

## Separating the pips from the fruit - Another look at Casketts Citrus



**Intensive farming on the Casketts Citrus Farm**

**Photo's Simon Espley**

Simon Espley

A new intensive citrus farm bordering the renowned Timbavati and Klaserie private nature reserves – the Greater Kruger – is now a *fait accompli*. This I state without any shadow of a doubt. I did not understand this reality when I arranged to meet farmer Kobus van Staden at his new project Casketts Citrus. But I do now.



Van Staden met me at the gate to Casketts and jumped into my venerable Landy Defender to guide me to the farm HQ. I had loaded up a key question: whether he would consider dropping the intensive farming idea and instead partner with others to open a lodge or other tourism service. That question disappeared like mist under the African sun when we emerged from hectares of scrappy thorn scrub to a vista of ploughed fields with rows of plastic irrigation pipes and a newly-

I followed van Staden and fellow Casketts owner Jurie van Vuren to a rustic farmhouse veranda overlooking the Klaserie River and beyond to prime Big 5 safari

country – the Greater Kruger. What followed was a cordial but frank discussion, followed by a tour of the farm. My every request for information was met without hesitation, and I was left free to photograph anything – including a cleared area beyond the authorised limits.

There has been much said and written about this controversial situation, and the battle became intensely personal, with van Staden taking body blows to his reputation. Team AG initially requested members of the public to exercise their legal right to have a say in December 2018 and then followed up with regular opinions from respected

scientists opposed to the new farm – who also questioned the Impact Report. However, what we had failed to do, to date, was speak to the farmer, a situation I was keen to remedy.

The context to these notes, is that I was and remain, opposed to this intensive farming operation on the border of the Greater Kruger. BUT I now understand better the context and the complexities, and I hope that my notes below will resource you to debate this controversial topic from a factual perspective.

The 420ha farm (Casketts) was subdivided and purchased from former owner Rocco Gioia for about R35million (US\$2,5m) – and

is entirely surrounded by Gioia's remaining farms. The authorities have authorised 102 hectares for irrigated citrus orchards based on an existing water right.

The farm was purchased in 1967 by Libero Gioia, who farmed cattle, tomatoes and cattle fodder. When his son Rocco took over the farm, he focussed on tobacco, mangoes, sweet

potatoes, tomatoes, chillies, lucerne and blue buffalo grass and various game species – some of which are hunted. Rocco Gioia continues to utilise the remaining 2,400ha surrounding Casketts primarily for game farming.

**A water right granted in 1950 allows Casketts to legally irrigate 120ha**

Cont. on page 8



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# “Kan jy dit glo...”

David Batzofin - Editor



EDITOR

**Another month has slipped by and we are all on the downhill run towards the end of 2021!**

Winter has almost gone, but not before leaving us with one last cold spell and the promise of the possibil-

ity of snow in certain parts of the country that might not have seen it for a while. Somehow, I don't think that Hoedspruit will be on that list anytime soon.

That being said, the town has been nominated for 'Dorp of the year', which I think is a great honour for this important hub city. Recognition at last. Voting has closed and we wait with bated breath for the winner to be announced.

The current adjusted Level 4 lockdown has once again played havoc with the tourism industry and seeing that one of the hot spots was Gauteng, travel to and from that province has been severely curtailed. So far this adjusted level has been in place for the last 4 weeks

and as I write this, I am awaiting what will be added or subtracted when our President addresses the nation later this evening. One thing that is almost guaranteed is that restrictions will not be removed but they might be relaxed.

**BREAKING NEWS...** Thanks to our President we have moved to adjusted Level 3 lockdown. Alcohol will be on sale again during the week and inter-provincial travel is allowed. Do I hear the words 'road trip'?

What else happened during July?

POPIA? Show of hands if you, like me, were inundated with an email purporting to have our best interests at heart when it comes to keeping our data safe and

secure? For those of you who don't know what the Act is all about, POPI (Protection of Personal Information) has come into effect in South Africa as of 1 July 2021. This Act is designed to enforce companies to keep strict and secure measures to protect your personal information, and they are required to inform you of their compliance with the Act. I have had mail from people who have a Facebook page, telling me that my data is safe and secure, but we all know that in reality that once we have supplied our personal information online, it is out there forever. All we can do is try to make our passwords as unpredictable as possible (no dates of birth or anniver-

saries etc). However, I tend to forget certain passwords with monotonous regularity and that slip usually occurs when I am away from home and I try to access a site that requires a password I have not used for a while. Very annoying having to try and figure out what it might be or, if it is not going to call too many problems, reset it. I have a piece of paper in a journal that contains all of my passwords, but they have been changed SO many times that I cannot remember what is old or new. I have tried many times to rewrite this important document, but no sooner

have I done that than I need to change at least one! It is an endless task and I have resigned myself to the fact that it will be a neverending task.

Finally, I want to pay tribute to all those who have had their vaccinations and especially to those who are working at the local vaccination points.

Let us also take a moment to remember all those who have passed on, either directly or indirectly, from this terrible pandemic. May their memories forever be cherished.

Until next time, stay safe

*David Batzofin*

## Letters to the editor

Letters to the editor – Jul 30th 2021



Dear Mr Editor,

Before placing an article on the front page of a newspaper that serves the whole community don't you think you should have investigated the true facts? Next week Tuesday the parties that are truly concerned about the area will meet. If you had the common sense to engage with Mr van Staden you would have had the true facts. This is a small community and one of the first families in the area with very long proven history on farming and conservation. Did you realize that every person in that article that is against such a development is not even living close to this area?

You and Daily Maverick will soon be exposed for publishing half-truths which is favouring only one side as we will have a press release soon with all true facts revealed.

Maleni van Staden



Dear Ms van Staden

Thank you for your message directed to our Editor, David Batzofin. We believe that one of the aims of a community paper like Kruger2Canyon, is to initiate debate and thoughtful deliberation. We would like to get all participants on whatever side of any story, to put their side of the story out to our readers.

As such, we as the editorial committee of Kruger2Canyon, (which does comprise some editors of national and international newspapers), decided to publish the news article that you have referred to in your message.

It is important to note that the specific article referred to (Big game parks versus big farming: a battle for the ages on the Klaserie River) was originally published by The Daily Maverick. It is their article and we got permission to publish the same, because we believed that the article was a relevant one to the community of Hoedspruit and the surrounds, and one that would hopefully command a response from the parties involved.

We as the Kruger2Canyon are not making judgement nor are we offering opinion, we are merely publishing The Daily Mavericks article. We have noted that you are intimately involved in this matter and should you have a press release, we would be very happy and only too glad to publish that as a response to

our lead story of June 2021, in the July 2021 publication (as you know we are a monthly publication).

We welcome that interaction because that is what a community paper is all about – local interaction, about local events/happenings and hopefully by local people and in a way that nurtures healthy debate. That of course does not negate the fact that others can write about our area, more specifically our biosphere (the 11th best in the world!) and we can publish that, if and only if we deem it to be relevant and newsworthy.

To reiterate, we are not making judgement nor are we offering our opinion. We look forward to receiving your response on this article and with permission, would like very much to publish the same.

Regards, Mark Bishop, Publisher

Note: The Kruger2Canyon has subsequently received an email from Ms van Staden with her 'press release' that according to her are the facts. This 'release' we publish today as our lead story: Separating the pips from the fruit!

Kruger2Canyon has undertaken, thanks to Simon Espley and Africa Geographic, to publish this article for the sake of transparency and fairness. Readers will make up their own minds, as to where they stand on this issue. Ed

Dear Editor

It is a breath of fresh air! If we are in the biosphere can we not have many more interesting wildlife articles?

Regards James

Dear James

Thank you, our forward plan is to include more wildlife articles, articles of interest. We have access to the very best people in their fields and we will harness these contacts to bring you the best we can on this subject. Ed.

Dear Editor,

I absolutely love what you are doing with the paper – thank you so much, we really needed a good clear media voice.

Stella

Dear Editor,

Thank you for bringing the print version back. I always hoped that this was going to happen. What I do like is the inclusion of the puzzle – fabulous. Doris

### FILL IN THE MISSING NUMBERS

- Each number is only used once
- Each row is a math equation
- Each column is a math equation

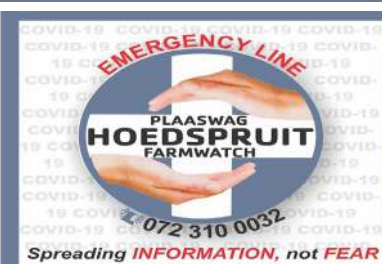
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# These shoes are made for walking...

Jan Dumon

**HDS Number Plates and Shoe & Leather Repair Shop, old school values in a modern setting.**

HDS Shoe and Leather Repair shop is part of HDS Number Plates and can be found on the main road of Hoedspruit, roughly half-way between the Kamogelo Centre and Spar.

It is a little jewel of a shop, owned and managed by Jan and Lize Dumon, well known to many in the area, who have lived in the community for 20 years.

Upon entering the shop, one is immediately greeted with the smell of leather and dubbin emanating from the countless pairs of shoes and boots, immediately taking customers back to simpler times when shoe repairs were almost an art form. Aside from shoes, all the other available space is taken up by belts and handbags being repaired and restored to their former glory. Using old-school craftsmanship and a fully functional traditional singer sewing machine dating back to 1930, you'll be instantly reminded of the traditional cobbler shops of yesteryear. The list of services offered by HDS Shoe and Leather Repair shop includes sole and heel replacements, restitching and repairing of shoes and boots and other leather goods. Replacing belt buckles and refurbishing belts, making new belts to order, replacing zippers on leather boots and chaps as well as ladies' shoe tipS and heel replacements to name but a few of the services on offer.

Much the old story "The dog ate my homework", shoes are brought in in various states of disrepair with stories ranging from



**Old school craftsmanship on display in the Shoe & Lether Shop**



**Before and ....**



**... After, beautifully restored**



**Photo's supplied**

"The dog chewed the tongues ", "A hyena ruined these boots" and even a pair that was held together by carpenter nails and cables ties!

As a leather repair shop, they are also able to assist with saddlery repairs such as reins, belts and even some basic repairs to saddles themselves, having done work for every stable in town.

"HDS also has an ongoing contract to refurbish used army boots for some of the anti-poaching units in the area, injecting new life into worn and used footwear and ensuring that the finished products are fully functional and good for many more kilometres".

On top of this wonderful service, HDS also has a number plate division. They make number plates for all provinces including personalized plates. All plates are fitted free of charge. HDS Number Plates is SABS approved with brand new machines and uses SABS approved materials.

The need for a professional service to assist with the registration of motor vehicles also became evident and HDS rose to the occasion and runs a vehicle licensing and registration service. Offerings include the registration of new vehicles, license renewals, change of ownership, change of address, application for duplicate Natis documents and Business Register Number Certificates and the collection of driver's licenses from the traffic department. Please feel free to pop in at any time...we would love to assist you.



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# Serving to change lives ... Hoedspruit Rotary Awards

Lovelle Henderson

The elegant Tasting Room hummed with happy voices and goodwill at a splendid dinner, catered for by Anita from OEMF Caterers and the Greater Kruger Hotel School & Training Centre, in honour of Wilana Manderson's induction as President of the Rotary Club of Hoedspruit for 2021/22.

The annual President's Award was handed to Alan Partington, Club Treasurer, for the incredibly tough task of keeping the Club's finances in sterling order during the past, very unpredictable, Covid year.

Jozua van Wyk from Hoedspruit FM was presented with a Rotary Merit Award for his dedication to the Hoedspruit community. Becky Harmon and Stella Horgan, of Zingela Ulwazi, were the guests of honour. Zingela Ulwazi is a non-profit organization collaborating with local communities and organisations to create projects focused on resilience, leadership,

Ole Ahrens, Rotary Past President wearing his chain of office. Seated is Sherry Couch

creativity and prosperity. During the past year, Rotary has collaborated with them to empower women in the rural community through permaculture vegetable gardening which enables them to, not only feed their families but also earn an income from their remarkably successful small gardens.

Rotarians the world over will continue to "Serve to change Lives" in the coming year.

If you would like to join or support Hoedspruit Rotary, in any way please contact **President Wilana Manderson 0832758862.**



Past President Rose White- left Rotarian Paul White- centre Rotarian Wilana Manderson – right



All photo's supplied by Rotary



Rotary Treasurer Alan Partington- Left Rotarian Wilana Manderson before receiving her Presidential Chain of office- Centre Rotarian Hazel Partington – right



Incoming President Wilana Manderson receiving her chain of office from past President Ole Ahrens.



Alan Partington holding his President's Award with past President Humphrey Couch looking on



Incoming President Wilana Manderson

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## Hoedspruit Cafe's tea time chocolate treat



### Ingredients

1. 2 cups cake flour
2. 2 cups white sugar
3. 3/4 cup cocoa powder
4. 2 tsp baking soda
5. 1 tsp baking powder
6. 1 tsp salt
7. 1/2 cup oil
8. 1 cup buttermilk
9. 2 eggs
10. 2 tsp vanilla essence
11. 1 cup hot coffee

### Method

1. Mix together the dry ingredients in the mixer
2. Mix together all wet ingredients except the coffee
3. Beat together the wet and dry ingredients
4. Add coffee and mix together
5. Pour into tins and bake at 180 degrees celcius



## Hayley's Chia pudding recipe

Hayley Cooper, Wild Dreams Hospitality

Chia pudding is so easy to make, I love that it can also be made ahead of time so it's an ideal meal to meal-prepare a day, or 3 in advance. I also love that it is so versatile in the sense that this could be a breakfast dish or a dessert. But a healthy dessert! Lastly, if you were making this for a lodge bush breakfast it works amazingly well as it holds up the travel & doesn't need to be served ice cold (that's the lodge manager brain coming out in me)

Chia pudding can also be made with a range of different plant-based kinds of milk so really whatever you have on hand, & if you are wanting a creamier, richer flavour & texture then you can also use coconut milk or cream, I would suggest these would be more of a dessert though as it may be a bit heavy for a breakfast.

Chia seeds are also so good for us, they are high in Omega 3s, Fibre, Protein & very low in calories. They have so many nutrients & are high in antioxidants & have been linked to helping some health problems. I include chia seeds in my meals pretty much daily & it is so easy to do so, throw them into cereals/porridge or a smoothie, sprinkle on a salad or into baked goods (sweet & savoury). If you haven't used chia seeds before then you may be surprised by the way they thicken & form a gel-like consistency & you will see them used often in vegan baking as an egg replacement.

I created this recipe because I just love the combo of chocolate & orange & the balance of these 2 flavours complement each other perfectly in this. This will serve 4 people depending on your serving size.

I'd love to hear if you made this dish & what you thought of it, the best way to reach me is an Instagram message over at my company page, [www.wilddreams.co.za](http://www.wilddreams.co.za)



### Ingredients

1. Half a cup of Chia seeds.
2. Quarter cup of Cocoa powder or cocoa powder
3. Half an orange (you will use the juice & zest)
4. 1 and a half cups of Plant-based milk of choice (I use oat)
5. 1 Tsp Vanilla essence or powder
6. 4 Tbsp Maple syrup – not a maple flavoured syrup but the real deal
7. Pinch of good quality salt
8. 2 Tbsp Coconut flakes (optional)

### Method

1. Sieve your cocoa powder into a mixing bowl
2. Add your maple syrup, salt, and vanilla and whisk into a paste
3. Add your plant-based milk slowly, whisking as you add it to ensure it is smooth & without any clumps
4. Squeeze the juice from your fresh orange into the bowl
5. Grate about a teaspoon's worth of the orange skin to form a zest and add to your bowl, mix well
6. Add your chia seeds and continue to whisk together for a minute until all mixed
7. Cover your bowl (or transfer it into a Tupperware or individual containers that you want to serve this out of) and put it into the fridge for a minimum of 3 hours, it is a good idea after 30 minutes to give it one more whisk as it starts to set. Toast a couple of tablespoons of coconut flakes in your oven on low heat for a few minutes, until golden
8. Dish into a glass, bowl & decorate with your dried orange slice & some extra zest on top



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# The Butterflies of Lekgalameetse Nature Reserve

Daddy Mathaba  
Mark Bishop

**Butterfly research was conducted in the Lekgalameetse Nature Reserve from the 28th to the 30th of April 2021.**

The time was also used as a social-learning and team-building event for 15 K2C Environmental Monitors from different regions, from Lekgalameetse, Olifants, and Phiring. For those that do not know, the Lekgalameetse Nature Reserve is a conserved mountain wilderness of about 18,718 ha, situated west of Trichardt in the northern Drakensberg of Limpopo Province, South Africa.

On the first day, a route from the Lekgalameetse entrance gate to the waterfall was followed. Two teams were allocated a sweeping net each. The atmospheric conditions were perfect for ectotherms and many butterflies were spotted, caught, squeezed on their thorax, and kept safe for later identification.

The team had diverse background knowledge on biodiversity. Within the research team, there was Lucius, who was assisting in identifying the arachnids, amphibians, and plants. His knowledge

of invertebrates sparked the brains of the whole team, many of whom knew little about these small creatures. Most flora and fauna of the region were identified whilst catching butterflies. The dominant butterfly species spotted on this day was the Soldier Pansy. Research was not conducted on camp days, so most butterflies were caught and released as they had been collected previously. This highlights the eco-friendliness of the methods used to collect butterflies.

On the 2nd day of research, the temperature was not in favor of mobility for most butterflies; it was windy and overcast. However, the team took a 5km route from the entrance gate to the south-side gravel road of the reserve. The team took three hours to reach the waterfall. The Olifants and Phiring Environmental Monitors were excited to experience the beauty of the waterfall and its surroundings. Fruit traps containing four month old fermented banana bait were hung in trees in the early morning and retrieved in the late afternoon when specimens collected were documented. Two sweeping nets were also used to evaluate species diversity.

The research had four main goals to achieve. The first goal was to determine the butterfly species diversity of the Reserve; the second, to assess the concentration of different species in various habitats; the third, to assess the hotspots of butterfly species in the Reserve and lastly, to identify the correlation between seasons and butterfly species richness.

The overall results showed that Lekgalameetse has diverse flora and fauna. 12 different butterfly species were collected during the research, 6 species on the first day and 6 species on the second day. Some species were identified, and some are still awaiting identification. The Lekgalameetse Environmental Monitors have already collected more than 40 different butterfly species, which is more than the 1990 Master Plan of the Lekgalameetse.

**The Lekgalameetse Nature Reserve is believed to have a diverse number of butterfly species.**

The results indicate that various environmental factors (humidity, temperature, and wind intensity); habitat variables (host plant and vegetation) and elevation indicate a strong correlation with species richness and diversity. Certain butterfly

species can survive cold, windy conditions, however, the highest diversity of butterflies is observed during blooming season, and at less steep elevations.

More research has to be done to identify the relationship between vegetation types and butterfly species richness.

The research team would like to acknowledge the K2C management for food provision, Prof. Alan Gardiner for assisting in identification of the butterflies and the Lekgalameetse management for hospitality.

*First printed in the Kruger to Canyons Biosphere Newsletter June 21*



Junonia terea - Soldier Pansy Photo - Butterflygear



# Starry starry night - Constellation of the month - Aquila

Ben Coley

**Aquila is famous in Greek mythology on 2 counts. Firstly, for carrying Ganyমেদে, Zeus' cupbearer, to Mount Olympus to serve Zeus; and secondly for a more unpleasant role in mythology.**

Prometheus was one of the Titan gods that roamed the world and became an advisor to Zeus. Prometheus was very protective of the people of Earth and was concerned about their lack of ability to make fire. In an attempt to help, he stole a ray of the sun which he duly delivered to mankind. However, Zeus felt that mankind was not worthy of such a gift and punished Prometheus for his unwarranted actions by chaining him to a mountain and letting his eagle Aquila attack him day after day, eating his liver.

As a Titan, however, Prometheus was immortal, although some sources suggest that his immortality was inherited from Chiron (Centaurus), and thus recovered from his injuries each night, only to be tortured again the following day. After many years he was rescued by the Greek hero, Hercules who killed Aquila with his bow and arrow and Zeus placed his favourite eagle in the stars so that it could soar for eternity in the heavens. The arrow can be found next to Aquila in the sky as the small constellation, Sagitta.

**Notable Stars**

*" Altair is the brightest star in the constellation of Aquila and is also the 12<sup>th</sup> brightest star in the sky, thanks in part to its relative proximity".*

Altair lies only 16.7 light-years from Earth and is easily found in the eastern sky

as the centre star of 3 that resembles the famed Orion's Belt asterism. Its name comes from Arabic and means 'The Flying Eagle'. Altair makes up one point of the 'Spring Triangle' in South Africa, along with Vega, the 5<sup>th</sup> brightest star

in the sky (Lyra) and Deneb (Cygnus).

**The Qi Xi Festival**

In Asian mythology, the star Altair represents a mortal man who fell in love with a heavenly goddess, Vega (the brightest star in

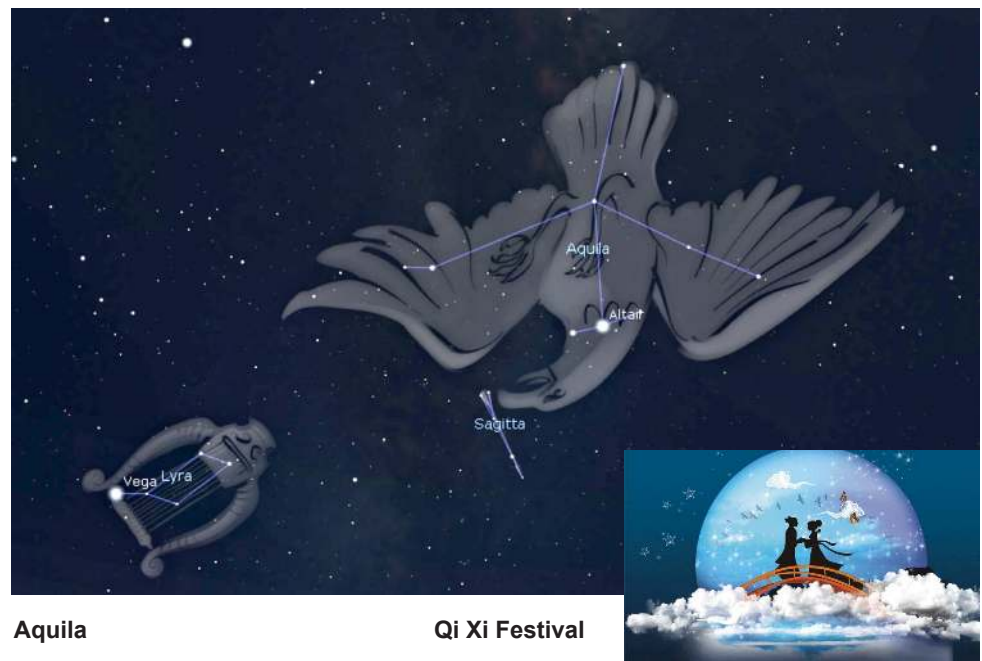
Lyra).

One day Altair was tending to his cows and playing his flute when a white dove landed next to him and turned into the beautiful Vega, princess of the Heavenly Skies. Both were enchanted with each other

and for many weeks Vega visited Altair during the nights before returning to the stars each morning.

After some time, Vega's mother discovered their romance and forbade it since no immortal should meet with a mortal being. Vega went searching for Altair but her mother turned the Milky Way into a mighty river and the couple became stranded on either side. However, Vega's father took pity on the couple and arranged that on the 7<sup>th</sup> night of the 7<sup>th</sup> moon each year, all the magpies on Earth would fly to the heavens and create a celestial bridge for the lovers to meet for the night.

This occasion is celebrated in China as the Qixi (Key-She) Festival and is considered one of the most romantic festivals of the year. The date coincides with the 7<sup>th</sup> day of the 7<sup>th</sup> moon of the year.



Aquila

Qi Xi Festival

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## Photographic tips from the “Hide Lady”



Magnificent images captured by Janet from the hide

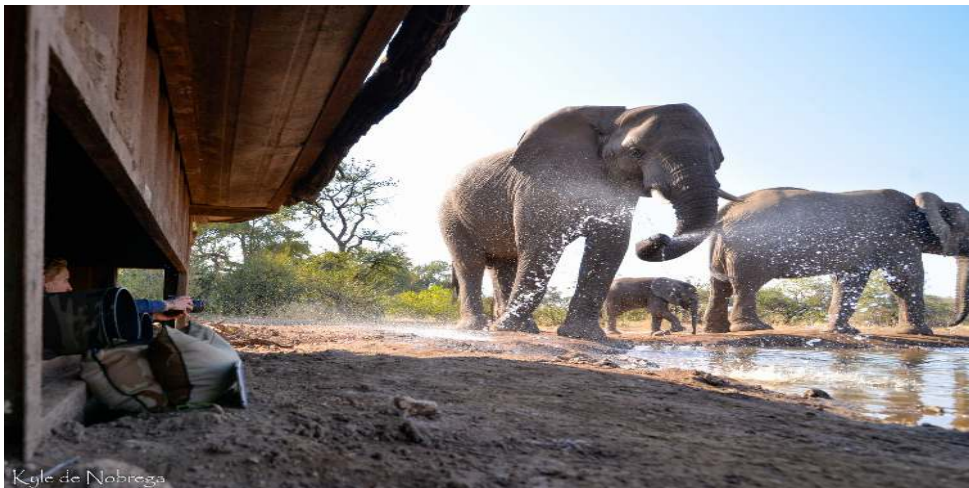


Janet Kleyn

### Biography

Janet Kleyn manages the PhotoMashatu photographic concession at Mashatu Game Reserve in the Northern Tuli block of Botswana, where she shares her expert advice, tuition and experience to help her clients take their photography to the next level. She is a sought after guide and tutor. Many guests return to gain from her expert advice, keen photographic eye and her intimate knowledge of wildlife.

**“It’s as much about the experience of being in nature, as it is in getting the photograph – and if you loving the experience, you’re bound to reflect that in your photography”.**



Kyle de Nobrega

David Batzofin

**Well-known photographer, Janet Kleyn shares her photographic experience on hide photography.**

I’m sometimes referred to as “the hide lady”, other times as “the bunker lady” this is not surprising since I spend many hours photographing from an underground photographic hide in Mashatu Game reserve, Botswana”

Although I have access to the entire reserve, sitting quietly in the hide remains my favourite spot to photograph from.

Firstly, there is the

obvious advantage of being positioned at an angle that is ideal for wildlife photography. As wildlife photographers, we always strive to get photos at eye level to our subjects as it helps to create a connection between the subject and the audience, but when the subject is having a drink, eye level is very low and this is where a sunken hide comes into its own.

Photographing from ground level changes perspective and gives the added advantage of increasing the distance between the subject and the background. The greater this

distance, the shallower the depth of field resulting in softer backgrounds.

But apart from these photographic benefits, I find being so close to animals, without the sound of an engine, gives me a much more intimate experience with the subject. The animals are allowing you into their space. This is a very privileged place to be as it relies on trust and these animals trust you to do no harm and better yet, capture them going about their normal lives. This intimacy helps me with deciding on compositional elements and deciding what



it is I want to portray in my image.

While driving we tend to miss so many of the smaller, less obvious things. Being forced to sit in one place and wait for whatever arrives has made me pay attention to so much more. It’s taught me to look out for interesting behaviour to capture, and that is what photography is about for me – capturing moments.

A hide at a waterhole offers a huge diversification of different species from frogs to predators and everything in between. It takes patience but the rewards are boundless.

Janet’s top tips for photographing from a hide:

**Be ready for anything** – If possible, have a long and a wide lens available to give you different photographic options. Don’t panic shoot, take your eye off the viewfinder occasionally and look around for inspiration and decide what you want to capture.

**Be prepared** - Have all your equipment out and easy to get to. You don’t want to be fumbling and opening zips or velcro to get to your equipment just as the animal arrives.

**Be fully immersed** – Look and listen for clues of



what may be approaching or what may happen. Eg. squirrels alarm calling could signify a predator approaching or branches breaking an elephant. This will give you time to prepare and be ready.

If you know some animals or birds are regular visitors, think about what you want to capture in advance and plan your shots.

**You can’t control the light** – think about what you will do as the light changes. When it is very bright consider shooting for black and white where a higher contrast subject can work well against a bright sky.

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## Separating the pips from the fruit

Cont. from page 1

Casketts has a legal right to extract sufficient water to irrigate 120 hectares. This right was granted in 1950 when the Klaserie Irrigation Board was constituted by the then Governor-General of the Union of South Africa.

That water offtake is sufficient for Casketts purposes – they have made no application for additional offtake, and no other water use license is required in terms of the Water Act.

The Klaserie Dam was built in the 1950s on the Klaserie River about 22 km upstream of Casketts specifically to enable the farmers to access reliable water for their crops. The total water listed for farmers from the dam is to irrigate 1,100ha, of which about 500ha is currently utilised.

Water is regularly released from the dam to provide the farmers' required water and maintain the river's ecological state (theoretically). Casketts has a pump to extract that water directly from the river as it flows past. This water is then pumped to earth dams for storage and then irrigation.

A perceived conflict of interest has been raised in some quarters because Casketts co-owner Jurie van Vuren is also a board member (and chairperson) of the Klaserie Irrigation Board. The general suspicion being whispered is that he either used his position to grant the necessary water rights (not possible because the water rights were allocated in 1950, as described above) or will influence future decisions related to water and Casketts.

The Department of Water Affairs owns the Klaserie Dam, and the relevant farmers own allocated water volume rights. The only way to be on the Irrigation Board is if you are a water right owner. All board members are beneficiaries of decisions made by themselves. In other words, this is not a public democracy; it's a club of people who own rights to a water resource and who rely on their collective intent and skills to best manage that resource. This is no different to the many other forms of cooperative resource manage-



ment boards, such as those governing the Timbavati and Klaserie private nature reserves (PNR), for example.

When I questioned van Vuren about the timing of his appointment to the Board, he advised: "I became a shareholder of Casketts on 09 September 2018 and a board member of Klaserie Irrigation Board on 23 November 2018."

So, van Vuren was not alive when the water right was granted. Could he conceivably influence water-related decisions in favour of Casketts? Yes, absolutely. But then so could every other Klaserie Irrigation Board member serve their interests in this way.

The conflict of interest is there, it's intentional, and it is no different to other boards that serve a similar purpose.

Perhaps boards such as these – with significant environmental impact – should be opened up to include independent board members? But that's a conversation for another day.

Casketts has four long-existing dams on a drainage line that feeds into the Klaserie River. Two still hold water, and two were breached during the 2012 floods and are currently empty. Van Staden has repaired the largest of the broken dams and indicated that he wouldn't repair the other dam. The EIA conditions stipulate that he cannot increase the size of the repaired dam – from the original 70m length, 6m width and 5m height.

Our tour of Casketts included the dam in question. It was apparent that the dam

floor has been scraped – "to remove the accumulated sand from the rocky floor of the dam", he told me. The repaired dam wall does not appear to exceed the permitted 5m height limit. The wall is now wider than 6m, increased to 12m in places. Van Staden's explanation that this was to ensure no further breaches during floods makes sense, as does his further justification that the wider wall now permits them to use the dam wall as the main road to access the portion of the farm on the other side of the drainage line with heavy farming vehicles. In this way, they avoid making roads through the protected riverine area. The length of the wall has been increased to allow for a spillway to prevent future floods – the original dam did not have a spillway. The spillway does not increase the holding capacity of the dam.

I am no dam expert (obviously), but I was no more alarmed at what I saw here than I was last year when one of the largest landowners in Timbavati PNR repaired the 2012 flood-damaged dam wall at his lodge on the Nhlalalumi River. He moved large amounts of sand from the dam floor. I was alerted to this by a downstream property owner who was surprised to see little or no flowing water immediately after excellent rains early this year when the Nhlalalumi was flowing bank-to-bank a short distance upstream. This is a large dam with no agricultural benefit. The flow of this non-perennial river

is impeded to provide a visually appealing lodge site and attract wildlife for those gin&tonic moments. As an aside, one reason for the concentration of elephants in the Greater Kruger during the dry months, and subsequent destruction of local trees, is these man-made dams. But that's another discussion entirely.

Do these increases in width and length of the Casketts dam wall represent an opportunity for legal and punitive action? Time will tell. Should every dam repair, regardless of where, be appropriately scrutinised for environmental reasons? Certainly.

The EIA stipulates that no protected trees may be removed during the bush clearing process – without a permit. Van Staden assured me that no such trees were removed, but of course, I have no way to verify that claim. Google Earth shows old fields with scant natural cover – much like the damaged scrubland we drove through on the way from the gate to the orchards. Nevertheless, there were some sizeable, defiant leadwood, marula and knob-thorn trees dotted amidst the moonscape – and each had been marked with plastic tape.

I noticed that part of the clearing was taking place beyond the clearly defined EIA boundary limits and questioned van Staden about that.

He explained that he had to decide how to make up the permitted 102ha of land to be cleared because some of the area approved

for clearing featured more trees than the area he chose to clear. This transgression did not result in him exceeding the 102ha allocation, and he seemed philosophical about potential ramifications.

Another primary concern is how Casketts will 'deal with' the overload of insects that can be expected to invade the citrus orchards from the neighbouring biodiversity-rich Greater Kruger area. The likely chemical warfare will surely impact groundwater pollution and wildlife that feeds on poisoned insects.

Van Staden dismissed my concerns – mainly on the basis that Casketts will, like his other farms, be GLOBALG.A.P certified to export their fruit and that the requirements are so precise, traceable and transparent that there is no room for errors. He also emphasised that he requires his chemical processes to be bee-friendly to ensure the fertilisation by bees of his orchards. He mentioned using predator insects as one tactic to remove insects that could harm his citrus crop. He further added that GLOBALG.A.P. is very sensitive to negative social media publicity and extra vigilant during the annual audit process.

I found myself silenced by his confident dismissal and not knowledgeable enough to counter. And yet, I am mindful that scientists cite the ubiquitous use of agricultural pesticides and the spread of monoculture crops as a primary reason for the fall-off of the world's

insect populations.

Other scientists conclude that insect declines are linked to the intensification of agriculture in the last 50 years.

Much of the legal tussle going on between the parties seems to hinge on whether any of the bush clearing occurred while the appeal process was underway – which would be illegal. This Daily Maverick provides the relevant detail, and I won't go into this matter in any further detail. Van Staden did not want to comment on this matter because of the impending legal actions, but he did express frustration at the costly delays related to the appeal process.

In this timeline below, it becomes clear that the authorities (office of the M.E.C., Limpopo Department of Economic Development, Environment & Tourism (LEDET)) took 21 months to finalise an appeal process that they are obligated to complete in 90 days. Despite the LEDET tardiness, appeals lodged by some parties after the stipulated 20-day deadline were rejected as being late!

The Legal timeline starts on the 23/03/2017 with the application for subdivision of property and runs through the permission to cultivate, approval of subdivision, transfer of the property into the name of Soleil Mashishimale (Pty) Ltd, and the EIA being initiated and approved. In August 2019 appeals were lodged by Timbavati PNR, Klaserie PNR and Elephants Alive, amongst others. Various other appeals were not submitted timeously and therefore dismissed. In March 2021 all appeals were dismissed and the EIA approval upheld.

In April 2021 an application was lodged by the appellants against the M.E.C.: LEDET & Others for a judicial review of the decision by the M.E.C. (It is unlikely that this application will see the courtroom sooner than eighteen months from now – we can expect Covid-related delays – and by then, the citrus trees will be in the ground, and the farming enterprise will be well on its way).

Cont. on page 9

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# Another look at Casketts Citrus

Cont. from page 8

There was also an urgent application by above appellants to prevent any further development until the judicial review has been finalised this urgent application was dismissed in June 2021.

Farms in this area are sought-after because they are close to the Greater Kruger and could one day conceivably be incorporated into this successful conservation endeavour – which would add significantly to their value and revenue-generation potential.

I was curious as to how this valuable wildlife land could end up as a citrus farm. My enquiry as to why Casketts was not fenced into the prestigious Timbavati or Klaserie private nature reserves was referred to the previous owner, Rocco Gioia. As a local landowner, Gioia co-operates extensively with Timbavati and Klaserie management during their anti-poaching efforts to protect their rhino – his farms border those reserves – and maintains a good relationship with them.

HOWEVER, Gioia pointed out in an email that his requests for his farm to be included in Timbavati Private Nature Reserve were turned down.

I discussed these historic rejections with a former Timbavati warden, who confirmed that the decision-makers viewed Gioia's property as not suitable for inclusion. We also extracted this statement from

the Timbavati chairman Anthony Hare: "We took a decision based on our ability to absorb a large property, beyond our natural footprint. This would have meant considerable extra resources and cost required and without being able to leverage the existing operations to take it on. We did not rule it out forever, just at the time."

Gioia also mentioned several attempts to have his farm included in the Klaserie Private Nature Reserve, including one request based on operating as a hunting camp. We were advised by the current Klaserie warden Colin Rowles that according to his records, Gioia applied at some stage in the 1990s but subsequently withdrew that application.

Gioia provided several examples of specific requests made by him to both reserves going back about 30 years, and the reasons for rejection varied each time. His obvious frustration provides a clear indication that things need to change if we are to avoid similar scenarios repeating themselves. Angry neighbours, of whatever level of economic empowerment, make for bad conservation bedfellows.

The concern about animals being killed by various means as they target the citrus trees is valid, and this scenario is mirrored on most commercial farms in the world. Animals will die in their pursuit of nourishment from these trees – from insects to birds and mammals. Hopefully, there

will be mitigation strategies in place (van Staden says there will be), but the reality is that some animals will die.

The issue that has hogged the limelight has been the likelihood of elephants targeting the oranges and what will happen if and when they do.

Van Staden seemed open to any considered, well-managed collaborations to reduce the risk of this happening and to prevent elephant crop-raiders from being killed or harmed – by working with local authorities and NGOs. He seemed to be relaxed about this risk and confused about the focus on elephants as the main issue at play. "Elephants will have to come through four fences before they get to my property", he said – the Greater Kruger fence, a neighbour farm fence, the Gioia farm fence and the Casketts farm fence. The EIA requires him to install an elephant-proof fence on Casketts – and he assured me that this would be done.

To help me understand the elephant-oranges issue better, I spoke to Kevin Leo-Smith, manager of Rietspruit Game Reserve, just outside Hoedspruit and across the busy R40 road from the Greater Kruger area in question. His input is very relevant because he recently managed the re-introduction of elephants to Rietspruit, which borders directly onto established citrus farms. The neighbour consultation process

involved explaining to concerned farmers his mitigation procedures if elephants escape Rietspruit to raid the citrus orchards.

Leo-Smith explained that there is no scientific evidence that elephants specifically target citrus as a general rule. There is plenty of anecdotal evidence of elephants eating oranges in farm orchards, but elephants target just about anything edible. For example, three bull elephants that escaped from the nearby Balule Private Nature Reserve (Greater Kruger) about four years ago followed the Blyde River upstream as they pursued their natural dispersal instinct. They did not make their way to nearby citrus farms; instead they feasted on the mango orchards along the way before being captured and returned to the reserve. The Malelane and Komatiport areas, about 250 km south of Hoedspruit, are awash with huge sugar cane and citrus farms, amongst other crops, and few if any elephant issues are reported by farmers.

Leo-Smith explained that bull elephants in particular will, through learned behaviour, regularly visit sources of reliable nutrition – including citrus crops – but that they are more likely to target grass crops like sugar cane, maize (corn) and sorghum, which more closely resemble their preferred grass diet.

Several people I have spoken to recently seem under

the impression that this area bordering the Greater Kruger is unspoilt bushveld. I live here and can tell you that this is a fallacy. The area has been farmed extensively, and the veld bears the scars – with large tracts of invasive shrub species such as sickle bush *Dichrostachys cinerea* and no sign of palatable grass or large trees.

We also have massive mining operations nearby (including on the Kruger National Park border) and even a railway line running through the Greater Kruger delivering mica and other minerals to insatiable international markets. Brief scrutiny of the area on Google Earth reveals massive currently used irrigation fields at several places on or near the Greater Kruger border. I mention this to add a touch of reality to some perceptions.

One thing I am sure of is that this citrus farm will go ahead. What remains to be seen is how much financial damage is to be suffered by the warring parties before the storm passes.

On the one side is a wealthy, astute local farmer who is meticulous in his planning. On the other side are extremely wealthy, mostly non-resident landowners and a respected team of elephant scientists.

As much as van Staden has outmanoeuvred his opponents to date, his journey has been made easier by a notoriously lax local government that is the bane of most wildlife

landowners. LEDET should hang their heads in shame for twiddling their thumbs while their missed deadlines wreak havoc for all of us.

There is no question in my mind that a significant conservation concern is the lack of employment for local people – and Casketts promised 60 permanent and 120 seasonal local jobs (employees need SA identity documents and local bank accounts) trumps what was on offer before. Perhaps things would be different if Gioia's application for his farm to be included in the Greater Kruger had been successful?

**We all recognise the critical role that both farming and wildlife tourism play in SA and that where they meet/compete, we have to be pragmatic in finding ways to solve problems and work together.**

Perhaps once the time and money have been spent on legal proceedings, all parties should sit down and agree on a mitigation strategy for the inevitable consequences of this intensive citrus farm on the Greater Kruger's border. Perhaps the conservationists should also work out how this happened on their watch and make sure it does not happen again.

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Pump station on the Klaserie River



Earthen dam on the farm

Photo's Simon Epsley



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# Caring for Kari



Sarah McSmith



more dust and a lot less cars and shops. Kari was working at the original Ngala Game Lodge manning the curio shop, reception and front of house. With a salary of around R550 per month, any shopping trip was a huge and exciting undertaking. At the time Joe commuted between the big smoke and the bush. They soon got married and the bush easily won the toss and they moved to Tshkudu Game Lodge. Their sons Brent and Daniel were

Southern Cross Scholars and the family have become very familiar to many of us. As they say .... and that was that! They jointly managed share blocks for many years and Kari was lucky enough to enjoy her other love, that of a seamstress with Katherine Parker Interiors. You may have also seen her in Pick n Pay where she joined the team for a while before returning to the lodge industry.

Kari Pearson is a child of Africa; the African dust is in her veins and her heart beats its rhythm and always has. She is happiest when outdoors. A natural green fingers, gardening is another deep love of hers, and she is known for her bright, joyful gardens welcoming in friends, bees, birds and bugs.

Kari Pearson was settling down into a new job at a local game lodge. She had boldly enrolled months ear-

lier to up skill herself on an advanced course in Pretoria. Her life was filled with the things she loved, the bush, her family and her new job. Sadly her life was shattered in the first week of July when she was diagnosed with stage four gallbladder cancer.

The support from the community has simply been overwhelming! It is best said in a short write up we did when we found this thought – a provoking poem by Maurene Medway, posted by her lovely mum, Angie Rowles;

“I was born in a land where the skies are so blue; African sunsets, flamed bright golden hue; Communities were strong, we cared, we shared; Problems rallied us, loads together we bared”

As a people we share our abundance and our strife and in the true sense of ubuntu, “I am because you are”. The kindness, support,

love and messages - the ubuntu of our community, ensures that Kari remains surrounded by gardens and trees, and birds and bugs, and love and care.

As part of the Caring for Kari drive we would like to present some raffles. Participate and stand a chance to win one or more of the fabulous prizes on offer. All prizes have been donated by “angel givers” and the raffles will be launched soon – so please keep your eyes peeled.

There will be three raffles of differing ticket prices that will be accompanied by prizes kindly donated by Areotel, Bushwillow Creek Ranch and/or Nyala Safari Lodge; African Dream, Godding & Godding and Queen of Africa, Switsongo Bed n Breakfast, Lisa Erasmus, Hoedspruit Coffee Purveyors, Ecologic, PTC Hoedspruit and/or Hoedspruit Optometrists; the Bushpub

& Inn and the Outback Pub and Grill, Campfire Properties, Stoned Olive Café, Charismatic Cakes, Appelblaar Kamegelo Nursery and a surprise donated by the local community. The more tickets you take the more prizes you can win!

Kari and her family would like to say thank you to everyone, individuals and companies alike, for absolutely everything. The outpouring of support, and the generosity shown by the community is unfathomable. To all the people and companies donating towards the raffles, to all who have donated directly to the Back-A-Buddy campaign and the direct bank account – Kari and her family are truly humbled and eternally grateful. It gives them strength to face this testing time, which would not have been possible without all your love and support!

# Youth poets show survival spirit ... enter the next round

Charmain Pieterse

During Youth Month the AVBOB Poetry Project announced a mini-competition on social media, inviting South Africans poets, aged 18 and younger, to reflect on their experience of surviving the pandemic. Here we announce the winning poets and profile their inspiring poetry.

Although none of the current winners come from Hoedspruit, there will be a chance for local poets to compete in the next round that begins in August 2021.

Three immensely talented youth poets demonstrated resilience and imagination in their entries to the AVBOB Poetry Youth Month mini-competition. Their creative responses address the devastation faced by this generation of high school learners tackling matric studies in isolation and the issue of mental health.

A swathe of terrific entries arrived from writers 18 years and younger in response to COVID-19. Notably, all three

winners matriculated in 2020. Kiara Naidoo, Alister Hichens and Athikshay Maharaj won prizes of R1000, R700 and R300 respectively. All revealed their wistful wishes, words of wisdom, and aching worries in tender and touching poems.

Our overall winner, Kiara Naidoo, is a talented wordsmith who matriculated at Saheti in Johannesburg last year. She also entered the AVBOB Poetry Competition in 2020 and her poem ‘Pioneer’ appears in the AVBOB Poetry Library.

Her poem ‘Rising Thespians’ is a worthy first-place winner in the Youth Month mini-competition. She used the sophisticated form of the villanelle that challenges experienced poets. Her language and concept engage the reader from the first line, setting the stage powerfully in theatrical fashion for a tragicomic portrayal of the pandemic.

Kiara moved to Stellenbosch this year to study a BSc in Molecular Biology

and Biotechnology. ‘Rising Thespians’ spotlights the strains on mental health in the youth. “This is easily concealed... the victims are phenomenal actors and it’s easy to assume that a loved one is coping when, in reality, they’re overwhelmed. The central

symbol of the poem, the Sock and Buskin, speaks to how South Africans fashion comedy from memes and social media posts in the face of tragedy.” Kiara urges those struggling with their mental health: “Don’t hesitate to seek the help you deserve.”



The AVBOB Youth Month winner Kiara Naidoo

## Rising Thespians by Kiara Naidoo

Today we wear our Sock and Buskin  
To mask in sarcasm callow distress  
With youthful pretence we can begin.  
Comedic containment with memes akin  
As youth we connect; in social media we bless  
Today we wear our Sock and Buskin.  
With online school to make our heads spin  
All that Math and Science is just a guess  
With youthful pretence we shall begin.  
A mocking façade of what has been  
Sanitiser, soap, and all that mess  
Today we wear our Sock and Buskin  
To hide behind exaggerated grins  
The lurking depression and shroud of stress  
With youthful pretence we will begin.  
Confined within the walls of West Berlin  
For even in our home, there is no rest  
Today we wear our Sock and Buskin  
With youthful pretence we begin.

## MISSING NUMBERS SOLUTION

3	-	4	-	15	×	1	-	13	-29
-	■	+	■	-	■	×	■	-	
25	-	11	-	6	+	23	-	21	10
+	■	-	■	+	■	+	■	-	
14	-	5	+	24	÷	8	×	18	63
-	■	-	■	÷	■	+	■	+	
9	-	22	+	12	-	20	+	17	-4
-	■	-	■	+	■	-	■	+	
2	×	16	-	7	+	19	-	10	34
-19		-28		18		32		1	



# Tricky Truck Trouble ... Time to take action

Mark Bishop  
Marie Helm

The DA Councillor of the Mopani District Municipality, Cllr Marie Helm, has kindly outlined the massive problems being experienced by the local communities adjacent to the R40, R530 and other local roads in the area.

The problems have again raised their ugly heads because of the increased traffic of large trucks carrying magnetite from Phalaborwa to various locations, with little or no consideration to the environment, the local infrastructure and the people within the confines of these arterial routes.

This is not a new problem as every time the price of magnetite increases, the mines up the production and the truck traffic increases to levels that are quite frankly not sustainable for the challenged infrastructure – more specifically the roads. This problem occurred in 2013, 2019 and now again in 2021.

In an attempt to address

this problem a group of concern business owners and residents met on the 22nd June 2021. Issues that were raised regarding the R530, included the following: after offloading the magnetite, truck drivers dumped the residue magnetite remaining in the trucks at laybys along the route back to Phalaborwa with the resultant impact issues attached. The road network was clearly not constructed with the view of handling the truck traffic in terms of its volume nor of its weight and the resultant impact on the infrastructure, is huge potholes developing on the truck routes – a danger to everyone. The disregard of good driving conduct was also an issue, and this took the form of “truck trains” (where trucks travel dangerously close behind each other with no chance of any motorist overtaking one truck at a time) and a complete disregard of the rules of the road. Truck drivers are often seen overtaking on blind rises and on solid white lines with scant regard to the safety of others.



One of the trucks on a rest stop

Photo by MDP

The noise factor was another issue brought up – residents in Letaba and Leopard Rock estates have complained of relentless hooting, loud music and reverse gear ‘beeping’, all clearly audible from some distance.

Around Sameys (on the R40) trucks often block the entrance gates to the farms,

often causing bad visibility for residents exiting their properties, not to mention the dust problem. Again the lack of obeying the rules of the road is an ongoing problem endangering all motorists. At the illegal stops such as Sameys and Hoedspruit, residents complain about drivers defecating on the shoulder of the road even

though there are toilet facilities, and condoms and other rubbish dumped uncaringly wherever the trucks stop.

“Various solutions were proposed the first of which were legal truck stops to cater for the needs of the drivers without compromising the communities, reviving this in Phalaborwa and looking at the possibilities of the same in Klaserie and around Acornhoek”.

The second proposal was to encourage Traffic Officers to enforce the Law on all counts including roadside behavior and driving offences. The third proposal was to request a weigh-bridge and a monthly report from SANRAL. The fourth proposal was to patrol and control the trucks and drivers, as has been done in the past as well as daily cleaning at illegal stops. The fifth proposal was to look at a permanent solution in getting the mines to purchase their own trains and lease the rail usage from Transnet. The last proposal was to educate truck drivers and to ensure proper induction of them.

The group also felt very strongly, that it was

imperative that the mine conduct an environmental impact assessment (EIA) looking at the impact of the trucks on the road infrastructure and the surrounding communities. There is an unacceptable imbalance of profiteering by the mines whilst the communities suffer.

The group agreed to join the “R40 Concern Group” to form a consolidated front that will team up with other concerned groups along the R40 route in Acornhoek, Bushbuckridge and White River as well as along the R530 in Lydenburg and through to Middelburg.



Evidence of damaged trucks on the roads

Photo supplied

A meeting was held with representatives of PMC on 27th July 2021, and feedback was promised by Friday 30th July 2021. The problems however still persist until such time as these serious issues are addressed and resolved.

Anyone wishing to join, contact or contribute to this group should get in touch with Cllr Marie Helm on 082 683 2835 or on mariehalm@hotmail.com

Kruger2Canyon News will do all it can to help this cause in normalizing our road usage and bring a sense of law and order to our roads in our treasured biosphere and beyond.

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<b>MEDICAL &amp; VETERINARY SERVICES</b>		
Counselling Ronelle Joubert	082 787 4471	
DR Van Eeden (Dentist)	015 793 1876	
DR Werner Muller (Dentist)	015 793 1894	
Hlokomela	072 698 6538	
Hoedspruit Clinic	015 793 2342	
Hoeds Wildlife Est Pharmacy	015 793 1427	
J Coetzee (Clinical Psychologist)	015 781 0012	
Marlie Landman (Eye Clinic)	082 803 0369	
Med Centre (Dentists)	015 793 0845	
ProVet Veterinary Hospital	015 793 0797	
<b>REAL ESTATE &amp; PROPERTY</b>		
Century 21	015 793 1534	
Fine & Country	083 377 6622	
Pam Golding	015 793 2712	
<b>TOURISM &amp; THINGS TO DO</b>		
Eastgate Airport	015 793 3681	
Hoedspruit-info	078 979 6486	
Hds Endangered Species Centre	015 793 1633	
Jabulani Elephant Interaction	015 793 1265	
K2C Biosphere Region	015 817 1838	
Sky-Way Trails	013 737 8374	
<b>VEHICLES. SPARES &amp; REPAIRS</b>		
Laevelid Trekkers	087 806 5616	
Supa Quick	015 793 0176	
HDS Number Plates	082 807 4757	

# KEEP CALM & WASH YOUR HANDS

**HEKOMELA**



# 59 Leaders collaborate on conservation at the SAWC

Aswell Glasson

What happens when you take 59 leaders from eight African countries, representing dozens of conservation organisations, and guide them on a collaborative, intergenerational learning journey? You gain incredible insights into trends and issues at a critical time for the conservation sector, suggests Elsbeth Dixon, from leadership development organisation, Common Purpose.

For the last two years, Dixon has been working with Southern African Wildlife College and the Environmental Sustainability Agency (ESA) on a Conservation Leadership Programme run through the College's African Intergenerational Leadership Hub (AIGLH), with the support of the Mava Foundation and Peace Parks. Participants come from eSwatini, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, South Africa, and Zambia.

"Despite dealing with the realities of Covid-related conservation impacts, ongoing wildlife crime, and increasing demands on scarce natural resources, the men and women working in conservation show up for people and the planet, day after day. As the programme nears completion, it has been a privilege to be part of a process to recognise and grow their leadership skills and now, share some of their collective learning," said ESA's Clive Poultney.

Here are seven take-away lessons from leaders involved in managing some of Africa's most significant conservation landscapes.

**Meaningful collaboration with communities is critical.**

Conservation leaders know that 'going it alone' is not an acceptable or effective strategy, but they wrestle with how to work with communities most effectively in the areas they operate in. Despite this, when meeting with engaged community



members, the conversations and opportunities for mutual insights are enormous.

Conservation must learn from other sectors.

Conservation can be a very inward-facing community that will benefit from broadening its horizons and involving multiple and broad stakeholders in conservation activities. Learning from people who are outside the conservation space can help conservationists become more effective. This includes connecting more effectively with indigenous knowledge.

You cannot achieve conservation outcomes without addressing climate change.

Conservation thinking needs big picture thinking, and you cannot work in conservation without also looking at the context in which conservationists' practice. Climate change is a major driver of many challenges facing conservation leaders, who need to recognise how their local efforts connect to the bigger global picture, and that climate change is not a stand-alone issue, but rather a background condition for all their work.

Education can help future-

proof conservation.

Connecting with the education sector and engaging with young children in a structured and sustained way can provide powerful future impacts to the conservation sector. It does this by instilling a real love and appreciation for the value of healthy ecosystems in their lives and providing a focus for future career aspirations, resulting in a new generation of leaders ready to tackle the big conservation issues.

Embracing technology makes conservation more successful.

Technology and the possibility of harnessing technology through apps, better data management, and various other platforms and opportunities, is changing how conservation is practised. Some technologies already allow for incredible impact at scale, and the sector needs to keep up, whether it relates to using technology to connect with stakeholders, gather data, improve law enforcement, or learn more about their environment.

The wisdom derived from intergenerational learning is more than the sum of its



parts.

A profound lesson from the programme that brought young and more senior leaders together, is that youth and experience can be immensely powerful when mixed. Young leaders can benefit from deep seams of knowledge gathered over decades, while senior leaders can – and are open to – learning from younger people. However, there is a need to create platforms where young conservationists can find and share their voices.

Closer ties between conservation organisations benefit everyone.

The programme has broken down the distance between conservation organisations by bringing leaders from around Africa together. This prompted a realisation that conservation institutions across Africa are not effectively connected. If you can lessen the distance between them, there are powerful opportunities

for support, sharing and impact at scale.

Furthermore, creating interpersonal links between leaders from different organisations and countries is powerfully encouraging for individuals working in often difficult and even dangerous situations. This is something that the Southern African Wildlife College has experienced when bringing people from across Africa together in a learning environment, which then becomes a melting pot for ideas, across its natural resource management programmes.

To find out more about the course, visit [www.wildlife-college.org.za/sawc-hubs/african-intergenerational-leadership-hub](http://www.wildlife-college.org.za/sawc-hubs/african-intergenerational-leadership-hub).

The leadership programme is run in parallel to a community leadership programme, so look out for lessons for conservation from communities being published soon.

The Southern African Wildlife College campus located on the Orpen Road

Photo's supplied

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