

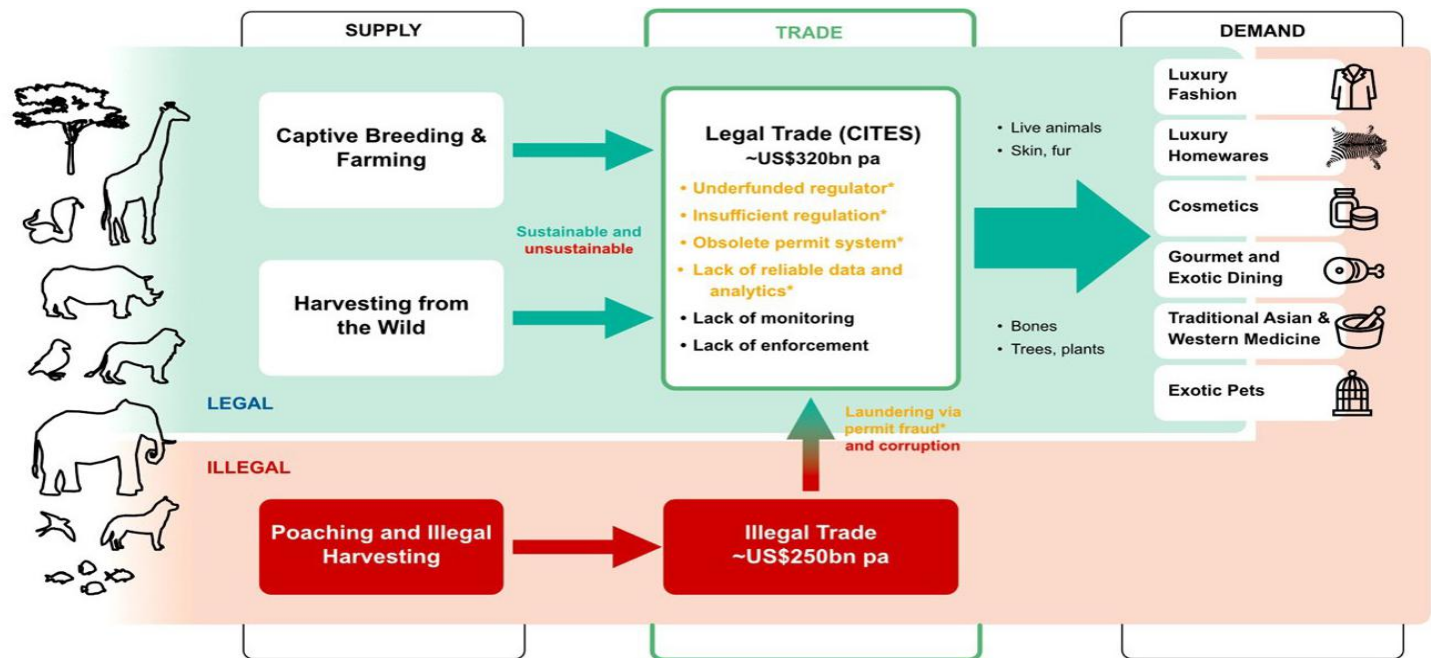
## Trading in wild things: Major rethink required, for biodiversity's sake



An international shortage of lab monkeys is driving prices higher, with concerns that this is fuelling the hidden market  
Photo: Nature Needs More

Don Pinnock

Every year, millions of creatures and plants are traded for food, pets, fashion, curios and traditional medicines. Some end up as hunting trophies. There's a mechanism to regulate this, but it isn't working. The problem has a fix, but it will take audacity.



\* Currently the legal and illegal trade are so intertwined that they are functionally inseparable. The only way to tackle the illegal trade is to modernise CITES which addresses all the items marked in amber.

Photo: Nature Needs More

Peering through rimless glasses and flipping pages, gold cufflinks flashing, Judge Alfred Cockrell is going through documents in forensic detail as befits his role.

He has a gentle, almost fatherly smile as he demands precision from a bench of black-clad advocates in the Cape Town High Court seeking to contest hunting quotas for lions, rhinos, elephants and leopards.

The case before him is about the procedures around trophy hunting permits granted or not granted by Barbara Creecy, Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment.

The legal contest, brought by the Humane Society International/Africa, is ultimately dismissed, though certain costs of the no doubt considerably expensive case must, rules the Judge, be shared.

Within a day of intense argument, however, there is a sub-theme on which, unfortunately, the Judge feels he cannot comment as it would be overreach in terms of the case: how to evaluate the threat to a

### Trade in Wildlife Graphic

species by human action; a so-called non-detriment finding (NDF). How can that be assessed, who requires it, and is it even possible?

Before we take a step in that direction, let's do a bit of acronym bush clearing, because the names of the organisations coming up are a mouthful. There's CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora), Nemba (the National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act, 2004), and the Scientific Authority of South Africa.

While we're at it, keep in mind another bit of shorthand: Appendix 1, 2 and 3 are categories CITES uses to afford different levels of protection to wild species – 1 being the highest, where species are threatened with extinction and need the most protection. Then there's reverse listing, but we'll come to that later.

To export for trade, a species listed under

Appendix 1 or 2, CITES requires the Scientific Authority to provide an NDF in terms of Nemba requirements. Thank heavens for acronyms, or that would've been a very long sentence.

It seems reasonable: before issuing an export permit, the Scientific Authority of a country has to ensure the trade doesn't endanger the species' population or disrupt its role in the ecosystem. It's what scientists are for, right? But before we move on, let's unpack what that requirement entails.

To ensure no harm will be done to a species, you need to know (take a deep breath) its biology and life-history characteristics; its range (historical and current); population structure, status and trends (in the harvested area, nationally and internationally); threats; historical and current species-specific levels and patterns of harvest, and mortality (like age and sex); management measures currently in place,

and proposed, including adaptive management strategies and consideration of levels of compliance; population monitoring and conservation status.

### How do we know what is detrimental?

All 184 CITES members are required to do an NDF on exports, but undertaking all that is, as you can imagine, time-consuming and expensive, and requires people who know how to do it.

This doesn't mean it can't be done, just that confidence in exporting countries – mainly in the global south – actually doing it before issuing an export permit is not high. Without it, or it not having been done properly, an entire species can be placed at risk.

Indeed, there are holes all over the place, according to a report by Nature Needs More, entitled "You can't make a silk purse out of a sow's ear".

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# From the editors desk



Supposedly the older you get the quicker time flies ... well I am certainly one person that can confirm that! It feels like only yesterday that we began our journey with the Kruger2Canyon News.

Over the years I have tried very hard to get stories out of the community. For whatever reason, this is like extracting blood from a stone – yes there are a few regulars that submit stories from time to time. I think in the mainstream there is a fear of exposure. Privacy concerns and worries about misrepresentation can be significant deterrents. Building trust and rapport becomes crucial, assuring residents that their voices will be heard accurately and respectfully. Transparency about the editorial process and open communication go a long way in fostering this necessary trust. I believe that we have achieved this and have shown the brand integrity that we continually strive so hard to ensure.

Having said all that, the Kruger2Canyon News would love to hear from residents and visitors in the area – send us your stories and/or pictures and if they are newsworthy, we will print them. Let's highlight the everyday triumphs, hidden talents, and unique perspectives within our community as this will not only enrich the local paper but also strengthen the very fabric of the community itself. I await the response with bated breath; I will report back next month. Please note FGASA is not in the back page this edition, but will resume next month.

Have a wonderful month ahead – until next time.



Mark Bishop - Editor

## Love the Hoed® titbits

### New hotel development around the Farmhouse in Zandspruit

Lines on the ground, gut from peg to peg, a positioned container, the sound of digging, and a small sign erected indicated action on the new 12 bed Khiwane Boutique Hotel. Before we knew it, it was fenced off and the machinery was in. They have subsequently progressed to digging it trenches; it's on the move. Now that's an exciting development – due to open 2024! We wait in anticipation.



### Beautifuling Hoedies

Following up on last month's Titbit about the gardens and murals at the La Bamba/PnP intersection – the second part of the project is now well under way. In fact, it may well be complete by the time you read this. Popping in to see what was happening, it was unbelievable to witness the murals taking shape on the wall. Hard at work in the scorching sun, these artists are giving of their time to make our town more beautiful – and for that we thank them.

### The view from the Radisson main bar

#### The Mall

I have yet to receive a response from the developer – it was in the January 2023 edition that I responded to a letter about the mall, and in fact spoke to the developer. He promised me a summary of the development, at a later stage I was also promised a press release that had apparently been released. I never saw it nor did I receive either. I see that there is now a

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### What's happening to the Radisson Hotel?

Well, are you all in for a surprise!!! There has been a small 'soft opening', but the real opening will happen in April when all will be revealed – suffice to say that together with the hospital, this addition to the Hoedspruit offering will be amazing. Superb workmanship, state of the art technology, coupled with an amazing location, this facility will 'rock the Hoed' – and I believe for the better. Once they have ironed out all the niggles it will be set to go. We'll keep you updated.

'road' going through the site from near the Yum truck that comes out near the fire station – I have gathered that was put in place to alleviate traffic congestion at the La Bamba/PnP intersection. Apart from that I have no further update. Is it or is it not going to be built? Maybe this will initiate a response!

Local artists get to work on the murals (from left to right), Sbonelo Ngomane and his spotted bushsnake, Storm Barkas and her pangolin, Vanrooy Sondlane and his woodlands kingfisher



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# Trading in wild things: Major rethink required, for biodiversity's sake

Cont. from page 1

For a start, most traded species are simply not listed by CITES and are being traded without regulation.

Then, for Appendix 2 species (being the majority of all CITES-listed species), while exporting them requires an NDF, it is essentially "non-binding" in that there's no penalty for ignoring it.

## CITES is aware that NDFs are not doing a decent job.

A 2020 Secretariat report on NDF's was a damning indictment of the lack of quality in NDFs, finding that 64% of those surveyed inadequately considered the precautionary principle, and 83% did not fully consider patterns of harvest and mortality.

It gets worse.

A peer-reviewed study published in the *Journal of Environmental Management*, entitled "Determining the sustainability of legal wildlife management", found that, for most species, there was no accurate data to estimate wild population sizes, population abundance or volumes collected or traded.

So how do you answer the most basic question on which to base an NDF: what is a sustainable offtake? You can't.

"When combined with a lack of political will," the study notes, "this often results in scientific and economic uncertainties being propagated through most national to international trade."

It found that in many developing countries, there was a great tendency to miscalculate what is sustainable.

In the wildlife field, "sustainable" has become an irritating buzzword. What it should mean, is that use for human needs should not lead to a decline in biodiversity. But it's a term as misused as "free-range" eggs. It's a feel-good tag to make a product or action smell green and leafy.

True sustainability is damnably hard to measure but is critical to an NDF finding.

And can you calculate unintended consequences? In the 1970s/80s, for example, the trade in frogs' legs from India and Bangladesh saw a boom in the agricultural pests they ate, and an upsurge in the use of pesticides. How wide are the boundaries of your assessment? It matters.

## Trade and more trade

The disturbing truth is that not only are we unaware of what's being poached and trafficked, we don't even know the volumes of legal trade and whether it's sustainable.

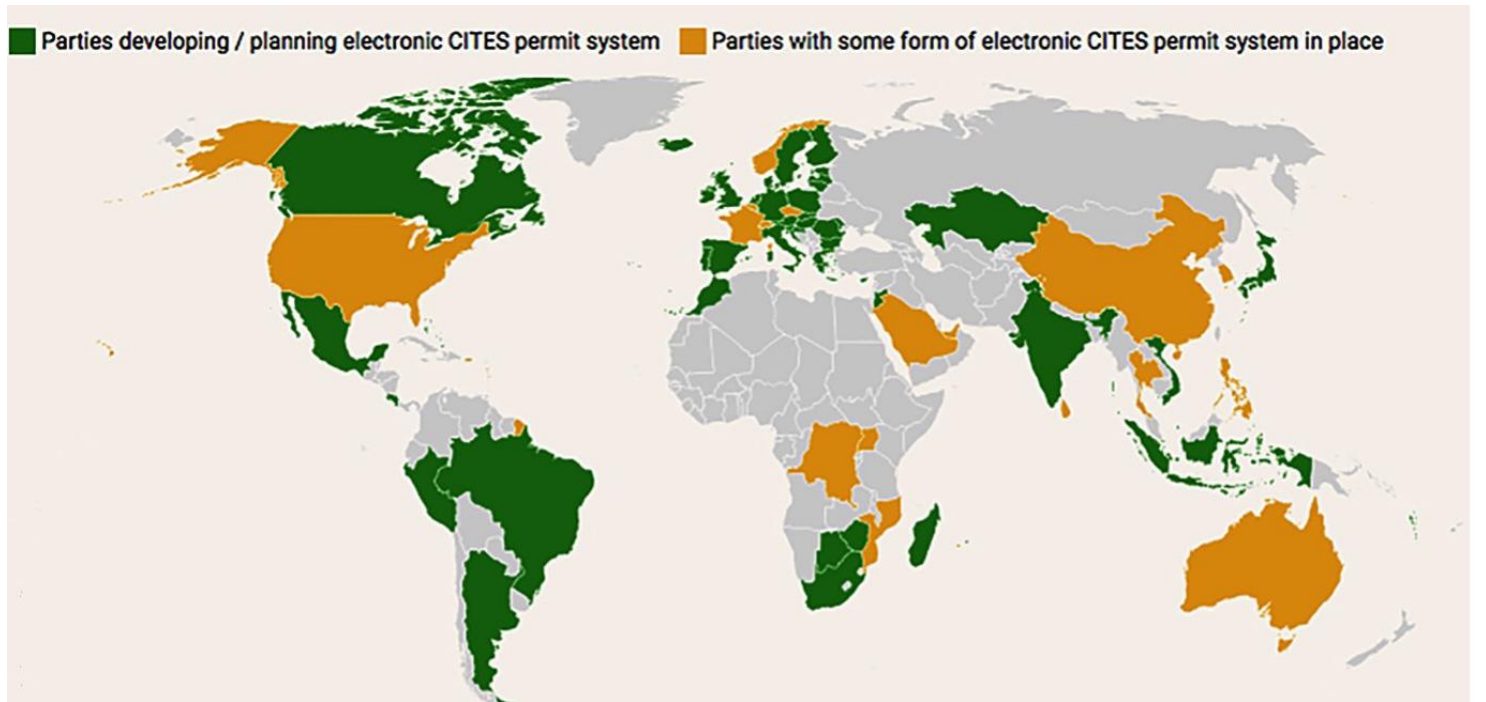
That's because most trade in wild species occurs outside the CITES system. To be "inside", it has to be listed, as one of the 40 900 among the earth's estimated 8,7 million species.

Take songbirds, much desired for their sweet singing in lonely cages by people unaware of the cruelty being perpetrated. Of the estimated 6 659 traded species, none is listed in the CITES database.

Of the 36% of reptiles traded, only 9% are listed there.

Of the 17% of amphibians traded, only 2.4% are listed.

The rarer they are, the harder they get hampered. It doesn't mean all these species are under threat, it's that we just don't know. It is



Countries with and without electronic listing of export permits (above). The international commercial trade in at least 267 amphibian species is not regulated by CITES even though some of these species are considered threatened  
Photo & map: Nature Needs More

largely a free-for-all.

The truth is that a CITES listing does not necessarily stop or even detect unsustainable trade.

While quotas and export permits may claim to be legal and transparent in claiming a sustainable trade, in the absence of solid NDFs they may be as sustainable as draining a pond to save the fish.

To be listed for trade, a country has to formally request its inclusion. Why would it do that? Largely because the species is considered potentially at risk, which is why it ended up with an Appendix listing in the first place, meaning it's potentially in trouble.

But waiting for species to become vulnerable to extinction before providing safeguards is too high a risk.

## Okay, where are we?

Apart from non-listing, let's tick off NDF problems.

They're complicated, potentially expensive and liable to be badly done (between 2003 and 2012, CITES exports from Africa had documentation discrepancies in 92% of records).

There's no mechanism to control their quality and they may take so long that a species could be almost beyond saving before they're implemented.

Worst of all, they might simply not be undertaken, which means they're not done for the majority of species exported.

The truth is that the entire CITES export mechanism, which was designed in the 1960s, is no longer fit for purpose.

## How do we fix it?

The solution is a no-brainer. No wild species, listed or not, should be traded unless permitted by an NDF. It's called reverse listing.

The details of this have been finely worked out by trade specialist Dr Lynn Johnson of Nature Needs More.

The problem, says Johnson, is that when a risk is perceived, it's up to the exporting country to make the call by way of an NDF. By reverse listing, it would be up to importing countries or companies to ensure – and pay



the exporting country for – an NDF permitting their use of the species.

She points out that most legal and laundered illegal trade is overwhelmingly for luxury products produced and sold in a handful of wealthy countries, mainly the US, EU, China, Japan and the UK.

These businesses should pay for and ensure the legality of their supply chains and for the NDFs required to do this.

A new Appendix 1, she suggests, could be created for species afforded the highest level of protection, forbidding all movement across international borders for trade, educational or scientific purposes. This would cover animals with high levels of sentience, like elephants, primates or cetaceans such as dolphins and orcas.

A new Appendix 2 would work on the precautionary principle with the burden of proof on importers to prove sustainability by funding NDFs.

An import levy on CITES shipments could, in addition, be used to improve monitoring and install a global digital permit system (it is presently paper-based in most countries).

Well, why not?

It will, however, take a big shift in thinking. It's a global problem all 184 members of CITES

need to get to grips with. That won't be easy.

CITES is a cumbersome UN-style bureaucracy with fixed traditions and many people are invested in keeping it that way.

But CITES needs a rebuild.

The danger of not changing course brings to mind a Titanic carrying the world's precious biodiversity.

It's time for an urgent rethink.

*This article was previously published in the Daily Maverick – Our Burning Planet*



Sea cucumbers are essential for the healthy functioning of marine ecosystems, but population reductions have a knock-on effect on food webs  
Photo: Nature Needs More





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## Picky View



Spectacular view from the viewing deck at the Buck and Berg, Halloumi fingers (middle) and the best vegan burger in town (above)

AE

Hello everyone – it's time to get back to work after 'MIA' on a wonderful holiday!

For something completely different we ventured forth to Kampersrus, to see what delicacies we could sample. I have to say at the outset that the climate there is fantastic, as was the buzz of excitement as we travelled there – something new, hopefully something great!

There was a bunch of us and so it was interesting to get everyone's feedback on what we found.

We slid into the 'Buck and Berg' restaurant and bar – you can't miss it on the right as you turn into Kampersrus. Who knows this may bring the establishment some infamy in the area, although I think that may have already happened.

One of the group got there a little early and was quickly in to sample the offerings and check the vibe at the bar (on the ground

floor – the restaurant is above the bar). Good offerings, ice cold beer and some happy revellers – all things that go into making it a place to check out and frequent.

The first thing that got me from the restaurant was the view over the lowveld (... forever) to the southwest at the front, and a marvellous view up the mountain at the back. We settled in at the front. The waitress was on point – quick to help with the drinks order and supply menus for the food.

We had heard that this place was 'famous' for its burgers. For starters we shared 'fried haloumi fingers on a nest of fresh rocket with cherry balsamic reduction'. Absolutely next level and a surprise to us all – things clearly were not what we may have expected. Best haloumi that I have tasted in a very long time. We also had 'vegetarian snails' - mushrooms in napolitana source, topped with mozzarella cheese and baked in the pizza oven. All served with bread with which we were able to play 'dippy-dippy' -



Images supplied

again a sure winner.

For mains there was more of a variety – shitake walnut vegan buck and burger, venison buck and burger, poncho polo pizza – a spicy Mexican chicken pizza, and a putanesca pizza – anchovies, capers, olives, and artichokes.

All the burgers were off the charts, well presented, cooked, juicy and flavourful. The vegan burger was particularly interesting and very good. One vegan burger had pickled chillies as an accompaniment which added a different, scrumptious spin. The onion rings, for those that had, came in generous portions and were delicious.

The spicy Mexican chicken pizza was rated by that particular diner as "the best pizza ever eaten"! The putanesca pizza held its own and was crispy, salty, and tasty. A comment here is that this is, so far, the ONLY restaurant to offer artichokes on a pizza ... if there are any others, please let us know!

For desert – this was decadent! The choice

was the Cape brandy pudding – a warm, dark, sponge pudding, soaked in brandy syrup, one served with ice cream the other with cream. To be honest there was a small scuffle, each one of us battling to get the one-up on the others in terms of consumption.

In conclusion, this is a venue that you must make an effort to go to. Very casual and unassuming, the offering is good and wholesome, well cooked, and delicious. I was surprised that this quality of food and ambience was so well priced. They might consider opening on Sundays – I think that would be a bomb; and they should also consider expanding the wine list. All in all, a great afternoon, great view, great food, great company, and at a good price – what more do you need? Well done to the Buck and Berg!

## Yotam Ottolenghi's cauliflower cake

Veggie Diva

Yotam Ottolenghi has been a big inspiration to me. I have all his recipe books and follow him religiously on Instagram. Most of his books and columns feature vegetarian recipes, he himself is not a vegetarian but he says in comparison to cooking meat, "vegetables take a bit more work, but they pay back with lots of TLC as well, because they are good for you, and they are much more versatile".

The biggest thing I have learnt from Ottolenghi is don't be shy to put unsuspecting ingredients together. His cauliflower cake is a good example of this.

Try it – it is delicious and even better the next day with a chilled glass of chenin blanc.

### Ingredients:

- 1 small cauliflower, outer leaves removed, broken into 3 cm florets
- 1 medium red onion, peeled
- 5 tablespoons olive oil
- 1/2 teaspoon finely chopped rosemary
- 7 eggs
- 1/2 cup basil leaves, chopped
- 1 cup flour, sifted
- 1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1/3 teaspoon ground turmeric
- 150g coarsely grated parmesan or another mature cheese
- Melted unsalted butter, for brushing
- 1 tablespoon white sesame seeds
- Salt and black pepper

### Method:

- 1 Preheat the oven to 200°C.
- 2 Place the cauliflower florets in a saucepan and add 1 teaspoon salt. Cover with water and simmer for 5 minutes, until the florets are slightly soft. Drain and set aside in a colander to dry.
- 3 Cut 4 round slices, 5 mm thick, off one end of the onion and set aside. Coarsely chop the rest of the onion and place in a small pan with the oil and rosemary. Cook for 10 minutes over medium heat until soft. Set aside to cool. Transfer the onion to a large bowl, add the eggs and basil, whisk well, and then add the flour, baking powder, turmeric, parmesan, 1 teaspoon salt, and plenty of pepper. Whisk until smooth before adding the cauliflower and stirring gently, trying not to break up the florets.
- 4 Line the base and sides of a 24-cm springform cake pan with parchment paper. Brush the sides with melted butter, toss the sesame seeds around the inside of the pan so that they stick to the sides. Pour the cauliflower mixture into the pan, spreading it evenly, arrange the reserved onion rings on top. Place in the centre of the oven and bake for 45 minutes, until golden brown and set; a knife inserted into the centre of the cake should come out clean.
- 5 Remove from the oven and leave for at least 20 minutes before serving. It needs to be served just warm, rather than hot, or at room temperature.
- 6 Serve with a fresh simple green salad and garlicky potatoes.



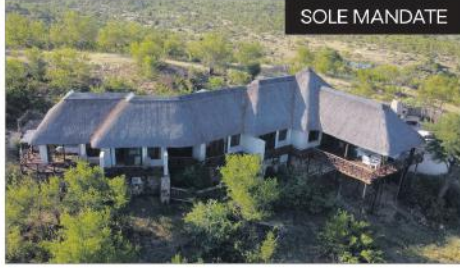
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SOLE MANDATE

**OLIFANTS GAME RESERVE, R 5 900 000**  
BIG 5 Beds 4 | Bath 4.5 | Traverse: 9,000 ha

50% Share in a beautiful bush home within Greater Kruger. This share is inclusive of a Land Rover game viewer. An open plan kitchen leads to a lounge and dining area, opening onto a large covered deck. An open boma and braai area allows for many a night under the African skies.

Yvette Thompson - 083 655 7176 Ref: 2203910



SOLE MANDATE

**NDLOVUMZI NATURE R 4 458 000**  
RESERVE Beds 4 | Baths 4 | Floor size: 300 m<sup>2</sup>

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, which makes the home appealing.

Jason Jones - 083 267 4794 Ref: 2152063



SOLE MANDATE

**RAPTOR'S VIEW WILDLIFE R 5 300 000**  
ESTATE Beds 3 | Baths 3.5 | Floor: 396 m<sup>2</sup>

Architect-designed home boasting unique character not typically found in Raptors View. Notable features include a new thatch roof, fresh paint, updated light fixtures, and a rentable cottage complete with a bedroom, kitchenette, and bathroom. VAT inclusive, no transfer duty applicable.

Rob Severin - 083 469 3820 Ref: 2194742



SOLE MANDATE

**HOEDSPRUIT TOWN R 1 400 000**  
Bedrooms 2 & loft | Bathrooms 2 | Floor: 104 m<sup>2</sup>

This townhouse is an ideal investment property or a great option for first time home buyers. The unit comprises an open plan living area with kitchen, lounge and cosy patio. Both bedrooms have built in cupboards and ceiling fans. Additional features include air conditioning throughout.

Michelle Severin - 083 469 3821 Ref: 2208429



DUAL MANDATE

**RAPTOR'S VIEW WILDLIFE R 5 600 000**  
ESTATE Beds 4 | Baths 4 | Floor: 484 m<sup>2</sup>

The home is beautifully set with a view on to the river with lovely trees, and is in a peaceful and quiet area, deep into the estate. It comprises large open plan living area with lounge, dining area and kitchen with scullery. The large covered patio with boma and pool has a beautiful river front view.

Michelle Severin - 083 468 3821 Ref: 2209448



SOLE MANDATE

**OLIFANTS GAME RESERVE, R 6 800 000**  
BIG 5 Beds 4 | Baths 4 | Traverse: 9,000 ha

50% share in a furnished bush home with full ownership of a Land Cruiser. Spacious lounge and living area leading to covered patio deck with phenomenal views! Braai and boma area set off the deck. A well-designed kitchen with a breakfast nook also enjoys the views. Excellent condition!

Rob Severin - 083 469 3820 Ref: 2211900



SOLE MANDATE

**GUESTHOUSE IN LIVERPOOL R 4 512 000**  
Beds 6 | Baths 3 | Floor: 289 m<sup>2</sup> | Land size: 21 ha

This property is now commercially rezoned and operational presenting an array of possibilities. The property boasts a prime location, with the guesthouse overlooking a perennial water source attracting wildlife, complemented by a tranquil garden with expansive lawns and large trees.

Jason Jones - 083 267 4794 Ref: 2206695



SOLE MANDATE

**KHAYA NDLOVU GAME R 3 250 000**  
RESERVE, BIG 4 Stand size: 1 hectare

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 1,305 ha.

Yvette Thompson - 083 655 7176 Ref: 2154781



SOLE MANDATE

**HOEDSPRUIT WILDLIFE R 4 550 000**  
ESTATE Beds 3 | Baths 2.5 | Floor: 240 m<sup>2</sup>

This home features a double volume, open plan kitchen with lounge and loft. The covered patio looks out onto the fenced garden and pool. There is a double garage with staff bathroom and two store rooms. The estate offers secure living with state-of-the-art access control.

Yvette Thompson - 083 655 7176 Ref: 2209653



SOLE MANDATE

**MODITLO WILDLIFE ESTATE R 4 500 000**  
Bedrooms 3 | Bathrooms 3 | Floor size: 275 m<sup>2</sup>

This family home is well located with lovely bushveld and mountain views. The home features a dining area, lounge, kitchen with scullery, and bar area. The living area leads out to the covered patio, deck and swimming pool. A braai area is tucked away in the corner of the garden.

Rob Severin - 083 469 3820 Ref: 2203063



SOLE MANDATE

**NDLOVUMZI NATURE R 5 200 000**  
RESERVE Beds 8 | Baths 8 | Floor: 480 m<sup>2</sup>

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

Jason Jones - 083 267 4794 Ref: 2151582



**RAPTOR'S VIEW WILDLIFE R 6 300 000**  
ESTATE Beds 4 | Baths 3 | Floor size: 427 m<sup>2</sup>

Large family home ideally located within the estate. The modern open plan living area leads out to a covered entertainment area with patio, pool and boma from where you can enjoy the mountain view. There is also a 2-bedroom cottage which is currently rented out for R11,000 per month.

Michelle Severin - 083 469 3821 Ref: 2176826



**RAPTOR'S VIEW WILDLIFE R 6 400 000**  
ESTATE Beds 3 | Baths 3 | Floor size: 362 m<sup>2</sup>

This perfectly positioned home sits on an elevated ridge with stunning views of the riverbed and the mountains in the distance. The living area comprises open plan dining and lounge with loft/study. A kitchen is tucked around the corner. Sliding doors open to the patio and rim flow pool.

Michelle Severin - 083 469 3821 Ref: 2157647



**HOEDSPRUIT WILDLIFE R 4 500 000**  
ESTATE Beds 4 | Baths 3 | Floor size: 335 m<sup>2</sup>

The modern, open-plan kitchen with breakfast nook has plenty of cupboard space and a scullery that opens to a courtyard. The lounge and dining area open to the covered patio with pool and braai area. Other features include a single carport, office, staff quarters, and established fenced garden.

Yvette Thompson - 083 655 7176 Ref: 2214688



**KARONGWE - BIG 5 R 7 495 000**  
Bedrooms 4 | Bathrooms 4 | Traverse: 8,000 ha

Be one of 14 owners within the exclusive Karongwe Nature Reserve, which offers pristine game viewing with 4 seasonal river systems. The home is situated on a dry riverbed and comes fully furnished. A Harvey tile roof contributes to lower maintenance costs. Low reserve levies.

Rob Severin - 083 469 3820 Ref: 2063307



**KAMPERSRUS, ESCARPIA R 2 850 000**  
ECO ESTATE Bedrooms 3 | Bathrooms 2

Inside this charming home you will find a modern, open plan living area and kitchen, complete with a separate scullery. Abundant natural light creates an airy and pleasant atmosphere throughout the house. The garden features a boma area nestled under the shade of beautiful trees.

Jason Jones - 083 267 4794 Ref: 2197031

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# Horns, carcasses found on Limpopo rhino farm overblown and misrepresented, says attorney



African rhino horn on live animals at an undisclosed location  
Photo Zahir Ali - Zali Photography

Tiara Walters

A Johannesburg-based firm representing a rhino rancher out on R100 000 bail, who is charged with arms and horn possession, says its client is the victim of an 'unjust' campaign. The firm argues the carcasses are the result of outside poaching and natural deaths.

Derek Lewitton, a prominent advocate for legalising the international rhino horn trade, was released on bail by the Namakgale Magistrates' Court in Limpopo on Wednesday, 10 January.

The rancher is charged with possessing 17 rhino horns, along with 16 "unlawful firearms" and ammunition.

However, Lewitton's attorney, Maurice Crespi of the Johannesburg firm Schindlers Attorneys, told *Daily Maverick* that his client was being persecuted.

Lewitton was arrested on Friday, 22 December, following a 16-hour investigation at a game farm near Phalaborwa outside the Kruger National Park, where law enforcement claimed to have found "26 unreported rhino carcasses".

**We have yet to see evidence that 26 rhino carcasses were found. The security company appointed to secure the farm since Mr Lewitton's arrest has only found a handful.**

The operation involved a multidisciplinary task force and led to the seizure of horns valued at R10-million, as well as "unlawfully acquired" firearms "and hundreds of

rounds of ammunition", according to a 27 December statement by the South African Police Service (SAPS).

## Not charged with rhino killings

"At the outset, it's important to note that the charges relate solely to the unlawful possession of firearms and rhino horns. The press release issued by the SAPS on 27 December created an impression that Mr Lewitton was involved in the illicit rhino trade and the killing of his own rhinos," Crespi says.

"However, in our interactions with the investigating officers and the National Prosecuting Authority [NPA], there has yet to be a suggestion that this is indeed the case."

Asked why 26 rhino carcasses were reportedly found on the farm and what the cause of death was, Crespi said: "We have yet to see evidence that 26 rhino carcasses were found. The security company appointed to secure the farm since Mr Lewitton's arrest has only found a handful."

**From a logical standpoint, a farm owner harbouring dubious motives concerning rhino horns would find it more advantageous to maintain the rhinos' lives...**

Pressed to clarify what "a handful" of carcasses would equate to in actual numbers, Crespi said that "shortly after Mr Lewitton's arrest, during our communication with the security company, they reported finding only four rhino carcasses".

However, he cites a "high likelihood of more existing".

"In instances of poaching or natural death, a rhino's carcass is typically left at the site of demise. Taking into account that a 'carcass' includes the bones of a deceased rhino, the actual count could be significantly greater," Crespi says. "However, we question whether the SAPS were actually referring to carcasses that consisted solely of bones."

## Poaching a 'regular' problem on the farm

According to Crespi, "poaching on the farm occurs regularly. The majority of the carcasses found on the farm relate to poaching incidents that have all been reported to the SAPS. The others are deaths by way of

natural causes. Our client has case numbers for each poaching incident. The substantial growth in the rhino population on the farm, a direct result of Mr Lewitton's diligent stewardship, clearly contradicts any allegations of his involvement in the deaths of these animals."

Additionally, the attorney argues that, "from a logical standpoint, a farm owner harbouring dubious motives concerning rhino horns would find it more advantageous to maintain the rhinos' lives, opting for periodic horn trimming, rather than resorting to killing them for their horns".

A Directorate for Priority Crime Investigation (Hawks) statement confirms that Lewitton is facing only horns, arms and ammunition charges.

"Given that the SAPS has found no complaints about any carcasses on the property, it is evident that all poaching incidents, which account for the majority of the carcasses, have been duly reported," Crespi says. "The insinuations in the press release appear to have been deliberately designed to unjustly accuse Mr Lewitton of being involved in these deaths."

## 'We have submitted all licences'

It is legal to sell rhino horn in South Africa's domestic market.

Crespi says his client "was in possession of horns in anticipation of their processing by the authorities, which takes place on a monthly or bi-monthly basis, depending on their availability. This practice has been ongoing for years."

Crespi notes that, with respect to the firearm charges, "we have submitted all licences as attachments to the affidavit supporting the bail application".

The Lewittons' website says that Derek and his wife, Xenja, are "responsible for hundreds of rhino on thousands of acres of wild African land" through Black Rock Rhino Conservation, a ranching business.

**Mr Lewitton has clearly made enemies in the wrong places, something he is all too aware of due to his activism directed at preserving South Africa's rhino population.**

Crespi says Lewitton does not own the

property, but "is actively pursuing the goal of owning the farm and has secured an option to purchase it. Currently, the farm and its owner benefit from Mr Lewitton's efforts to minimise the number of rhinos that fall victim to poaching."

## 'More at play here than a mere investigation'

An earlier statement circulated by risk and compliance consultant James Brackenbury on behalf of Lewitton is authentic, according to Crespi, who says the SAPS statement, on the other hand, is "filled with inaccuracies".

"There is more at play here than a mere investigation and arrest in the ordinary course," he says.

The US-educated rancher is well known within the private sector to have fought unsuccessfully for several years to trigger international trade in rhino horn, which is banned under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (Cites).

"Mr Lewitton has clearly made enemies in the wrong places, something he is all too aware of due to his activism directed at preserving South Africa's rhino population," Crespi argues.

Despite reports referring to Lewitton as a US national, Crespi says: "Mr Lewitton was born in South Africa and is a South African citizen. On [Wednesday] 3 January, we presented his original birth certificate to the NPA. Despite this, they insisted they needed a week to confirm the authenticity of the document. This unwarranted delay resulted in Mr Lewitton enduring an extra week of incarceration."

In the SAPS statement, Major-General Jan Scheepers, Limpopo's deputy provincial commissioner, reported that a helicopter was dispatched to survey the property on 22 December, uncovering a scene reminiscent of a "slaughterhouse".

"Everywhere you looked, there were rhinos lying dead," Scheepers said. In addition to carcasses, some "unmarked rhino horns" were reportedly discovered in a safe "without paperwork".

**This article was previously published in the *Daily Maverick – Our Burning Planet***

# The Significance of a Leap year: unravelling the temporal quirk

AI perspective 'correspondent'

A leap year, occurring once every four years, is a phenomenon that adds an extra day to the calendar, ensuring that our measurement of time aligns more closely with the Earth's orbit around the sun. While it may seem like a minor adjustment, the significance of a leap year extends beyond its role in maintaining temporal accuracy. This quadrennial occurrence has implications in various fields, from astronomy to finance, and its origins are deeply rooted in the quest for temporal precision.

## Astronomical origins

The Earth's journey around the sun takes approximately 365.25 days, and to account for this fractional day, the leap year was introduced. Julius Caesar, in consultation with astronomers of his time, implemented the leap year in 45 BCE as part of the Julian calendar reform. This modification was a crucial step in synchronizing the human-made calendar with the astronomical year, ensuring that seasons would align more accurately over time.

## Temporal synchronization

The significance of a leap year lies in its role in preventing the gradual misalignment of our calendars with the astronomical reality. Without this corrective measure, over time, seasons would slowly drift away from their designated positions on the calendar. By adding an extra day every four years, we recalibrate our temporal system, maintaining the synchronization between the calendar year and the Earth's orbit.

## Cultural and folklore significance

Leap years have also accumulated a range of cultural and folklore significance. In some traditions, it is considered an auspicious time for proposals, marriages, and various celebratory events. On the flip side, leap years have also been associated with superstitions and cautionary tales. The leap year has inspired cultural expressions, folklore, and even a touch of mystique as societies around the world weave stories around this quirk in the temporal fabric.

## Economic and financial implications

The impact of a leap year extends beyond cultural and astronomical realms into the

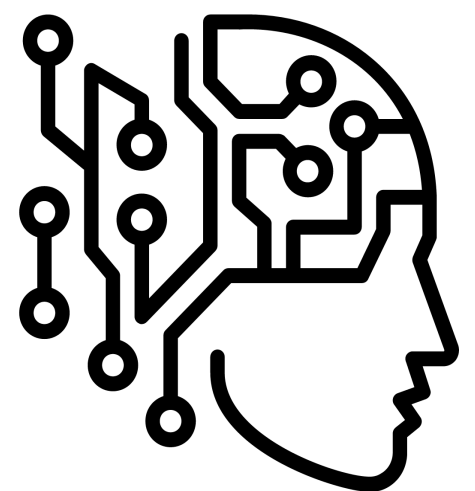
economic and financial sectors. In financial markets, the additional day can influence calculations for interest rates, bond yields, and investment strategies. Companies and governments must account for this temporal anomaly in their financial planning to ensure accurate reporting and decision-making.

## Legal and administrative adjustments

Leap years necessitate adjustments in legal and administrative systems as well. Contracts, agreements, and various time-sensitive legal documents must account for the additional day, avoiding potential discrepancies and legal challenges. Governments and organizations worldwide must adapt their administrative processes to accommodate the peculiarities of leap years, highlighting their impact on legal and bureaucratic structures.

## Conclusion

In essence, the significance of a leap year goes beyond its apparent simplicity. Rooted in the need for temporal precision and alignment with the astronomical reality, the leap year plays a vital role in maintaining the ac-



curacy of our calendars. Its impact ripples through various facets of life, from cultural traditions to economic considerations, demonstrating the interconnectedness of time-keeping with our societal structures. As we mark each leap year, we are not merely adding an extra day to the calendar; we are engaging in a timeless dance between human ingenuity and the cosmic rhythms that govern our existence.

**Credit: ChatGPT, chat.openai.com**

# The berg adder – *Bitis atropos*

Luke Kemp  
African Snakebite Institute

The berg adder - *Bitis atropos* - is a smallish adder, averaging 30 – 40 cm but reaching a maximum length of 60 cm. It is usually grey to brown with darker paired semicircle or triangle patterns along the back. Brick-red individuals are quite common in the Mpumalanga mountains. It may be mistaken for a small puff adder, but the patterns are paired down the back and not chevrons like a puff adder. As the common name indicates, it favours mountainous areas and occurs from sea level at Betties Bay in the Western Cape to elevations exceeding 3 000 m in the Drakensberg mountains.



Berg adders are usually grey to brown but brick-red adders are also common  
Images: Johan Marais

There are four major populations of berg adders – those in the Cape fold mountains, the KwaZulu-Natal Drakensberg, the Mpumalanga and Limpopo Drakensberg and another population in eastern Zimbabwe.

This little snake is commonly found basking on footpaths, amongst grass tufts or along rocky ridges and shelters under rocks. It may be quite common in montane grasslands around areas like Graskop, Sabie and Lekgalameetse. It is particularly bad-tempered, and will hiss loudly and strike repeatedly when approached.

Berg adder venom differs from that of

most of the other adders, in that it is neurotoxic and cytotoxic. The muscles in the victim's face are especially targeted and drooping eyelids, dilated pupils, slurred speech and blurred vision are common symptoms. Breathing becomes difficult after a few hours and most patients need to be ventilated, however deaths have not been reported.

Bites from the berg adder can be extremely dangerous, and patients should be hospitalised sooner rather than later. As for first aid, there is little that can be done.

Patients should be immobilised and safely transported to a hospital as soon as possible. Unfortunately bites often occur whilst people are out hiking in the mountains, and are often a number of hours from a car and medical assistance.

As there is no antivenom for berg adder bites, doctors will treat the symptoms. Pilocarpine (a medication to treat increased pressure inside the eye and dry mouth) may be required to manage dilated pupils, and respiratory support is necessary in most cases. Adequate hydration using

normal saline is important and will speed up recovery from hyponatremia.

These snakes generally give off a warning hiss before moving off into thick grass or under rocks, but occasionally people stand on them or sit on them whilst taking a break, so be cautious when out hiking in the mountains!

Check out the website on [www.africansnakebiteinstitute.com](http://www.africansnakebiteinstitute.com) – get your FREE App on the link <http://bit.ly/snakebite-app>

# The eastern bark scorpion - *Uroplectes vittatus*



Eastern bark scorpion  
Image: Tim Baynham

Tim Baynham  
Wildlife Safety Solutions

Southern Africa is home to roughly one hundred and fifty scorpion species, the vast majority of which are not dangerous to people or pets. As a general rule of thumb, scorpions with thick fat tails and small pincers are more venomous than those with thin tails and large pincers.

The eastern bark scorpion (*Uroplectes vittatus*) is a common species found in Hoedspruit and the surrounding areas. They are relatively small scorpions reaching up to

about 60mm in total length. Their body colouration varies from light yellow to orange with a darker back. More often than not they have a number of pale-yellow spots that run down the centre of the back. Typically, they have a dark V-shaped mask that extends from the eyes to the mouth parts. They may be confused with other lesser-thicktail scorpions such as the highveld lesser-thicktail, *Uroplectes triangulifer*.

In South Africa they naturally occur in the North-west, Northern Cape, Limpopo and Mpumalanga provinces. Elsewhere they are found throughout much of Botswana, Zimbabwe and southwards into eastern Eswatini. They occasionally turn up well outside their natural range, usually as a result of being transported in bags of braai wood.

As the common name suggests they are largely found under the bark of trees. I have however found that this is one of the more common species found in homes, where I suspect they may take up residence in thatched roofs. Being small scorpions, they are not easily seen and each year I received a number of reports of people being stung. For obvious reasons particular care should be taken when handling wood for your weekend braai.

Although they certainly pack a punch and their stings are quite painful, they are not considered medically significant. Stings are treated for pain and symptoms typically resolve within a day or so. They prey upon a variety of insects and other small invertebrates.

### Sting prevention

As the saying goes prevention is better than a cure, and by taking some basic precautionary measures it is possible to greatly reduce your risk of being stung.

- Always use a torch when walking around at night and wear closed shoes.
- Shake out shoes before putting them on, particularly if they have been left outside for any length of time.
- Always be conscious of where you are placing your hands. Whether it is grabbing some wood off the wood pile for your Friday afternoon braai, or moving those storage boxes in the garage, wearing gloves when performing these kinds of tasks will offer an additional layer of protection.

- Remember to shake out any items of clothing, towels, bags, or any other kind of materials that may have been left lying on the ground.
- Keep doors and screen doors closed particularly at night to prevent scorpions from entering your home. There are often gaps under doors and it beneficial to fit aluminium door seals (draft stoppers) with the rubber strip to prevent scorpions and snakes from entering under the door.
- We live in an area where many homes and lodges have outdoor entertainment areas. It is advisable to always check patio furniture thoroughly before use.

For more information on venomous animals, awareness training and talks, as well as a professional 24hrs problem snake rescue service, contact the author at Wildlife Safety Solutions: 073 934 6156; [info@wildlifesafetysolutions.co.za](mailto:info@wildlifesafetysolutions.co.za); [www.wildlifesafetysolutions.co.za](http://www.wildlifesafetysolutions.co.za), FB Wildlife Safety Solutions

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# The enchanting elegance of the silver clusterleaf- *Terminalia sericea* – a silver lining in the bush



The leaves and seed pods of the silver cluster leaf

Nature correspondent

Standing tall amidst the sun-baked bush of southern Africa, the silver clusterleaf tree, aptly named *Terminalia sericea*, paints a striking picture. Cloaked in shimmering silver foliage, it offers more than just aesthetic appeal, but also serves as a valuable ecological and cultural asset.

It is a small to medium-sized deciduous tree which grows up to 9m, but individual trees have been seen to reach 23m in height. It is part of the *Combretaceae* family that occurs in tropical and sub-tropical regions and on the plateau, from Tanzania and the DRC southwards.

They almost always grow in sandy soil and may be dominant in open woodlands. It is a pioneer species, easily becoming established in previously unwooded areas, and they may form dense shrubby thickets. It may also grow as a dominant or co-dominant species in mixed deciduous forests such as *Brachystegia*, mopane, *Combretum* or *Senegalia (Acacia)* forest. It is often found growing with mopane and bush willows.

The trees' true magic lies in its leaves,

adorned with a dense layer of silvery hairs. These hairs reflect sunlight, lending the tree its characteristic shimmer, and cooling it down in the scorching heat. The leaves are crowded at the ends of branches. It needs full light to grow well and tends to shade out weeds, so its presence helps climax species to become established. It has been used in land improvement and to control erosion. The leaves are shed in autumn.

The flowers of the clusterleaf are pale yellow to creamy white. It flowers mostly from September to January. The fruit is an oval nut surrounded by a flat wing. Unlike their close relatives the *Combretum* genus, the *Terminalia* genus has two-winged pods (as opposed to four-winged pods). These are pink in colour and persist on the tree for a long time in a dried-out form.

The silver clusterleaf is the key identifying feature of seep lines. These are water-saturated bands of veld that run along the contours of slopes. Underground water moving down the slope hits an impermeable layer (bedrock or dense clay) and is forced to the surface to form a seep line. The silver clusterleaf can deal with the waterlogged conditions and quickly colonises the area. Seep lines are vital during dry times as they pro-

vide greenery for animals in the dry season.

The silver clusterleaf is often parasitized by a gall-making wasp. The wasp stings the tree with a growth hormone which causes the tissue in a localized region to expand forming a hard acorn-sized gall. These are often mistaken for fruits. The wasp lays her eggs inside this gall which acts as a safe haven for the developing larvae. The tree is also a larval host plant for the guineafowl butterfly (*Hamanumida daedalus*). The fruits are often parasitized, and form deformed masses of long, thin, rusty haired structures.

Humans have long recognized the value of the silver clusterleaf, weaving it into the fabric of their lives. Indigenous communities hold it dear for its medicinal properties, the tree serves as a natural pharmacy. The leaves and roots are boiled in water and the infusion is taken orally for the treatment of coughs, diarrhoea, and stomach-ache. The root is used medicinally in lotions and potions that treat stomach disorders, pneumonia, or eye ailments. The leaves can be used as an antibiotic for wounds. In the case of bleeding, a paste can be made by cooking the leaves in water and placing them on the wounds. Extracts of the bark contain tannin and are used in tanning leather or for treat-

Images: Wikimedia - Bernard Dupont

ing wounds and poisonings. It is sometimes also implicated in diabetes treatments.

The hard-grained, termite-resistant timber finds use in construction, tool handles, furniture, and even fencing, making the silver clusterleaf a crucial resource for local communities. It is used for firewood and the making of charcoal. The bark has been used to make ropes and is also pounded to produce a substance for waterproofing boats. The bark of the silver clusterleaf peels back from the plant very easily and in long strips. This makes it ideal for braiding into strong rope or twine. The silver hairs on the leaves provide ideal glazing material and indigenous cultures apply the leaves to their clay pots before they are fired to get a glazed effect. The leaves are eaten by cattle during the dry season when the grass becomes unavailable.

This interwoven relationship between people and plant highlights the deep respect for nature inherent in traditional cultures. So, the next time you encounter this magnificent tree, take a moment to appreciate its beauty, its ecological significance, and the cultural tapestry it weaves.

## Why do some birds have 'fingers' at the end of the wing?

This design is usually referred to as 'fingers', 'fingertips' or 'spread fingered' and describes the separated feathers (outer primaries) at the end of the wing in flight. Found in large, heavy birds that have large, long, broad wings and that use these wings for soaring.

The movement of a wing through the air causes turbulence as the air current is divided to go over and under the wing. The air travelling over the top of the wing travels faster than the air under the wing causing different air pressures on the surfaces. The pressures need to balance out and they attempt to do this at the edge of the wing, causing a lot of vibration that makes the wing shake and the bird then battles to fly. To prevent this vibration, the feathers at the end of the wing have gaps (slotting) to allow the air currents to mix and reduce the vibration, allowing the bird to maintain stable flight. Smaller birds have less vibration because their wings are smaller and therefore do not need slotting.

### What are the reasons for different tail shapes?

As with wing shape, tail shape is inadaptation to habitat and the type of food eaten and technique required to get it. Although the power and lift for flight is generally all developed by the wings, the tail is vital for

steering the bird and enabling various degrees of manoeuvrability. Generally, the longer and bigger the tail, the more stable the bird will be in flight. This stability comes at the expense of turning ability, because it stands to reason that the more unstable something is in flight, the easier it is to deviate from the flight-path. The opposite is, of course, also true.

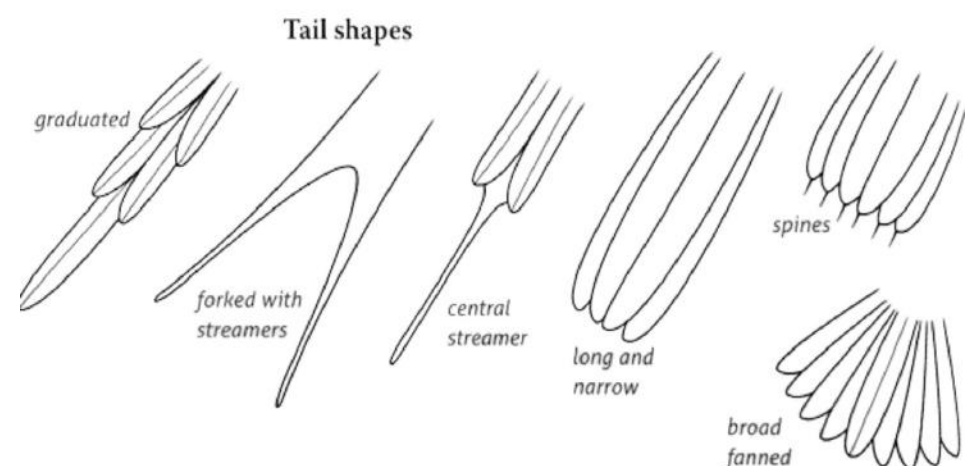
Birds that catch food in the air - such as swallows, swifts and pratincoles - generally have forked tails with a small surface area. These birds need to be agile and manoeuvrable to catch their prey. The forked tail also has the advantage that it can be spread or fanned to change the shape (and therefore the surface area) and thus the turning ability at different speeds - with fantail being slower and streamlined tail being faster. Small, unstable tails are taken to extremes in the spintails where only the bottom parts of the feather shaft have a vane, resulting in spine-like protrusions - hence the name. Another indication of the inherent instability of short tails is to look at the bateleur. Sometimes incorrectly referred to as the short-tailed eagle, this raptor has to compensate for instability in flight by continually rocking from side to side with the wings open while gliding and soaring. This is, in fact, how it got its name, meaning tightrope walker in French.

Larger birds of prey and vultures, for example, will also fan their tails when soaring to increase the surface area for lift. Broadening

the tails will also assist with breaking during aerial manoeuvres (such as in bee-eaters and sparrowhawks) and when the birds need to decelerate in order to land. Some birds have tails that get longer towards the centre with very firm shafts, allowing the tail to be used as a support structure/prop when clambering around on vertical surfaces (e.g.: woodpeckers and ospeckers). In many other species, the tail design is also influenced strongly by social pressures. The males of many, in particular, will develop long streamers when breeding in order to show off - the change often going hand in hand with striking plumage changes (e.g.: widowbirds, paradise flycatchers and

whydahs). Because these tails hinder flight and make the bird vulnerable and more conspicuous, they can only be tolerated seasonally. The stiffened feathers and design of the tail may also be used in display flights to make sounds in breeding displays (e.g.: African snipe and some larks). Long, rectangular tails also come in handy in raptors such as sparrowhawks, which used the tail to brake and steer through the forest understory.

Excerpts from 'Beat about the Bush - Mammals and Birds' by Trevor Carnaby, Published by Jacana Media, Second Edition reprint 2018.





# Herding Academy announces its transition to the Southern African Wildlife College



Theresa Sowry, SAWC CEO pictured with Johan Bouwer, co-founder of the Herding Academy

Images supplied

## Local correspondent

**In a significant move by the Herding Academy, which has transitioned to the Southern African Wildlife College (SAWC), regenerative land management practices and training are to get a real boost. This will ultimately help mitigate the impact of environmental degradation due to conventional land management and livestock practices, and the effects of climate change.**

With the complex nature of our ever-changing environment, rangelands make up approximately 40% of the world's terrestrial surface and are mostly located in arid and semi-arid regions. In Africa, rangelands make up 50% of the surface area, supporting around 270 million pastoralists, but poor grazing and land practices have resulted in the degradation and denudation of vast portions of land. The African Union estimates that the incidence of extreme poverty ranges between 25 and 55% among African pastoralists. This collectively impacts landscapes, the environment, the economy, social structures as well as stability within the region.

There is therefore a great need for holistic thinking and regenerative land management training to help obviate these risks. This has led to the amalgamation of the work being done by the Herding Academy and the SAWC, which will in future now be referred to as the SAWC Herding Academy.

"We believe this signifies a monumental step forward in the Herding Academy's commitment to regenerative land management and conservation training across the SADC region. Geared towards

addressing human/wildlife conflict and climate challenges through proper regenerative land management practices; the positive outcome on biodiversity, job creation, animal and other sustainable land management projects is immeasurable," said co-founder of the Herding Academy, Johan Bouwer.

With this transition, the Academy will be giving wings to its pioneering work over the past seven years whilst also helping to further cement partnerships between the various role players. These include Peace Parks Foundation, the SA College for Tourism, Conservation International, Conservation SA, Herding for Health, and Meat Naturally Africa, as well as the SADC Secretariat. These collaborative efforts will further enable the expansion of the training capacity which will in turn impact the sector and the region significantly.

"There is no doubt that the concept and idea of regenerative farming practices is becoming mainstreamed and gaining traction, both as people look at better land practices and healthier options for themselves and the environment. In addition, soil carbon and positive biodiversity potential is becoming attractive as a revenue stream. The SAWC, which has since its inception always been a needs-based training and skills development institution, is well placed to support the required training, and we are very excited to take the Herding Academy on board," said SAWC CEO, Theresa Sowry.

"The courses offered by the Herding Academy and by the SAWC such as Holistic Regenerative Land Management, Professional Herding, Eco Ranger Training, Responsible Resource and Land Use, already dovetail and once amalgamated

will lead to an even stronger product and training delivery," she added.

Interestingly, and given this holistic approach to the training and professionalisation of herders, subject matter across the Eco Ranger courses includes Ecology, Habitat Conservation, Animal Care and Husbandry, Life Skills, Land Management, Holistic Planned Grazing and Rangeland Restoration for example. The training is however adaptive and can also be adapted to suit the landscape and each group's preferred outcome and need, whilst also addressing social or cultural challenges.

With the amalgamation, the scaling up of training and holistic planned grazing models as a tool for rangeland restoration and community empowerment, will be enabled through the following actions:

- The continuous improvement of a professional herders and trainers or eco ranger training suited to commercial and communal herders in the African context.
- Development of regenerative decision-making for team leaders
- Ongoing research, lesson sharing and communication regarding the effect of holistic planned grazing models in a variety of biological and socio-economic settings.
- The development of cost-effective mechanisms to train professional herders or eco rangers at scale using a "train-the-trainer" model.
- The implementation of market-based mechanisms to incentivise rangeland restoration through holistic grazing models at scale.
- Learning exchanges

- Fundraising in support of training

## About the SAWC

The Southern African Wildlife College is an accredited higher education and training facility based 10 km west of the Kruger National Park in South Africa. Established by WWF-South Africa in 1996, as a needs-based independent non-profit organization, the College delivers a full spectrum of conservation education, training, and skills development programmes, using an applied learning approach. In doing so, it provides tomorrow's conservation leaders, field rangers and the community with the skills needed to become partners in helping to conserve the region's rich biological diversity and ensure that its resources and threatened species are protected.

[www.wildlifecollege.org.za](http://www.wildlifecollege.org.za)

## About the Herding Academy

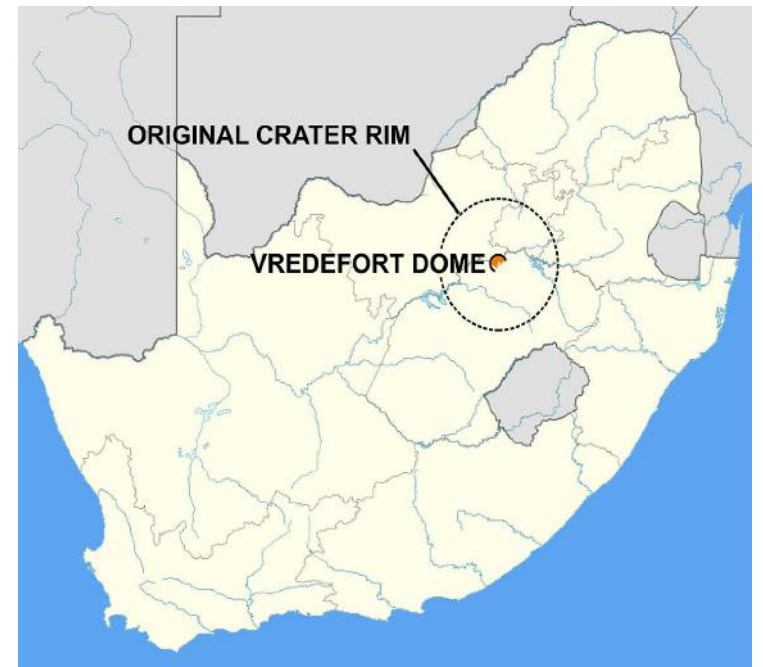
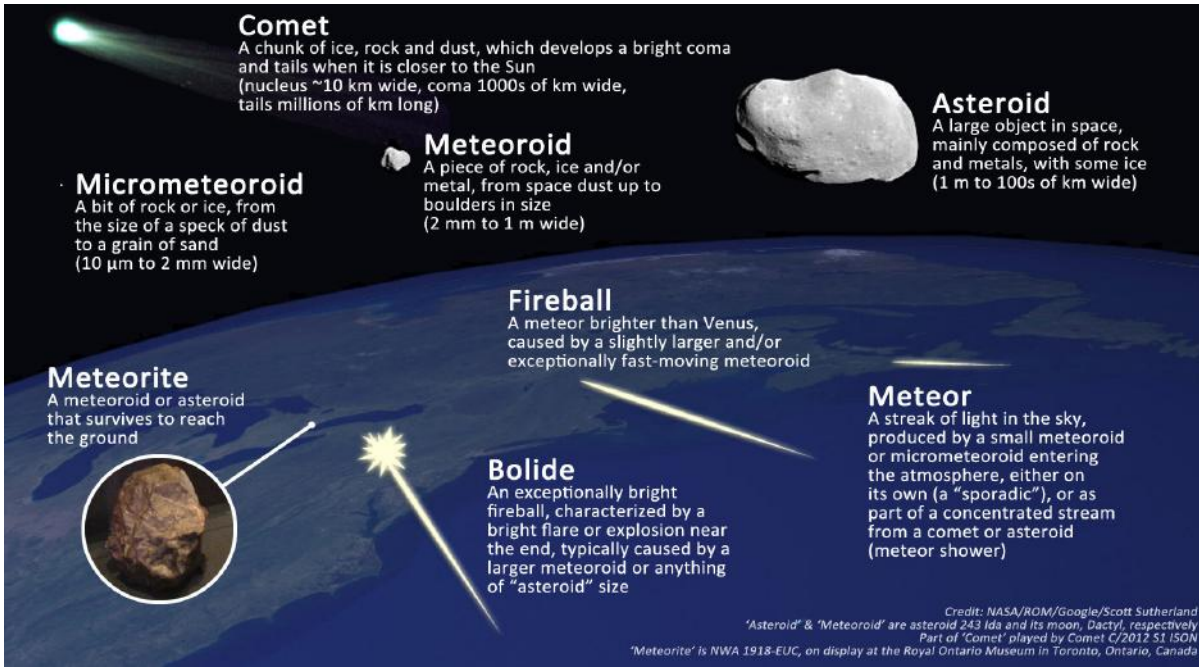
The Herding Academy was established in 2017 and was developed as a holistic learning centre where the ancient skill of herding animals was applied within a holistic decision-making framework to regenerate the landscape and bridge the socio-economic and cultural barriers that existed between humans and wildlife throughout Southern Africa. Previously located on the Camdeboo Private Nature Reserve near Graaff-Reinet, the Herding Academy - a training division of accredited training provider SA College for Tourism - was the first Academy of its kind.

[www.herdingacademy.co.za](http://www.herdingacademy.co.za)

## Trivia – hard for some, easy for others

- 1 In Elkhart Indiana, USA, what's illegal for barber to threaten to do?
- 2 George Bush removed what from the White House menus?
- 3 In 1907 who was first English writer win Nobel prize literature?
- 4 Name the science fiction writer who lived in Sri Lanka?
- 5 What pop group were dedicated followers of fashion?
- 6 CaCo3 is the chemical formula of what common item?
- 7 Name Elvis Presley's father? Vernon Presley
- 8 In what novel does Dr Hannibal Lecter first appear?
- 9 The Ionian islands are nearest what country?
- 10 In www terms what does "i.e." mean on a domain name?
- 11 Seawood's Folly is better known as what today?
- 12 What is a roastchaffer?
- 13 Ecuador was named after who/what?
- 14 Liza Minelli played what character in Cabaret?
- 15 What European language is unrelated to any other language?
- 16 In the 70s The Bahamas gained independence from who?
- 17 In what country did bongo drums originate?
- 18 Stuart Goddard changed his name to become what pop hit?
- 19 What's the main feature of a Chong Sang skirt?
- 20 The Davis Strait lies between Canada and where?
- 21 Henri Charriere is better known for writing what novel?
- 22 Melba sauce is made from what fruit?
- 23 Who was with Macbeth when he met the witches?
- 24 A lion and a sword appear on what countries flag?
- 25 A carbonade is a dish that must contain what?

# Rock Stars



Meteoroid Meteor Meteorite Fireball Bolide NASA-ROM GoogleEarth - SSutherland

Vredefort dome

Wikipedia

Ben Coley

Space: a poignant description of the vast inky darkness within which our blue planet is suspended. There is nothing around us, in any direction, for tens of millions of lonely kilometres. Or is there ...?

In reality, we share our stellar neighbourhood with billions of rocky particles, known as 'meteoroids'. They are remnants of a long forgotten, tumultuous past that saw multiple young planets destroy themselves as they jostled for position around our parent star. Travelling hundreds of times faster than a speeding bullet, catastrophic impacts, particularly of the larger objects, have sculpted our solar system, over the course of billions of years ... and they continue to do so to this day.

Very few larger fragments remain after 4,5 billion years, but day after day, and night after night, the Earth is pelted with ancient planetary debris. Thankfully, these potentially lethal projectiles are nullified by the protective shroud of our atmosphere, its elemental soup acting as the perfect baffle, causing such rapid deceleration, that all but the most stubborn interlopers are destroyed.

Once a piece of rock enters our atmosphere, it becomes a 'meteor'. During the daylight hours, their demise is unseen in the scattered light of our sun-kissed atmosphere, but under the cloak of darkness, their extinction is far more dramatic. As the meteor hurtles groundward, it heats up due to friction and its energy causes the surrounding gas to glow, manifesting in a fiery streak along its path of entry. These beautiful phenomena, often accompanied by awe-struck 'ooo's' and 'aaah's' from lucky onlookers, gave rise to meteors also being known as 'shooting stars'.

It is a humbling thought that our protective blanket is only effective to about 100kms above our heads. This is less than an hour's car ride for most of us! Yet it protects us 24 hours a day, unyielding in its defensive duties - all the more reason then, to protect and nurture our precious atmosphere. However, it cannot protect us from everything.

A typical shooting star (or meteor) is created by particles ranging from the size of a grain of rice to a golf ball. Even something as small as 2mm can produce a visible streak under dark skies. But there are larger rocks lurking in the darkness of space, and every so often, one of these objects comes a-knocking.

Sometimes, meteors get perilously close to our home. Bolides are exceptionally bright meteors caused by larger objects and occasionally the friction of the lower



A piece of the Chelysbinsk meteorite (above left) and Hoba meteorite (above right)



Images: Wikipedia

atmosphere causes them to literally explode. The ensuing shockwave can have devastating consequences. In 2013, a 20m wide meteor, weighing over 12 000 tonnes, rocketed into the atmosphere over Chelyabinsk in Russia. It exploded 25kms above the surface of the Earth, damaging more than 7 000 buildings in a radius of over 100kms.

This was not a patch on the Tunguska meteor of 1908 however. Estimated to be 50m diameter, the meteor detonated a mere 5 - 10kms from Earth with the force of 15 megatons, a thousand times more powerful than an atomic bomb. It flattened 80 million trees over a 2 000 square kilometre area of forest, and broke windows in houses over 100kms away. Thankfully it happened in an unpopulated area but the consequences could have been much more dire!

Despite our atmosphere's best effects, sometimes rocks do penetrate our planetary forcefield. If a meteor makes it to solid ground, it becomes known as a meteorite. Meteorites are rare, but offer scientists a unique opportunity to study the geology of our fledgling solar system. Today they are sought after by collectors, museums, and even jewellery makers. Many demand a high price for their history - thousands of US dollars per gram in some cases.

In ancient cultures, meteorites were revered items. Excavations of native American settlements and Egyptian tombs have discovered meteorites preserved in ceremonial fashion, while the Inuits made use of their iron content for cutting tools and spear tips. The Kabba Stone in the Grand Mosque in Mecca is said to be a meteorite sent to Earth to help Adam and



Tunguska Aftermath

Image: NASA

Eve build their first altar. Whilst in ancient Zulu culture, powdered meteorite was used in conjunction with other ingredients to bestow the powers of animals to new born children.

The largest meteorite ever discovered can be found here in southern Africa. The Hoba meteorite (named after the farm Hoba West) still resides exactly where it was discovered: in a field just outside of Grootfontein in Namibia. This incredible relic of our creation was discovered by a farmer ploughing his field in 1920 when the blades scraped against something metallic. Upon excavation, he unearthed a 66 tonne lump of iron that crashed into Earth some 80 000 year ago. Fittingly, the name 'hoba' comes from a local word meaning 'gift'.

Closer to home, South Africa houses the oldest, and largest, impact crater on Earth. The Vredefort Dome in the Free

state is thought to have been created over 2 billion years ago, and spans close to 300kms wide, although geological activity and weathering has eroded much of its grandeur. The Chicxulub crater in Mexico, that famously spelt disaster for the dinosaurs, is only 180kms by comparison.

Finding a meteorite is rare but not impossible. There are various traits one can look for, but most importantly, all meteorites, even stony ones, contain large quantities of iron and are thus magnetic. Most also have a 'fusion crust' - a baked layer of rock caused by the heat of passing through the atmosphere. If you happen across an unusually heavy and magnetic rock, it might be worth getting it checked out by the correct authorities - you never know, you may just have found a piece of creation: your very own 'Rock Star'!



# NOTICE

THE MPUMALANGA TOURISM AND PARKS AGENCY (MTPA) WILL TEMPORARILY CLOSE THE ENTRY GATES TO SWADINI AT BLYDE RIVER CANYON NATURE RESERVE DUE TO FILMING THAT WILL BE TAKING PLACE.

THE GATES WILL BE CLOSED ON THE FOLLOWING DATES:

FROM: 11 MARCH 2024 – TO: 10 JUNE 2024:

Full Exclusivity  
(no access to visitors (except patrons who are taking boat trips))

Kindly note that other tourist attractions on the Panorama Route like God's Window, Bourke's Luck Potholes, Three Rondavels, Pinnacle, will not be affected by this closure.

Boat operators and those that wish to access the dam will be allowed on specific days as per prior arrangement with Blyde Adventure Centre on +27 81 487 2267 or [booking@blydecanyon.co.za](mailto:booking@blydecanyon.co.za)

Issued by Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency

Mr. Jimmy Thanyani  
Reserve Manager  
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Email: jimmy.thanyani@mtpa.co.za

Mr. Jimmy Thanyani  
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[www.mpumalanga.com](http://www.mpumalanga.com)



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## NO 4 SUBSTITUTED SERVICE: SHORT FORM OF PROCESS IN THE REGIONAL COURT FOR REGIONAL DIVISION OF TZANEEN HELD AT LENYENYE CASE NO: LP/LEN/RC/25/2022

In the matter between:

**FOODCORP (PROPRIETARY) LIMITED - PLAINTIFF** (Registration number: 2004/000743/07)

And

**LAKESHORE TRADING 164 CC - FIRST DEFENDANT** (Registration number CC2003/021387/23)

**PETRUS JOHANNES COETZEE - SECOND DEFENDANT**

(ID Number: 651129 5045 08 2)

### SUBSTITUTED SERVICE [SHORT FORM OF PROCESS]

To: **PETRUS JOHANNES COETZEE** formerly residing at Plot 834, Randfontein Road, Roodepoort 237 IQ, but whose present whereabouts are unknown. (Hereinafter referred to as the Second Defendant herein)

**TAKE NOTICE** that by summons sued out of this court, you have been called upon to give notice, within **10 (ten)** days after publication hereof, to the registrar of this Court and to the Plaintiff's attorney of your intention to defend (if any) in an action wherein **FOODCORP (PROPRIETARY) LIMITED** (Hereinafter referred to as the Plaintiff) claims:

1. Payment in the amount of **R 270 023.60**.
2. Interest on the outstanding amount calculated at a rate of 7.00% per annum from 18 May 2021 till date of final payment;
3. Costs on the scale as between attorney and own client;
4. Further and or alternative relief.

**TAKE NOTICE FURTHER** that if you fail to give such notice, judgment may be granted against you without further reference to you.

DATED at **TZANEEN** this **24<sup>TH</sup>** day of **OCTOBER 2023**.

**HM MARÉ**

**DU TOIT SMUTS ATTORNEYS**

**ATTORNEYS FOR THE PLAINTIFF** : Law Chambers, Van Niekerk Street, Nelspruit

Tel : (013) 745 3200 , Email : [mvwesthuizen@dtsa.co.za](mailto:mvwesthuizen@dtsa.co.za), [mmare@dtsa.co.za](mailto:mmare@dtsa.co.za)

Ref : HM Maré/jb/r1/19 (RCL2/8)

And to: Registrar of the above

Honourable Court **TZANEEN**



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Kuku Interiors	079 503 0151
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Oasis	073 892 4944
SPAR Hoedspruit	015 793 2305
Tops @ SPAR	015 793 2069
Vehicle License Department	015 793 0838

### CONSTRUCTION & INDUSTRIAL

BUCO	015 793 0560
Coastal Hire	015 793 0971
Mopane Group	015 781 1571

### SCHOOLS & EDUCATION

Drakensig Laerskool	015 793 3756
Drakensig Pre-primer	015 793 2401
Hoedspruit Christian School	015 793 2067
Lowveld Academy	015 793 3750
Mariëpskop Laerskool	079 529 6071
Mariëpskop Pre-primer	082 880 7069
Perspective Training College	082 787 4471
Southern Cross Schools	015 793 0590

### EMERGENCY – HELP LINES

After Hours Emergency Doctors	084 770 1741
Air Force Base Hoedspruit	015 799 2911
Africa Safe -T	010 590 6313
Ambulance AFB	015 799 2065
Alcoholics Narcotics Anonymous	082 258 4602
Ambulance Airforce Base	015 799 2065
Ambulance Services Limpopo	015 793 1581
Ambulance Tintswalo	101 77
Ambulance Services Swift	060 528 2784
Farm watch/ Plaasweg	072 310 0032
Fire Brigade AFB	015 799 2172
Fire Brigade Maruleng	015 793 0536
Fire Dpt Hoedspruit	015 793 0728
GKEPF Greater Kruger Enviro Protection Foundation	065 743 2224
Hoedspruit Clinic	015 793 2342
Hoedspruit Medical Rescue	072 170 0864
Hoedspruit Paws	078 431 3161
Hoedspruit Town Watch	072 812 2172
Hoedspruit Farm Watch	072 310 0032
Hospital AFB Drakensig	015 799 2065
Hospital Nelspruit Mediclinic	013 759 0645
Hospital Tintswalo	013 795 5000
Hospital Sekororo Gvt-The Oaks	015 383 9400
Hospital Tzaneen Mediclinic	015 305 8536
Maruleng Municipality	015 793 2409
Medical Rescue	072 170 0864
Med Centre Emergency No	084 770 1743

Protrack	015 793 2585
SAPS Station Commander	082 565 8253
SAPS General	101 111
SAPS	015 799 4000
SPCA Phalaborwa	071 519 7044
Victim Support Unit	082 940 0651

### MEDICAL & VETERINARY SERVICES

Counselling Ronelle Joubert	082 787 4471
DR Van Eeden (Dentist)	015 793 1876
DR D Verhagen	015 793 0606
DR A Polley	015 793 0606
DR Shivambu	087 260 1537
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
Kyk Oogkundiges (Optometrist)	060 548 5387
Med Centre (Dentists)	015 793 0845
ProVet Veterinary Hospital	015 793 0797

### REAL ESTATE & PROPERTY

Century 21	015 793 1534
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### TOURISM & THINGS TO DO

Eastgate Airport	015 793 3681
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

## Important Notice

Anyone that has had dealings with a Mr Gerhard Meyer from a solar company, **Ergoflex**, are asked to please make contact with Mark on email [mbishk2c@gmail.com](mailto:mbishk2c@gmail.com)

## TRIVIA

### ANSWERS

- 1 Cut off youngsters ears
- 2 Broccoli
- 3 Rudyard Kipling
- 4 Arthur C Clark
- 5 The Kinks

- |                             |    |
|-----------------------------|----|
| 6 Calcium carbonate - chalk | 16 |
| 7 Vernon Presley            | 17 |
| 8 Red Dragon                | 18 |
| 9 Greece                    | 19 |
| 10 Ireland                  | 20 |
| 11 Alaska                   | 21 |
| 12 A beetle                 | 22 |
| 13 The equator              | 23 |
| 14 Sally Bowles             | 24 |
| 15 Basque                   | 25 |

- |                     |
|---------------------|
| Great Britain       |
| Eastern Cuba        |
| Adam Ant            |
| A split up the side |
| Greenland           |
| Papillion           |
| Raspberries         |
| Banquo              |
| Sri Lanka           |
| Beer                |

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# The Balule Outreach Trust

Often organisations like the Balule Outreach Trust move and work under the radar and do not get the publicity that they deserve. This organisation does some unbelievable work within the community at large. This briefly outlines five of the supporting programs that it is involved in on a day-to-day basis.

## S.A.M.E. (South African Medical Expeditions) after school childcare centre in Sigagule

Currently the Trust funds the purchase of basic nutritious food for carefully selected destitute families, with food parcels distributed on a weekly basis. They are also involved in ensuring access to educational books for supplementary daily afternoon, after school, lessons in English, mathematics, and environmental studies.

Added to this, and courtesy of some amazing donations that have been received, the trust is able to dispense of clothing, blankets, and toys – all donated by members and friends of the Olifants reserves.

The Trust has also funded the construction of three classrooms, the clinic, and an eco-friendly ablution block at the centre.

## Maseke Drop-in Centre

The Trust finances the purchase of a daily meals for the orphaned and disadvantaged children who attend the centre, for five days a week after school.

The borehole pumping system at the centre broke down and for over a year there was no

water, and they could only afford to purchase the absolute minimum of water which was carefully given to each child daily. The Trust, through Robyn Reid of ONGR, organised the funding and installation of a new pumping system, and thanks to that, water now flows again to the kitchen, the showers, latrines, and the vegetable garden.

## Lizvic Cleaning Services

Last year the plight of Lizzie Mohlala, who had suffered vicious physical abuse, was brought to the Trust's attention by Ian Nowak, Warden of Grietjie and Chief Warden of Balule.

Lizzie has an extremely good reputation amongst landowners in Grietjie for the excellent cleaning and gardening services she offers. However, she had purchased an unreliable vehicle from an unscrupulous individual and through her recovery time and the repair downtime on her vehicle, her business suffered. The Trust financed the vehicle for use by Lizzie to transport her staff, and her business is now thriving. She is also getting sound financial planning advice from Trustee, Al Pearce.

This is a one wonderful example of the Trust empowering our local communities.

## Enviro Training Africa

Having funded the construction of the lecture room for Enviro Training Africa, the Trust provides bursaries for young men and women who wish to pursue a career in field guiding.

The Trust funded three bursary students last year for the site guiding course, which qualifies them to become site guides in all national parks. Subsequently, one of the students was accepted for further studies at the More Community Foundation in the Sabi Sands.

The Trust will again be sponsoring a further three bursary students this year. They are all from the Acornhoek area and will all be selected on merit.

## Bursary students at Southern Cross School

For some years now the Trust, in partnership with Klaserie Eco Schools, has been sponsoring deserving young students at Southern Cross School in Hoedspruit.

Presently they have five bursary students who are all progressing well, two of whom - Appreciate Mugabe and Vusi Chiloane - were awarded scholarships last year, effective until they matriculate.

Southern Cross School writes the IEB matric, and bursary students have the rare privilege of receiving an outstanding education which prepares them well to be future leaders in whatever field they choose after leaving school.

The Trust is in touch with several of their past bursary students. Last month Trustee John Anderson received a letter from past bursary student, Leonie Wiltshire, in which she advised that, "I am currently still studying BEng Civil Engineering at the University of Pretoria and I



The bursary learners at Southern Cross Schools

am going into my 4th year this year - only one more left after this one. The degree is quite challenging, but I knew this when I began, and I am enjoying the challenge".

When it comes to education, the Trust supports the late Nelson Mandela's belief that "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world".

*If you would like to know more about the Balule Outreach Trust, or if you wish to donate please contact John Anderson on the email address: john@afgen.co.za*

# numiknow™ – the competition reveals a positive increase in the levels of mathematical proficiency

Previously the games were discussed in detail, all leading up to the competition that was held at The Hub on the 15 January 2024.

The competition was very well attended. The underlying 'ethos' of numiknow™ is to make numeracy fun, and fun was had by all at the competition. At the end of it, four individuals emerged as winners. In third place, Ouma Molobela and Delight Mahlakoane from Buffelshoek won R250.00 each, in second place Neo Malepe, from Sedawa, won R750.00, and the winner was Ribbens Shokane, from Sedawa, who won R 1 000.00.

In the group competition, the best-performing group was Group 1 from Area 1 from Hlohlokwe. They won R750.00, and in the area competition the best performing area was Area 1 from Hlohlokwe. They won R 2 000.00.

Thanks to Spar, all the cash prizes were sponsored and Blydevallei and BBI provided boxes of packed mangoes for all winners.

The competition provided useful results to determine how participants' mathematical proficiency developed. In summary, the performance and proficiency in the basic games of adda, mina and multa (addition, subtraction, and multiplication) had increased from 33% to 56%, a 23% improvement. This was expected as it is an elementary calculation of basic operations.

The performance in diva, perca, rata and fracta (division, percentages, ratios, and fractions) however achieved a mere 6%. This clearly showed that participants have very little understanding, if any, about the concept of division as is required to perform well in this group of exercises. The assessment instrument utilized resulted in a pass rate of 30%.

While some participants showed a noticeable improvement, others did not. It poses the question; what could the possible reasons

be as to why the performance of some participants seemed to stay stagnant and what would be potential solutions to assist the participants on their learning journey?

After the competition, 85 participants who achieved below-average scores were interviewed to find out what possible causes could be established for their poor performance. The feedback from the interviews was categorized into three main problems.

The first and most prominent was a lack of motivation to practice and to improve. Respondents did not see how improving their mathematical proficiency could enhance their everyday lives. As a result, they did not go to any lengths to practice, even though they had all the help at their disposal.

The second most significant factor was their experience and perception of mathematics. Most had preconceived ideas that it would be too difficult for them to grasp or master, and therefore, gave up mentally before they even started to practice. Participants also stated that they took longer to learn new concepts, which disadvantaged them, as most games were under a time constraint so they could not complete the games well enough.

Thirdly, some participants have never understood certain mathematical concepts and still do not understand them.

It is important to take a step back to understand the funding of this numeracy project (and others). The project falls under the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition accessing the Social Employment Fund as part of the Social Economic Strategy. It is managed by the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC) supporting non-state entities to create work that serves the common good in communities. This is exactly what the whole numiknow™ concept does, by improv-

ing mathematical proficiency for the common good of all. Through this initiative participants effectively 'work' (on a nine-month project) for the state, providing services within communities whilst studying. For this, all participants are paid a stipend by the state, but they must commit to self-improvement (improving mathematical proficiency) and allocating some of their time to the community for the upliftment and better good thereof. Should the commitment falter, either as a lack of self-improvement or a disregard for the commitment to the community time 'allocation', or both, the participant will lose the funding received and their services/participation will be terminated.

Fast forward to the present day, and based on the problems that have arisen, the following interventions are currently being implemented to assist the participants on the mathematical proficiency learning journey.

Firstly, the value of mathematical proficiency in the workplace, as well as in their day-to-day lives, will be demonstrated. In addition, if the participants cannot develop and improve their mathematical proficiency, and set an example to other learners, then they are deemed not suitable for participation, and corrective actions manage that.

Secondly, to achieve better results, personal SMART goals for each participant will be set to work towards an 80% proficiency at the end of the project. The project has four months left, and participants will participate in four monthly assessments utilizing the assessment tool. Currently the average is 27% but through mentored steps over the next four months this will be steered towards achieving an 80% proficiency.

Thirdly, the 'division barrier' must be broken to increase the understanding of division and

unlock the provided resources. Mastering division will positively influence the diva, perca, fracta and rata scores, and this in turn will greatly influence the average proficiency level for the better. This will be attempted through facilitator-intensive workshops with small groups. The first three of these workshops have had very positive results.

Practice will be critical for participants to see improvement in their results, and close contact be kept with all groups, to track their performance, provide further assistance as and when required, and celebrate their successes with them!

Next month's issue will follow up and report on other numiknow™ initiatives to support the mathematical proficiency development in the schools in the project area.

*To see a video of the competition go to <https://fb.watch/qf3gseg8N7/>*



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