



# Under the Baobab

Editor: Michel Zwaan

## From the banks of the Olifants

Bush greetings from Grietjie. The “winter” has arrived in Grietjie and the short fresh days are lovely.

I sent out a security letter during the month following the horrible incident at 104, so I will not deal with the details again. I would just like to thank the volunteers that are assisting with patrols along the R40. I have a meeting with the police next week and if there is anything to share I will do so. Although I gave these details in the security letter but here are the contact numbers for the Balule Control Room that is now situated on Grietjie: Johan Eksteen 078 900 6655 or 084 401 0213.

I hope that Mr and Mrs Marques and family are recovering from this terrible incident.

**Temporary Gate:** The CEO of RAL (Road Agency Limpopo) has still not signed our move of the gate to the new position. Mr JC Kriek our attorney handling this issue is sending them weekly requests for feedback and will continue to do so. We did however take the opportunity to capitalise on the ridiculous publicity the recent “Foskor lions on the loose” nonsense to emphasise the issue of wild animal breakouts!! As has become the norm, we will just continue to follow up and apply pressure we where can.

As soon as the Board is announced we will continue to push to proceed with the de registration process.

**Protected Area (PA):** A new MEC has been appointed at LEDET. Our conservation partners in the Protected Area program asked Balule to hold back with the legal process as they have approached the MEC to address issues with the backlog of Protected area declarations. They would like to give him the chance to follow through on his department’s promises to address this before we proceed with the legal action.

We have conceded to a 4 week grace period, during which the block 1 properties must be declared and our objection ruling and declaration must follow on immediately. Failing this we (Balule) will proceed as originally planned. For what it’s worth our dealings with him during the “Foskor Lions” issue has left me hopeful that he will perhaps be better than his predecessor.

**Tar Roads :** After considering the quotations received and discussing various options at the committee meeting, we have come up with a few different options that will be presented to the members for input and consideration. As this was not specifically budgeted for we need the member’s approval to adopt any particular option. The various options will be sent out for a vote. Ideally this should be discussed at the AGM but due to the continued damage being sustained by the tar roads and the dry season being upon us it would be best to select an option soon and proceed.

We will in the meantime be doing some emergency repairs to the section of Maggie’s hill that descends to the Swartspruit. These repairs will commence as soon as the material arrives in the next week or two.

**AGM:** The AGM will be held on the 24<sup>th</sup> of August 2019. Please save the date.

For those that will be on Grietjie for the upcoming long weekend, please travel safely.

Until next time,

From the banks of the Olifants.



### From the Vice chair

As I am sitting on my patio busy writing to you, I have to hold on to my papers not to become air borne. The first mayor cold front has eventually arrived on Grietjie. The temperature has dropped and the mornings are becoming chilly between 12C and 15C. Grietjies that do not reside here on a permanent basis might laugh at us and say 'it's not cold!' I agree with you, however, when you are acclimatised to 40C, any temperature under 25C is absolutely freezing.

The trees are fast losing their leaves and the landscape is turning brown. Winter has its own charm and generally I find it an excellent time for game viewing. We can see further into the bush. Homesteads also become more visible in the winter. Suddenly a house will appear that was totally hidden in summer. I urge owners whom still have white or light coloured houses to please consider painting your homes to blend into the surrounding bush (bush colours). Unpainted and reflective roofs should also be painted. After all, it is the owners who adopted the Building Guidelines and not the committee.

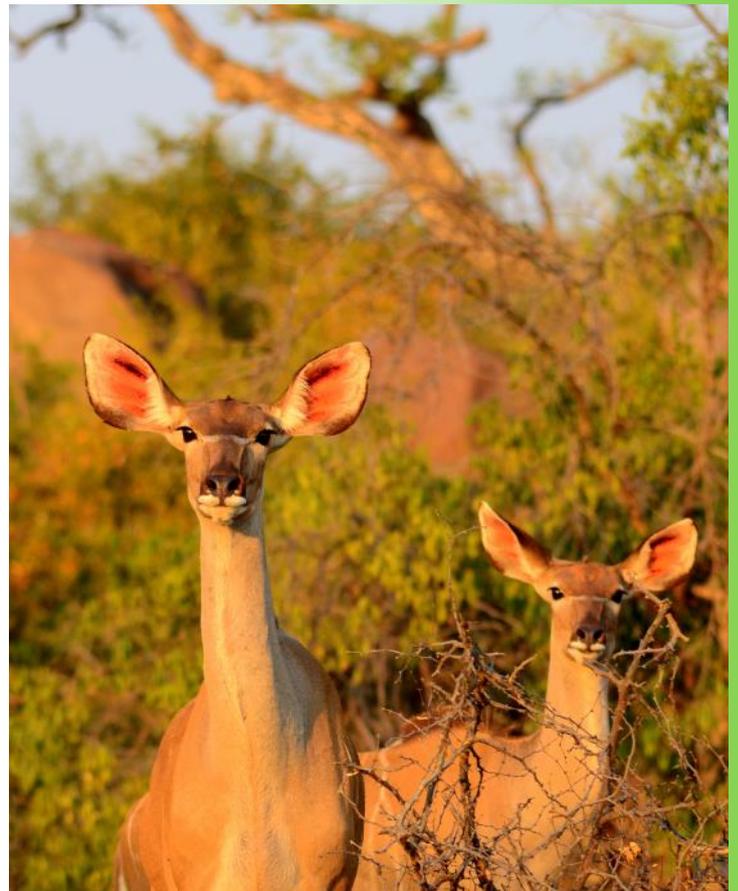
Our resident pride of lions has increased in numbers dramatically since the birth of all the cubs. They are doing well and growing rapidly. Our lionesses seem to be very good mothers. They hunt on a daily basis to feed all the hungry bellies. Another population which has boomed is that of the jackal. I am in two minds about this. The jackal are having a big impact on our small antelope population, for example our Duikers and Steenbokkies. I have over the past couple of months witnessed, on more than one occasion, how 8 to 10 jackal come together and actively hunt fully grown impala. Their behaviour mimics that of a pack of wild dogs. This behaviour is especially relevant in the Berg View road area. I am by no means an expert and would like someone to explain this behaviour to me? The leopards also seem to be sighted more regularly. En-route to town the other day, I was fortunate to find a leopard cross the road in front of me. This was mid-morning. I often also hear leopard calls around #80. Hyenas, on the other hand, never seem to venture this far north, but I do hear them call mostly towards Zebra lane and Scorpion road. We are very blessed to have such beautiful sounds just about every night. Every lion roar still send shivers down my spine. My primordial fear has not been lost in the evolutionary process!

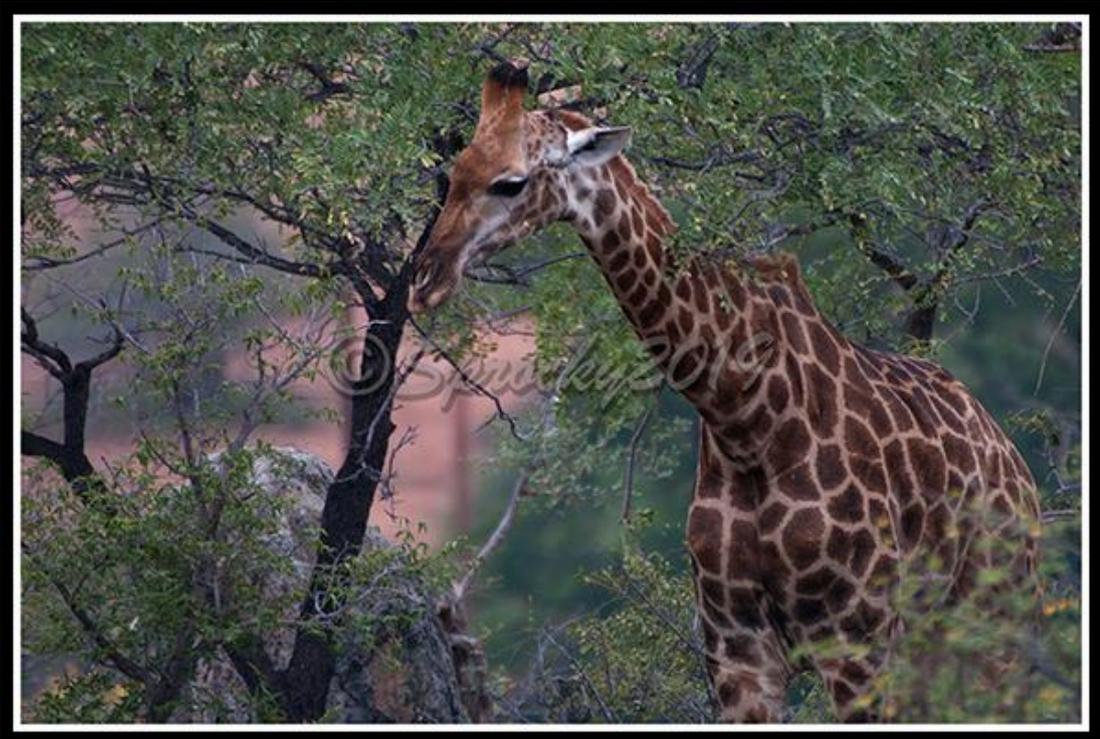
We find vehicles driving on the reserve that cannot be identified immediately. Whilst we are busy with the testing and development phase of the new gate entry system, we have decided to implement an old fashioned identification system of all vehicles on Grietjie at any one time. Small signage has been made that will be issued at the gate to all visitors. That would be contractors, lodge visitors and private property visitors. Property numbers will be visible on the signage and must be on display on the dash of the vehicle.

I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible, if not all Grietjies, at the AGM which will be at the end of August.

Until next time.

Antoinette





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Since being a resident on Grietjie, I realized how difficult it can be when your vehicle breaks down and Repairs are needed. I would like to offer my mechanical skills and experience to assist residents of Grietjie if help is needed.

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