



# KRUGER2CANYON

## NEWS

October 2022

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

## Getting women to reach their potential in Acornhoek

Stella Hogan

The launch of The Centre for Women's Independence (CWI) in RDP Village, just off Orpen Road, Acornhoek, took place on the mercifully cool afternoon of 15<sup>th</sup> October.

It was an incredibly colourful, vibrant event, with most of the 92 guests wearing *xidumbisas*, the vivid traditional cloths wrapped around waists or draped over shoulders. Huge smiles were evident everywhere as the ladies took ownership of this place that exists as a home for the empowerment of women.

The Centre itself is wrapped in a *xidumbisa*, in the form of an exquisite mural sponsored by Seeds of Light. This was painstakingly painted by Terence Mabaso, Vanrooy Sondlane and Penelope Colley. The centre is a learning space, business hub, women's gym, model permaculture garden and food forest.

CWI was born out of a need for a classroom and meeting space for local NPO Zingela Ulwazi

Trust's learning programs, which focuses on business development, permaculture, self-defence, and stress reduction training for women - elements we believe essential for a woman's independence.

We achieved our intention of only using local tradespeople from RDP Village in the creation of this centre. Ronnie Mashale headed the building crew, who did an outstanding job. A big thanks to Rajah Hardware for their support. The only contractor not from RDP was Marilize Botha of Rustique Interiors, Hoedspruit, who created our shadenet walls/blinds, installed by her husband Gavin. We were all moved by the synchronicity of our partnership, as Gavin's mother was the founder of Lumukisa Preparatory School, our neighbour.

Many communities neighbouring wilderness/conservation spaces remain cut off from resources, including water, development opportunities and the tourism/conservation sector. This contributes to devastating poverty and disenfranchisement.



Lekina and Dephney at the magnificent mural sponsored by Seeds of Light and Image supplied painted by Terence Mabso and Penelope Colley.

ment. RDP Village is frequently without water, and currently has not had water for 3 months. Water catchment systems and climate smart regenerative agriculture are thus crucial for survival.

The Zingela Ulwazi team has been working in RDP Village for over 10 years and has built strong relationships with the community and local structures. **Permaculture Explorers** is our flagship program, which assists women develop

businesses and home food gardens. With the support of our partners Pick n Pay, Ackermans Foundation, the NLC, Rotary, Sieta Foundation, and many private donors, we supply fencing, shade cloth and rainwater catchment systems to participating women, so that they can grow healthy, nutrient rich organic food to feed their families, as well as sell produce.

Our other initiative is **Sekwanele : Enough is Enough**, a self-defence

training program for women and girls, designed by two-times world champion Muy Thai kickboxer Xania Swart. Developed in response to requests from the women to help them deal with unrelenting sexual and physical assault, we have trained 3 local coaches, with another 3 about to start their training.

Business coaching is provided for these women set up their own businesses. The women also liaise with the Trib-

al Authority, DSD and SAPS to ensure women's constitutional rights are respected.

All the programs have resulted in a substantial rise in self-esteem, confidence, physical and emotional resilience and strength, and a greater capacity to engage the world as a participant. Women have reported reduced stress levels, improved communication and family relationships, and greater happiness.

The CWI is a space dedicated to building diversity and thus resilience and happiness, biodiversity, socio economic and dietary diversity for greater health, and wellbeing. We employ 7<sup>th</sup> generation thinking, which means that we are tending to Mother Nature, our children and their children's future.

We welcome our many NPO partners and those in our network to utilise our facility for educational or upliftment activities. Please check us out at [www.zingela.org](http://www.zingela.org).

Stella Hogan is a Director at Zingela Ulwazi Trust (Hunt for Wisdom)

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# From the editors desk...



Scan for the digital copy

Hello to all you wonderful people out there. Where did October go? In fact, where has the year gone – I suppose “time flies when you’re having fun”. When you read this, it will be only 64 days to 2023!

Thank you to all those that have taken the time to contact me about the publication. This is where doing this job is so satisfying – when you realise that your efforts are well received, and that the publication is stimulating and informative.

The weather has certainly changed to the upper reaches of the thermometer – summer is real - all we wait for now, is the rain.

The good news from the publication perspective is that we have now got a full-time social media strategist that has taken the reigns firmly in her hands, and its already producing results. This we have done to actively expand our reach. We do have followers all over the world, but our concentration over the next half-year is to make sure that we are dominant all over the lowveld and that we are the local publication of choice.

We are not a niche publication per se, and so our readership is general and widespread, and that includes locals and visitors,

business owners, farmers, pilots, decision makers and the like. Albeit that as a free publication we survive on advertising (for which we are always eternally grateful), we are cognisant of the fact that advertising and content must be balanced. We do not want to be all adverts and no content (or irrelevant content for that matter). Our success will be maintained by ensuring thought provoking, relevant, informative, and original content.

New to the publication is **The Picky View** column, which has been offered to the publication by a renowned ‘universal food fundi’ - AE. The editorial board welcomed this idea, as a light-hearted critique of the food offerings in and around Hoedspruit. All meals eaten were paid for, and please note that

the critic is “under cover” – identity unknown. This should add to the spice (excuse the pun) of the articles!

Also new is the **Recipe** column. Written by “Veggie Diva” this explores recipes towards a plant-based diet – something that is catching on around the world. Something new, something different, something exciting.

What is also new is the **Spotlight** article. This is a venture to find out who the personalities are, what do they do and how do they do it. The idea is to pick on someone randomly and feature them in the publication so that we also get to know who’s about town.

Frustratingly the Mayor’s office went ‘MIA’ again this month, although I did get an undertaking from the

Mayor himself that his office would be in touch with me. Well, as expected, that did not happen – AGAIN! So, I am afraid I cannot give an update on the roads or the water situation in the town, as I had hoped to do. I do however understand that he is busy but given that I’ve been on his case for almost three months for an answer that does not materialise, is plainly dismissive. As I expressed to his office, I think I must stop wasting my time, and holding onto hope that something would be forthcoming. That’s clearly not going to happen.

Next month poses some challenges in terms of logistics – I will be “man down” for a reasonable amount of November, which will mean that the **November publication will be distributed on Friday**

the **2nd December** and not on the previous Friday. Please take note of this to avoid disappointment. Until then, thank you for reading our publication, thank you to the advertisers for their support, stay safe – until next month.



Mark Bishop Editor



# Letters to the Editor

Dear Ed,

I was very interested in the ‘Rhisotope’ article. Well done on that. A great idea in theory, I think. The proof will be in the pudding and rigorous (long-term) testing to ensure rhino hosts are not harmed. Cancer and leukaemia can have a long latency period that might not show up in short-term tests. Dr Sam Ferreira of SANParks and fellow veterinarians

wrote a very critical article about the (in)effectiveness of a similar sort of plan 10 years ago to inject poison and purple dye into rhino horns. TC

*Ed: Thanks for that TC. I agree – a great idea and the long term will be the proof, albeit that the caveat of the research is that no harm will come to the rhino. I think the research that Dr Fer-*

*reira did 10 years ago might be a little dated now...radiation, like the gamma irradiation (radurisation) that is done on spices, medical equipment, fruits, etc., has had more research done on it than research on the pasteurisation of milk! It is safe, and I would guess that the same will apply to the rhisotopes. Time will tell, but as you say, theoretically a great idea.*

Dear Ed,

Please can you get some information from the Mayor on the water situation. Thanks for a great paper – makes Hoedspruit proud! Regards Mike

*Ed: Mike I have tried to get answers from the Mayor’s office for two months now – initially about the roads and this month on the water issue. Alas I have not had a*

*response from him save to say that his offices will be in touch with me – but that I am afraid has not happened either. I will follow up. Thanks for the compliment.*



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# ‘The Call of the Wind’ contemporary art exhibition

Arts Correspondent

**Chicshak Interiors (at the Farmery) recently collaborated with Johannesburg-based art consultancy, The Proof Project, to present an exhibition of contemporary art.**

Entitled ‘The Call of the Wind’, the exhibition included a selection of limited-edition prints, and other unique works, all taking inspiration from nature.

The captivating floral Antoinette portrait by Olaf Hajek enchanted viewers with its intricate and delicate beauty. Painter, illustrator and dreamer of other worlds, Hajek was born in Germany but has lived in Cape Town and exhibited worldwide. Describing his own style as developing from “the imperfection of beauty”, his practice is influenced by folklore, fantasy, and a fascination with nature.

Highlights of the exhibition included William Kentridge’s ‘Rhino’, an earlier hand-finished lithograph printed on book pages, and



a rare foil block print from *The Souls* by influential British artist, Damien Hirst. This series of luminous butterflies published in 2010, evokes ideas of life, fragility, love, and mortality.

Guy du Toit’s festive bronze ‘Party Hares’ brought their much-loved humor and charm.

By exhibiting exciting up-and-coming and established artists, the collaboration hopes to create opportunity for col-

lectors and contemporary art lovers alike, and to expose these artists to art lovers across the region.

New beginnings, inspiration, and the promise of rain on the lowveld. How better to mark the start of spring?

For more information, contact:

[louise@chicshakdesign.co.za](mailto:louise@chicshakdesign.co.za); or look at [www.the-proofproject.co.za](http://www.the-proofproject.co.za)



**Olaf Hajek Black Antoinette - Archival print on paper (above) William Kentridge Rhino, 2007-Lithograph with hand painting and collage (above) Images: supplied**

# 'Godfather' and SA man nabbed in major rhino horn busts in New York, Singapore

Tony Carnie

**Sniffer dogs, secret recording devices and the long arm of international law have helped to ensure the apprehension of at least two men linked to the slaughter of numerous rhinos. The arrests took place thousands of kilometres from the killing fields of southern Africa.**

Both suspects appeared in court early this month — one in the US, the other in Singapore. They face several charges relating to the illegal transnational trade in threatened or endangered wildlife.

Teo Boon Ching, a 57-year-old businessman known as "The Godfather", appeared before federal magistrate judge Gabriel Gorenstein in New York on 7 October, charged with allegedly participating in a conspiracy to traffic more than 70kg of rhino horns valued at more than \$725,000 (more than R13-million).



**Teo Boon Ching, as captured in an undercover screengrab recording. (Photo: Environmental Investigation Agency, UK)**

Ching, a citizen of Malaysia, was arrested in Thailand in June at the request of the US following a lengthy undercover operation by the US Fish and Wildlife Service and other law enforcement agencies.

The second suspect, 32-year-old South African national Sthembiso Joel Gumede, appeared in court in Singapore on 6 October after being arrested at Changi Airport during an apparent attempt to smuggle rhino horns from Johannesburg to Laos. Airport sniffer dogs led their handlers to two bags containing 34kg of rhino horns that originated from a Johannesburg flight.

According to a report in *Singapore Today*, Gumede said

he had no lawyer, but was "pleading innocent" and was unsure if he could raise bail.

**Extradition to US**

In a press release issued by the US Department of Justice, the US Attorney's Office and US Fish and Wildlife Service confirmed that Ching was brought to New York following an extradition request to the Royal Thai government and police force.

According to an indictment unsealed in the Manhattan federal court on Friday, Ching came unstuck largely due to secret recordings of conversations held with undercover sources while negotiating the sale of several horns. Subsequent testing by forensics experts found that two horns came from black rhinos and another 10 from white rhinos, both species native to Africa.

According to the Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA), which specialises in covert investigations of environmental crimes across the world, Ching was arrested in Thailand in 2015 for possession of 135kg of African elephant ivory.

"Despite his arrest, he evaded prosecution and continues his wildlife smuggling exploits," the EIA said in a statement earlier this year, adding that he had been implicated in another rhino horn seizure in August 2018.

In a report titled *Exposing the Hydra*, EIA investigators documented Ching's alleged role as a specialist transporter assisting Vietnamese and Chinese syndicates in trafficking wildlife between Africa and Asia.

**US wildlife trafficking laws**

This time, however, Ching will have to contend with US justice officials and a battery of laws crafted specifically to combat international wildlife crime.

This could include the Lacey Act which prohibits international and domestic wildlife trafficking — including wildlife, fish and plants that have been taken in violation of other federal, state or even foreign laws.

The Endangered Species Act and regulations also protect fish, wildlife and plants that are, or may become, imperilled due to de-

mand in international markets, while the Rhinoceros and Tiger Conservation Act makes it a crime for anyone to knowingly sell, import or export any substances derived from any species of rhinoceros.

The US Justice Department has not yet responded to our queries on whether Ching was being held in custody or has been released on bail, but a report in *The Diplomat* magazine suggests Ching is in custody, and that he also faces sanctions designed to deny him access to any property or financial assets held in the US.

According to a statement from the US Attorney's Office on 7 October, Ching has been charged with conspiracy to traffic in more than 70kg of rhino horns and also with laundering the proceeds of his illegal horn sales. The US Treasury Department Office of Foreign Assets Control had also sanctioned Ching and his associated business entities.

**'Transnational criminal enterprise'**

US Attorney Damian Williams said: "Teo Boon Ching is alleged to be the leader of a transnational criminal enterprise trafficking in rhinoceros horns, enriching poachers responsible for the senseless illegal slaughter of numerous endangered rhinoceros, and furthering the market for these illicit products."



**Some of the horns found in the baggage of Sthembiso Joel Gumede in Singapore.**

Photo: National Parks Board of Singapore



**Some of the horns allegedly offered for sale by Teo Boon Ching.**

Photo: US Department of Justice

"Thanks to the tireless efforts of the US Fish and Wildlife Service, this defendant has been caught and brought to the US to answer for his alleged crimes."

US Fish and Wildlife Service Office of Law Enforcement Assistant Director Edward J Grace said: "This extradition is a major success for wildlife and people... Wildlife traffickers run complex international criminal enterprises that require a multinational law enforcement effort to investigate, arrest and prosecute them for their crimes."

The indictment describes Ching as the leader of a transnational criminal enterprise based in Asia with significant operations in Malaysia and Thailand which engaged in the large-scale international trafficking and smuggling of rhino horns.

"Ching served as a specialised smuggler, transporting horns from rhinoceros poaching operations primarily in Africa to the eventual customers, primarily in Asia."

**Undercover operation**

It said Ching met with a confidential source to negotiate the sale of rhino horns in July 2019. He had told a confidential source (CS-1) that he served as a "middleman" — one who acquires rhinoceros horns poached by co-conspirators in Africa and ships



**Seized rhino horns in Singapore. Photo: National Parks Board of Singapore**



**A white rhino in Hluhluwe-iMfolozi Park, KwaZulu-Natal.**

Photo: Tony Carnie

them to customers around the world for a per-kilogram fee.

In August 2019, CS-1, at the direction of law enforcement, bought 12 rhino horns from Ching with money he believed was the proceeds of other illegal wildlife trafficking and was in bank accounts in New York.

At Ching's direction, law enforcement deposited the purported proceeds into numerous Chinese bank accounts at an underground banking facility in Thailand to disguise the origins, source and purposes of the monetary transactions.

It is alleged that Ching later arranged for his co-conspirators to deliver 12 horns to undercover law enforcement personnel in Bangkok, Thailand.

The prosecution of this case is being handled by the Complex Frauds and Cybercrime Unit.

**Activities recorded**

Ching's meetings, voice calls and messages sent via an electronic messaging application were all recorded, including the account numbers for five different bank accounts at Chinese banks into which

CS-1 was instructed to deposit money to pay for the horns.

Regarding trafficking violations of various US codes, an application would be made for the forfeiture of "all wildlife imported, exported, transported, sold, received, acquired and purchased", along with "all vessels, vehicles, aircraft and other equipment used to aid in the importing, exporting, transporting, selling, receiving, acquiring and purchasing of such wildlife".

Ching should also forfeit to the US "any and all property, real and personal, involved in said offence, or any property traceable to such property, including but not limited to a sum of United States currency representing the amount of property involved in said offence".

*This article was previously published in the Daily Maverick. Visit Daily Maverick's homepage for more news, analysis and investigations.*

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# Fibonacci – considering the wonders of the numbers



**Leonardo Bonacci**  
Source: thoughtco.com

Mark Bishop

**The Fibonacci Sequence turns out to be the key to understanding how nature designs... and is... a part of the same ubiquitous music of the spheres that builds harmony into atoms, molecules, crystals, shells, suns, and galaxies, and makes the Universe sing. — Guy Murchie**

November 23 is considered to be Fibonacci Day. Many around the world celebrate this day, that honours one of the most influential and talented mathematicians of the Middle Ages (and maybe of all time) - Leonardo Bonacci. Leonardo was an Italian, from the Republic of Pisa. He was born in 1170 in modern day Algeria. His father was an Italian merchant, and Leonardo travelled around the Mediterranean extensively as a child. He was educated in Bugia (Algeria) where he learnt about the Hindu-Arabic numeral system.

In his travels, and whilst speaking to merchants and traders, he soon realised the advantages of the Hindu-Arabic numeral system over the Roman numerals that were in use at that time. It was later in 1202, that he completed the Liber Abaci (Book of Abacus or The Book of Calculation), a Latin publication on arithmetic, which basically popularized the Hindu-Arabic system in Europe. He illustrated its practical use and value in applications such as bookkeeping, weights and measures, calculation of interest, money-changing, and others. The book was so well-received that it had a profound impact on European thought and processes. Replacing the old

numeric system and utilising the abacus was an advance in making business calculations easier and faster. The book explained different uses in business, from converting different currencies, to calculating profit and interest. This contributed to the growth of banking and accounting in Europe at the time.

However, although the Liber Abaci contained the earliest known description of the (now known as) Fibonacci sequence (named after Leonardo) outside of India, the sequence had in fact already been described by Indian mathematicians as early as the sixth century!

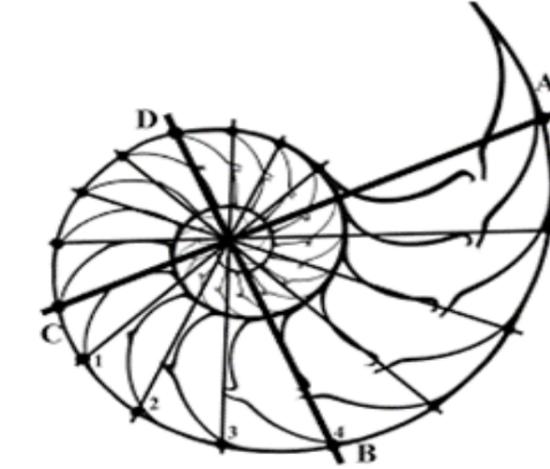
Leonardo is thought to have died in the 1240's, and later in the 19th century a statue in his honour was erected in Pisa.

Back to November 23. The reason why this day is celebrated is because if one writes the date out as 11/23, the digits form the four of the first five digits in the sequence - 0,1,1,2,3. The Fibonacci sequence is simply a series of numbers, where a number is the sum of the two numbers before it. So in the sequence, 2 is the sum of the two numbers before it (1+1), and 3 is the sum of (1+2), and so on. Leonardo carried his calculation up to the thirteenth place with a value of 233.

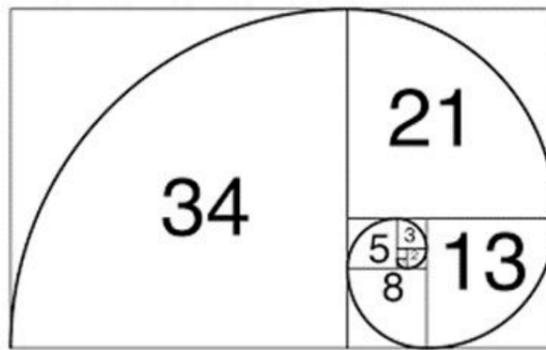
Leonardo came upon this sequence whilst investigating a simple puzzle about a rabbit population. The question that was posed was, that if there were a pair of newly born rabbits - male and female - in a field, and if they were able to produce another pair of rabbits in their second month of life, how many pairs of rabbits would there be after a year? Was there nothing else to think about? But then again that's what made him famous.

The solution, generation by generation, was the sequence of numbers later to be known as the Fibonacci numbers.

Amazingly the ratio of two successive numbers in the Fibonacci sequence (especially as one gets closer to



**Nautilus spirals and the meta-golden ratio**  
Source: link.springer.com



**Fibonacci sequence and Golden Ratio** Source: studypug.com

infinity) is very close to what is called the 'Golden Ratio'. This ratio is approximately equal to 1,6 – a ratio, it is believed, that suggests that objects that exhibit this ratio in length to breadth, are the most pleasing to the eye. It is thought that this is because the Golden Ratio can be processed faster by the human eye, and as a result it causes our brain to feel 'pleased'. The two are intricately interwoven and connected in a way to the golden spiral.

The amazing thing about the Fibonacci sequence of numbers, the Golden Ratio, and the golden spiral is that you find these all over the natural world. There is evidence that the Fibonacci numbers and the Golden Ratio occur from microscopic structure proportions in living beings, to relationships of gravitational forces, distances between bodies in the universe. And even the stock market!

Fascinatingly, the logarithmic spiral, that we are talking about, is equiangular;

so, if you draw a straight line from the center of the spiral to any point on the spiral curve, the line always cuts the curve at exactly the same angle.

**Botany**  
These numbers and ratio are often demonstrated in the structural symmetry of plants. Many flowering plants exhibit petal symmetry, and often illustrate the sequence in their seed sections, or in the spirals that are formed as new parts and branches grow.

Examples of flowers whose petals exhibit the Fibonacci sequence are the euphorbia, iris, hibiscus, Black Eyed Susan, plantain, sunflowers, and daisies.

Interestingly the bumps and hexagonal scales on the surface of most pineapples form either 3,5,8,13 or 21 distinct spirals in increasing steepness. This creates a recognizable pattern of Fibonacci numbers. The Romanesco broccoli has a shape with florets organized in spirals in both directions around the



**Sunflower**  
Image supplied

center point. Fruits that are common to us, that exhibit this series in the seeds' sectional arrangements are the banana, cantaloupe, cucumber, Kiwi fruit, watermelon and apple. The sequence is also found in pinecones, ginger plants, artichokes and others, including numerous cacti. Palm leaves are also arranged in Fibonacci sequence spiral formation.

**Insects**  
The honeybee is a famous example of an insect that exhibits a Fibonacci sequence, which can be seen in the numbers of ancestors of each generation.

**Animals**  
Microtubules (making up the cytoskeleton) of an animal cell, exhibit Fibonacci numbers. Some researchers have even seen the golden ratio in the shape of horns of both Rams and kudu, and in the curvature of elephant tusks. Many sea creatures exhibit the golden ratio in one form or another. A wide variety of sea creatures exhibit symmetry, for example the sea star and starfish. In addition, growth patterns of natural shells like that of the moon snail shell, the conch shell and the Atlantic Sundial shell, all show patterns of the golden spiral. Curled up pangolins, millipedes, and the chameleon's tail, all exhibit a golden spiral.

**Birds**  
Research has shown that some Falcons keep a slightly curved diving trajectory whilst hunting prey. They do not dive in a straight line, and in fact follow this logarithmic spiral down to intercept their prey. Hawks have also been observed to follow the same pattern.

**The universe and geography**

The Milky Way Galaxy and other spiral galaxies in our universe, all resemble the golden spiral formation. Some scientists have even suggested that the distribution of planets, moons, asteroids, and rings in the solar system conform to the golden ratio properties.

Fibonacci sequenced numbers, and the relationships between them, have been observed in sea wave curves and tributary patterns of streams, drainage patterns and in weather patterns. Even the shape of whirlpools and hurricanes closely match the golden spiral.

**The human body**  
Our human body structure really brings to the fore, the Fibonacci sequence or numbers. One, is represented by our trunk, head and heart; two, is represented by our arms, legs, eyes and ears; three, by the number of bones in each leg and arm, and the main parts of the hand. Five, are the limbs and head attached to our torso; two arms, two legs, and a head.

We also have five fingers, five toes and five openings on the face. With all these, our five senses allow us to interact through sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell. The human arm together with fingers consists of eight parts. All the numbers in the base column of human structure are in the Fibonacci series.

The cochlear of the ear is also a Fibonacci spiral as is the spiral of the umbilical cord. Even our DNA has Fibonacci proportions as do our fingerprints!

And there is so much more to delve into within the human body and its peculiar relationship with the Fibonacci sequence, the Golden Ratio and the golden spiral – do yourself a favour and look this up – you will be amazed.

The Fibonacci sequence has even been shown to exist on the stock market – but that is another story. It does, however, not occur everywhere, but it is just one simple example of the resilient and persevering quality of nature. How amazing nature is.

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SOLE MANDATE

**NDLOPFU PRIVATE NATURE RESERVE** R 7 600 000  
Site: 10,000 m<sup>2</sup> | Reserve: 2,500 ha

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

**Yvette Thompson - 083 655 7176** Ref: 2072996



SOLE MANDATE

**KHAYA NDLOVU RESERVE** R 8 850 000  
3 Bedrooms | 3.5 Bathrooms | Floor size: 340 m<sup>2</sup>

This modern, elegant bush home has been built on the banks of a dry riverbed in this sought-after reserve. It offers spectacular views with loads of entertainment space. The reserve is 1,307 ha in size with only 35 stands. Home is sold furnished.

**Yvette Thompson - 083 655 7176** Ref: 2028774



SOLE MANDATE

**KARONGWE - BIG 5** R 9 250 000  
Bedrooms 4 | Bathrooms 4 | Traverse: 8,000 ha

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

**Rob Severin - 083 469 3820** Ref: 2063307



SOLE MANDATE

**ZANDSPRUIT BUSH & AERO ESTATE** R17 000 000  
Bedroom 4 | Bathroom 3.5 | Floor: 515m<sup>2</sup>

Sold fully furnished, decorated and equipped. Price includes a double hangar-stand with plans drawn up. Features include a separate library, TV room, gym, double garage, 2 carports, staff quarter and store-room, just naming a few.

**Yvette Thompson - 083 655 7176** Ref: 2050871



SOLE MANDATE

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

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

**Mike Dodds - 082 906 7004** Ref: 2048251



SOLE MANDATE

**HOEDSPRUIT WILDLIFE ESTATE** R 4 000 000  
Bedroom 4 | Bathroom 4 | Floor: 200m<sup>2</sup>

There is an open plan lounge, dining area and kitchen, as well as a guest bathroom and outside shower. Covered patio looks out towards splash pool, braai area, fenced garden and viewing deck. Home is sold furnished. VAT applicable on price.

**Rob Severin - 083 469 3820** Ref: 2060556

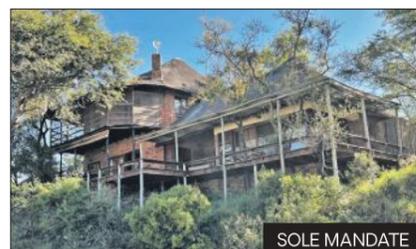


SOLE MANDATE

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

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

**Jason Jones - 083 267 4794** Ref: 1459112



SOLE MANDATE

**NDLOPFU, UMBABAT** R 11 500 000  
Bedrooms 4 | Bathrooms 3.5 | Floor size: 240 m<sup>2</sup>

The house is privately situated on the banks of the seasonal 'Tsiri river. Ndlopfu is a share block in the heart of a Big 5 Greater Kruger, with only 32 member sites on 2,500 ha of pristine bushveld in the sought-after Umbabat Private Nature Reserve.

**Yvette Thompson - 083 655 7176** Ref: 2032793



SOLE MANDATE

**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



SOLE MANDATE

**SILONQUE, PHALABORWA** R2 950 000  
Bedrooms 2 | Bathrooms 2 | Floor size: 160 m<sup>2</sup>

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

**Mike Dodds - 082 906 7004** Ref: 1317289



SOLE MANDATE

**INGWELALA - Greater Kruger** R 4 600 000  
Bedrooms 4 | Bathroom 2.5 | Traverse: 3,146 ha

This 50% share comes furnished and with a share in the Land Cruiser game viewer. Open plan lounge, dining and kitchen area. Covered patio, built-in braai and boma fireplace. Ingwelala is one of the prime Share Blocks in the Greater Kruger.

**Yvette Thompson - 083 655 7176** Ref: 2065153



SOLE MANDATE

**LISSATABA** R 3 500 000  
Bedrooms 3 | Bathrooms 3 | Floor size: 220 m<sup>2</sup>

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



SOLE MANDATE

**NDLOPFU - Greater Kruger** R 17 000 000  
Bedrooms 4 | Bathroom 3 | Floor size: 350 m<sup>2</sup>

This large home is situated in the exclusive Ndlopfu Private Nature Reserve with extra traverse on the neighbouring property, N'tsiri. The home is privately located overlooking the 'Tsiri river. Sold fully furnished and including a game viewer.

**Mike Dodds - 082 906 7004** Ref: 2063033



SOLE MANDATE

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

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

**Rob Severin - 083 469 3820** Ref: 1443333



SOLE MANDATE

**NDLOVUMZI** R 3 950 000  
Bedrooms 4 | Bathrooms 3 | Floor size: 380 m<sup>2</sup>

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

**Jason Jones - 083 267 4794** Ref: 1459005



SOLE MANDATE

**GRIETJIE, GREATER KRUGER** R 8 800 000  
Big 5 | Floor size: 400 m<sup>2</sup> | Stand size: 21,4 ha

This property offers elevated views of the surrounding bushveld, with peace and quiet only the bushveld can provide. This beautifully maintained property offers 3 dwellings - a 3-bedroom main home, a 2-bedroom cottage and a rondavel.

**Yvette Thompson - 083 655 7176** Ref: 2050020

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# Developing Young Leaders for tomorrow

Lovelle Henderson

The Rotary Youth Leadership Awards (RYLA) camp is an intensive leadership experience organized by Rotary clubs and districts around the globe. Young people identified as having leadership potential are sponsored by Rotary Clubs to attend the event, which allows them to test their skills through team building, problem-solving and individual self-growth exercises.



The Rotary Youth Leaders at the Awards camp that was held at Warriors Camp in Magoebaskloof.

In May and September of this year, a total of twelve learners sponsored by the Rotary Club of Hoedspruit headed off for a long weekend of fun and fellowship at the Warriors Camp in Magoebaskloof. Coming from Phendulane School, Acornhoek, Lehlasedi High School, Bushbuckridge, Lowveld Academy and Southern Cross Schools, they joined around 100 other young people from all over South Africa for the leadership camp. This gave them the opportunity to develop skills as a leader, have lots of fun, and

also to make new friends across diverse cultures and languages.

These can be life-changing weekends for the participants and our sponsored learners described their experience of the weekend in their own words:

"I thank Hoedspruit Rotary for investing their time and money in me and allowing me to experience one of my most memorable weekends ever. The many activities, the insightful lectures and

even the socializing was so much fun."

"So much anticipation had built up since I heard that I had been selected to attend the RYLA Leadership Camp – it finally arrived! I was excited, the air was cold, and I saw a line of tents, a big field and a boma."

"My experience on the RYLA Leadership Camp was far greater than I thought it would ever be"

"We experienced some daring activities like a



pitch-black underground maze, a 30m tree climb, a night hike and more. We also had the freedom to participate in group discussions that really benefitted me."

"Through these experiences, I took home some amazing skills that I am sure to use in my future of leading."

"This camp is such a valuable opportunity that everyone should experience it."

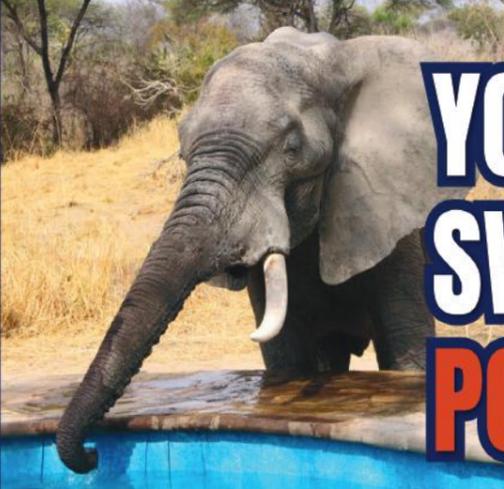
The Rotary Club of Hoedspruit is now looking forward to planning yet more adventures for prospective young leaders in 2023!

## SUDOKU

### INSTRUCTIONS

Use the numbers 1 to 9 to complete the Sudoku. Only use each number once in each row, column and grid.

	8					3	7
		4		5			6
	7	2					8
						5	
8	5		6	9		2	3
3		6					
	4					3	
			7	2			9
							5



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## The Picky view

My goodness this place is hot! I only hope the food is as good as the climate.

I've been doing this for some time, as my rotund figure will attest. To be frank, I don't want to go out there to dish the establishments; what I want to do is give a kind of lay-man's view of what they are getting. I could bring in the pretentious critic in me, but what would that serve in this frontier town? I'll be basic, appreciative of the difficulties in a place like this, and let's see what the maestros in the kitchens can dish out. Some may well be amazing (I expect that), but others may well require a miss – I am non-apologetic for that, it is my view, my opinion and only mine. You, out there, may well have another experience – well then, so be it.

So, I have arrived and settled in – thank heavens for my air conditioner, it serves as my one small item of solace (as long as the power is on!). To hell with the mosquitos, I lay exposed to the kind cool breeze from the humming machine, but when that goes off, oh my, the cold shower is my refuge. Thank heavens. What a resilient crowd of people you are, to have to live with this interruption all the time; but you do. So, without further ado let's get

onto and into the task at hand. Food!

The first food establishment that I have visited in Hoedspruit was at the old station – a place called Sleepers Restaurant. Tucked away amongst the tall trees and hugging the train track, here I find an oldy-worldy face-brick building, probably out of the 60's, that has a quaint feel about it. Well-appointed and organised, I was greeted by the very cheerful and pleasant, Jeridiah. I was informed about loadshedding, and it was impressed upon me that I should order timeously to ensure full access to the extensive menu, and extensive it was. If you cannot find something to satisfy the taste buds on this menu, then I am afraid you probably never will.

I was somewhat surprised to be asked if I wanted smoking or non-smoking (a nice touch, and different from where I come from) and was then guided to a lovely table looking out onto the fairy lights, that created a somewhat jungle-like ambience under the big trees. I did need to ask for the lamp to be lit and the fan to be put on for some circulation. The lamp should be standard procedure. The switch over on the loadshedding was amazingly seamless but the ambience

was slightly spoiled by the powering up of the garage generator over the road – what happened to silent generators? Certainly no black mark for Sleepers, but one would think that those machines would be located in a people friendly spot and not 20m from the front porch!

First things first – something to drink. I sorted that out quite quickly and it was duly brought to the table, accompanied by the required ice bucket and extra ice – well done! I was not unduly perturbed by the fact that I was left to pour the wine, but that may have been in response to my lurching across the table to take a secure grip on the bottle neck, to ensure I poured the wonderful beige liquid in my glass first. I think my enthusiasm for the bottle shocked her as she retreated a step. Sometimes quaffing a good cold glass of vino is like heaven. Apologies to her. All the refreshments, and my dearly beloved wine, were nice and cold and served with a smile, and there was no shortage of ice – very important.

My waitron's knowledge of the menu and specials was impressive, and I, with some friends, ordered a variety of dishes to sample. The waitron wrote nothing

down and I assumed the order would be incorrect and something would be long forgotten.

Surprise, the order was delivered correctly and timeously (and all together!) and all dishes were nicely warm and well presented. Salads were fresh, beautifully coloured and wholesome, the pasta was well cooked and delicious – the highlight, brinjal based with fresh parmesan cheese - the burgers were spot on (although the patty may have been a little small) with wonderful onion rings and crisp-on-the-outside-soft-on-the-inside, hand cut chips, the pizza was cheesy and hot with a wonderfully crispy base and the veggie burger (as an alternative), also with onion rings, chips and a small salad, was to die for. Wonderful tastes, great texture and good presentation made for a great meal.

After getting the check, and reviewing the evenings spread, it was unanimously agreed that the value for money was excellent, based on the facts that the service was good, the food scrumptious and the ambience fabulous (*sans* generator). There was even someone to look after the car in the car park.

Well done to the staff of Sleepers Restaurant, I will be back with friends and fel-



Scrumptious brinjal pasta (above) and homemade green veggie burger (below) Photos: A.E



low countrymen in times to come. Don't drop that ball now. My only tip, it might be nice to see the management interacting with the guests.

But before I go let me leave you with this, which all restaurants should take heed of: a very good friend of mine, Jon Taffer, once said:

"A plate of food hits the table, lands in front of you. One of two things happens. Either you sit up and look at it and react to it, or nothing happens. If nothing happens then that restaurant is stuck in mediocrity forever." Now onto my next culinary adventure.

AE

## Recipe by Veggie Diva



"I would like to eat more of a vegetarian diet but don't know what to cook...."

So many people have said this to me, so here we are. Every month I will share one of my favourite dishes which will hopefully inspire you to eat more veggie based food. I have been on a journey for the past 14 years to find

the right foods for my body. A vegan diet works for me, but it was a slow process getting there. I ate vegetarian for many years, thinking it would be too difficult to eat vegan, especially when eating out or at friends. As

with many things in life, when something is the right thing to do, it becomes very easy.

I have more energy, and I'm in better shape than I've been for years.

The tip is always buy the

best quality you can afford. Where possible buy organic, it really makes a difference to the taste, and to your body to eat food that has not been treated with chemicals and pesticides. So let's get onto my recipe.

### The Lunch Stack

This is a light, healthy, open sandwich enjoyed for lunch on a hot summers day, or an early dinner, enjoyed with a chilled glass of Chenin Blanc.

This is one of my favourite dishes. It is quite versatile in that you can use all sorts of different veggies. I like to eat what is in season, so asparagus can be replaced with quick fried mushrooms or char-grilled baby mielies. Use the veggies you like, and always cook extra to keep in the fridge for tomorrow's lunch.

#### Ingredients:

- sour dough bread sliced
- avocado slices
- courgettes
- asparagus
- rocket
- shaved almonds, toasted
- clove of garlic, crushed
- olive oil
- small bunch of rocket
- lemon wedges
- ground salt/pepper

Thinly slice the courgettes length-ways about 2-3mm thick. Combine the crushed garlic and olive oil, and brush the courgettes on both sides.

Char-grill the courgettes in a griddle pan until soft but not squishy.

Whilst the courgettes are cooking, pop the asparagus into boiling water for 2min to blanch. Once the courgettes are cooked toss the drained asparagus onto the griddle pan, to get that lovely brown griddled effect.

Toast a slice or two of sourdough bread, layer sliced avocado, courgettes, and asparagus.

Top with a few leaves of rocket and toasted almonds.

Drizzle a generous amount of olive oil over the stack.

Serve with a wedge of lemon for squeezing, and a good grind of black pepper and salt. Cheers !

# Birding Hotspots for the hot



Racket-tailed Roller - a speciality of Northern Kruger - John Edwards



Grey-headed Kingfisher, a common summer migrant at Marataba by Josh Carlton

Mike Meidlinger

**As if from nowhere, suddenly the throngs of summer have arrived, the heat has been cranked up to weirdly unfamiliar levels, while life begins anew.**

Despite regressing for what only feels like a short time, it is surprising how fast the vibrance managed to drain from the land. Equally surprising is how refreshing the budding of trees, the sound of insects pollinating merrily and the renewed flush of bird activity is, and can be.

A lick of early rainfall or a healthy dash of returning migrants may have already graced most readers by now with the promise of a good summer ahead. The increasingly humid nights of the upcoming month, will ring in a number of both dramatic and subtle changes as we oscillate back to the subtropical.

From a birder's perspective, the good times are ahead. The major body of migrants will be settling in while the mad dash of breeding will be at full throttle, all by the next time the moon resembles tonight's. This month, it's all about getting out and using this, arguably the best time of the year.

South Africa's beauty in terms of its avian bounty is due largely, to the great variety of habitats that can be found not just on its national scale, but in a local

context too.

A healthy myriad of life, of all forms, can often be experienced in short journeys or even within a single province. On that vein, in this piece we will delve into the best birding that Limpopo has to offer.

Covering the north-eastern corner of land and crossable, on average, north to south in roughly five hours, east to west in six - Limpopo is a fair size indeed. It is striated by a number of key distinct biomes dominated by savannah, both lowveld and thornveld, mountains, both secondary and Afromontane forest alongside a number of transitional habitats.

For many, there are several species that catch the eye while gleaning through bird books or apps when looking at the region. These species often draw an illustrious response from their small, dot-like ranges, or due to their great looks. Limpopo lays claim to a wonder of diversity alongside a good number of well-known "most wanted's", those that are highly coveted due to being rare, secretive, or both.

This handful of prized species can be found more easily here than in the rest of the country, and in some cases, than the rest of the world. There are a number of different areas within Limpopo which we will have a look at, offering tips and

advice for aspiring birders to get the best out of this year's upcoming summer.

Limpopo has a fantastic track record and one of the country's best Birding Big Day teams operating in the Polokwane area. This dedicated handful of individuals have taken the 1st spot in this national competition on a number of occasions.

The major draw card of this region, the one that runs along the eastern edge of the province, with its international acclaim, is the Kruger National Park. This world renowned wildlife hotspot lays claim not only to Africa's most infamous, but also a huge and well-celebrated range of reptiles, arthropods and yes indeed, birds.

In terms of birding, the park is excellent. There are many generalists, plus several specials found here and in other large protected savannahs, such as the other famous African parks. Summer is generally best, between mid-November and mid-April as the habitat receives a wide range of summer migrants. The park can be divided into three "birding regions" as it were, the south, central and north, the latter occur in Limpopo.

The central kruger comprises of the Satara, Olifants, Letaba and higher areas. Birding here is good especially within rest camps where one can stroll and explore. Satara and Tamboti

are particularly good. In the former good birds to look out for include Bennetts Woodpecker, African Scops Owl, and African Mourning Dove, while the latter holds African Barred Owlet, Square-tailed Nightjar, and the Red-capped Robin-Chat. Main roads offer excellent mammalian sightings and scenery, while there are a number of open plains species here. Grasslands hold Secretarybird, Monotonous Lark, Chestnut-backed Sparrowlark and Southern Carmine Bee-eater. Night drives, especially after rain, can be extremely rewarding for Harlequin Quail, Common Buttonquail, nightjars and owls, as well as nocturnal mammals.

The northern Kruger, distinct and heralded, is a fantastic "early summer" destination for two major reasons. The first and foremost is around the Punda Maria Restcamp, which, for a limited time each year, offers one of the best chances at seeing the spectacular, sandgrouse-sized Pennant-winged Nightjar.

For optimum chances of observing one or more males at their traditional lek site, inaccessible to the public, one must join on a "sunset drive". Spaces are limited, so early booking is essential for these short bumbles that leave from the restcamp reception. When it comes to weather, dry, relatively still conditions are best. The birds arrive and start displaying from mid-October and are reliable until breeding begins. This is after the first heavy rains, usually around the first week of December.

The other major area, of this area, is the infamous Pafuri. For local birders it is a name shrouded in fame and mystery, especially for those who have not made the pilgrimage yet. The best spots and specials along main roads are well-known, such as the picnic site, the Levubu bridge, the markers along the road to its north and crooks corner.

An overnight stay, and

booking a night drive at the Pafuri Border Camp, often yields a sighting of the elusive Pel's Fishing Owl. Another reliable place at the time of writing for this ever-changing and unpredictable bird, lies a few kilometers across the border post itself into Mozambique. The spot itself, is a local wilderness lodge sitting on an oxbow of the lazy green Limpopo.

Nestled close to the small town of Hoedspruit lies the small but uniquely diverse Moholoholo Game Reserve. An ecotonal reserve that has great diversity. Habitats consists of sour to mixed savannah, interspersed by valleys of secondary forest. For the adventurous, these valleys lead to Mariepskop, the area's highest peak, which lays claim to both pristine afromontane forest and as well as a mind-bogglingly isolated crown of true fynbos!

The diversity involved, despite the presence of great species like Green Twinspot, Olive Bush Shrike, Sweet Waxbill and Narina Trogon, is not what sets this place apart. There are a number of major draw cards that this reserve offers, which are tricky at the best of times.

One of these, is a reliable stake out for the critically endangered and highly sought after Taita Falcon. This tiny, unique and highly charismatic raptor was a regular at the Strijdom Tunnel, between Hoedspruit and Orighstadt, for almost twenty years. In 2018 however, the pair suddenly vanished either having moved on or having had their time. For several years now sightings of any individual, other than those seen during research activities, have been erratic at best.

The site within this reserve now offers one of the best opportunities to find the incredible bird within Southern Africa and quite possibly even the world. Regular guided walks offering controlled and ethical viewing

of these birds, ideally using a spotting scope, can easily be arranged by contacting the managers at the reserve's accommodation.

Other top birds between the reserve and The Aventura Swadini resort next door, include regular sightings of African Finfoot and Half-collared Kingfisher, Verreaux's Eagle, Cape Vulture, Yellow-bellied Eremomela, Bushveld Pipit and much more.

Mariepskop has fantastic forest birding, but it is by no means the only forest found within Limpopo. The most impressive is undoubtedly the Woodbush Forest around Magoebaskloof which is covered well by several Birdlife community guides. These lush and tropical labyrinths hold the critically endangered Cape Parrot, Black-fronted Bush Shrike, Brown Scrub Robin, Orange Ground Thrush and more.

Within a one hour's drive, but feeling like another planet to the succulent dark and damp forests, is the sprawling city of Polokwane. Surrounded by stark thorny savannah and grasslands, this small town is the warbler capital of the country.

Almost all of migrant warblers can regularly be found at the right places from late November onwards but especially towards March and April. Thrush Nightingale, River Warbler, Common White-throat and Olive Tree Warbler are all regular. Up to ten species of lark have been noted especially the localized, but common, Short-clawed Lark plus others.

About an hour west of the Punda Maria Gate of the northern Kruger, and north of the forests of Magoebaskloof, lies the Soutpansberg. This alluvial and undulating region is served, year round, by its long standing and excellent community bird guide and offers a wealth of mouth-watering gaps for many.

Cont. on page 9

# months in Limpopo



African Pygmy Goose - Tom Ennis



Orange Ground Thrush - found in the forests of Magoebaskloof - Dubi Shapiro

Cont. from page 8

Words like Blue-spotted Wood-Dove, Bat Hawk, African Broadbill, Brown-necked Parrot, Allen's Gallinule and Pink-throated Twinspot resonate deeply in many a local birder's heart. These trips can be easily added on over a morning, tagged to a weekend Pennant-winged pilgrimage at the right time of year, which just so happens to be starting now. In the far north, along the

proverbial provincial river, lies the Mapungubwe National Park, a series of rocky hillsides stocked with baobabs. There are a few gems here including Pels Fishing Owl. Birds are best found, on morning and afternoon walks, but only when reliable puddles remain filled. If dry, the birds move out until they are replenished. Other birds here include Burchell's Sandgrouse, Fawn-coloured Lark, Meyer's Parrot and, in summer, Three-banded

Courser. Beyond Polokwane, west and south still, lies a relatively unknown hotspot in an area that receives surprisingly little coverage by local standards. Thabazimbi and, in particular, the Marataba Contractual National Park are unknown but offer great birding. Marataba itself is essentially a private addition to the Marakele National Park. Mammals sightings are excellent with many species and flexible drive times from

a number of private lodges that operate within the reserve. Birding is varied along its catena starting with sourveld and high ridges leading to mixed, then to thornveld and a pristine river. Specials are Southern Pied Babbler, Great Sparrow and Barred Wren-warbler which are all plentiful, even on the roads around the reserve. Other inhabitants within include Shelley's Francolin, Freckled Nightjar, White-backed Night Heron,

Bushveld Pipit, Swallow-tailed Bee-eater to name a few. Even the rare Cape Eagle Owl has been heard on cliffs within the reserve. The viewpoint atop Marakele National Park, itself a Sanpark, holds relict populations of high altitude birds like Gurney's Sugarbird, Nicholson's Pipit, Cape Bunting and Malachite Sunbird. Around Thabazimbi, particularly the Koedoeskop and Northam area, there is excellent black cotton soil supporting

Orange-breasted Waxbill, Black-winged Partincole and occasionally Yellow-throated Sandgrouse. The area is full of surprises and has much yet to yield. All in all, Limpopo truly is fantastically bountiful in avifauna and, as can be seen, is well worth exploring this summer while out over weekends or over the festive season. This month, get out to your local hotspots and get exploring for some truly great backyard birding.

# Why do wild dogs regurgitate their food and why do they hunt in relays ?

Wild dogs, in common with other dogs, regurgitate food to feed members of the pack (both adult and pups) that cannot hunt. This process is generally most conspicuous during the denning season when pups and their 'minders' are confined to the den site and need to be fed. Carrying the food in the stomach is the safest way of getting it back to the den without it being stolen. During the rest of the year all members of the pack are highly mobile and nomadic, and regurgitation on demand occurs for individuals who were on the hunt but got little or no food. This is a very specialised mechanism that ensures survival of all members - survival depends on pack strength rather than individual strength. Wild dogs den down for about 3 months of every year, the alpha or dominant female having up to 16 pups. The pups are unable to keep up with the highly frenetic nomadic lifestyle for the first three months of their lives. They stay at the den, where they are guarded by

one or more minders, while the rest of the pack goes out to hunt. Contrary to popular belief, wild dogs are highly successful and efficient predators and can finish a carcass within minutes. This phenomenon is probably an adaptation that gives other predators less time to steal the kill, and also to ensure that enough food is consumed to feed the other members of the pack at the den. Upon returning to the den, there is much excitement as the pups jump up against the adult dogs, whimpering and nipping at their lips and mouths. This begging behaviour is the signal to regurgitate some of the food from the kill, which is eagerly snapped up by the puppies, and then by the other dogs. The dogs do not regurgitate all their food as they also need to keep their own energy levels up to hunt again. **Do wild dogs hunt in relays?** No, this is another of the many fallacies regarding wild dogs.

To those *not* in the know, wild dogs supposedly chase animals and, as the leaders tire, they are 'replaced' by fresh dogs from the rear - thus the dogs can effectively run the prey to exhaustion. This is an unrealistic and illogical portrayal of what really transpires. Assuming the front dogs are running at full speed to keep pace with the selected prey and therefore get tired, we can also therefore assume that the other dogs are 'resting' at the back somewhere. Wild dog hunts cover distance quickly, so we can again assume that when a 'shift' change is due, the 'fresh' dogs will be perhaps 500m behind the prey. To catch up they would have to tire themselves out, only to be replaced by dogs from the 'fresh pack' that has by now lagged even further behind. The theory that the dogs at the rear cut across the arc made by the fleeing prey, thereby shortening the distance, is often true in practice because the prey does not generally run in a straight line due to the limi-



tations imposed by the landscape and vegetation. This does not, however, qualify as true relay-running! The prey is not run to exhaustion by fresh dogs, but simply because wild dogs (as with most canids) are built for endurance and have more stamina than their prey. It is interesting to note that jackals, foxes and wild dogs always seem to trot everywhere, not walk! I recently saw a single

male wild dog split from the pack in a chase and pursue two adult male impala. He started about 300m behind them but unbelievably closed the gap, seeming to change gears every 500m or so, clearly stretching his strides and accelerating. After about 2km he made the kill. The dogs do not hunt in single file but are spread out. They usually approach on a wide front, especially

in denser woodland. They probably do this to spook visible prey (or flush hidden prey), possibly to get them to run and in so doing expose individuals with weaknesses. It therefore often happens that as the quarry flees it may suddenly move towards or shorten the distance between itself and the dogs and the flanks. These dogs then naturally take the lead in the chase, making it appear that a relay is in action. Wild dog have been known to abandon unsuccessful hunts after a few kilometres, again disproving the relay idea, as 'fresh' dogs from the rear should in theory allow the hunt to continue indefinitely. *An excerpt from 'Beat about the Bush - Mammals and Birds' by Trevor Carnaby, Published by Jacana Media, Second Edition reprint 2018. Purchase for a discount of 30% at <https://jacana.co.za/product/beat-about-the-bush-mammals/> Coupon code BATB30 is valid until 30 November 2022*

# SA's dwindling chameleon populations and how you can encourage them back to your garden

Tyrone Ping

**South Africa's chameleons face an increasing range of challenges, including habitat loss through land clearing and urbanisation, busy roadways and the illegal wildlife trade.**

Until early 2022, there were 19 described species of chameleons in South Africa. That number has now changed, with three new species described, taking the total to 22. There are two typical chameleons (Chameleo) and 19 dwarf chameleons (Bradypodion) species.

There are very few biomes across South Africa where one cannot find at least a single species of chameleon, whether in coastal forests, grasslands, savannah, montane forests, fynbos, renosterveld or Karoo scrub. And due to the transformation of wild areas and rapid urbanisation, certain species have become well adapted to suburban gardens and well-planted urban areas.

So where have all the chameleons gone and why are we seeing fewer and fewer of these fascinating reptiles?

There is a general trend that biodiversity across the world is rapidly declining due to a variety of factors: land use change, climate change, invasive species, over-exploitation, and pol-

lution.

There is, however, good news. In many areas where suitable habitat is present — both natural habitat and slightly disturbed — chameleons can still be found in great numbers, that is of course if you know how to find them. Chameleons are notoriously difficult to spot during the day. They are the masters of camouflage after all.

Chameleons are often more easily seen at night, while sleeping on the edges of branches and leaves. When chameleons rest at night, the specialised cells in the skin, called chromatophores, become pale and are easily spotted by torchlight against vegetation.

Chameleons are up against a range of challenges: disappearing habitats, busy roadways, domestic pets, and people keeping these amazing wild animals as pets.

## Habitat loss and fragmentation

Although not unique to chameleons, vast tracts of suitable habitat are being cleared to build houses, office parks or roadways. Even if a few chameleons survive the land-clearing, their habitat and food source is often lost and the remaining chameleons simply cannot survive. When animals are restricted to a small patch of habitat, once carrying capacity is reached, this forces animals to leave and

attempt to find new habitats, usually by means of crossing roads, which leads to road mortalities.

## Suburban gardens

Well-maintained suburban gardens with manicured lawns, high concrete walls and topped with electric fences are often inhospitable for chameleons. Large open lawn spaces without corridors of interconnecting vegetation will force chameleons to venture onto the lawns putting them at risk of predation by small mammals, birds, and domestic pets. Chameleons are unable to climb up smooth concrete walls, further restricting their movements. If they do manage to climb these walls, they are often met with electric fences and killed on contact.

## Pesticides and insecticides

Chameleon's prey items — their food — are killed by people using pesticides and insecticides. A sprayed or poisoned insect can also end up killing the chameleon.

## Domestic pets

Free roaming cats can destroy a healthy population of chameleons in a suburban garden in a matter of months. Once the local population has been eradicated, these free-roaming cats continue in adjacent greenbelts, causing further destruction to the chame-



Just under 130mm long, *Bradypodion caeruleogula* lives in trees in small forests in KwaZulu-Natal  
Photo: Tyrone Ping

leon populations.

## The illegal trade

Although the removal and transportation of wild chameleons are illegal in all provinces in South Africa, the trade is big business, especially in the export market where many wild chameleons are collected under the guise of being captive bred. Taking a chameleon you find crossing the road home to your garden or buying chameleons being sold on the roadside is simply perpetuating the problem by supply and demand. Don't move chameleons far from where they are found and don't take chameleons to collectors or sanctuaries as they are seldom released.

## What you can do

We can all make a difference to help these animals even by something as small as not totally clearing all-natural vegetation, planting indigenous and by not supporting the illegal wildlife trade.

Create well-vegetated green corridors in your garden where chameleons are able to move around freely without being noticed or forced to move across large open spaces.

Growing indigenous plants and shrubs, which flower naturally in season, attracts a large diversity of butterflies and other insects which the chameleons need in order to thrive. If your garden is planted correctly, chameleons will eventually make

their way into your garden.

Creating a compost heap or an area in the garden where you allow leaves and garden cuttings to naturally break down, brings more insects into the garden.

Planting more indigenous trees, plants and flowers, and clearing alien vegetation, will create healthy green spaces which encourage insects and allow chameleons to naturally thrive.

*Tyrone Ping is a herpetologist and published author who travels South Africa documenting and photographing some of the country's most elusive reptiles. Visit [www.tyroneping.co.za](http://www.tyroneping.co.za)*

*This article was first published by GroundUp and then by Daily Maverick*

# This month it's Dolomite – a type of Limestone



Dolomite formed from fossil stromatolites, from the Olifants River.  
Image: David Havemann

John Roff  
*Nature and Geology Guide*

On the ancient basement rocks that surround Hoedspruit sit slightly younger rocks that make up the great escarpment, or Mpumalanga Drakensberg. These mountains were formed by sediments laid down on a very different early earth. One of these

layers formed primarily on the shallow edges of an ancient ocean, and gave us rocks known as Dolomite and Limestone. Timeous

When you drive to Hoedspruit through the Abel Erasmus pass, after Ohrigstad, and before the tunnel, you pass through a long section of these layered grey and black rocks; the picture shows a good example.

Look out for them the next time you travel that route.

At the time this rock was being formed, there was hardly any oxygen in the earth's atmosphere. As living organisms emerged and developed, the dominant life forms for an extremely long time, were vast communities of microorganisms, primarily blue-green algae. These grew as thin sticky mats, at and just below the shallow edges of the sea. They were photosynthesising, taking carbon dioxide out of the water and releasing oxygen. More and more oxygen was produced on a huge scale, and the atmosphere gradually changed, enabling the emergence of more and more complex life, including humans. We can thank the humble blue-green algae, or cyanobacteria, as we take our next oxygen-rich breath.

When cyanobacteria take in carbon dioxide, calcium carbonate precipitates out of the water and settles on the sticky algal layer. They

respond by growing on top of this mineral deposit, and gradually a series of layers develops. Over time, these layers of calcium carbonate become Limestone. If this calcium is replaced by magnesium, we get a rock called Dolomite.

A distinctive feature in these rocks are structures that show how many of the blue-green algal communities formed layered domes as they grew. The rounded rock in the picture clearly shows some of these fossil structures. They are called Stromatolites. This rock was found in the Olifants River near Mica, and would have travelled down the river from higher up on the escarpment.

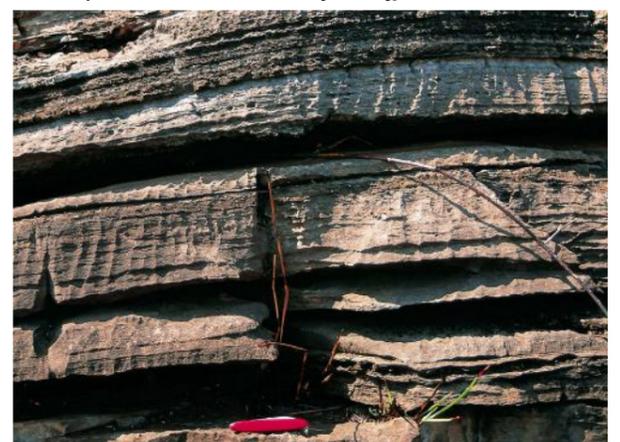
Because of the minerals in these rocks, they produce soils that are very distinct. This allows unusual plants to develop, and there are some that grow only in limestone soils. The little known *Aloe fouriei* is one example - it is only found in this part of the great escarpment.

Just before you drive

through the tunnel on the Abel Erasmus pass, on your way towards Hoedspruit, you can see a famous and mysterious waterfall, on your left, flowing out of the rocks and falling into the gully below. Most waterfalls wear away the rock they pass over, but this one is actually growing forwards. As it's water travels through the Limestone and Dolomite rocks it picks up calcium, which is then deposited at the point where the water flows out. Layers of new calcium-rich rock, formed in this way, are called Tufa.

So the mystery of this waterfall is that the exit point of the water from the underground source, (that what we see as the waterfall), is actually "moving forward" very slowly, year on year due to the deposit of calcium from the water.

*John has a continuous curiosity and an abiding passion for sharing the stories of South Africa's remarkable biodiversity, rocks and landscapes. Based in KZN, he offers geological learning adventures throughout South Africa. Check out [www.johnroff.co.za](http://www.johnroff.co.za).*



# Constellation : Aquarius, the Water Bearer

Ben Coley

## Mythology

The constellation of Aquarius represents the gods' cup bearer, Ganymede. Ganymede was the son of the King of Tros, who named the city of Troy. Ganymede was thought by some as the most beautiful boy alive and Zeus became infatuated with him. Aquila, Zeus's eagle, one day swept down and carried Ganymede up to Mt Olympus to be the cup bearer for the gods. Ganymede has always been associated with water and was said to have begged Zeus to send rain to the Earth for the benefit of mankind. Ganymede was later glorified as the god of rain, Aquarius.

## Notable Stars

The brightest star in Aquarius is known as Sadalsuud, meaning the 'luck of lucks'. Many of the stars within Aquarius share similar etymologies, since the helical rising of the constellation coincided with the coming of spring and the good fortune associated with it.

Sadalsuud is a double star situated around 550 light years away, whose combined light shines over 2000 times more brightly than our Sun.

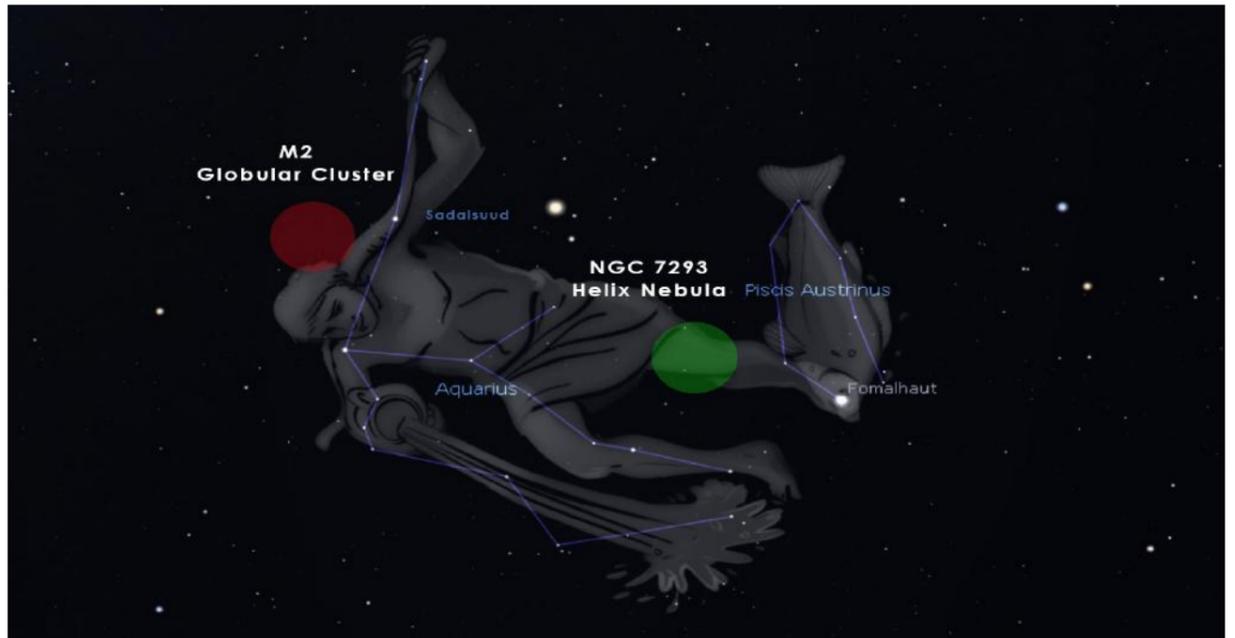
Formalhaut is the 18<sup>th</sup> brightest star in the sky, and is found in the neighbouring constellation of Pisces Austrinus. Its name comes from the Arab meaning 'mouth of the southern fish'. The constellation is usually depicted drinking the water being poured from Aquarius.

## Deep Sky Objects

Messier 2 is a bright globular cluster found close to the perceived head of Aquarius. This old ball of stars has been dated at close to 13 billion years old, and contains in excess of 150 000 stars. It is one of the largest globulars in the sky and can be seen with binoculars under good conditions.

The Helix Nebula (NGC 7293) is one of the closest planetary nebulae to Earth at only 700 light years. It marks the expanding gas cloud of a dying star that is ejecting its atmosphere into space, and the circular shape has seen it dubbed, 'The Eye of God'. It is just visible with binoculars under dark skies but the object really sings in long exposure photography, making it a favourite for astro-photographers worldwide.

*See Celestial Events SA advert for contact details*



Aquarius (above), Messier (above left) and Helix Nebula (above right)

Images supplied: Ben Coley

# The Upside Down Tree – the Baobab - *Adansonia digitata*

Brett Heasman  
Guiding Naturally

The lowveld has some very special trees, and one of the most impressive is the Baobab. Having spent time moving north through the lowveld, these incredible, magnificent, behemoth creatures, become more and more abundant as you progress north. They almost subliminally make one realise that you cannot miss the opportunity to dig deeper and learn more about these beasts.

Large trees are more apparent - I'm always on the lookout for young trees, but these are difficult to recognize and are seldom seen. This is because the leaf structure changes with time, to the point that there is this feeling that young trees don't exist out in the bush - and as per some of the local traditional beliefs that there are no young Baobabs.

The young sprouts of the tree can be eaten like asparagus, and the roots of very young trees are also somewhat edible. One may think that this is the reason it disguises itself so well when young, so it doesn't fall vic-

tim to human harvesting.

The local folklore tells us about the fully developed ones being flung from paradise, and as they are top-heavy, they land with their roots in the air (hence the upside down tree). This is much like the few young gents that hit the gym, most forgetting about leg days along with ego, and the first beer down the hatch they look like an ostrich burying it's head!

Ok maybe that was the wrong analogy, possibly a bit more like me with a wide circumference and soft, spongy fibrous inner core, with an incredible water content of 40% to 70% - especially after a sojourn to the local pub with a few Zwakalas under the belt - this is what gives the baobab recognition as the world's largest succulent.

Some of these incredible specimens have had an extreme makeover. Some of the trees inner heartwood dies and then with time healing of the inner surface, the hollow insides are often made use of by many animals of the bushveld, including porcupines, genets, jackals, leopards, bats, parrots, hornbills and roll-

ers. Over the years we have seen other conversions to housing pubs, toilets and even prisons within the confines of the tree.

The fibrous, string-like bark is used for various items such as pulp, mats, ropes, fishing nets and even clothing. Although the bark is heavily eaten by elephants and used by people, another fascinating thing is that they have the ability to grow another layer, and not fall victim to ring barking. This is unlike most hard wood trees with an inner cambium layer, the Boabab will survive the onslaught from elephants with the resultant damage to and harvesting of, the bark.

Another astonishing feature about these colossal giants is their age. There is so much speculation, and the more you research, the more it varies. Recent work using carbon-dating techniques, suggest an average tree with a diameter of 10m may be as old as 2000 years. Some species are big enough to be pushing three to four thousand years of age - so Mr Leadwood, take a seat.

The large white and sweetly scented flowers, emerge



The Baobab exhibiting beautiful new leaves

Image : Canva

in the late afternoon in early summer (from October to December). They emerge to have a beautiful and pleasant one-night stand with the pollinators, bats been the primary one; but many different insects and other creatures, such as birds, will visit and take advantage of this very short-lived flower, and play their critical role in the pollination process.

The fruit, looks like an old brown leather rugby ball, consisting of a hard, woody outer shell with a dry powdery substance inside, that covers the hard, black, kidney-shaped seeds. The seeds are not generally eaten by animals, but the outer parts are relished and eaten by monkeys and baboons. Humans however have found another use, by

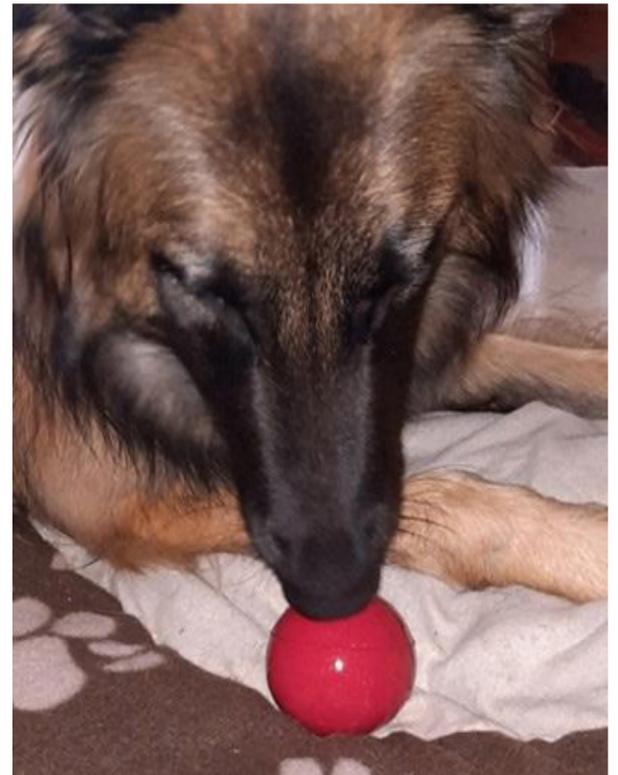
roasting these seeds as a substitute for coffee to get their morning fix of personality.

So the next time you pass one of these pre-historic, botanical phenomena, relish in its biblical glory, and admire the beauty it creates in our beautiful landscape - it is the true charmer of our piece of land.

# Seeing colour – why my dog can't find her red ball



Gerrie van der Walt / Unsplash



Don Pinnock

**She never lost her black ball in the grass. But when a tree ate it and she got a red one, her troubles – and mine – began.**

The dog has a long nose a zillion times better at smelling than mine. It seemed obvious she'd find her ball in the long grass after having chewed it a bit beforehand. But it wasn't so.

The new red ball that replaced the lost black one kept getting lost. I wasn't much help, being red/green colour blind. Then it dawned on me: so was she.

That sent me down a rabbit hole into the world of how we creatures see colour. It's a strange, spooky place that caused Charles Darwin to shudder at how evolution could have arrived at such a thing as an eye.

On the Origin of Species he wrote that "to suppose that the eye... could have been formed by natural selection seems, I freely confess, absurd to the highest possible degree."

He would have been delighted by the discovery of opsins. In fact, they would have supported his finding that we share animal origins. They can be found in eyes from corals to kangaroos, shrimps to squirrels – and us.

But I'm getting ahead of

myself. Let's begin with light or, to be more precise, energy photons. They pass through the pupil to the back of our eyeball, reaching receptors of the retina where they contact cones and rods.

Within these they hit opsins, minute, light-sensitive protein receptors whose job – it's close to magic – is to turn visual light into electrical signals for your brain to analyse. Actually, our brains do the seeing with the assistance of our eyes.

Unique opsins respond to different light wavelengths. The ones in our cones grant us colour: microscopic marvels that open our eyes to rainbows, fireworks and harlequins. Opsins in our rods respond to light and shade and those quick movements at the edge of our sight.

We creatures all have this equipment but in different proportions. Human opsins in our cones are tuned to red, green and blue. We're what are called trichromats. Photons arriving in equal proportion we see as white, but wavelength variations are read by our brains in a startling rainbow of colours. Vision scientists agree that the human eye can probably see several million colours.

If red and green opsins are activated we see yellows and oranges, greens

and blues mix as teals and turquoises, blues with reds might make violets and indigos. We see more than a rainbow world: walnuts, caramels, umbers, silvers, bronzes and many we have no names for. This ability we share with the great apes, baboons and macaques.

Feel sad for owl monkeys, seals and whales – they're monochromats and see only shades from white to black and a zillion shades of grey. But their eyes pack rods which give them great night sight.

Nearly all mammals, from shrews to elephants, are dichromats. So, unfortunately, are my dog and me. Well almost. My dog has blue opsin receptors like I do as well as others tuned to wavelengths between red and green. I just have reduced green which seems to cause confusion between red and brown. Neither of us, however, can find that damn red ball in the grass, an affliction that, in humans, seems mostly a male thing. But we have the advantage of better night sight.

Beyond all these variations are tetrachromats with colour sight we simply cannot even imagine. They're exceedingly rare. In her book Sentient: what animals reveal about our senses, Jackie Higgins documents an Australian woman named Concetta Antico and, no

surprise, by the age of five she decided on a career as an artist.

She saw the world differently, but for her it was normal. "You don't question what you see," she said. Many years later she read about tetrachromacy and went "aha". She was tested and found to have four types of cones.

Her paintings are more beautiful than we can know. What for us seem monochromatic landscapes are rendered in magentas and mauves, their shadows in madders and russets which she insists are really there.

"The colours I paint into twilights are not artistic expressions," she says. "Where you see greys, I see a rich and beautiful mosaic of lilacs, lavenders, violets, emeralds. You might see lead whites, ivories, chalks, silvers, warm whites, cold whites, but I see so many more subtle shades, most without a name.

I wish everyone could realise how beautiful the world actually is," she told a researcher, "then perhaps they might value it more."

In the colour department, though, Concetta didn't make the Guinness World Records. That went to a small lobster called a peacock mantis shrimp. Its initial fame was not its eyes but the power of its punch.

Using club-like arms, it

peacock mantis shrimp (far left) Image: Roy Caldwell  
Dogs are dichromats with two-colour vision (centre) Image: Don Pinnock

Dog puzzling her red ball (above) Image: Don Pinnock

packs a punch faster than a champion boxer, with velocities around 80km/h. So hard and fast, in fact, that it creates a flash of light and heat at the point it strikes its victim, generally an unwary crustacean.

The study of its eyes came later – and caused a sensation. It has eight photoreceptors, which Guinness calls "the most complex eyes of any animal", six of which can see polarised light.

The scientist who discovered it, Justin Marshall of the University of

Queensland Brain Institute in Australia, called it "the richest, most harmonious chorus of colours imaginable, a thermonuclear bomb of light and beauty. When we try to describe it, we start waving our arms around and resort to words like psychedelic."

Dog and I, meanwhile, understand our limitations. Next item on the Pet's Place shopping list is "black ball".

This article was previously published in the Daily Maverick.

## SUDOKU ANSWERS

5	8	1	4	6	2	9	3	7
9	3	4	8	5	7	2	1	6
6	7	2	9	1	3	5	4	8
4	2	9	3	7	8	6	5	1
8	5	7	6	9	1	4	2	3
3	1	6	2	4	5	7	8	9
7	4	5	1	8	9	3	6	2
1	6	3	7	2	4	8	9	5
2	9	8	5	3	6	1	7	4

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# Caterpillar rearing – where does one start

Ian Sharp

**“At the beginning” would be the logical answer but where exactly would that be? This may seem a little tedious, but for us to get involved we have to have an understanding of where this leads us, and how we get there.**

**Equipment**

There is no fancy equipment required. With only one exception in my opinion. If the years are marching on and the old eyes are not as sharp as they used to be, a magnifying lamp with the added ring light would be of great help. Some caterpillars are very small, especially if just hatched from eggs, and would have to be handled delicately, an aspect needing good visibility.

As one will be collecting a variety of caterpillars (hopefully) suitable containers are required to keep each individual caterpillar. Ice-cream containers may work, but there are many varieties of plastic containers available. Containers will need ventilation, achieved by providing some holes in the lids. One should be careful however, not to make the holes too large so as to provide a convenient exit for the hard-found caterpillar bounty.

Any other items that may assist in rearing your caterpillars can be collected over time to make working with the caterpillars or handling their food plants easier. Here a tweezer and a side-cutter or pruning shears would greatly reduce your frustration levels.

A very important piece of equipment is a good camera to record images of each caterpillar rearing attempt. A

digital camera with a macro lens would be the first prize, however, modern day cell phones have excellent cameras and would be suitable to take images of good quality and high resolution.

**Finding caterpillars**

Caterpillar hunting is an art and requires patience. What does one look for? Just finding the caterpillar by sight would be the way to go. But wait - these guys have a myriad of other organisms also looking for them as a next meal or a progeny breeding chamber! As a result, caterpillars have many methods of self-preservation: from the use of camouflage, feeding at night, constructing refuges, to mimicry of other organisms.

Finding a clutch of eggs would be one way of collecting specimens, but only the larger eggs are easily spotted. In certain instances, where the adult moth or butterfly lays clusters of eggs, they will be more visible. As one starts to learn and recognize the preferred larval host plants, it will become easier to spot eggs. Through quiet observation of a gravid female, you may be rewarded as she perches on the host plant, bending the abdomen forward to deposit her egg.

Many caterpillars create a ‘housing’ within which they feed or use as a refuge from which they venture out to feed. Such structures are highly variable, some just two leaves over each other that are woven together. Others again are intricately woven structures using vegetation and even grains of sand. There are caterpillars, like spiders, that create



Examples of camouflage and mimicry by some caterpillars

Image Supplied

a web of silk and live suspended in the web material, that includes branches of their host plants. Finding caterpillars is simplified by these ‘housings’ that may be equated to a gift, as you never know what you may find inside.

Caterpillar frass (poop) is another dead give-away. Larger caterpillars produce large quantities of easily visible frass. When searching for caterpillars, it is a good idea to keep an eye on the ground or sometimes on the leaves of plants, as frass deposits point the way to a possible caterpillar find.

The most obvious sign to look for would be feeding damage. One must, however, be careful not to confuse the feeding damage by

grasshoppers, beetles, and others, with that of caterpillars. Once again, with experience, this will become easier to discern. Most caterpillars chew half-circles into the leaves, sometimes to the point of only the central rachis of the leaf remaining. Some caterpillars will only feed on the leaf epidermis leaving a transparent window in the leaf surface.

**Required information and record-keeping**

When a specimen has been collected, it is important to make notes. Firstly, the identity of the host plant is of major scientific value. If you cannot identify the plant or not entirely sure of the identification, collect a representative sample for later identification by someone with the necessary knowledge.

Other points to note are the locality details: the farm/reserve name and a GPS reading will suffice. The date of collection must be recorded, and each specimen given an identity label. Any other observations considered of importance for example, a ‘housing’ type description, can also be added to the collected data.

**Photographic record**

All collected specimens should be photographed immediately. If left for a day, one may return only to find a pupa lying in the container or a cocoon already spun. Each specimen should preferably have several photos recorded: images of the side,

top and front of the caterpillar is the minimum. High resolution images are preferable, because if any image is requested for publication, the quality of the image in a publication will be greatly enhanced.

**Final preparation of specimen for rearing**

Once back at your “lab”, containers must be appropriately labelled to avoid confusion. Fresh food is then placed in the container, with extra host plant material bagged, and placed in the refrigerator. The caterpillar is then carefully placed in the container, the lid securely closed and off you go - you are ready to embark on your caterpillar rearing journey. Good luck!

## Spotlight time

Public Correspondent

**The idea of this piece is to highlight people around Hoedspruit. There is no qualification or job that needs to be done, the principle is to pick on some unsuspecting person, and get to know them. This we will do by ‘challenging’ them with some questions so that we all can get to understand where they are from, what they do and how they do whatever they do. This way we will get to appreciate who lives in the “Hoed”.**

My first unsuspecting victim was Henk Prinsloo. What a very affable fellow – I met him, dressed in khaki (like we all are), with his bush hat on, intently studying a map of the lowveld. He looked interesting, and so I sidled up, introduced myself and said that of all the people in Hoedspruit,

I had chosen him to be my ‘guineapig’ for this piece. He chuckled, and politely agreed. So here goes ...

Henk and his wife Cecilia (a Brazilian) have been living in Hoedspruit since 2019 after moving their business, **African Flame Safaris**, from Mpumalanga. On his own admission he is “a happy camper in the Hoed”. After moving, Henk and Cecilia quickly realised that this was the place that they should have been in all their lives. They have three daughters.

Both of them are super happy here, having made lovely acquaintances and wonderful friends. The whole ‘family feel’ of Hoedspruit really came to the fore for these two during the Covid pandemic, when local folks stood by them and offered them both physical, and emotional support. That’s just one of the reasons why

they love Hoedspruit, and they are looking forward to meeting more locals, and sharing this privileged piece of paradise with them all.

Henk and his wife run **African Flame Safaris** – a company that specialises in tours of the Kruger Park. They do overnight, camping and day trips in and through the Kruger. They have some 28 year’s experience and a broad base of expertise in nature, culture, military history, and adventure. They cater for the individual and small upmarket groups always aiming to provide a unique experience. The company operates specially designed open safari vehicles. Cecilia also adds Portuguese to the mix.

One look at TripAdvisor and FB and you will see that Henk, his wife and African Flame Safaris deliver on their promises and produce the goods.

Take a look at the website [www.africanflamesafaris.com](http://www.africanflamesafaris.com) to see what is on offer, or contact Henk on email [henk@africanflamesafaris.com](mailto:henk@africanflamesafaris.com). Here’s hoping that this will continue for years to come.



# Conservation science must empower people, socioeconomic development in SA, says Creecy

Roving Reporters Writer

**The environment minister told the Oppenheimer Research Conference that South Africa was inviting final inputs on draft laws on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of South Africa's Biodiversity, as well as the nation's first Game Meat Strategy.**

More cutting-edge research is required into the role and value of indigenous and traditional knowledge in promoting biodiversity conservation.

This was a key message that South Africa's Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, Barbara Creecy, delivered to more than 380 top African scholars on the first day of the 11th annual Oppenheimer Research Conference.

It was vitally important, said Creecy, that measures to conserve biodiversity empowered rural people and enabled transformative socioeconomic development.

"This audience understands more than others the crisis confronting our natural world and indeed the future of humanity as we know it. Climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution threaten the environment on which we depend and weaken our economic

and social systems," said Creecy.

She said the conference could not have come at a more suitable time given that South Africa was inviting final inputs on draft laws on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of South Africa's Biodiversity, as well as South Africa's first Game Meat Strategy.

She said that while the draft White Paper recognised the value of indigenous knowledge systems and practices in protecting natural resources, more research was needed and should be prioritised by academics and research institutions.

Habitat loss and degradation, invasive alien species, overharvesting and illegal harvesting all threatened biodiversity, resulting in negative impacts for livelihoods and the economy, said Creecy.

Equally urgent, said Creecy, was the need to mitigate climate change and support "the adaptation capabilities of communities and regions to build climate resilience".

Creecy said a recent World Economic Forum survey had identified climate action failure, extreme weather events, biodiversity loss and ecosystem collapse as the top three of the top 10 global risks by severity over the next 10 years.

"The role of scientific

research in promoting evidence-based decision-making becomes more important than ever before, added Creecy, especially in finding innovative solutions to the existential challenges facing mankind."

Creecy said she was "heartened to read in the programme that topics such as biodiversity loss, reintroduction of critically endangered species, landscape ecology, climate change and wildlife economies will be covered during this conference."

"These are not only central, but also aligned to South Africa's future vision for a prosperous nation living in harmony with nature," added Creecy. "The work presented here is not only relevant to providing solutions for South Africa, but its cutting-edge excellence informs African and global approaches, and demonstrates South Africa's continued leadership in climate change, biodiversity conservation and sustainable use research."

In his opening address, Mavuso Msimang, a co-founder of the NGO African Parks and former CEO of the South African National Parks, addressed the economic risk of not embracing the power of nature to solve climate change crisis.

He warned that biodiver-

sity loss had significantly contributed to global warming, resulting in climate-related disasters such as the KwaZulu-Natal floods earlier this year.

"Severe droughts had also led to massive crop failures in East Africa while fish stocks off the coast of West Africa were in decline," said Msimang.

He referred to predictions that a 4°C increase in global temperatures (relative to pre-industrial levels) could cause about a 12% decrease in the African continent's overall GDP — "a decline we simply cannot afford".

"But we can stop this trend and safeguard our economy if we embrace nature-based solutions," said Msimang.

He cited a 2020 World Economic Forum report stating that a transition to a nature-positive economy could generate \$10.1-trillion in business value every year and provide about 400 million new jobs.

Aside from investing in renewables, the report offers a range of solutions; from precision agriculture to retrofitting buildings with more efficient technology, reducing municipal water leakage and improving global waste management systems. Reusing automotive parts and even diversifying diets were among many other solutions posed.



South Africa's minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, Barbara Creecy.

Photo: Supplied

Amid such innovation, Msimang believes that Africa's protected areas have a vital role to play.

"If Africa chooses to unlock the power of nature by expanding and improving management of protected areas, it will create unparalleled business value for the continent," said Msimang. Citing figures from a SA National Biodiversity Institute (Sanbi) study, Msimang said that South Africa's tourism sector (closely linked to biodiversity) created more than 418,000 jobs. Mining, on the other hand, sat at 434,000.

"Yes, this is higher than biodiversity, but mining is finite. Nature — if protected — is not," said Msimang.

He noted that when the Sanbi study was conducted, just 1% of government spending went into biodi-

versity. "Imagine if that number was increased by even a fraction, said Msimang.

He applauded international efforts to increase globally protected areas to cover 30% of the world's land and sea by 2030.

"We must continue to be trailblazers, pioneers, and leaders when it comes to protected areas and community-led preservation of nature. By being bold and supporting goals such as 30 by 30, and investing in nature today, we can reap the rewards, and they are rewards that the many, not the few, will have access to."

*This article was previously published in the Daily Maverick.*



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## The Birds Are BACK in town...



"Piet My Vrou" "Piet My Vrou" "Piet My Vrou"

WHAT'S MY NAME?

### Grab your binoculaurs!

As we head into November and December, all the beautiful migrants are making their way back down into South Africa. Make sure to keep your eyes peeled for some of these incredible feathered friends of ours.

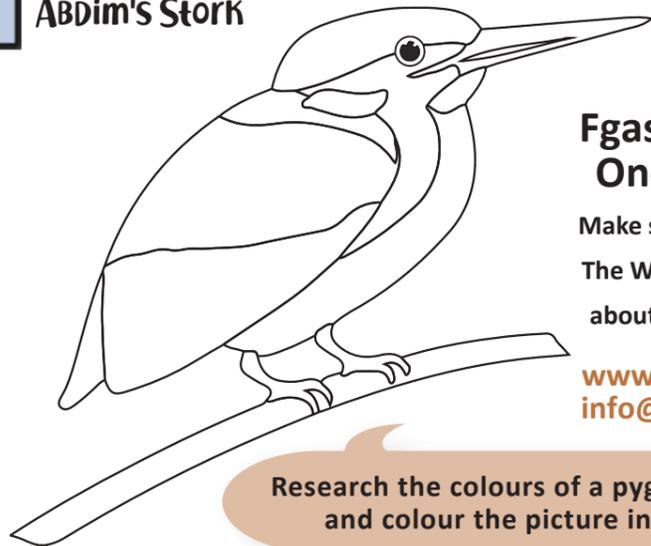
Here are a few to look out for and check off your list:

- Lesser-Striped Swallow
- White-rumped Swift
- Amur Falcon
- Yellow-billed Kite
- European Bee-Eater
- Woodland Kingfisher
- Red-Chested Cuckoo
- Pygmy Kingfisher
- Abdim's Stork



"I build a mud nest and have altricial chicks"

WHAT'S MY NAME?



Research the colours of a pygmy kingfisher and colour the picture in correctly.

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Make sure you go check out Kids In The Wild to get all the information about the eLearning programme.

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BIRD NAMES: 1. Red-Chested Cuckoo 2. Lesser-Striped Swallow



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