



KRUGER2CANYON

NEWS

July 2023

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

Crisis? What crisis? – ‘water jenga’ in Hoedspruit



Investigating correspondent

“Thousands have lived without love, not one without water.” - H. Auden

Currently in our town, Hoedspruit, we seem to be playing the game of ‘water jenga’. Anyone who has played this game will know how fragile this game can be – one wrong extraction of a piece sees the whole tower come tumbling down.

It seems the same when trying to get to grips with the water situation in Hoedspruit. ‘All is not good on the western front’ - so as to speak. The frustrating part of this saga, and a saga it is, is that it can be fixed, but the will to do the fixing seems to be lacking.

I managed to corner Marie Helm, who was a Councillor at Mopani District Municipality, and is currently a Member of the Chamber of Commerce in Hoedspruit, where she is responsible for the water and electricity portfolio. She gave me an overall picture of the ‘state of the water in the town’. It was

interesting talking to her, and I soon realised that Hoedspruit is very privileged to have people like her and Lizmari Wolmarans carrying the torch for a better Hoedspruit.

The broad picture

When talking about the water in Hoedspruit one must consider two systems - the irrigation system and the river. The irrigation system services 8000 hectares of agricultural land and is dominated by agricultural allotments of water to farms within that area.

All water in the area comes from the Blyderivierpoort Dam, and is gravity fed to all users within the project. Initially, the system was designed to supply water from the dam to the irrigation project and the mines at Phalaborwa. Now of course, and from some time ago (the early 1970’s), Hoedspruit town has come into the picture.

Years ago, the irrigation project consisted of excavated ground channels, but the inherent loss of water initiated a rethink, and

a decision was made to install a pipeline that would be far better from an efficiency perspective both in terms of the maximisation of the delivery of the water and the reduced loss of water along the system.

At the stage of laying down the pipeline, the Department of Water Affairs provided some funding, and the farmers were brought into the agreement to contribute funds to make up the shortfall. But on analysis, there remained a further shortfall. This is where Rand Merchant Bank (RMB) came in and got involved in financing the balance for the construction of the pipeline.

The deal was that RMB would finance the construction of the pipeline on condition that the farmers contributed to paying back that loan to RMB. If one looks at the current status of the agreement, the problem is that the total value of the money loaned by RMB is so large (including outstanding debt), that under the current circumstances it looks unlikely that this loan will ever be paid back. This effectively means that the

current ownership of the pipeline resides with RMB and not the Department of Water Affairs or the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure. This will only change hands at the time the loan (plus outstanding debt) is repaid in full.

Unconfirmed reports state that the loan amount is currently around R300 million Rand (including outstanding debt) – but this amount remains confidential between the Department of Water Affairs and RMB. It can be confirmed that a letter confirming the outstanding debt was recently sent by RMB to the Department of Water Affairs. Org van Rensburg, Director of MBB in Nelspruit, did confirm that the outstanding debt will NOT be settled by next year, or any time in the near future, so the ownership of the infrastructure will remain with RMB for the foreseeable future.

Operations of the pipeline

Cont. on pages 8 & 9...

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From the editors desk and letters to the editor



It was quite a month.

After the fantastic response we had from the private hospital article, we decided to get someone to try and investigate the water situation in Hoedspruit. My goodness, this was an intertwined and complicated puzzle to unravel. We hope that the article clarifies the status as it is currently. There is certainly reason to be concerned.

The fear that I certainly have is the predicament relating to Plastic View. I may be wrong, but it does seem that the population there is increasing, and it does seem that more shacks are being erected as a result. Where is it going? A huge concern must be the litter emanating from this site and being dumped on the edge of the railway line – what is being done about that?! Surely someone in the municipality must be tasked with sorting this issue out. Or is it a free for all?

From the Editor is short sharp and sweet this month – space is limited! So, until next month, I hope to see the weather warming up, tourism to keep pumping and our efforts to make sure we continue to live in a paradise, to continue. Thank you all for the emails and compliments – I believe we have taken the publication to another level, and we will strive to keep it there. Stay safe, until next time.

Dear Editor,

Please can you help me out here. I have recently travelled into town from the tunnel and what do I see? I see a monstrosity of a building going up right near your offices! I was horrified – it looks like a boarding house! I then ventured onto the road that links Zandspruit Aero to The Farmhouse and I see an artist's impression of what this 'thing' is going to look like! Oh dear

Does the person developing this 'horror' have no sense to the ethos of our town? Surely the estate developer (if there is one) would have laid down some strict building regulations to ensure that the feeling of being in the bushveld lingers with us ... or do we want to look like some city mall – in which case we are lost. This is a disgrace!

A very disgruntled and concerned resident,
Jean.

Ed: Dear Jean, thank you for your letter. I am supposed to be impartial on these matters, so could I be so bold as to refrain from answering this letter? I do think the building is too far gone for anything to be done about it. Regards

Dear Ed,

So, what is happening about this mall? Thank you for outlining and bringing us all up to speed on the hospital – but the mall? Regards, Johan

Ed: Dear Johan, thank you. I have no idea what is transpiring with the mall suffice to say that attempts at getting an answer out of Mr Rob Hare have proved fruitless (see past editions of the Kruger2Canyon News). I don't think the Chamber is any the wiser. Right now, the 'development' is a total eyesore. We will continue to try and find out for you - if we can. Regards

Hi Mark,

Thanks for the comprehensive and professional report on the progress and details of the Hoedspruit Private Hospital. Congratulations to Carien Taute, Pieter Scholtz and Jaco Leister for their vision, dedication and progress - we will all benefit from this step change in the future of our lifestyle complemented by the enhancement of the value of our investments in the Hoedspruit area. A significant development.

Regards,
Kevin Leo-Smith

Ed: Dear Kevin, thank you so much for your mail and the compliment. Much appreciated. Yes this will be a significant development for the area and I think we all look forward to that. Regards

Dear Editor,

I want to thank you for a great read - I am from out of town and now subscribe to your digital publication.

When I do drive through town (which I do quite often) I am astounded by the amount of litter around town - not a good advertisement to the tourists that are flocking to the Lowveld! For me there are 3 spots that need mention (not for good reason):

The "Park" on the side of the R527 in town opposite Dunlop, the area called Plastic City (?) and the area from the La Bamba intersections on the R40 up to the informal settlement on the left hand side going out of town. Can something not be done about this - it is such an eyesore?

Keep up the good publication and hopefully you can inspire action on my content.

Regards
James

Ed: Thank you, James, for your kind words. With regards to the litter, I am afraid I agree with you and it seems to be getting out of control. I do know that there is an initiative to clean up the town, but I fear this will have to be done once a week, in future, at the rate of accumulated litter. It is very sad, but I am sure that there are some very concerned residents, and the Chamber will be looking into solutions for this.



Mark Bishop - Editor

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Will business competition save the consumer money?

Lizmari Wolmarans

It feels like at least once a week there is a post on the Hoedspruit Facebook group about how exorbitant prices are in Hoedspruit or how someone was ripped off. Many reply with the simple comment of "more competition is necessary to even out pricing".

Economics consist of four basic principles, scarcity, supply and demand, costs and benefits, and incentives.

The first is simple to explain, if a product/service is scarce, you tend to pay more for it. Like for example if you want to purchase oranges (winter produce) in the summer, you are likely to pay a premium for it.

Supply and demand is also a straightforward concept. Supply is the amount of a specific good/service that is available in the market. Demand is the amount of the good/service that customers want to buy. Supply trends are more upward - as the prices rise, suppliers are willing to produce more. Demand trends are more downward - the higher the prices the less consumers will buy.

Costs and benefits assume that people usually behave rationally, which means that a consumer will try and maximise the ratio of benefits to costs in their decision making. The assumption is that a consumer will buy the best product they can afford, but not, perhaps, the best of its kind in the store at the higher price. Many people however, also tend to make emotional decisions and do not maximise the benefit.

Incentives, is not a "long story short". You are welcome to research the concept at your own time on the internet.

Many people are calling for more competition, but many small business owners may disagree

It can hold true that more competition gives consumers more choice. Competition may pressure businesses to improve their offerings which holds a greater benefit for the consumer. But there is a downside too. Too many options complicate decisions for consumers and some companies get so dead-set on their competitiveness that their service falters. Let's be honest, better service delivery trumps a better price any day of the week.

This all sounds quite logical, but there are other factors that play their hand, like consumer psychology, culture, and many other factors play just as big a part as the economic principles.

Too much competition often creates saturation. Each competitor chips away at the piece of the pie and in turn loses customer interest. Many small family owned businesses are not able to relinquish their piece of the pie, causing them to close their doors. They could try different marketing angles or product offerings, but it is hard to compete and win when you are barely surviving. Even more so when a competitor with greater capital backing easily weathers the storm.

There is the idea that competition drives prices down. Is this true? It is not. Small businesses that sell goods, more often than not, depend on quantity/weight targets for

discounts or even free delivery. If a new competitor takes a portion of their sales, it means that the business will not hit targets which in turn negates the ability to negotiate with suppliers for discounts. The battle turns from having the best product, to having the lowest price. Many businesses will then resort to generic products with lower prices, but as a wise man once said "goedkoop koop, is duur koop" (buy cheap, but in the end you will pay more).

Acquisition costs is another factor. Businesses compete for the same group of customers - if the demand increases, but the supply remains stable, the prices will increase. To add insult to injury, YES, transport costs do play a factor in the price of most goods delivered to Hoedspruit.

Competitors usually come in with new strategies to try and dominate a market. They may have more funding, better resources or equipment, advertising or more experience. Smaller business may not have the know-how, the inherent will or resources to compete with these titans. Consumers are quick to demand lower prices or more variety, but we tend to forget that it is no substitute for the relationships and service delivery models that some small businesses spent years developing. Besides, most businesses are willing to source goods which are not readily available, if asked.

We are not saying that competition is bad. A free market economy cannot survive without it.

As a consumer we need to educate ourselves to not be blind to the effort that goes into owning a small business - more often

than not it is to survive and not to thrive.

Don't be stereotypical on social media - you hurt the hardworking businesses in the same industry more than you can imagine. If you can complain about a business, you should be able to give a good review to those who have earned it. A good review or positive word of mouth far exceeds even the best advertising campaign. Doing a review directly on the REVIEW part of their social media platform will assist more with their ratings and SEO than a post on a page or group.

Seek out the companies/contractors who will go the extra mile for you, irrelevant of price. Talking about price, if you think it is not fair, shop or ask around - someone will be able to assist you in validating or renouncing your suspicion. A suggestion is to support the fair and refuse the dishonest.

You will find that most business owners in Hoedspruit are friendly and reasonable people - if you have a problem, speak to them directly and never resort to defamation on social media.

A Service delivery tip to business owners: The customer is not always right as the old saying goes, but the customer is always king. Humility and kindness can go a long way. Up your game, not your prices.

Happy "businessing" everyone.

Lizmari Wolmarans is the Chairperson of the Hoedspruit Chamber: hoedspruits@gmail.com

10 years celebration : Black Mambas All-Women Anti-Poaching Unit

Valeria van der Westhuizen

July is a special month for the conservation world, as it is celebrating World Ranger Day on the 31st July. Rangers are the first line of defence for wildlife in the Greater Kruger area, and the world. ‘Essential Planetary Health Workers’ - a term recently introduced by the International Ranger Federation, is self-explanatory and captures the essence of what rangers do, and why their services are so crucial for the planet and its wildlife to flourish.

This year, the Black Mambas All-Women APU, celebrate a decade of working in the Greater Kruger area.

The Black Mambas is the world’s first officially registered and recognized all-women anti-poaching and wildlife security unit, that is run by Transfrontier Africa NPC. They started their very first operation in 2013 in the Olifants West Nature Reserve. Back then there were only six ladies, but over the years the unit has grown to 36 rangers and environmental educators.

In the first year of operation, the bushmeat poaching reduced by 89% in the sections of their deployment, and no rhino have been lost since then. Currently the Mambas patrol 20 000 ha of Olifants West Nature Reserve and sections of Blyde-Olifants Conservancy.

The unit is unarmed. Their weapons are visual policing and crime deterrence, as well as education and relationships with the communities they come from. The Black Mambas’ ethos, states that no matter how hard you are trying to save and protect wildlife, it is unethical to put the lives of animals above the lives of humans.

The Mambas say: “There are different approaches to conserving our natural heritage, and different strategies to secure protected areas, and the animals from poachers. It was our choice not to carry guns, and instead, we deter the poachers from the boundaries of the reserve, displacing criminal activities and working with youth and matriarchs of the communities. This is the choice we are proud of as a ranger unit. This is a multi-generational investment into humans through women. We think that long term it is going to pay off, and we will see it in the younger generation. Their view on wildlife is going to be different, they will start effortlessly seeing intrinsic value in it.”

Olifants West Nature Reserve benefits from the Mambas strategy - the unit itself is unarmed but there is an armed backup for cases when they are needed. They



Happy 10 year anniversary to the all women APU unit - The Black Mambas

conduct daily foot and vehicle patrols, inspections, regular snare sweeps, road-blocks, nighttime observation, camera traps checks, disruption of the landscape and close monitoring of the rhinos in the reserve. They also offer environmental education for the locals both in schools and in the bush! These are the major tools in the toolbox of The Black Mambas APU. There have been many achievements over the last decade, some of which are the destruction of 16 poacher camps, they have assisted in 48 arrests, not to mention the thousands of snares removed. They have also rescued and re-released 52 iconic species from poacher traps. Currently they teach more than 2 000 children in 10 rural schools, and they fed 90 impoverished families in three communities during the Covid-19 pandemic. They have gone on to distribute 1 500 sustainable wood-burners in three communities, built Bush Babies Environmental Education community centre in Maseke and contributed to global research on illegal wildlife crime.

In the past 10 years the Mambas had have won 10 internationally recognized awards, including Champion of the Earth by the United Nations, and they have been recognized as Highly Com-mended ranger teams by IUCN twice.

The Black Mambas are more than just an anti-poaching unit, it is a fundamental women empowerment program, where local women are trained and deployed as wildlife protectors. Apart from that, they are encouraged to consistently grow through various wildlife courses, life skills workshops and professional networking. After the Black Mambas launched, new all-women ranger units started to emerge in Africa; Akashingas in Zimbabwe, Team Lioness in Kenya, Kufadza in Zambia, and The Plains Foundation in Botswana. The Mambas have catalysed new policy, strategy and women empowerment plans globally. As a founding company, Trans-frontier Africa NPC has received multiple invitations to present the model at inter-national forums, including the Interpol Wildlife Crime Committee and the New York Explorers Club.

Transfrontier Africa NPC thanks all their colleagues, partners, supporters, and col-laborators for making a huge difference to the conservation of species and uplift-ing the local communities in the Greater Kruger.

Happy 10 year anniversary to the Black Mambas APU and happy World Ranger Day to all the wonderful fellow rangers across southern Africa and the globe!



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Beauty or Beast Wildlife Exhibition raises funds for pangolins



One of the magnificent artwork pieces by Storm Barkas auctioned on the evening
Image: supplied



Dr Pete Rogers auctioning Warren Carys piece (above). Note beer in top pocket of keen onlooker ! Art pieces on show (top)
Image: Image sup-

Stephanie Mollett
Artist, art curator and art consultant

The opening evening of the Beauty or Beast Wildlife Exhibition held at the enchanting Warren Cary Wildlife Gallery on the 6th of July, was an extraordinary event that left attendees in awe. Showcasing the incredible talents of 36 dedicated artists, the exhibition captivated the senses and succeeded in raising a staggering R250 000 through an exhilarating auction, and an additional R50 000 from a percentage of sales, with proceeds going towards the vital conservation efforts for the endangered pangolins.

The exhibition was a stellar collaboration between the Warren Cary Wildlife Gallery and the two beneficiaries - Provet Veterinary Hospital, and the Umoya Khulula

Wildlife Centre. The collective passion and commitment of these two organizations to preserve and protect wildlife shone through every aspect of the exhibition, ensuring an immersive and impactful experience for all.

Supported by an impressive gathering of over 200 local wildlife enthusiasts and art aficionados, the atmosphere was filled with excitement and a shared sense of purpose. Guests had the opportunity to admire the captivating artworks and connect with like-minded individuals who shared a deep appreciation for the natural world.

The highlight of the evening's festivities was the auction, which saw nine incredible pangolin works of art generously donated by six participating artists. With their kind contributions and the enthusiastic support of the attendees, a remarkable amount of money was raised to support the conservation of pangolins, a critically endangered

species threatened by illegal wildlife trade.

The Beauty or Beast Wildlife Exhibition showcased a mesmerizing array of over 100 magnificent artworks, sculptures, and photographs. Each piece portrayed the awe-inspiring beauty and raw power of the natural world. From life size bronze sculptures to captivating animal portraits, the exhibition brought together the diverse artistic endeavours of the artists, collectively celebrating the wonders of wildlife.

The evening was accompanied by delectable culinary delights provided by the Yum Factory, expertly paired with fine wines from Safari Wine, ensuring a sensory experience that complemented the visual spectacle. Conversations flowed freely, as guests engaged in discussions about the artwork, the conservation cause, and their own personal experiences with wildlife.

The exhibition was a resounding success,

not only in terms of the funds raised, but also in generating awareness about the critical importance of protecting endangered species such as the pangolin. Through the power of art, this event reminded us of our responsibility to be stewards of the natural world, inspiring each individual to take their own actions towards conservation and the preservation of our planet's biodiversity, in each of their own unique ways.

This exhibition was a transformative celebration of wildlife, art, and conservation. Through the remarkable talent displayed by the participating artists, the contributions made by generous donors, and the unwavering support of the attendees, this event left an indelible mark on the hearts and minds of all those present.



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SOLE MANDATE

INGWELALA, GREATER KRUGER R 5 950 000
Beds 6 | Baths 3.5 | Floor size: 450m²

50 % Share - There is no better investment than Big 5, Greater Kruger properties. This is one of the largest homes at Ingwelala which can accommodate up to 12 people. The house comes furnished and equipped and includes a 50% share in the Land Rover game-viewer.

Yvette Thompson - 083 655 7176 Ref: 2102135



SOLE MANDATE

APARTMENT IN HOEDSPRUIT R 670 000
Bedrooms 1 | Bathrooms 1 | Floor: 69 m²

This apartment is a great investment property, with a reliable tenant in place. It has an open plan living area and kitchen, as well as bathroom on the lower level and an upstairs bedroom. Municipal water supply and pre-paid electricity. Communal pool and braai facilities.

Michelle Severin - 083 469 3821 Ref: 2156206



SOLE MANDATE

GETAWAY SPOT IN UMBABAT R 600 000
Bedrooms 2 | Bathrooms 1 | Farm size: 245 ha

This is an amazing opportunity to get into the Greater Kruger Park with the Big 5 right on your doorstep. A 13th share in this unique 245ha farm in the Umbabat area can make your dream become reality. The rustic camp offers furnished accommodation for up to 10 people.

Mike Dodds - 082 906 7004 Ref: 2153763



SOLE MANDATE

BLYDE BOTANICAL RESERVE R 3 890 000
Bedrooms 3 | Bathrooms 2 | Floor size: 373 m²

The location is serene and peaceful; magnificent botanical gardens, large trees and the ever-impressive Drakensberg Mountains surround this home. This home has a free flow layout for comfortable living, lots of windows, and inviting views of the outside wherever you are in the home.

Jason Jones - 083 267 4794 Ref: 2140767



SOLE MANDATE

GUERNSEY, HOEDSPRUIT R 17 500 000
Bedrooms 18 | Bathrooms 15 | Floor size: 1235 m²

This property is home to a well-known restaurant and pub, guest accommodation, as well as several home rentals and accommodation rentals. It is ± 4 hectares in size and borders the Timbavati and is 500 meters from the gate and 11 km from the Eastgate Airport. Income via various rental options.

Rob Severin - 083 469 3820 Ref: 2149661



DUAL MANDATE

KARONGWE - BIG 5 R 11 950 000
Bedrooms 7 | Bathrooms 6 | Traverse: 8,000 ha

This stunning private lodge with two homes, is nestled under large riverine trees and overlooks the river. One house has three bedrooms and the other four bedrooms. Entertainment area with pool, bar and braai area. The purchase includes furnishings, Land Cruiser game viewer and staff.

Rob Severin - 083 469 3820 Ref: 2154120



SOLE MANDATE

BLYDE WILDLIFE ESTATE R 4 324 000
Bedrooms 3 | Bathrooms 3 | Floor size: 360 m²

This home is privately situated and overlooks the wilderness area. The layout includes open plan kitchen, living and dining room as well as a separate scullery and a separate laundry. The living area and bedrooms all lead out to the large, covered patio with pool and elevated views.

Jason Jones - 083 267 4794 Ref: 2143428



SOLE MANDATE

ELEPHANT ROCK ECO ESTATE R 700 000
Stand size: 2,400 m²

This elevated bushveld stand features lovely trees and views over the lowveld. The stand is located in the first phase of the development. Elephant Rock Eco Estate is 240 hectares in size with 125 stands. The estate is located approximately 30 minutes out of Hoedspruit on the R530.

Michelle Severin - 083 469 3821 Ref: 2152428



SOLE MANDATE

HOEDSPRUIT WILDLIFE ESTATE R 3 700 000
Beds 3 | Baths 3 | Floor size: 160 m²

This beautiful home has it all! The lounge opens up onto the patio and entertainment area with pool and well-maintained garden. Upstairs is a study and a second lounge. The immediate area around the house is enclosed by a latte fence. There is a double carport plus a garden shed.

Yvette Thompson - 083 655 7176 Ref: 2143619



SOLE MANDATE

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

This farm is within Greater Makalali Nature Reserve, which has the Big 5 and 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

KHAYA NDLOVU GAME RESERVE R 3 250 000
Stand size: 1 ha

This beautiful river site is the ideal blank canvas for you to design and build your dream bush home. The stand is set between large riverine trees on the edge of the seasonal Sandspruit river, in the exclusive Khaya Ndlovu, a low density residential reserve with only 35 stands on 1,307 ha.

Yvette Thompson - 083 655 7176 Ref: 2154781

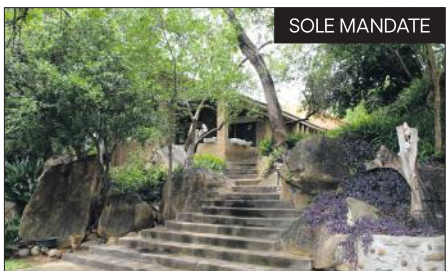


SOLE MANDATE

MAHLATHINI PRIVATE GAME RESERVE R 4 500 000
Beds 3 | Baths 3 | Floor size: 479 m²

This stunning home with its quality features is situated on a 21-hectare freehold stand in a secure estate bordering the Kruger National Park. It is ideal to be used as a holiday home or even permanent living. The 21-hectares offer a lot of privacy and no one else may traverse onto your property.

Mike Dodds - 082 906 7004 Ref: 2143562



SOLE MANDATE

NDLOVUMZI R 4 458 000
Bedrooms 4 | Bathrooms 4 | Floor size: 300 m²

This tranquil home's is situated overlooking the Olifants River and is surrounded by large riverine trees and rocky outcrops. The open plan living, dining and newly fitted kitchen are all under high vaulted ceilings that make this home light and bright and there is also a separate scullery.

Jason Jones - 083 267 4794 Ref: 2152063



SOLE MANDATE

RAPTOR'S VIEW WILDLIFE ESTATE R 6 000 000
Beds 4 | Baths 3 | Floor size: 312 m²

This immaculate property is privately located in the third phase of this sought after estate. It has a comfortable living area with lounge, dining room and large kitchen. The large covered patio with pool and mountain views is great for entertaining. It has a boma area with pizza oven to the side.

Michelle Severin - 083 469 3821 Ref: 2155933



SOLE MANDATE

MAFUNYANE, KARONGWE R 14 000 000
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: 2107650



SOLE MANDATE

NDLOVUMZI R 5 200 000
Bedrooms 8 | Bathrooms 8 | Floor size: 480 m²

Set on 21 hectares and overlooking the Olifants River, this property offers four separate residential dwellings, the main unit has two downstairs bedrooms and three on the upper landing. There are three additional chalets, each of these overlooking the Olifants River

Jason Jones - 083 267 4794 Ref: 2151582

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Spotlight: Anton Mzimba lives again !

Mark Bishop

Anton Mzimba's story is well renowned and was told in the Kruger2Canyon News (August 2022) soon after his untimely death. Now through the efforts of Howard Walker, the landowners in the Timbavati and others, Anton has come to life once more. A sculpture of Anton was unveiled at the Graeme Naylor Museum in the Timbavati Private Nature Reserve.

The sculpture came about through the efforts of Howard Walker dealing with various donors and funders for the project. Renowned bronze sculptor Brendan Leggat from Plettenberg Bay was commissioned for the project, which took a total of five months to complete, from inception to unveiling!

As Brendan said, "Few people get to have a sculpture made of them which clearly is testament to the man Anton was. Through this piece I hope that his legacy will live on forever". "For me I wanted the piece to be very impactful because of the presence that Anton projected ... I sculptured it in a way that he is looking out and beyond what the people around him are doing. It signifies his deep understanding and empathy for the bush, the animals, and the critically important work that he did in the conservation of our natural heritage," says Brendan.

Anyone viewing this sculpture will agree that the concentration by the artist on the smaller things and nuances of the person allowed him to create an extremely life-like sculpture on the man that Anton was. Howard Walker's first impression was one of total amazement – it was like looking at Anton in real life. Matt Lindenberg (Global Conservation Corps) commented that it was like he was looking at Anton's youngest son – a splitting image of Anton!

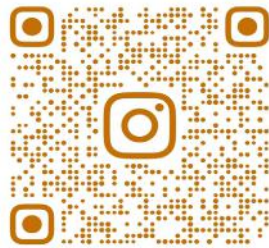
The sculpture was placed and unveiled at the Graeme Naylor Museum on the 1st July 2023 to coincide with the Timbavati Private Nature Reserve AGM. The sculpture was 'constructed' from Brendan's close study of pictures and videos of Anton. It was cast at the Bronze Fields Foundry in Plettenberg Bay. The sculpture is a complete once-off - a total of 40 panels were cast into bronze directly and were put together with seamless welding in bronze, to appear as a 'one piece' sculpture. It is a life-sized bronze sculpture of Anton and weighs a total of 130 kilograms.

To round off this amazing tribute to a giant of a man, a small miniature of the sculpture was cast in bronze and will be presented as the floating trophy for the annual award of 'Ranger of the Year' within the Timbavati Private Nature Reserve.

It is hoped that this sculpture will bring the memory of Anton Mzimba to life for everyone that sets eyes on it. Hopefully it will also create an awareness about all those incredible people that involve themselves, and put themselves on the frontline, in pursuing their passion to safeguard our fauna and flora for generations to come.



The life-size bronze sculpture of Anton Mzimba sculptured by Brendan Leggat. Take a visit to the Graeme Naylor Museum to view this spectacular artwork and the many other impressives displays.



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Picky view- The Bush Pub



Delicious prawns (above), nachos and pizza (above right). Images supplied

This time I ventured forth into the wild for Father's Day – a test for any establishment, what with unruly adults, screaming kids and other irate patrons. Our target was The Bush Pub and Inn, close to the Timbavati/Klaserie gate.

What a pleasant surprise we had – our group was well represented with a bunch of adults and some hungry teenagers. What a great casual spot for a lively afternoon's entertainment.

We settled down under the welcome shade of the netting precariously suspended over the patio. The music was a touch loud, but the atmosphere was jovial and celebratory. We started with a healthy order of ice-cold beer, and then proceeded hungrily to the chips with cheese sauce and bacon bits which we all tucked into. That was good and was considered a real devilish treat for most of us.

We then followed up with mains of beef nachos, prawns, and vegetarian pizzas.

The beef nachos were man-sized – cheesy with a good helping of beef. The teenagers made short work of that serving and were well satisfied and satiated. To round it off perfectly it was suggested that a larger quantity of guacamole and sour cream

could have been served. Was it made with Father's Day – a test for any establishment, what with unruly adults, screaming kids and other irate patrons. Our target was The Bush Pub and Inn, close to the Timbavati/Klaserie gate.

Our dear friend almost chewed her fingers off in devouring her garlic/lemon/peri-peri/butter prawns – served with delicious yellow rice. Beautifully firm, cooked to a 'T' the prawns were fantastic and this dish was definitely the hit of the day.

The vegetarian pizzas were well topped with generous amounts of avocado, pineapple and more. The bases were thin and crispy and to be honest, were well worth the wait. The delivery of the food, however fantastic, was very slow – unfortunately our order got stuck behind the rest of the restaurant (or so it felt) and we did wait an age for our main courses. This could be understood as a function of the Father's Day chaos, so we pocketed our disdain and 'sucked it up' and ordered another beer! The staff were very attentive and communicated the delay at regular intervals – importantly not leaving the patrons guessing.

Even after lunch we stayed and enjoyed the ambience of the afternoon – we were so satisfied that deserts would have been wasted on us – and so we opted for a more liquid finale.

Blueberry Tarts from the Veggie Diva

Fresh blueberries are starting to come into season and with this chilly weather there is nothing more delicious than a freshly baked fruit tart.

These tarts are simple and so pretty served with a dollop of cream or ice cream. And don't forget Blueberries are a super food so don't hold back, they are so good for you.

Ingredients

- 2 1/2-3 cups fresh or frozen blueberries
- 1-2 tablespoon corn starch
- 1/4 cup honey or granulated sugar
- 1 tablespoon lemon zest + 1 teaspoon lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon fresh thyme leaves (or 2 teaspoons dried thyme)
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 sheet frozen puff pastry, thawed
- 1 egg, beaten
- Coarse sugar
- Vanilla ice cream, for serving (optional)

Instructions

- Preheat the oven to 200°C.
- Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
- In a medium bowl, toss together the blueberries and 1 tablespoon corn starch. Add the honey, lemon zest, lemon juice, thyme, and vanilla.
- On a lightly floured surface, roll the puff pastry out until 1/2 cm thick. Cut into 4 rectangles, placing each on the prepared baking sheet. Arrange the blueberries evenly over each rectangle, leaving a 1cm border. Fold the edges up and over the blueberries.
- Brush the edges of the pastry with beaten egg and sprinkle with coarse sugar.
- Transfer to the oven and bake for 20-25 minutes or until golden brown. It is OK if the edges get dark.
- Let them cool slightly and serve with ice cream. Enjoy!



This month's trivia questions:

1. In what game would you see Stamen, Blackwood and Gerber?
2. What was the breed of John Steinbeck's dog Charley?
3. The male of what species has his abdomen ripped apart on mating - then dies?
4. From what modern country does damask come from?
5. Anethum tastes a little like aniseed - what herb is it?
6. In Wisconsin it is against state law to serve apple pie without what?
7. In York its legal to kill a Scotsman (not on a Sunday), if he carries what weapon?
8. What comes in varieties called Duncan, Burgundy and Marsh?
9. The United Nations in New York were originally where?
10. What is the last element - Alphabetically?
11. In what country is the northernmost point of Africa?
12. What kind of animal is Jormangard in Norse mythology?
13. Assassin Magazine and Sofa come from which language?
14. In what book did we meet the Eoli and the Morlocks?
15. In what film did Charlie Chaplain have his first speaking part 1940?
16. Where was Harry Houdini born?
17. Ville-Marie was the original name of where?
18. Omphalitis is an infection of what part of the body?
19. In Call of the Wild by Jack London what was the dogs name?
20. Charles Bingley was a character in what classic novel?

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Cont. from page 1

Operations of the pipeline

The physical conveyancing of the water and maintenance of the pipeline is done by MBB Consulting Engineers (MBB) acting on behalf of RMB.

There are numerous take-off points along the pipeline to service the farmers within the irrigation project. Most farmers have their own pumps to secure this take-off as there is not enough pressure from the gravitational flow to push it through the irrigation systems installed by the farmers.

The whole pipeline system is run by MBB via a digital monitoring system that provides all the necessary information required to maintain and run the pipeline effectively and efficiently. If a pipe bursts, for example, information is immediately relayed to the MBB control centre, and the appropriate action can be taken. This system also has the ability to monitor the flow in the pipeline and to monitor the offtake of water at various designated points. It also monitors the pressure in the pipeline, amongst other things. MBB and the water utility company reside in the same offices, so that communication between the two organisations is seamless and immediate.

On the pipeline there is a pump station called the Parma pump station. This pump station is responsible for pumping water 'up the hill' to the water purification plant located in Drakensig, the residential area of the Air Force Base Hoedspruit. This is exclusively what this pump station does. The Parma pump belongs to RMB.

From the Parma pump down the pipeline to the Blyde River, there are two pumps situated on the river called the Essex pumps. Each one of these pumps has double the capacity of the Parma pump. These belong to the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure.

When the Air Force Base residential area at Drakensig was originally developed, there was no Parma pump, and the water was pumped by the Essex pumps out of the river straight to Drakensig. The original plan was that Drakensig, Suikerkop (a small residential area near Eastgate Airport) and at a later stage the airstrip at Eastgate Airport, were all to be included in the water supply chain. At that stage when this development took place Hoedspruit was a very small town. There was no municipality, and it fell under the original Services Council. As a 'favour', the Air Force Base (Drakensig) agreed that they would supply the small town of Hoedspruit with water, as they had the capacity to do so. There was no formal agreement entered into between the town and the base, and it was merely considered a 'favour' to supply. Currently Drakensig effectively provides Hoedspruit with its water.

In principle the Essex pumps could provide all the water to Drakensig and the corresponding reservoirs, but this does not happen. This is partly due to the pumps not being properly maintained, and the apparent inability of departmental personnel to run the pumps. Those pumps are currently run by the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure. The Essex pumps pump water through the same pipeline, and via the Parma pump station to the water purification plant in Drakensig.

It seems that the Essex pumps should effectively be a backup to the Parma pump, if this pump is in any way is compromised. Should the Parma pump break down, the Air Force Base and the town would be supplied with too small a volume of gravitationally fed water to be sufficient for the requirements of both. This of course poses a huge supply problem which should be negated by the Essex pumps providing backup. But for years this backup has not worked effectively, because of the inability of the Essex pumps to be run correctly and maintained

in proper and good working order.

MBB have in the past offered to take over the running of the Essex pumps, but this offer was rejected by the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure.

The Drakensig system

Within the Drakensig residential area there is a purification plant which consists of six dams. One dam must be maintained every week - so effectively there are five dams functioning in the purification plant every week. All dams are operated on a sand filter system. From the purification plant the water is pumped into the reservoirs where chemicals are added, and the water then distributed accordingly. (The reservoirs are made up of two 5 mega litre reservoirs and one 2,5 mega litre reservoir, giving a total capacity of 12,5 mega litres). The system is currently operating at 150% capacity, 50% above total capacity.

The problem is not the delivery of the quantity of water as mentioned, but the fact that the purification takes time. With the current six purification dams and only five ever operational (because one has to be cleaned every week), there is a dire need for an additional purification plant to be installed.

From Drakensig, the Air Force Base, Eastgate Airport and Suikerkop are supplied from one pipeline. The town is serviced by a take-off point from that pipeline at the reservoir. The Maruleng Municipality is only a distributor/conveyancer of water - they are not responsible for the source of the water. This is done despite the fact that there is no formal contract securing the water supply from Drakensig to the town.

The Department of Public Works and Infrastructure are responsible for the pipeline from the Essex pumps which joins the pipeline from the Parma pump to the purification plants in Drakensig (monitored by the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure - part of the problem because if anything happens on this pipeline it is a nightmare to get it fixed). They are also responsible for the pipelines from the reservoirs in Drakensig, to the Air Force Base, Eastgate Airport and Suikerkop. The Maruleng Municipality is responsible for the water pipelines in town.

If the Drakensig reservoirs run dry, the Maruleng Municipality can do nothing about it. They are only responsible for the reticulation of the water around the town. The municipality also reticulates water to the Hoedspruit Wildlife Estate, Raptors View Wildlife Estate, and part of Bosveld centre.

The money issue

From 1994 up to July 2020 the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure was responsible for paying the water utilities to MBB as per the contract. Service departments for example the Department of Defence, Department of Education would pay the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure for the water that they would be supplied. The Department of Public Works and Infrastructure are supposed to maintain the infrastructure. Until 2021 the Maruleng Municipality was supposed to pay the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure for the conveyancing of the water - this is because the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure were paying MBB for the conveyancing of the water from the Blyderivierpoort Dam (to Drakensig) as well as the associated electricity usage related to that service.

But the Maruleng Municipality has only paid for the conveyancing of the water until 2012. From 2012 to 2021 the municipality account owed to the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure stands in the region of R9 million. The reason for non-payment was supposedly because the water quality delivered to the town from Draken-



sig was not up to standard, which in general was not true, although the quality was not good for a very short period of time and as a result of the 2012 floods. Due to the general non-payment from service departments throughout South Africa, the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure withdrew from paying for utilities and has transferred that responsibility onto the different service departments, in this case the Department of Defence. The Department of Defence has subsequently taken over the payment of the conveyancing of water to the utility as of July 2020 - including the town usage, although the contract for the conveyancing the water remains between MBB and the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure.

Although the residents of the Maruleng Municipality pay for their water usage monthly, the reciprocal payment is seemingly not paid over to the Department of Defence. This begs the question as to where is that money going?

The Parma pump take-off point is critical and this is properly measured by MBB. One of the questions that could be asked, is do Eastgate Airport and Suikerkop pay for their water usage, or is this usage included as a whole in the Department of Defence's cost and billing? In reality it seems that it is only a matter of time before the Department of Defence starts digging their heels in with regard to the payment for the conveyancing of water to them and the town. In fact, at the time of going to print, it was disclosed to the Kruger2Canyon News that a flow meter had been installed on the 21st July 2023, to monitor water usage, and the Maruleng Municipality will now be receiving monthly invoices for that usage.

What are the alternatives?

The alternatives it seems are simple: taking into consideration that there is enough water in the system and that the water allocation was approved some time ago. It is quite clear that the ability of the utility to provide water is not in dispute, it is the infrastructure that is the major problem in securing a constant and reliable clean water supply to the town.

The municipality that is supposed to look after the town's bulk water supply is in fact the Mopani District Municipality. Legally Mopani District Municipality is the water service authority in the district of Mopani.

The workable and relatively easy alternative is almost in place. There is land behind Obaro that has already been purchased by the Mopani District Municipality and the pipeline has already been laid to that point - where a water purification plant has been planned to be built. As this pipe has been laid for some time, its serviceability might be questionable - but it is there. This is a

Mopani District Municipality pipeline. A pump station should be installed at Zandspruit River where it will join the irrigation pipeline.

A few years ago, and with a company by the name of Zenobia upgrading the infrastructure in town - the construction of this alternative of the current water system was due to be started in 2018 and completed in 2021.

The problem that arose was that the engineer involved in the infrastructure in the town, identified two plots alongside Drakensig reservoirs, but outside of the base. It was originally thought that this land belonged to the municipality, but that is in fact incorrect. The plots belong to a town resident. This resident is not willing to sell that land, which poses a problem as to where the reservoirs for the town would be constructed. This site is the preferred site for the reservoirs as it is the highest point in town, and pipes have already been laid to that point. The town reservoir will be built outside Drakensig so that maintenance can be conducted on the structure - Drakensig is a National Key Point, and a civilian reservoir cannot and should not be constructed within the confines of the base.

All that needs to be done (if push comes to shove) is to expropriate the two plots with compensation (as per the Expropriation Act 63 of 1975), build the reservoirs, build the purification plant behind Obaro, connect the pipes between the purification plant and the reservoirs, and the supply of water to town will be perfectly secured. As previously pointed out, the condition of the laid pipes is unknown as they were laid some time ago.

The Mopani District Municipality will then convey the bulk water to the town and the municipality will pay them for the usage of the water - quite simple.

Originally Kampersrus and Scotia were included in this plan, but the plan has changed over the years many times, and it seems that these two settlements are not in the proposed mix.

The Drakensig sewage system

The plants at Drakensig are also operating at 150%, meaning it is also operating at 50% above total capacity.

All sewage goes to the sewage plant at Drakensig - BUT it clearly does not work. The evaporation dams take the inflow of sewage from the town. However, if the sewage is 'running' at 150% capacity, but the system is only operating at about 30% of its capacity - the net result is that raw sewage has to flow somewhere - and, from a reliable source, it apparently flows onto the neighbouring farm!

There are sewage pumps down Leguan Street (often non-operational and pending confirmation, may flow through Southern Cross School!) and near La Bamba, where a

‘water jenga’ in Hoedspruit



Farm irrigation water pump (top) and water treatment plant (above)
Images: Supplied Pampsix & Gomez David

second pump is supposed to run smoothly, the raw sewage creates a dreadful odour and a serious health hazard. These are operated by Mopani District Municipality, and they are supposed to pump all the sewage from the town through to Drakensig purification plant. The system however is dysfunctional.

Consider that Hoedspruit Wildlife Estate has their own sewage plant, Raptors View Wildlife Estate works on septic tanks as does the Zandspruit Estates – so these areas do not contribute any part to the sewage load.

The latest plan according to the Air Force, is that they are going to fix and extend the current sewage plant to accommodate the town until 2040. The new hospital will be directing their sewage through the Hoedspruit Wildlife Estates sewage plant, but the mall (if completed) will be going through the Drakensig system.

Take over

The Department of Water Affairs and Sanitation is very eager to take over the pipe-

line system, which is subject to a contract between the Blyde Water Utility Company (on behalf of RMB), and the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure. This contract expires on the 24th of February 2024. A reliable source has indicated that RMB will not pass over the ownership of the pipeline to anyone until being paid in full and final settlement for the financed loan (plus outstanding debt).

The Eskom issue

There was an application to Eskom by the Hoedspruit Chamber of Commerce, to exempt the pump stations from load shedding schedules – this was denied. If the Parma pump station is out of power for four hours, Hoedspruit will have no water.

Parma is currently big enough to push through enough required water to the town (if there is no further development and the demand for water stays the same), and as the Essex pumps are controlled by Department of Public Works and Infrastructure who exhibit an element of uncoopera-

tiveness, this renders the system critically vulnerable, especially at stages of high-level load shedding. There has been copious correspondence on this matter between the Chamber and Eskom, but Eskom responded (via the Provincial Manager) that an exemption will not be allowed because some consumers on the electric lines servicing the pumps are behind in their electricity payments, and because of that, Eskom will not allow the pumps to be exempt from load shedding.

Further concerning water related matters

The Blyderivierpoort Dam has a capacity for 54 million cubic metres, and a through-flow (water that must flow downstream that no one can use) of around 21,5 million cubic metres. The agricultural allocation is around 8,9 million cubic metres. Hoedspruit has an allocation of around 3,7 million cubic metres. According to MBB, the town uses around 912 000 cubic metres of water, including Hoedspruit Wildlife Estate and Raptors View Wildlife Estate.

Kampersrus, Scotia and The Oaks are allocated about 2,6 million cubic metres – but this is not fully utilised. Kampersrus uses some, Scotia has no access to this water because of simple infrastructure problems that are not being rectified, and The Oaks, and other villages down the line, are not getting nearly enough water!

The Oaks, and most villages down the line, are being supplied by water trucks! The water truck ‘contractors’ will apparently not allow the water installation to The Oaks to be completed – it is not known at this stage who owns the water trucks supplying The Oaks, suffice to say that these trucks are filled in town from the town allocation at various fire hydrants in town including the Springbok Street fire hydrant! This has been viewed on the Town Watch camera system. It has come to light from a reliable source that this supply is offered as far wide as

Mabins some 55km away! The water being sourced for free, and allegedly sold, clearly carries a handsome profit.

Other unused installations

After the 2012 floods, it was decided, with a Department of Water Affairs grant, to engage a contractor to sink 11 boreholes to supply emergency water to the town. The boreholes are in the drainage line behind the Kamagelo Centre. All 11 boreholes were installed (at an estimated cost of R12 million) post 2012, electrified and were fully functional. These pumped water into a system near the municipality offices. The system consists of two water tanks and one container - one is a raw water tank, the container is a purification plant, and the last tank is a purified water tank. This facility can supply the town with emergency water.

This system has not been utilised at all since 2012, and is now rusted through, and totally dysfunctional. The system was only run once when the engineers tested it on completion of the installation! The facility is so under-maintained and mismanaged that the lock securing the doors to the water purification facility in the container cannot be opened because it is rusted tight. This is a perfectly workable system that could supply basic water needs to the town in case of emergency – but is totally dysfunctional.

The town should have their own sewage plant – no confirmation could be obtained that land for this type of project is available in town (or just outside). There is, however, a massive sewage plant built at Kampersrus that has never worked a day! The original idea was that all sewage from Hoedspruit would be pumped there, but this idea and project was not carried through.

The future

The problem that Hoedspruit faces is that there are more houses going up on the estates, more houses are being built in town, there could be a densification of the urban area; and all this contributes to an increase in the demand for water. There is no possible way, that under the current system there can be an increase in water delivery since there is not a big enough water purification plant to handle that increase in water usage.

Water must also be secured to the rural settlements like Scotia and The Oaks, and villages down the line, and it will take brave municipal interference to do that. Our policing has to be dogged and we must not, as a community, bow to the ravages of corruption and crime.

The sewage issue has to be posing a serious health hazard to the town, especially with the increase in development and population. That there has been no municipal injunction on this matter is quite unbelievable. Is it a matter of “Nero fiddles while Rome burns”?

If the townsfolk of Hoedspruit had been serious about this water and sewage issue, this matter would have been solved years ago. However, this will take effort, and sadly there seems to be too much apathy within the residents of the town to get things actioned correctly and timeously, and to put their weighted support behind the people that are giving their time and unerring efforts to try and sort these matters out for all of us. The time is now, to get up, be heard, and solve this matter once and for all!

This investigation is ongoing, and more information and revelations will follow.

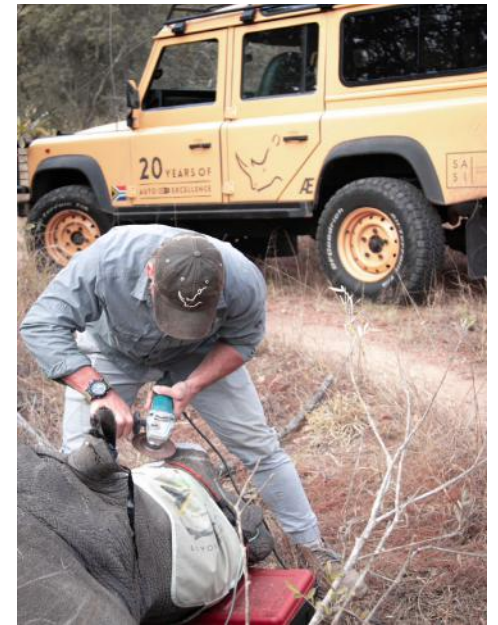
<h2>Trivia answers:</h2>	1. Bridge	8. Grapefruit	15. The Great Dictator
	2. Standard poodle	9. San Francisco	16. Budapest, Hungary
	3. Honeybee	10. Zirconium	17. Montreal
	4. Syria	11. Tunisia	18. The umbilical stump
	5. Dill	12. Serpent	19. Buck
	6. Cheese	13. Arabic	20. Pride and Prejudice
	7. Bow and arrow	14. The Time Machine by HG Wells	

Stormers rugby stars shining bright for rhino conservation

Nkombe Rhino



Left to right - Joe Pietersen, Paul de Wet, Migael Wahl, Kade Wolhuter and Jean-Luc du Plessis (above), smoothing the horn with a grinder (right) and the ops team busy at work (below right) Images supplied



Mark Bishop

Since the early 2000's Nkombe Rhino, a South African non-profit organisation, has focused their endeavours on the protection of endangered and threatened species.

This is no back-office organisation, they are an organisation that is actively on the ground supporting and helping conservation, from anti-poaching units to veterinarians and helicopter pilots. Through a pool of resources and sustainable partnerships, the organisations' aim is to better impact the conservation realm as a collective unit of like-minded organisations. A target is to create and engender an awareness in people to the plight of all threatened fauna and flora and to stimulate an everlasting involvement in the conservation cause.

I was fortunate enough to be involved in the Greater Makalali Nature Reserve (GMNR) on a specific project financed by Nkombe Rhino through the fund-raising efforts of three up-and-coming rugby stars from the Stormers camp, together with their fitness and conditioning coach. Nkombe Rhino is the brainchild of Joe Pietersen (ex-Stormers rugby, Founder and Director of Nkombe Rhino), who is on hand and on the ground, participating in all interventions by the organisation.

Kade Wolhuter, Jean-Luc du Plessis, Paul de Wet and Migael Wahl (all Stormers) arrived in the Lowveld with a certain amount of trepidation, for what lay ahead.

Kade Wolhuter, had initially reached out to Joe to find out how to get involved in conservation projects. He brought in three other friends to raise money together, to allow them to build a project to take part in an adventure to dehorn rhinos in the Kruger2Canyons biosphere area.

The experience was mind-blowing for the four, two of which had not ever been to the Lowveld! Never could they have imagined being close-up and personal with these beautiful brutes, taking part in a dehorning operation that could effectively contribute to saving the species for later generations. The learning curve was exponential for all and has now sown the seed for more in-

volvement in conservation.

GMNR have been involved in dehorning rhino for many years. Their success in this endeavour is a combination of good veld and animal management, and a very strong anti-poaching and security set-up.

Dehorning is a costly exercise, is stressful for the animals and needs to be repeated regularly. It's not only a matter of dehorning – a lot of research is also done on the rhinos whilst they are 'doped' including DNA sampling and ear notching.

Five animals were selected, and together with helicopter pilot, Gerry Macdonald, and his twin brother, Bruce, in his fixed wing aircraft, the Provet team headed by Dr Pete Rogers, and the team from GMNR headed by Warden Antony Collett, it was 'all systems go' for a good day for conservation.

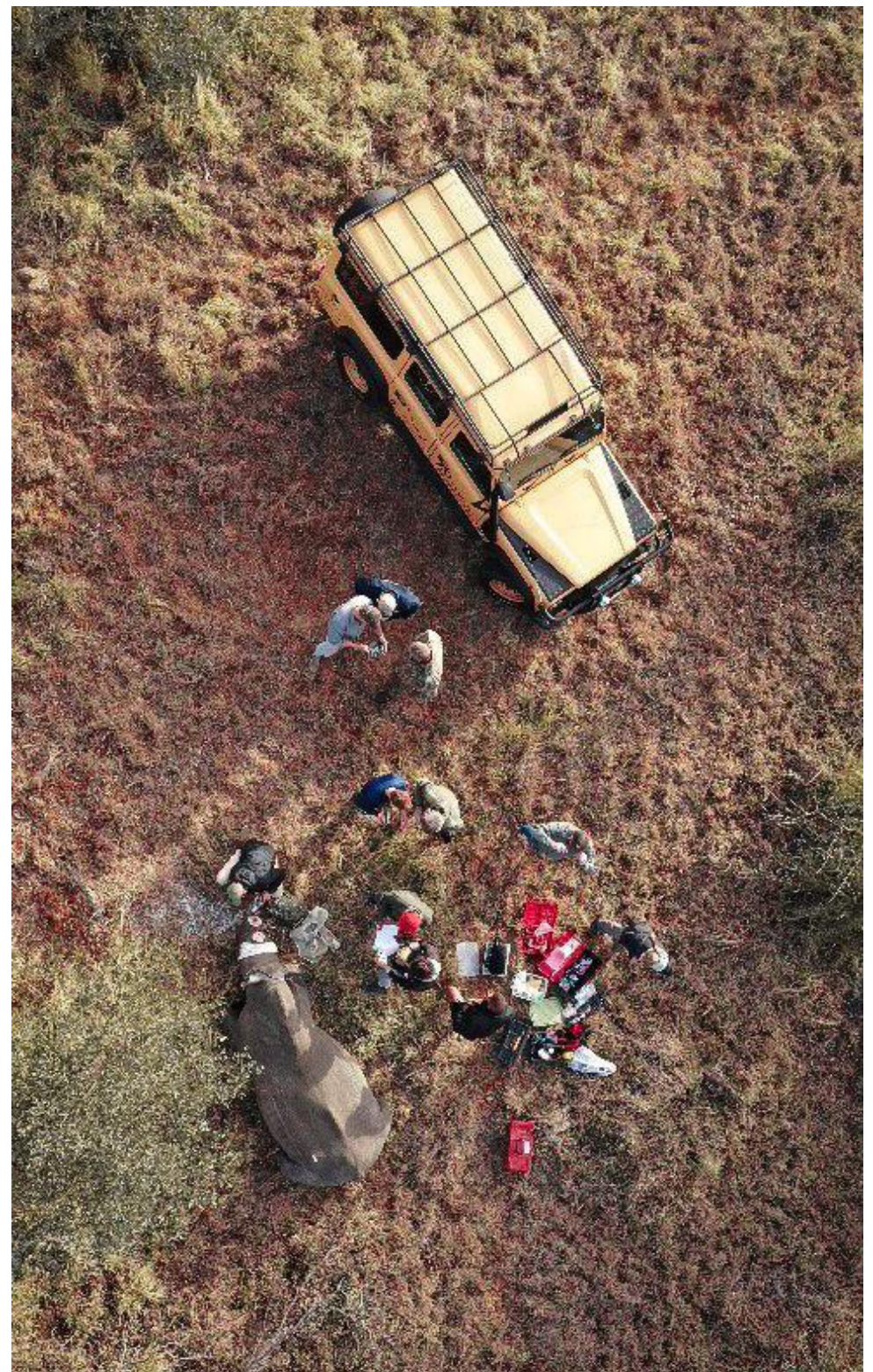
The operation, finely tuned and planned, went off without a glitch. Bruce located the animals and called in Gerry in the helicopter, with Pete ready with the dart gun. Once darted the team on the ground were called in to secure the safety of the animals and the dehorning began.

No animal was 'out' for more than 25 minutes, in which time all tests and dehorning was done. The team remained on site to ensure that the animals had no adverse effects of the tranquiliser and were up and about in a normal fashion.

The whole process was so well co-ordinated that within the morning, all five rhinos had been successfully dehorned. The slick functioning of the team on the ground, air and the veterinary services ensured that the animals experienced the minimal amount of stress possible whilst being dehorned, checked, and subsequently 'released'.

The Nkombe Rhino motto of "Custodians of Hope" certainly resonated with all involved, and it is hoped that the amazing work done by this organisation, continues and grows. We all must do what we can to reduce the poaching scourge, to support those that look after our wildlife heritage, and to safeguard our fauna and flora for generations to come.

For more information on Nkombe Rhino, who they are, their numerous projects, or simply to donate to a cause, access the website at nkomberhino.org



Capturing photons



Ben Coley
Celestial Events SA

Our understanding of the cosmos is entirely dependent on our ability to interpret light. The distances to objects in the sky are so great that they are almost impossible to comprehend. Our closest star, after the Sun, is over 40 trillion kilometres away. This journey would take around 5 million years to complete in a commercial airliner, but light accomplishes this feat in a little over 4 years!

Our understanding of physics and technology will have to improve dramatically before we can reach these mysterious realms in person. By capturing and studying their distant light, we have been able to visualise and analyse the atmosphere on strange new worlds, the birth and death of stars, and even galaxies formed during the inception of the universe, more than 13 billion years ago. Ultimately, the key to understanding space is to capture its photons.

Astrophotography used to be reserved for scientists and researchers with access to highly bespoke equipment, but nowadays almost anyone can capture the beauty of the night sky in incredible detail, without the need for specialist tools. Cameras capture photons, and modern technology allows today's entry level cameras the ability to see into the depths of the cosmos, returning images of such beauty and impact, that the experience is beyond humbling; almost spiritual.

To capture simple night images, all that is required is a dark night and camera mounted on a tripod. It is best to plan these sessions away from areas of major light pollution and when the moon is not visible, in order to maximise the darkness.

Here is quick guide to setting up your camera for the perfect nightscape.

Equipment

Make sure that the camera is in manual mode so that bespoke settings can be applied. Remember that most cameras are not designed with astrophotography in mind and have to be told what to do in these situations.

Ensure that the picture quality is set to RAW. This will mean larger files, but the camera will record a huge amount of additional data that can be teased out in postprocessing to accentuate the scene.

Due to the long shutter speeds being employed, a sturdy tripod is best to avoid any camera-shake. Try and set up

out of the wind and add additional weight to the tripod in order make it more secure is recommended.

A remote trigger will help to reduce any vibrations caused when the shutter button is depressed. If one is not available, then use the timer mode set to 5-10 seconds so that the camera stops vibrating before the mirror is released.

Composition

A basic rule of thumb for any form of photography is the 'rule of thirds'. Astrophotography is no different, so when planning a shot, try to ensure that elements of the foreground and background adhere to this. Imagine dividing the image into 9 equal squares and place the areas of interest of the image where the lines meet. For horizons, try and frame the photo so that a third is foreground and two thirds is sky, or vice versa.

'Leading lines' are very aesthetically pleasing to the eye and can direct a viewer's eyes to the focal points of the photo. Consider using straight lines such as roads, fences, shorelines, etc., to create a more three-dimensional effect to the image.

Remember that rules are made to be broken however, and it is a great idea to try new things and go against the norm! Beauty is in the eye of the beholder and unusual images can be particularly intriguing to the eye!

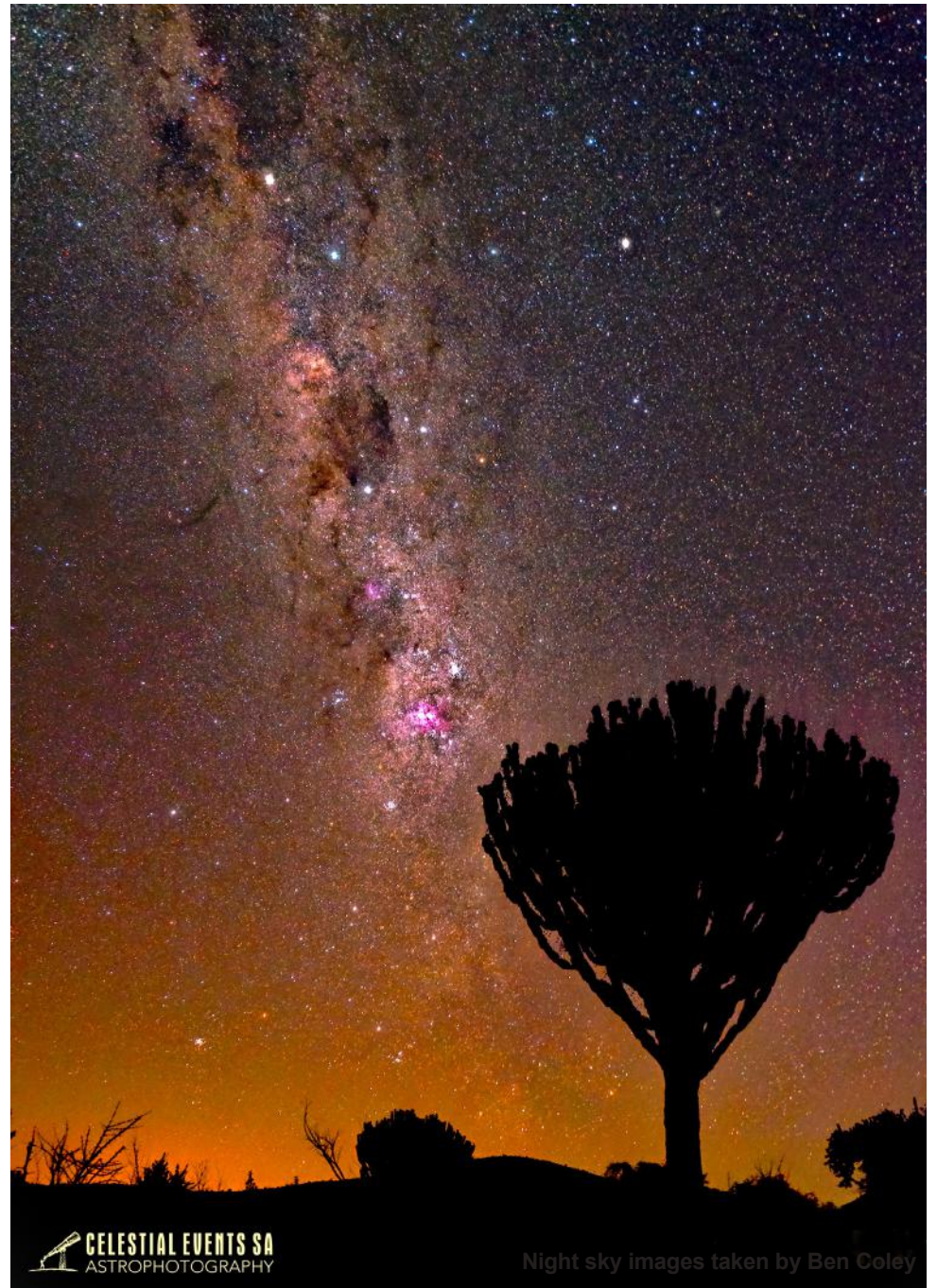
Aperture

Aperture refers to how much light hits the sensor and is referred to as the 'f' number. Fast lenses with an aperture of f2.8 or less are best, but always try and shoot with the lowest 'f stop' (widest aperture) possible with the equipment available.

Shutter Speed

The longer the shutter is open, the more time the sensor has to capture the distant photons. However, shutter speed is a balancing act, since the earth is constantly rotating and thus the sky seems to move from our perspective. If the shutter speed is too long, the stars will no longer be pin pricks of light, but rather form small stripes due to this motion.

The best way to estimate the maximum shutter speed is to use the 'Rule of 300'. In order to do this, work out the focal length of the lens (taking into account the crop factor of the camera if it is not a full frame sensor) and divide this into 300. For example, if the focal length is 18mm, 300 divided by 18 will give you around 16, so set the exposure to 15 seconds.



CELESTIAL EVENTS SA
ASTROPHOTOGRAPHY

Night sky images taken by Ben Coley

In order to capture longer exposures, and thus more detail, a star tracker mount is required. These are aligned to the celestial south pole and rotate at the same speed as the sky. Correctly used, these can allow for exposure times well in excess of 3 minutes.

ISO

ISO refers to how sensitive the sensor is to the light hitting it. The higher the ISO, the more light will be captured, but this is offset by 'noise', random patterns of pixels that make an image look grainy. Use as high an

ISO as possible, without compromising the quality of the image. Every camera model is different, so experiment with the equipment at hand, and see what setting is most appropriate. Normally ISO's of between 1600 and 3200 are best.

With these settings applied, some patience and a cloudless night, the wonders of the cosmos await. Astrophotography has a large learning curve, but it is addictive, and the results are quite literally out of this world! We wish you luck on your astrophotographic adventures!

Taking a look at birding in Kwa-Zulu Natal



Rosy-throated Longclaw (above)

Image: Josh Jones



Palmnut vulture (above)

Image: eBird

Green (Woodwards) Barbet
Image: Niall PerrinsSpotted Ground Thrush
Image: eBird

Mike Meidlinger

Cold winter nights have been dominating much of the month and the savannah has been dealing with temperatures it simply isn't used to. Frigid mornings, middays and afternoons, have spent the month barreling past us in their three-to-four-day spells, as cold front after cold front floats across the country. With the wildlife coping better than the humanity at its doorstep, for the fortunate few the option of popping down to the warm east coast has been both a lifeline and a promise of hope.

Despite being within relatively easy reach of the Lowveld, the amount and variety of birds and wildlife available are not to be laughed at, even now, during the driest of times. With its more tropical climate and humid coastal waters, the lush haven of Zululand, a tiny little corner of South Africa, has much to offer those who need a mid-winter break, and a place that generally holds its temperature to some degree.

For the overall tourism enthusiast, the beaches are beautiful and the jungles tropical, while for those who travel to enjoy wildlife, there is much to appreciate and much to discover. For those after bigger mammals there are fantastic game reserves like Hluhluwe-Imfolozi and Phinda. Here there are beautiful and rare reptiles to be found, there is great

diving offshore, and of course there are some cracking locations for birding.

Starting off in the major hub of Durban, sanctuaries like the local Pigeon Valley Nature Reserve offer a wonderful quiet walk through the park with its paths and benches, but it also lays claim to sought-after birds like the green twinspace, buff-spotted flufftail, grey waxbill and in winter only, the rare and endemic spotted ground thrush. Other areas in town that are great for birding and relaxing include the Umdloti River mouth with its regular osprey, pink-backed pelican, Caspian and swift terns, as well as the chance at something strange or unusual. The Knysna warbler is another endangered species that has begun to spread into this area and now areas around Kloof offer some of the best chances in the entire world to see this dull but enigmatic "little brown thing". A skulking bird, it is defined as one which doesn't naturally like to reveal itself. Some say secretive, but skulking is like secrecy with purpose, and this little mouse-like warbler has left tears in the eyes of many who attempt to see it.

Despite often being in mind-bogglingly close proximity, it is amazing how a bird, such as this, or as a flufftail, simply cannot be seen. Spending time in these havens for special species offers a great way to break up a family visit, from an otherwise completely urban city break, while picking up on species that might be here today but gone tomorrow.

Moving away from Durban to the north takes one, within a short 90 minutes, to the hallowed ground that is Eshowe and the Dlinza Forest, famed among birders and an easy day trip from the big city. This lush and uniquely accessible Afromontane forest offers a range of mouth-watering specials that include year-round spotted ground thrush, and the isolated eastern bronze-naped pigeon, as well as forest classics like narina trogon, grey cuckooshrike, yellow-throated woodland warbler, dark-backed weaver, black-bellied starling and much more. A mere two hours from town, the small estuary town of Mthunzini offers a great overnight trip from Durban, and is laden with fantastic local spots which can be explored for wonderful birds. Birds in town include the purple-banded sunbird, white-eared barbet, yellow-rumped tinkerbird, palmnut vulture and for the lucky, southern banded snake eagle.

During the winter months the Umlalazi Nature Reserve on the town's doorstep, holds the country's most reliable mangrove kingfisher population in winter, while in summer the moist grasslands lay claim to black coucal, African crane and the beautiful red-headed quelea. The nearby Amatikulu Nature Reserve has a good population of swamp nightjar while the Sappi Stanger wetlands often offer a surprise or two. The most important location, near to Mthunzini, is undoubtedly the sacred oNgoye Forest, up on the fringes of the escarpment a mere half an hour from the highway. The target here is the infamous green, or Woodward's barbet, which can only be found here on this one mountainside. There are a number of Birdlife community guides who service these areas and can offer all the major attractions over a very short period, with most being attainable over a single day.

Stretching further up the coast takes one to the tourism hub of St Lucia, a town with a fantastic array of activities available. From midnight turtle-nesting (December) and hatching (March), to epic whale-watching in summer, to game drives in the nearby Isimangaliso Wetland Park, the town has a lot to offer. The iGwalaGwala trails go through a wonderful short forest trail that holds

Livingstone's turaco, Woodward's batis, Rudd's apalis, southern crested guinea-fowl, green malkoha, and in the crepuscular hours, both the endemic brown scrub robin and the skulking and reclusive buff-spotted flufftail. The flufftails have a number of hotspots in town from the Sugarloaf Campsite to the Ezemvelo office garden, but it is never easy to see. Night drives from town can yield the scarce but beautiful swamp nightjar, but care must be taken to separate it from the more numerous square-tailed nightjar, which shows one or two whitish bars on the folded wing.

The estuary holds its fair share of summer waders and is always capable of turning up a vagrant or scarcity, with sooty tern being recorded several times annually. More regular species include greater flamingo, swift tern, little tern, white-fronted and sand plover, and the more common inhabitants as well as brimstone canary on the sand dunes, and black-throated wattle-eye on the relatively busy boardwalk.

The wetland park is excellent in summer for breeding birds and migrants alike, some of which are still present in winter - while the telephone poles and dead trees often yield a sighting of the globally threatened southern banded snake eagle. Due to the amount of dangerous game in the area, such as hippo, elephant and buffalo, much of the bird-life in the park goes about their lives unnoticed. There are good birds that can be sometimes found, including greater painted snipe, lesser moorhen, lesser jacana and rufous-bellied heron.

Further and further into Zululand, and things become more and more tropical with great spots around Mkuze and Bonamanzi being famed for years. These are both excellent destinations which harbour many of the regions' specials in their sand forest and mixed mosaic of other habitats. Some of the best birding however, takes place outside of these areas, with the Royal Thonga Safari Lodge holding the best range of specials. African broadbill, Neergaard's and plain-backed sunbirds, eastern nicator, pink-throated twinspace and many others already mentioned, can be found in a day or two spent here. While other more infamous regions might have some of these, they lack the full compliment. Pel's fishing owl is a rare resident in the Mkuze area, and the best way to see this tricky and unpredictable bird is to hire a local guide for a day, who keeps tabs on the birds' movements. Even still, luck is needed to see this species.

In the more rural areas of this, now Thongaland region, birds like the lemon-breasted canary are top priorities, while large open pans like those found in the Nibela peninsula and around Lake Sibaya, offer excellent chances at the rare and gorgeous rosy-throated longclaw. This bird is found in its slightly-flooded habitat niche at the verges of these large waterbodies. Other species that can be found at places like these are birds such as collared pratincole, great white pelican, grey-rumped swallow, and African quailfinch; and in winter there have been sporadic records of both black-rumped buttonquail and short-tailed pipit.

From estuarine or coastal species, to those found in the humid jungles of the coast and mist-belt, the northern realms of Kwa-Zulu Natal have much to yield those brave enough to face the humidity. With a major collection of year-round specials and unique species, Kwa-Zulu Natal is a truly fantastic winter destination for both local birders and those from further afield.

Boomslang - *Dispholidus typus*



Johan Marais
African Snakebite Institute

Drop for drop, the boomslang is by far the most venomous snake in Africa. Whereas the black mamba, (arguably the most dangerous snake in the world), has around 300 mg of venom and requires 15 mg to kill an adult human, the boomslang has 8 mg of venom and needs as little as 0,07 mg for a lethal bite – a drop so small that it cannot be seen by the human eye.

Fortunately, it has a pleasant disposition and has little interest in biting. It spends most of its life in trees and shrubs and is quick to disappear into vegetation or go higher up a tree if disturbed. It is not an easy snake to see as it is well camouflaged, but birds are quick to announce its presence. The bulbuls are usually first to voice their displeasure, followed by the barbets, sunbirds, hornbills and eventually there may be more than half a dozen species noisily harassing the snake. This is a long, slender snake, averaging 1,2 - 1,5 m but it can reach 2 m in length. It is one

of few species where males and females can usually be told apart by colour (but not always). In the Lowveld adult males are green in colour, sometimes with distinct black between the scales, and females are various shades of medium to dark brown. Juveniles are grey to brown (never green) with a massive emerald eye. The main distinguishing features of the boomslang are the large blunt head, very big eyes, slender body, and each body scale has a distinct longitudinal ridge, referred to as a keel.

The boomslang is found in a variety of habitats throughout southern Africa including Karoo scrub, arid savanna, moist savanna, lowland forest, grassland, and fynbos – wherever there are trees and shrubs. It is active during the day where it actively hunts its prey, making use of its superior vision. Once it spots a meal it will freeze with its head cocked, the only movement being lateral waves that sweep the neck. It will then swoop down onto its prey, which is held firmly in its jaw while the fangs move in a chewing motion. It feeds on chameleons and oth-

Boomslang (*Dispholidus typus*) hatchling (above left) and male above . Photographs taken in Hoedspruit, Limpopo. Images Johan Marais

er tree-living lizards, nestling birds, bird eggs which are swallowed whole, and frogs. Small mammals and adult birds are seldom taken.

When threatened and easy escape is not possible, it will inflate the neck and most of the body, displaying vivid markings between the scales. At this stage it will draw back into a striking position, often with the mouth agape, and strike out with meaning. Being back-fanged, it is a popular misconception that the boomslang cannot easily bite and needs to get hold of a little finger. This is not true, as it can open its mouth to 170 degrees and easily bite a person on an arm or even the chest.

Boomslang venom is potently haemotoxic, compromising the blood clotting mechanism. It is slow-acting, and it may take several hours or even more than a day before the first signs of envenomation to show. It usually starts with blood oozing from the fang punctures, followed

by a nosebleed, headache, bleeding from the mucus membranes and eventually internal bleeding. The South African Vaccine Producers manufacture a monovalent boomslang antivenom that is highly effective, if given timeously.

Bites from this snake are extremely rare and most victims are snake handlers. Should the birds alert you to the presence of a boomslang in a tree, it is best to leave it there. It poses no threat to anyone, provided that no attempt is made to capture it.

*Johan Marais is one of Africa's leading herpetologists and is CEO of the African Snakebite Institute. He is a best-selling author, a compulsive photographer, and a travel addict. Check out the website on www.africansnakebiteinstitute.com – get your **FREE** App on the link <http://bit.ly/snakebiteapp>*

Cupcakes for Pangolins

Local correspondent

Cupcakes for Pangolins was started in November 2022. This was in response to the number of pangolins that were rescued by Dr Debbie English. These animals had all been poached and all were in a horrific health condition. Dr English works at the Provet Wildlife Services and Animal Hospital in Hoedspruit and has been instrumental in treating these poor animals and nursing them to a 'normal' state of health.

The costs of this rehabilitation of these animals are exorbitant and can easily run up to R15 000 a week for hospitalisation. There are fortunately organisations that do help with donations, but this takes time and involves quite some administration. Unfortunately, there is a constant requirement for extra funding, which is an ongoing project – but there is no let-up in the rescuing of the pangolins and as a result the costs keep mounting. As an example, a recently received pangolin had seven broken ribs,

a broken tail and was extremely traumatised. This animals' recovery will take many months.

Once the pangolins have been treated at Provet, they are moved to a rehabilitation centre where they are nurtured and prepared for full release back into the wild. Before they are released each pangolin is fitted with two trackers which cost in the region of R30 000!

The appeal is to all and everyone to donate – any amount helps, be it big or small. These highly endangered animals really need our help, without which they will disappear from the face of the earth – forever!

All funding and donations go directly into helping these wonderful creatures. Donations can be done through the link below. Only we, as the custodians of this planet, can help.

<https://www.backabuddy.co.za/pangolin-medicals-5605658712732190448>

Image : Panthera Photo Safaris



The black monkey orange - *Strychnos madagascariensis*

Brett Heasman

Brake lines, fuel lines, and tyres could be gutted and ripped from beneath your vehicle if you choose to be the 'monkey' that drives offroad over this particular tree. The branches are short, rigid with lateral shoots that may resemble spines, and is the primary cause of damage to your undercarriage. This tree is the local mechanics best friend and money maker.

Throughout our woodlands, grasslands, and savanna, along the rocky areas, riverine fringes and coastal forests of the beautiful lowveld, we will be able to locate the marvellous black monkey orange. The trees can grow up to 6 metres tall.

It is known for its ornamental greenish yellow trumpet-like flowers, and its ability to attract pollinators such as bees and butterflies.

The tree is heavily branched and has smooth pale grey bark is somewhat powdery with white patches (that darken with age). Its leaves are clustered at the end of the small branches and are small, hairy, dark green with very leathery texture, having 3 to 5 veins from the base making it very easy to identify.

The tree is drought-tolerant and can withstand a wide range of soil conditions. It is commonly used for erosion control. Overall, this tree is a resilient and versatile species that plays an important role in our ecosystem.

The fruit is smooth, hard and large. The hockey ball sized blue-green coloured balls hanging from the tree turn yellow when mature. It does contain poisonous alkaloids in the seed integuments. The seeds are covered in an orange fleshy pulp that is somewhat edible and very rich in citric acid and iridoids. The fruit is eaten by baboon, monkey, bushpig, eland and nyala. Due to the presence of compounds that mimic dung compounds, seeds attract dung beetles which then roll the seed with dung and bury it. This is a secondary dispersal of the seed.

The leaves are eaten by many animals including duiker, impala, kudu, nyala, steenbok and elephant.

There are many uses for the plant – the flesh is pounded, then dried and is edible. The seeds are bitter, but are dried and considered a 'sweet' treat for children. Musical instruments like the marimba and flutes are made from the dried shells.

It also has medicinal uses – the roots are ground up, mixed with hot water and taken



The fruit of the black monkey orange

Image : Random Harvet Nursery

orally as an emetic. A paste made from the fruit is used for treating jigger fleas (that burrow under the skin of humans).

The genus is an important source of drugs and poisons. The seeds of some species are the source of strychnine and strychnine

compounds. Curare poison is extracted from the bark of *S.toxifera* and other species.

So if it looks like a gem squash, be like my kids and avoid it. Have a great month and stay safe out there.

Does bad weather affect animals?



Lightening may cause death or injury to animals

Images :Canva Clintspencer

Yes, some animals are very susceptible to sudden changes in weather.

Warthogs, for instance, exhibit fairly high mortality during cold snaps and when borghs are flooded during heavy summer showers. In fact, many animals that make use of Burrows or underground chambers is refuges or breeding places in summer are at risk of pneumonia or other diseases associated with being cold and damp, and of drowning. Strong winds can indirectly kill animals as well. In the Okavango I have seen a large Buffalo bull trapped and killed when the tree beneath which it was resting collapsed under a combination of the weight of rain-laden foliage and strong winds. Torrential downpours often result in mud slides and flooding, which not only threatened the lives of animals adjacent two rivers, but many are also drowned when being washed away by the torrents of water. Even elephant and hippo can die in this way.

Lightning can also be a big killer of animals on land or in the water. As far as the letter is concerned, animals swimming - be it suppose, elephants, fish, crocodiles, or others - are incredibly vulnerable to electrocution

if they're on the surface close to a lightning strike. This is because the charge carried by a bolt of lightning (20 000 to 300 million volts / averaging plus minus 30 000 amps) tends to travel along the surface of the water instead of going through it. Animals are at risk up to a kilometre from the strike. Strikes on ground will also easily kill animals - whether under tree cover or out in the open. I know of rhino, elephant and giraffe having been struck directly and killed. But even strikes close to animals will kill them. I have seen this on numerous occasions both in South Africa and Botswana. In one such case in the Okavango Delta, four Buffalo were killed within a 50-metre radius of one another by what was probably a single bolt grounded in the vicinity. I have seen numerous Impala dead (with blood seeping out of ears and nose) off the storms in the Lowveld.

Lightning injuries or death are caused by two common factors, namely electrical discharge (by the conversion of air to plasma) and mechanical force (caused by the shock-wave generated).

What do animals do in case of fire?

Bushfires will always result in some sort of mortality, the severity of which is influenced by factors such as the intensity and speed of the fire, the time of year, and the availability of escape routes.

Invertebrates (insects, millipedes, spiders, etc) tend to suffer the most with mammals, bird and reptile mortality, on average, being slight - the after-effects of the fire often being more life threatening than the fire itself.

Files are part of the natural scheme of things, and generally occur naturally during spring and summer when lightning, the primary ignition agent, is prevalent. A lot of die down occurs during winter, and the fuel load is therefore not that great. Because some vegetation will not burn easily after the first rains, the resultant lightning fires are usually not too severe. Most animals, sensing the approaching fire, retreat or move into holes in the ground or trees. Fatalities among smaller animals are difficult

to measure but appear to be few because they move into shelters. Larger animals tend to suffer more, but relatively speaking there are few fatalities, although a number may have injuries. In a way, fires can be seen as a natural population regulator.

Problems do, however, arise when artificial or accidental fires occur, particularly at the wrong time of year. Fires in autumn or early winter can be devastating as the fuel load is high after the summer rains and so the fire is hotter and more intense. Mortality figures can be much higher across the board. Habitat damage that results in the death of trees is immense. As the rains are then still a few months away, this puts a further burden on the survivors who are then faced with a chronic food shortage.

Excerpts from 'Beat about the Bush – Mammals and Birds' by Trevor Carnaby, Jacana Media, 2nd Edition reprint 2018.



Raging veld fire can be sensed by most animals

Images :Canva Ascione

AI - Are rights earned or are they inherent?

The question of whether rights are earned or inherent is a complex and debated topic in philosophy, ethics, and political theory. Different perspectives exist and the answer may vary depending on the specific rights being discussed and the underlying philosophical framework.

Inherent Rights: Some philosophical viewpoints assert that certain rights are inherent to human beings by virtue of their humanity. In this view, rights are considered to be fundamental and inalienable, meaning they cannot be taken away or given up. These rights are often seen as natural rights that exist independent of any human-made laws or systems. Proponents of inherent rights argue that all individuals possess these rights simply because they are human, regardless of their actions or status.

Earned or Acquired Rights: On the other hand, some argue that certain rights are earned or acquired based on a person's actions, contributions, or social contract with others. According to this perspective, rights are not automatically granted but must be earned through participation in society, fulfilling responsibilities, or meeting specific criteria. For example, legal rights granted by a government might be seen as earned through citizenship or adherence to the laws of the land.

Hybrid View: There are also hybrid views that acknowledge both inherent and earned aspects of rights. Some rights may be considered inherent, such as the right to life or personal autonomy, while others may be earned through social participation or achievements.

Ultimately, the concept of rights is a product of human societies seeking to establish

frameworks for individual and collective well-being. Different societies and cultures may interpret, and approach rights differently based on their values, history, and political systems.

In practice, the recognition and protection of rights often involve a combination of inherent and earned aspects. For example, most democratic societies recognize certain inherent rights as fundamental human rights, while also granting additional rights and privileges based on citizenship, contributions, or other factors. The ongoing evolution of rights and their understanding continues to be a subject of philosophical and legal exploration.

Credit: ChatGPT, chat.openai.com
 ChatGPT is an artificial intelligence chatbot developed by OpenAI based on the company's Generative Pre-trained Transformer series of large language models.

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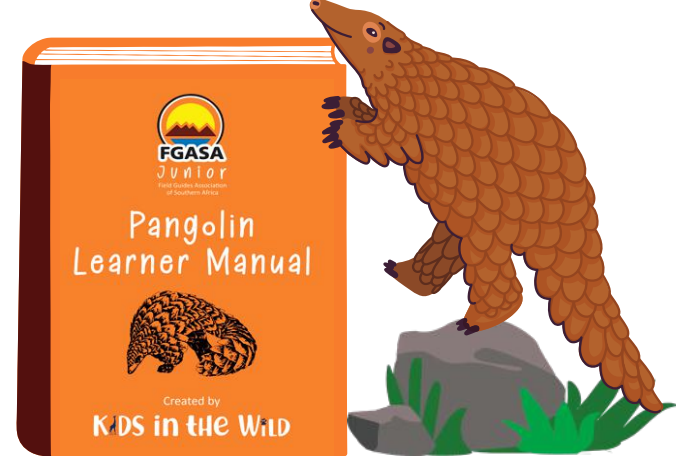
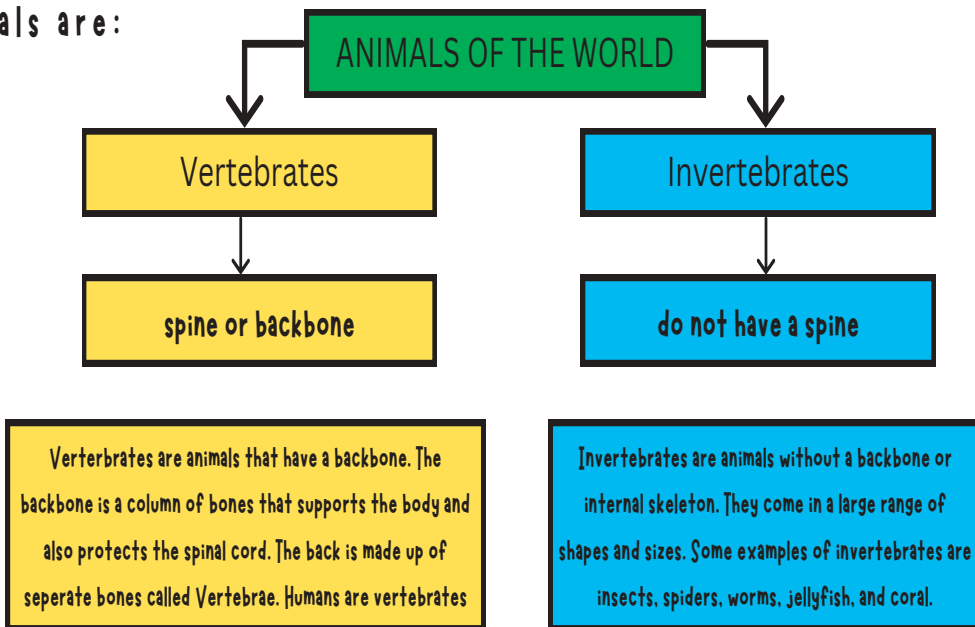
Animals of Africa

Before you can learn about all the different animals in Africa. You need to first understand Taxonomy.

What is Taxonomy?

Taxonomy is the theory and practice of classifying and naming organisms. This produces a formal system for naming and classifying species that have similar characteristics. Our world is home to many different types of animals. Some animals swim, some fly, some breath air, and some breath under water. Some have skeletons and others don't.

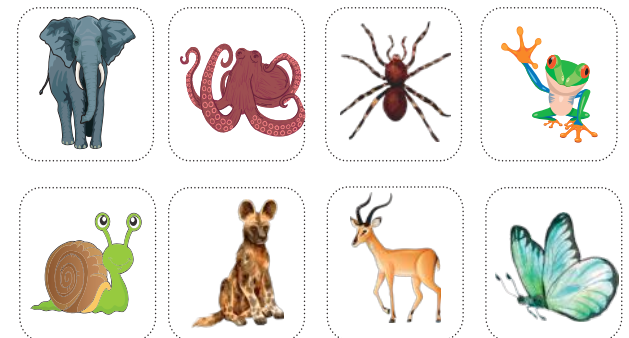
To help us understand the difference between the animals in our world, scientists have sorted these animals into different groups that share important characteristics. The two largest groups of animals are:



Vertebrates and Invertebrates

Cut and paste the pictures under their relevant categories.

VERTEBRATES		INVERTEBRATES	



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