting – it's now up to the powers that be, especially our Mayor to push through with these ideas to truly put Hoedspruit on the map.



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Khaya Ndlovu Manor House

The Khaya Ndlovu Manor House is situated on the Khaya Ndlovu Game Reserve and was purchased by Trevor Jordan in 2004. As part of the Rietspruit Game Reserve it now traverses a total of 5500 ha and is a mere 12 minutes out of Hoedspruit.

One of the reasons for Trevor's purchase of the Khaya Ndlovu property was his determination to restore the area known today as the Blue Canyon Conservancy and Rietspruit Game Reserve, to a big-game haven. He had previously successfully achieved a similar process with his assembly of the Thornybush Private Nature Reserve. Undaunted by the magnitude of this task, Trevor then embarked on his ambitious project to get all the fences dropped between the smaller game farms that dotted the area.

Part of the process involved tackling the fearsome quartet of Steinburg brothers who owned the farm Bloubank. The hard-core Afrikaans farmers needed some convincing that they would benefit by the removal of their boundary fences so that 'their' wildlife could roam and graze more freely. More importantly, however Trevor was aiming for bigger roams areas that are an absolute necessity for the introduction of the iconic big game species; elephant and lion. After months and months of sensitive talks, the Steinburg brothers were finally convinced, and the Blue Canyon Conservancy

and Rietspruit Game Reserve was borne.

A side note of one obstacle faced by Trevor in this endeavour, was the Steinburg brother's pet warthog, Frikkie. Frikkie was part of the family and travelled everywhere with them. He also pushed his way into any bed that had space and was a frequent lounge on the sofa during rugby matches!

Nico Steinburg was very concerned about Frikkie's welfare and Trevor was quick to try an allay any fears of Frikkie being taken by the lions that had recently been introduced. The reasoning was the fact that as Frikkie was always around the farmhouse at Bloubank; there was little chance the lions would venture there, and besides he could dash into the house for protection!

That lasted for only three months from the lowering of the fences – a very distraught Nico called Trevor with the bad news that Frikkie had indeed been taken by lions, and sadly the only parts left of him were his tail and one trotter! "Die leeus het Frikkie geeet, net sy stert en een draver bly oor!"

The Manor House, was a weary and in some way a dilapidated shadow of its current glory! Having been occupied as a hunting Lodge, many forlorn glass-eyed trophies stared down from the crumbling walls! Impenetrable, drought-hardy creepers engulfed an overgrown garden, whilst a patchy lawn failed to compete with dense mats of defiant paper-thorns.

When they weren't fleeing from the hunters that had

previously occupied the dwelling, small herds of skittish plains-game treaded delicately and nervously, weaving their way through fragmented cattle fences, and other farmyard scraps that left tell-tale signs of a bygone agricultural history.

Living full-time in Johannesburg, Trevor did not spend much time in the Lowveld, but on one of his infrequent trips to check on his Hoedspruit developments, he awoke to a torrent of rainwater flooding the lodge passages and rooms. Drops of water trickled from the thatch, adding further to the woes of the crumbling walls.

Making an immediate and necessary decision to patch the leaking roof, Trevor had no idea that he was embarking on a massive game of construction-dominoes! After calling in a team of roofing experts, they set about the essential task of re-thatching the entire house.

The first warning sign that things were not going quite as planned, came after the removal of the holding beams and the first patch of thatch. Trevor watched in horror as the perimeter walls of the house came tumbling down, one after the other.

He had no option but to rebuild the house, and the construction of the Khaya Ndlovu Manor House as we know it today, was finally completed in 2006.

The house was originally furnished with many of Trevor's personal belongings and artefacts. The furnishings are forever changing however, as Trevor and his partner

Lisa, are always on the hunt for interesting additions to add to the décor of the lodge.

With the introduction of other iconic game species, black and white rhino, as well as cheetah and elephant, the time had come to transform the Manor House into a commercial lodge. In 2010 Trevor moved out of the luxurious honeymoon suite, and the Bali doors adorning the Manor House entrance hall were opened to welcome commercial guests.

Since then the lodge has seen many tourists both local and international cross the Manor House threshold, from statesmen, actors, photographers, wildlife enthusiasts and business people, to local guides and residents. All are blown away by the view, the activities, the professional service and of course the cuisine!

The Khaya Ndlovu story would not be complete without inclusion of the Rhino Revolution (RR), being the headquarters of the organisation that raises funds for rhino conservation, since its inception in 2011. The RR rehabilitation centre was officially opened in 2015, and within two weeks of opening its doors, two rhino orphans arrived. Over the course of the next 18 months, they were joined by a further three calves who were all successfully released onto the Khaya Ndlovu property in November 2017.

A year or so after their release, the crash of orphans was joined by a dominant bull who had left his former territory on the Reserve to court the females. Excite-

ment levels reached epic proportions when a Khaya Ndlovu Manor House guide witnessed the bull mating with Masingita. She was given the Tsonga name meaning miracle whilst in the facility, as she had wondered aimlessly, lost, hungry and alone, for days in a predator-rich bush at only three months old. Her mother had been poached. She was found by an expert team of anti-poaching trackers. It truly was a miracle that the tragic little bundle of skin and bone had survived the poaching ordeal.

The white rhino gestation period is approximately 500 days; a long and frustrating time that was patiently endured waiting to see if Masingita's liaison with the wild bull had resulted in a viable pregnancy. Finally, on 12 October 2021, a new-born female calf was spotted during an afternoon Manor House game drive by one of the lodge's regular international guests. The baby has been named Lesedi, the Tswana word for light.

Lesedi's birth has validated Rhino Revolution's professional rehabilitation process, and in so doing fulfilled the ethos of true conservation; a calf born in the wild to a hand-raised, rewilded rhino. It's no wonder that Masingita and her miracle baby have become the most revered sighting for all Khaya Ndlovu safari guests.

Covid saw a period that was very bleak in the tourism world. With no tourists coming to the lodge it was decided that some renovations could be done with little impact on the 'invisible tourists'. It was discussed at

length between Trevor, Lisa and the remaining staff, and finally the idea of an expansive kitchen with associated room space was the ideal addition to the Manor House. This would put the kitchen and the alfresco restaurant on the map – which also had a resultant addition.

Great food needs to be eaten in a great environment and so the next step of the additions was an extension of the deck – which possibly has the best views of the northern Drakensberg in the Lowveld! Although Covid was terrible and in many instances a disaster, at the Manor House it saw the birth of a new kitchen complex and an extended deck – all adding to the enhanced guest experience.

The extended deck area is partly under thatch, partly under the sun, and partly under the large bushveld trees that overhang, and overlooks the infinity pool that flows over and onto the view of the African bushveld ... and in the distance the mountains. It's a setting fit for kings (and queens) and is a destination that needs to be visited to appreciate the beauty.

Today the Manor House offers its guests 5 star accommodation, 5 star cuisine, a bush spa and a 5 star safari experience. The lodge has eleven well-appointed double rooms and a bush tent for two. Together with the study lounge and the alfresco dining area and bar, the deck, swimming pool and the view, one can just kick off one's shoes, lie back and relax, sucking in the fresh air, peace and tranquillity and of course ... that view.

Skyway Trails – fun, family activity



Ishmael and Nhlamulo, the Skyway Adventure Guides (above) Jordan du Plessis taking on the 230m zipline and the challenge (right above and below) Photos supplied

Adventurist

This is really a worthwhile, fabulous, exciting family activity. A must do from all angles!

We headed out to Hazyview from Hoedspruit early on an overcast Saturday. Expectations were high as we made the journey and discussed what we might experience at Skyway Trails on their zipline course above the trees and gorges.

On arrival we were lucky to be the first in line to challenge ourselves. We were met by a very professional and knowledgeable group of people amongst which were our guides, Ishmael Shabangu and Nhlamulo Zitha.

After signing all the required documentation, we were led out to be kitted up for the adven-

ture – including our hairnets! Clearly getting kitted correctly, checking all straps and attachments, and being briefed, are integral parts of the safety required to participate in this activity. You are also required to do a mini zipline to ensure that you understand the process and are equipped with some skills to allow you to safely enjoy your rides.

After that it was into the vehicle for a 10-minute ride to the starting point. A short walk through the forest to the start and we were on our way. There are 8 slides with a total length of 1,2km – the longest slide being 230m, and what a ride that is – fast and furious, exciting and exhilarating. For a group of 4 this may take about an hour and a half. We were told that the cables took about 6 months to set up and are

checked every morning – always good to know.

Ishmael has been working with Skyway trails for 11 years and Nhlamulo for 3 years – both love their jobs, meeting people from all over the world and acquitted themselves with total professionalism. They helped where required and suggested how to take pictures and when. Some clients have been known to take hundreds of pictures. They really did look after us on the adventure and its absolutely beautiful up there on the lines and stations.

We eventually made it to the last line, which was down a beautiful gorge, amongst the trees and creepers, with the sound of a river flowing below. It was wonderful. And then it was over – the vehicle was waiting to ferry us back to the offices, our hearts still rac-

ing and the adrenalin still very much flowing.

We did not realize that the challenge was not over – on arrival at the offices we were shown the Tree Top Challenge. This is a series of obstacles at tree top level. Participants are connected to an overhead cable for safety, in case one slips off the obstacles! From trying to negotiate single cables, to wooden bridges, tyre challenges and finally a short zip line – this is a challenge to take on! Most guests do both the zip lines and the challenge.

Booking these adventures is essential. It costs R560 per person for the zip lines, and from 3 years old, all are welcome! Obviously, the youngsters are taken in tandem with the guides to ensure their safety. To do the Tree Top Challenge one needs to be a minimum of 1,25m tall, and the cost of that is R170 per person for those under 16 years old, and R190 per person for the others.

Just some of the other activities you can find in the Hazyview area are river rafting, tubing, quad bikes, archery, abseiling, and elephant whispering.

Take the drive, come and visit and enjoy the fun!

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Constellation of the Month ~ Virgo ~

The Goddess of Agriculture

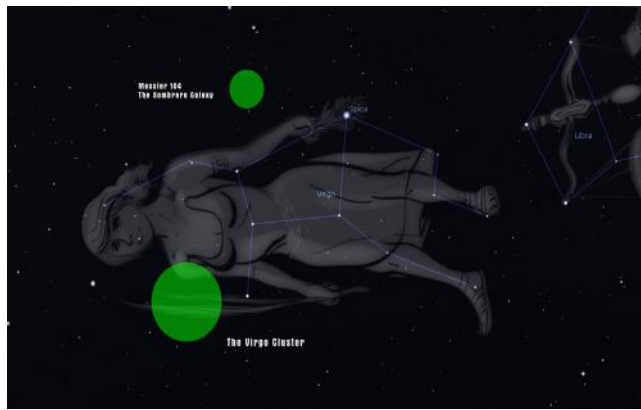
Ben Coley

Mythology

Virgo is the second largest constellation in the sky after Hydra. Virgo is often represented by a maiden or virgin, but in Greek mythology, it has no such connotations. There are various versions of mythology, but the most popular cites Virgo as Demeter, the goddess of fertility and agriculture.

Demeter's role as goddess of agriculture was to ensure good conditions for mankind for growing their crops. Demeter had a beautiful daughter, Persephone, whom she was very protective over.

One day, Hades, god the underworld, took a shine to Persephone and abducted her into his kingdom to be his wife. With no explanation of her daughter's whereabouts, Demeter became distraught and ignored



her duties to the world. Soon, terrible conditions prevailed, such as drought and famine, and the people complained to Zeus.

Zeus was able to negotiate with Hades to return Persephone, but she was tricked into eating some pomegranate seeds, the food of the underworld. This meant that she was obliged to spend 3 months a year with Hades. During these 3 months, Demeter is beside herself and does not focus on her godly duties, resulting in poor growing conditions. This is

why we have 3 months of winter.

Notable Stars

Spica is the brightest star in Virgo and the 15th brightest in the sky. The star is actually a double star, but its second member is too close to the primary star to be resolved in telescopes. The 2 stars are separated by only about 1.5 million kms, which is a mere tenth of the distance from the Earth to the Sun!

The name 'Spica' comes from the Latin meaning 'Ear of Grain' or 'Ear of Corn' due to the constellation's association with

agriculture and farming. In many sky charts, Virgo is pictured holding an ear of wheat to symbolise this.

Deep Sky Objects

The Virgo Cluster is a group of close to 2000 galaxies that are all interacting with each other. A 6-inch telescope will reveal over 150 individual galaxies! The cluster extends into the neighbouring constellation of Coma Berenices.

The cluster is part of the larger complex known as the Virgo Supercluster, of which our Milky Way is also a member.

In 2019, history was made when the Event Horizon Telescope captured the first image of a black hole at the centre of Messier 87, a huge galaxy about twice the size of the Milky Way and one of the largest members of the Virgo Cluster.

See Celestial Events SA advert for contact details



Virgo CC(left)
Virgo cluster (below)

Persephone (above)
Image supplied Ben Coley



The incredible Sycamore Fig - Ficus sycomorus

Brett Heasman

Mother's Day is a celebration honouring the Matriarch of the family or individual, the maternal bonds, and the influence of mothers in society.

In nature we have a tree that holds a legacy, a mother to many kinds of organisms. She herself is beautiful, majestic, wise, and of course can be a place of safety. She creates a home, she's robust, and can handle the surge of a flooded river. Her roots hold her firm, imbedded in the earth, showing much more than strength and power – this is the Sycamore Fig Tree. Some say that she is in herself, an entire ecosystem!

This beauty grows along our riverine systems, where the tree towers high, often reaching 20m. She has no regard to seasons, and sheds

her leaves as she pleases. With a very noticeable green yellow somewhat powdery bark, and a very large buttressed trunk, one can be fooled to think that she never flowers. However she does, but in an extraordinary way. She bears a fruit that hangs in clumps, as a member of the family Moraceae, which also includes the common edible Fig. It produces an abundance of fruit almost all year round.

These figs are an important source of nourishment, and as we know can be rather tasty. The fruit is eaten by a wide variety of animals. While the figs are still on the tree they are eaten by many different species. In fact the diversity of animals feeding on this tree could well be the highest on any tree. Feeders include insects and birds like Parrots, African Green Pigeons and many other frugivores, as well



The sycamore tree symbolises protection, divinity, eternity, and strength
Photo: Canva

as bats, monkeys, Chacma Baboon, bushbabies and giraffe. Mammals such as the Bushbuck, Kudu, Warthog, Elephants, Impala and Nyala all take advantage and eat the fallen figs from the ground. Even fish are known to feed on floating fruit!

The most fascinating part about this tree, is the extraordinary relationship on which she completely depends - an obligatory symbiotic relationship with an insect so small it can fit through the eye of

a needle. Without the one the other would not exist – and this little insect is the Fig Wasp (family *Agonidae*). Brace yourselves for what follows!

The fig is a false fruit, it produces seeds, which grow within the fig and develop into hundreds of minute flowers – within the fruit! Here starts a unique, fascinating and quite miraculous process. With the arrival of the fig wasps, they enter a tiny opening in the fruit that only they, as the smallest of insects, can fit - much

like a lock and key. The female will lay her eggs inside the fig totally encapsulated with nourishment and protection all in one. Once they have completed this, the females often die and the fig tree becomes the surrogate mother. The fig then closes the opening (the size of a pinhead) and protects itself with the antiseptic properties of a white milky latex, that also helps against being predated.

During pupation the females can't break out of the galls. The male can

however, because he is armed with powerful jaws. On hatching, the males make their way to the captive females to let them out, but whilst still captive in the gall, and before they let them out, the males impregnate the females. The males cut the tiny flowers of the fig and as the females (already impregnated) make their way out of the fig they pack the pollen from the cut flowers on their breasts.

This piece of this fascinating puzzle and process is critical for both the survival of the fig and the wasp. The females, with the pollen from the flowers inside their host fruit sticking to their bodies, then fly to another tree to repeat the cycle of pollination and egg-laying all over again.

The males however are unable to survive outside of the fig for very long. Their job is basically to impregnate the females and provide an escape passage for them. Job done!

What an incredible tree with an incredible story. Happy mother's day to you all. You all play an incredible role, some of which benefits others more than you think.

More rhinos are being killed for their horns —

Cont. from page 1.

Conservation, he says, has been a sidestep, not a starting point. Yes, he retains his childhood affection for Kruger and there are family ties too (his Mother and Sister's ashes are scattered there). But his present focus on the park owes more to research on pioneering wildlife filmmakers like Dieter Plage and David and Carol Hughes.

"I should make my lack of credentials clear," says Glenn, acknowledging he has no professional qualifications in ecology or any of the biological sciences. But when it comes to scholarly writing in general he feels on familiar ground, and he expects other commentators from the academies to uphold the accepted standards of accuracy, fairness and rigour.

Distortion

That they failed to do so, he says, prompted Framing the Kruger National Park. In a nutshell, it skewers foreign critics of Kruger who, Glenn feels, betray a limited experience of circumstances in Africa in general and of the park in particular. And it accuses them of distorting or ignoring the historical record.

There is plenty of evidence, including from before recorded history, that both man and animals lived on the land that would eventually become Kruger, and its adjoining private reserves (collectively known as Greater Kruger). The eviction of indigenous inhabitants began more than 100 years ago, culminating in the park's creation in 1926. With it came the ideal, for some, of a pristine "wilderness", conceived as a place without people.

Motives

The legacy of exclusion endures, but Glenn argues that many critics, for ideological reasons, exaggerate the number of people displaced from their land or otherwise affected. They distort too, he says, the motives for anti-poaching measures and the realities that require these. This serves to legitimise poaching as something happening on "stolen" land, popularising the idea that the crime is the inevitable consequence of dispossession.

"Some foreign academics may see poaching as resulting from deprivation and land claims, but that view strikes me as naive and out of touch with the realities of criminal gangs and corruption," he tells me. "In reality they are career criminals who moved from car theft or people trafficking. This is just their latest gig."

"Perhaps we need to get better at looking at it dispassionately," says Glenn, acknowledging the difficulty of this. "Is it possible to look at it dispassionately?"

It's easy to leap to the conclusion that poverty lies at the root of poaching, he says. Some 2.9 million people live within 50km of Greater Kruger's boundaries — according to a 2020 study by the University of Florida and SA National Parks — and other studies put the pov-



Crime scene: A hunting rifle, marked by a police cone, at the scene of a shoot-out between rhino poachers and an anti-poaching unit. Photo: Peter Chadwick

erty rate in neighbouring Mpumalanga and Limpopo provinces at 50%. That's an awful lot of needy people, but subtle, cultural forces should not be overlooked.

'Hot wheels and women'

People seek more than an escape from poverty. They recognise inequality and yearn for dignity, opportunity and many other things beyond putting bread on the table. Young men, to put things in simple terms, will always want hot wheels and women and they'll hunt for ways to pay for these.

None of this is clear-cut, nor are solutions to the illegal wildlife trade easy. Yet "visiting experts", blinkered academics from abroad as Glenn sees them, come to the problem with pet theories, ignoring the realities on the ground and the published record.

In many cases, he adds, foreign NGOs are more concerned with "signaling stances to their constituencies than with dealing with the realities and responsibilities on the ground".

Some consider themselves authorities on Kruger, but he argues in his paper, there are "few signs that the critics have studied the archival evidence or insider accounts".

Local authorities have sometimes complained to him that information they



Legalising the trade in rhino horn could give rise to commercial farming of rhino which could, perhaps, ultimately end endemic poaching of wild rhinos, says Ian Glenn. Photo: Zahir Ali/ Zali Photography

give to visiting academics is simply ignored when it does not fit their preconceived notions.

Then there's the contentious "fortress conservation" model to consider. It describes Kruger and other parks where fence lines and gates are used to restrict access to nature in order to protect it. The model is roundly criticised by idealists and Glenn takes their point. But he isn't impressed by the alternatives. "Fortress conservation is the worst, except for all the others," he says.

And while fortress conservation and the extent to which it alienates people living outside its fences often dominate the critical discourse, Glenn is concerned that critics overlook or devalue the sacredness of the protected space. He speaks of a "disappointing failure ... to examine how and why the Kruger Park has mattered and matters to a wide range of South Africans".

He is incensed by academics who frame Kruger as a one-time colonial happy hunting ground turned playground for the privileged, or who paint anti-poaching initiatives "as akin to the War on Terror".

Natural capital

Critics are also ignorant of the financial pressures Kruger faces and dismissive of the good work it does, he says, pointing out that the park strives to provide the South African public with relatively affordable access to the big five, while supporting international tourism — "a major earner of foreign exchange for economies in the region".

In the aftershocks of Covid-19, which robbed Kruger of vital tourism rev-



White rhino mother and calf. Mothers poached means calves orphaned — only the lucky ones survive. Photo Leon Molenaar/ Flickr

enues, it must find ways to conserve iconic species with dwindling resources. By SANParks' own admission, it's caught in a cycle of crisis management to "keep the lights on".

Does he see a possibility for conservationists and poachers to find common ground on how Kruger's wildlife resources — its natural capital — can be used? I ask him.

"The trouble with rhino poaching is that you can have all the incentives you want, but how do you dissuade those people?" Glenn replies.

"I don't know that one can find a compromise with commercial poachers easily. The obvious solution, which I have a lot of sympathy for, is that crocodiles and ostriches were saved from extinction by commercial farming. Could the same be true for rhinos?"

He answers his own question by suggesting, "only demand reduction in Asia" will ultimately stop poaching. "Given that Taiwan, for example, has stopped using rhino horn, this is not impossible, but obviously difficult."

Lessons from Africa

What about lessons from

elsewhere in Africa? After all, other countries on the continent are grappling with many of the difficulties South Africa faces, from the illegal wildlife trade to climate change, to the impact of Covid on parks and tourism.

Other African countries have sometimes taken a "tougher and more successful stance against poaching", but "the political will to do the same thing in South Africa is lacking and perhaps the administrative capacity," he says.

"The serious academic work on poaching in Africa sees it as far more linked to corruption than to poverty and it is no accident that poaching spiked (in South Africa) during the period of State Capture," says Glenn.

Drawing on his own research, including a great deal of time spent monitoring poaching cases at the Skukuza Magistrate's Court within the Kruger National Park, Glenn has come to view government corruption and a failure of law enforcement as major contributors to the steep decline in wild rhino populations at the hands of international syndicates.

Cont. on page 13



Lucky that this inquisitive white rhino was viewed through a camera lens and not the sights of a gun. Photo: Jacques Briam

and it's not just the poachers who are to blame



Poaching arrest: What happens after poaching arrests, ultimately becomes the true test of criminal prosecution process. (Photo: Peter Chadwick – African Conservation Photography)

Cont. from page 12.

“People throughout the system are playing the system. In reality, there are very high levels of protection,” he says, adding that the “ruthless follow-through” necessary

for successful prosecutions is missing.

Evolving story

The failings of the country’s criminal-justice system are, of course, hardly limited to cases involving the illegal wildlife trade.

Nor can you dissociate what is happening in the park from what is happening in wider society. Kruger’s history in many ways mirrors South Africa’s – an evolving story of a resilient place and its people who have long

weathered turbulent times.

Responding to Glenn’s comments, the National Prosecuting Authority’s (NPA) head of communications, Bulelwa Makeke, said corrective plans had been implemented “to

enforce strict and effective follow-through needed to curtail our poaching epidemic”.

She provided a summary account of notable prosecutions, noting that countrywide, from 2016 to 2021, the NPA had successfully finalised 264 rhino related prosecutions in which 244 persons were convicted, most of them in the Skukuza court.

“The NPA has been and will continue to prosecute rhino related matters with the vigour it deserves without any fear of favour,” said Makeke. “In addition, the NPA has enhanced training initiatives which have led to the development of highly skilled advocates who are dealing with these kinds of prosecutions within the Organised Crime Units and in the regional courts in the country.”

This article first published by Daily Maverick, forms part of a series of stories arising from a journalism workshop hosted in Sku-

kuza, in the Kruger National Park. Organised by WESSA and Roving Reporters, the workshop aimed to stimulate debate on the complexities of the illegal wildlife trade in and around the Greater Kruger. Views expressed in this series are not necessarily those of the project implementors or its sponsors.



Ian Glenn, author of Framing the Kruger National Park and a soon-to-be published book on wildlife documentaries in Southern Africa.

Photo: Supplied

Supporting the Awelani Protected Environment project



Spectacular Baobab sunset in the Awelani Protected Environment, west of Pafuri Gate

Photo supplied



Wehncke van der Merwe, Kruger National Park Buffer Zone Coordinator and GEF PA Programme Manager

The Awelani Protected Environment is a small reserve located just west of the Pafuri Gate of the Kruger National Park. It

falls within the Mutele Traditional Council Area. This area is very unique, as it contains high levels of biodiversity and is rich in cultural heritage sites. The Kruger to Canyons NPC is currently developing a management plan for the reserve.

The area was declared in 2021 as Protected Environment, which, as per the National Environmental Management: Protected Areas Act, requires the assignment of an entity that will manage the reserve, as well as the development of a management plan. As part of the GEF PA Program being implemented by the Kruger to Canyons NPC, SANParks, LEDET and MTPA, the team, Dr Marisa Coetzee (SANParks), Wehncke van der Merwe, Dr Kiera Schoeman and Romy Antrobus-Wuth is supporting Awelani with the development of their to Management Plan.

The development of the management plan was initiated in January through the Awelani Advisory Committee, which is a committee (chaired by DFFE) in support of the Awelani Protected Environment. Various processes have been undertaken since then, and the draft management plan is nearly complete. The most insightful and value adding processes so far has been the stakeholder engagements that took place during the first week of February.

Engagements were held with the Awelani Advisory Committee, Awelani Trust, Transfrontier Parks Destinations (who manages the tourism facilities) and the Mutele Traditional Council. During the week of engagements, a METT, Biodiversity Assessment (done by LEDET) and Greater Kruger Socio-economic Impact As-

essment was also undertaken. A site visit also took place, highlighting some of the unique biodiversity and cultural richness of Awelani. A big thanks goes out to the facilitators who, during this week, helped translate, organize, and facilitate discussions. They include Rudzanie Mudau (DFFE), Fanie Phandavhudzi (GEF 6) and Faranani Lalumbe (WWF Khetha).

The development of the management plan and support to the Awelani Trust through the Awelani Advisory Committee, will hopefully play an important role in catalyzing change on the ground, through creating and enabling an environment that gets all the relevant role-players to sit around the table. The work is being undertaken as part of the Greater Kruger Strategic Development Program and feeds into Strategic Objective One: Securing the natural capital base.

The management plan will be finalized late June, with another round of stakeholder engagements taking place early June. If you would like to participate in the Awelani Management Plan stakeholder engagements, please get in contact with Wehncke van der Merwe at wehncke@kruger2canyons.org.

This project is funded by the Global Environmental Facility through the SANParks Protected Area Program, in partnership with SANParks, LEDET and DFFE.

Safari Guide of the Year 2022 finalists

Mark Bishop

This time of year is upon us again. The Safari Guide of the Year 2022. The finalists have been chosen. This is a competition in the guiding world like no other. Powered by FGASA, this year's event is sponsored by hosts Bushwise Field Guides on location at The Southern African Wildlife College. The event takes place from 27th June to the 3rd July 2022.

The five finalists in no specific order are:

Liam Henderson



Liam is 30 years old and hails originally from Johannesburg. He has completed a Bachelor's Degree in Environmental Development at Stellenbosch University in the Western Cape. He is a FGASA qualified Professional Field Guide and Professional Trails Guide. He works at The Homestead, Nambiti, in Kwa Zulu Natal, and has been there since January 2022. Previously he spent time working at Mala Mala and Londolozi. He is passionate about wildlife photography, and gets in-

spiration from teaching and educating people, motivating and sharing knowledge and upskilling people. He considers being nominated to participate and being chosen as a finalist as an amazing feat. Liam is looking forward to being around other awesome guides and judges, sharing experiences and finding out how others have made it to the finals. He wants to see how far he can take his guiding skills, improving all the time in his quest to be more professional and ultimately wants to find out what it takes to be a star! Liam is of the opinion that those guides that stayed on over Covid and went through the trials and tribulations of that recess, are in this field for the long-term.

Liam stated that the notion of being a guide is not just a short 'gap year fill-in' but more of a serious career choice.

Ruvan Grobler



Ruvan is 27 years old and hails from Nelspruit. He did his guide training at Bejane Nature Training in Kwa Zulu

Natal. He is a Field Guide and a Trails Guide. He has worked for 5 years at Lion Sands in the Sabi Sands. Ruvan spent time at the Thanda Private Game Reserve in KZN prior to moving to Lion Sands. He feels that he is a good allrounder in terms of guiding but has a special passion for birding.

The excitement of being in the finals is palpable as you speak to him. He wants to gain experience and enjoy and learn from his participation in the event. Ruvan states that it is a true privilege and honour to have been nominated and making it to the final. He is looking forward to the exposure and to learning from some of the doyens in the industry. He looks forward to seeing the bush through the eyes of the judges.

Solomon Ndlovu



Solomon is 38 years old. He hails from the village of Utah in Mpumalanga. He always imagined being a guide and was offered a tracking opportunity at Ngala, in the Timbavati. His primary mentors have been Alan Yeowart

and George Nguna. He did his first FGASA qualification in 2009. In 2010 he joined the Singita Tracking School and has been at Singita ever since! He is a Professional Field Guide as well as being a Trails Guide.

He is an avid birder, with a special passion for trailing, track and sign. Solomon wants to glean more knowledge from all the guides and judges at the competition. He states that everyone has their own unique way of guiding, and as such he would love to share and learn other methods that may add to his offering as a guide. He loves the idea of sharing knowledge with the competitors and judges alike, and questioning and learning from the experience of the competition.

Cameron Pearce



Cameron is 35 years old and hails from Johannesburg. He went straight from school at King Edwards VIII in Johannesburg, into guiding – and has not left. This is his career, and he is passionate about it. He is a Professional Field Guide, a

Professional Trails Guide, he is a Marine Guide and Culture Guide. He has achieved SKS National Birding (South Africa, Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe and Mozambique). He is also a Professional Tracker with Cybertracker and a FGASA Assessor.

He is a freelance guide and trainer but has since December 2021, been working at Ongava, Namibia. His specialities are birding and tracking. He is looking forward to rubbing shoulders with the top-end guides and mentors at the competition – as he says, "these are the biggest people in the industry."

Cameron believes in grabbing opportunities as and when one can. He is looking forward to sharing his energy and that of others with the people that are passionate and at the top of their game. He's looking to learn from the competitors and judges alike to be able to add "more ingredients for my recipe."

Nico Brits



Nico is 32 years old and

was primarily brought up in Cape Town. After school he went to work on his Grandfather's game farm in Alldays in Limpopo. He started his guiding career in 2013 and has progressed to qualify as a Professional Field Guide, with additional skills of Professional Track and Sign and Trails Guide. He also has regional birding qualifications.

Nico is currently working as a Trainer at Bushwise Field Guides and has been there since July 2021. Prior to that he was working in the Eastern Cape at Kwandwe Private Game Reserve. His speciality that has developed over the years is walking trails.

Nico is excited about the competition and about meeting the other competitors. He looks forward to learning from the others as he has spent most of his time in the Eastern Cape which is "a pretty secluded spot". He has always aspired to take part in the competition and views it not only as a challenge but also as a learning experience.

He has been challenged in the training sphere through all the questions that are asked of him by the students, which he is quick to point out is quite different from the guiding side of guiding. Through this he feels his knowledge has increased and he is keen to test himself in this competition and of course always learn more.

Hoedspruit Town Watch installs CCTV Camera Surveillance System



Hoedspruit Town will be monitored by a CCTV surveillance camera network. This is according to the Chairman of the Hoedspruit Town Watch, Mr Johan Potgieter. Hoedspruit Town Watch's objective

is simple; to make Hoedspruit one of the safest places to live and work in, and secondly to ensure that one's property or business increases in value.

Whilst the Hoedspruit Town Watch has been running for many years now, it is necessary to keep a step ahead of potential criminals. Presently, patrols are run every night however there is also a need use technology to achieve their goals, said Potgieter.

"We work very closely with partners and authorities. This means working closely with SAPS, Traffic Departments, Farm Watch and other relevant authorities. Hoedspruit

Town Watch's mandate it to observe and report."

Recently the Town Watch Vehicle Patrols were given access to two-way radios. This allowed for a quicker response in case of urgent reporting. The radios were kindly donated by Farm Watch.

Mr Johan Potgieter added that the camera network will solely monitor public spaces in Hoedspruit Town. The Town Watch was very aware of the requirements of the POPI Act and fully compliant with the record keeping requirements.

The camera network will monitor vehicle and pedestrian movement. All cameras are installed on private prop-

erty. This helps to ensure that the cameras are installed in safe areas and have a reliable power supply.

The camera technology that has been implemented is industry standard. This means that it is easy to link up the camera network with other organisations such as the Farm Watch camera network. Installing cameras is the easy part of the project. Maintenance, running costs and monitoring of the camera network is what makes a camera network successful and sustainable.

Town Watch has partnered with local companies to ensure the sustainability and

affordability of this project. Companies such as Herotel, AM Tech and Canyon Risk Services, amongst others, have assisted greatly in this aspect of the project.

The project is being funded by the Hoedspruit Community. "We are blessed to have such a caring and participative community. The funds were collected over a 7-week period," said Potgieter.

Hoedspruit Town Watch is a Non-Profit Organisation. This means that they depend on financial contributions from the community (and outsiders) to provide the service. It also means that their governance must be transparent and compliant.

The intention is to get the local community to assist in monitoring the cameras. If anyone has a PC and an internet connection, they can

participate in ensuring the safety of Hoedspruit, irrespective of where they are in the world.

A camera surveillance system is not fool proof. It has to work in conjunction with vehicle patrols, the relevant authorities and the local community.

Potgieter added that this project would not be possible without the assistance and contribution of the community and local businesses. Hoedspruit Town Watch would like to sincerely thank all those businesses and individuals that gave and give of their time and money to make this project a reality.

If you are interest in collaborating or donating to this project please contact Andre Nortje (0827120989) or Thierry Boulanger (0824401145)

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Annual Rotary 'K2C Cycle Tour' resumes after 2 years in mothballs

Rotary

The spectacular Rotary Hoedspruit Kruger 2 Canyon Cycle Tour through four Big Five safari reserves, resumes on 16 July 2022, cycling through part of the Kruger to Canyon Biosphere around the Hoedspruit area.

The 100 km dawn to dusk tour caters for a limited field of 5 pelotons of 20, making it an exclusive event of only 100 riders.

It is a tour and not a race, so there is plenty of time to view the impressive scenery and you can be assured of sightings of warthogs, zebra, giraffe, hippo and sometimes a lazy crocodile in a relaxed environment.

The pelotons are accompanied by experienced armed guides who are more than capable of warding off any dangerous encounters with elephant or buffalo. How-

ever, these adrenalin moments add to the excitement of the day, while your peloton guide will cluster you all together and keep you safe.

Every year riders return with exciting stories of close encounters, and the wonderful support of their team and guides who accompany each peloton. They talk of the camaraderie that develops on such a day, lifelong friendships are fostered, and old ones renewed.

Wilana Manderson, Rotary Hoedspruit President says, "We are so grateful for the support, and the return of many of our regular sponsors who produce the scrumptious breakfasts at the start of the race, and who ensure tummies are full at lunch time, while cyclists are well watered along the route."



"A number of riders in two pelotons, both local and international, have patiently waited in the wings for the big day and are again supporting us," says Paul White, one of the Rotarian organizers and regular participant in the event.

Come and ride with us through the Timbavati, Thornybush, Kapama and Blue Canyon Reserves and you will traverse areas not normally accessible to the public.

Bookings are filling up fast, so please make your reservation soon to prevent disappointment. What about putting together your own peloton with family, friends and work colleagues?

And then early, as the sun rises on Saturday 16 July, you will hear the enormous Kudu Horn being blown by Rotarian, Alan Partington, and you will know it is the turn of your peloton to set off into the sun on this beautiful ride.

Bookings can be made on www.k2c-cycletour.co.za

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Drakensig athletes shine brightly



Lindy-Lee Meyer and Rianco Haggard

Carina Nel

This year's school athletics kicked off with a bang, as schools returned to the "new normal" after the Covid-19 pandemic. Athletes (and other sports participants) have literally missed out on two years of growth, experience and competition. It is very sad but now the excitement of competition returns.



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It was fantastic to see the athletes participating so zealously for the first time in two years! Drakensig Primary School is proud of their athletes, and their exceptional performance during the first school term and the school holidays.

The following Drakensig learners performed well in the regional athletics events and also participated in the Limpopo Championships in Polokwane: Sophia Viljoen, Kian Lotter, Rianco Haggard, Blessing Ndala, Monene Sekgobela, Ronewa Mudanalwo, Lindy-Lee Meyer and Mialene Neuhoff.

Drakensig is especially proud of Lindy-Lee Meyer (100m sprint and Girls Relay Under 12) and Rianco Haggard (200m Hurdles) for participating in the South African Primary Schools Athletics Championships in Potchefstroom on 25th and 26th March.

All our athletes kept the Drakie spirit high – Carpe Diem.

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CELEBRATING MOTHERS AND FATHERS OF THE BUSH THIS APRIL AND MAY WITH SOME ANIMAL GROUPING INFO!

WHAT IS A MATRIARCHY?

A Matriarchy is a social organisation where the mother or oldest female heads a family or social group. Descent and relationships are decided through the female line.

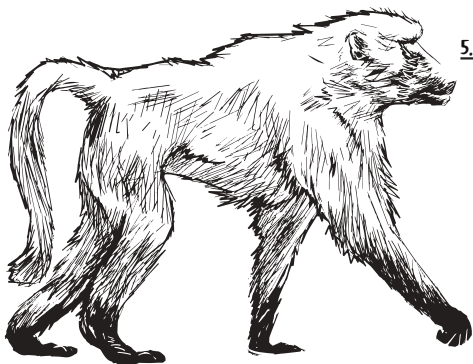
Examples of animals that use this type of grouping are elephants, spotted hyena, lemurs and sometimes lions (when the male is not around).

WHAT IS AN OLIGARCHY?

An Oligarchy is a 'gang' of dominant males. The chacma baboon is part of this grouping. The group has a number of males that work together to defend the females in the group, and they then share the breeding.

Write down 5 facts ABOUT the BABOON

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



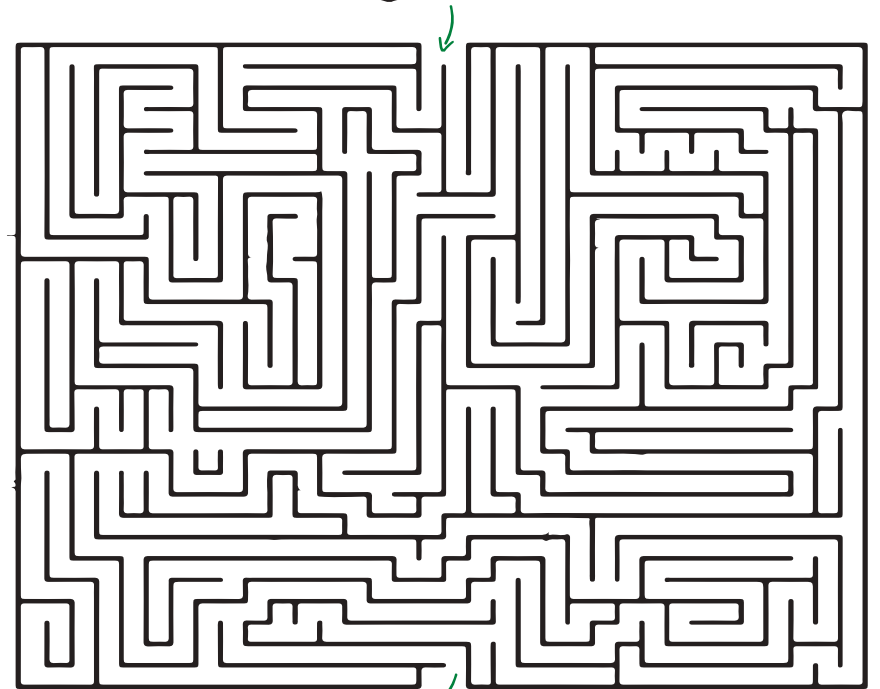
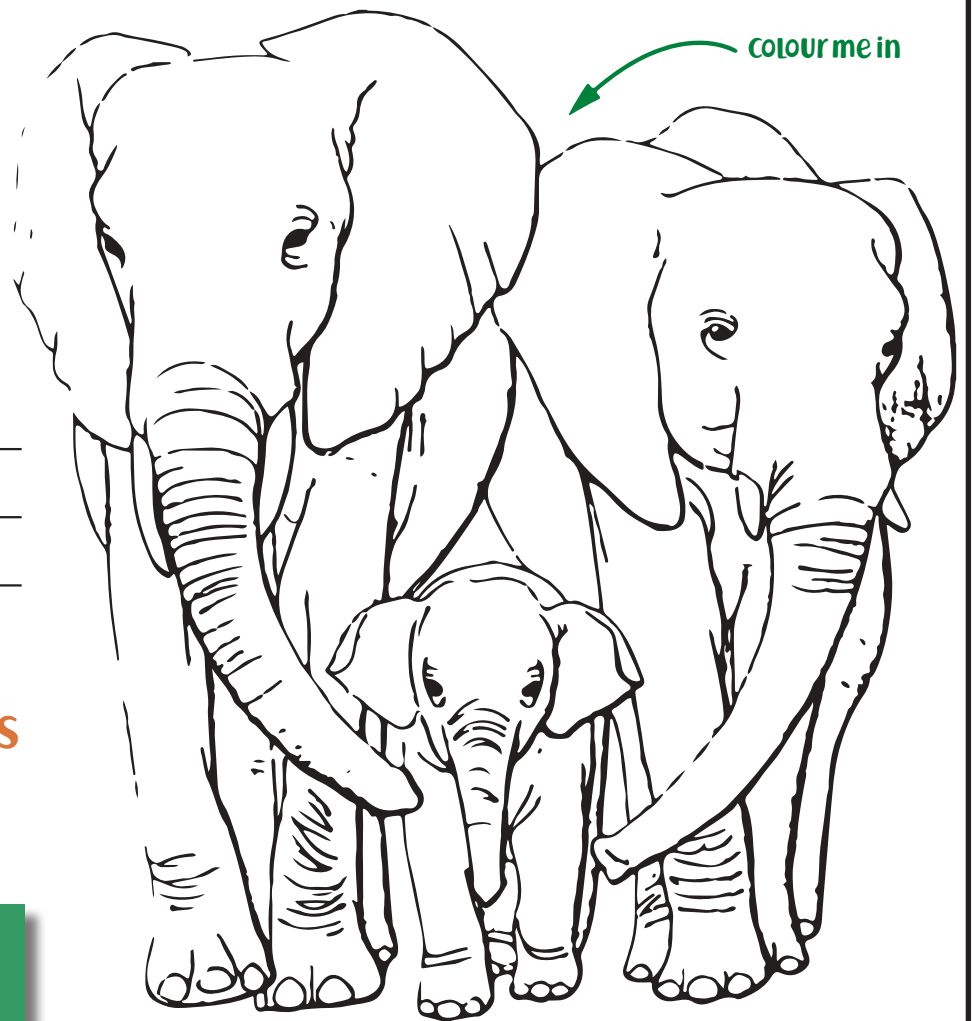
**DID YOU KNOW:
A GROUP OF BABOONS
IS CALLED A TROOP?**

It's competition time!

We want to know how many words you can make with the word:

ELEPHANTS

The person who comes up with the most words stands the chance to win the brand new FGASA Junior and Kids In The Wild Learner Manual!
Email your word list to: info@kidsinthewild.co.za



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