



JANUARY 2014



(c) 2014 Lengau Lodge, Grietjie PNR



Photographs-Loek Bleeker, Lengau Lodge

COMMITTEE UPDATE by Hans Schmid

Committee Structure

As stated in the December Newsflash, Scott Elliot and Gerrie van Zyl have resigned from the committee due to other commitments. This leaves the committee with 6 members of whom one is the warden, and Johan has more than enough on his plate already without taking on a portfolio. The other 5 members are doing their utmost to keep GPNR going. We already have a few people assisting us, but if there are any community minded residents out there who are willing to be co-opted, or just help manage our reserve, we would be grateful.

Change of Ownership

Elke and Evert van Eeden took over ownership of plot 13, previously Kulungi Lodge, on 1 December 2013 and have renamed it "Baluleni Safari Lodge". The van Eeden's also run a lodge on Parsons.

Another lodge has changed hands; plot 110 (ex G Zunkel). Loek Bleeker and Ilse Ramler from the Netherlands are calling it "Lengau Lodge". Loek and Ilse intend to become permanent GPNR residents within the next few years.

At midnight on New Year's Eve, Ian and Maxine Smith became the new owners of plot 10 previously owned by Brian Sears. The Smiths have been renting #10 for over a year now and Maxine should be known to all of you. She has been efficiently running Grietjecomms since September last year.

I am privileged to announce that all three owners have signed the constitution, had their memberships approved and have paid their levies in full. We wish them all a warm welcome to our community and many happy days on Grietjie.

Mike Peel Meeting 22nd February 2014

Please be advised that this meeting will take place on Saturday 22nd February at 10h00 on #36 (Schmid). Mike presents an annual ecological survey of GPNR and the Association of Private Nature Reserves. His presentation is well worth attending as it impacts on all our properties.

Maseke Game Reserve

As you have previously been informed by the GLA (Grietjie Land Owners Association), the farms north of Parsons, ONGR and Grietjie, (ie. Archie, Square, Try and Morelag), have been purchased by the Government and handed over by the Land Claims Commissioner to the successful claimants, the Maseke tribe. It was a condition of this restitution that these farms be retained as conservation areas and not be used as settlement farms. Sean Nielsen has obtained a 30/50 year lease of the land between Balule and the R40 tar road and has called this Maseke Game Reserve. He has approached Balule management with the intent to join Balule and create a new "Balule North" which will include his concession as well as Parsons, ONGR and Grietjie. Maseke Game Reserve is about 10,000 ha in size. Sean's proposal is at an early stage, but he envisages all the common fences to be removed, a new combined access for Grietjie, ONGR and Parsons at the current Inyatikulu entrance and a combined approach to game management and anti-poaching north of the Olifants River. This may initially seem to be a great idea, but there are numerous details that have to be discussed, amended and compromised before a final proposal can be tabled. Sean's proposal will be discussed at the next Balule meeting on the 25th January, and we will keep you posted of any further developments. There are numerous issues incorporated in this proposal that will affect many owners. The committee will however not make a decision for the collective owners of Grietjie; you, the owners of Grietjie will make that decision and give the committee the mandate to act upon it.

Identification of Protrack Personnel

We have requested that you report any suspicious activity on GPNR, but you may see armed Protrack personnel walking on the reserve. To prevent misunderstanding they can be easily identified by the badges on their hats and the ID cards that they carry, as well as by their radios, books, backpacks, uniforms.



Standard Grietjie Signage

At the AGM it was requested that all owners should identify their plot numbers for security and emergency purposes. It was also requested that signage be standardised.

Pierre Ackermann has kindly designed and manufactured two moulds for concrete supports for signs. The one support has a recess for a 150mm x 350mm sign (Photo 1) and the second support has a recess for a 150mm x 400mm sign (Photo 2). The base of the support can be sunk into the soil for extra stability.



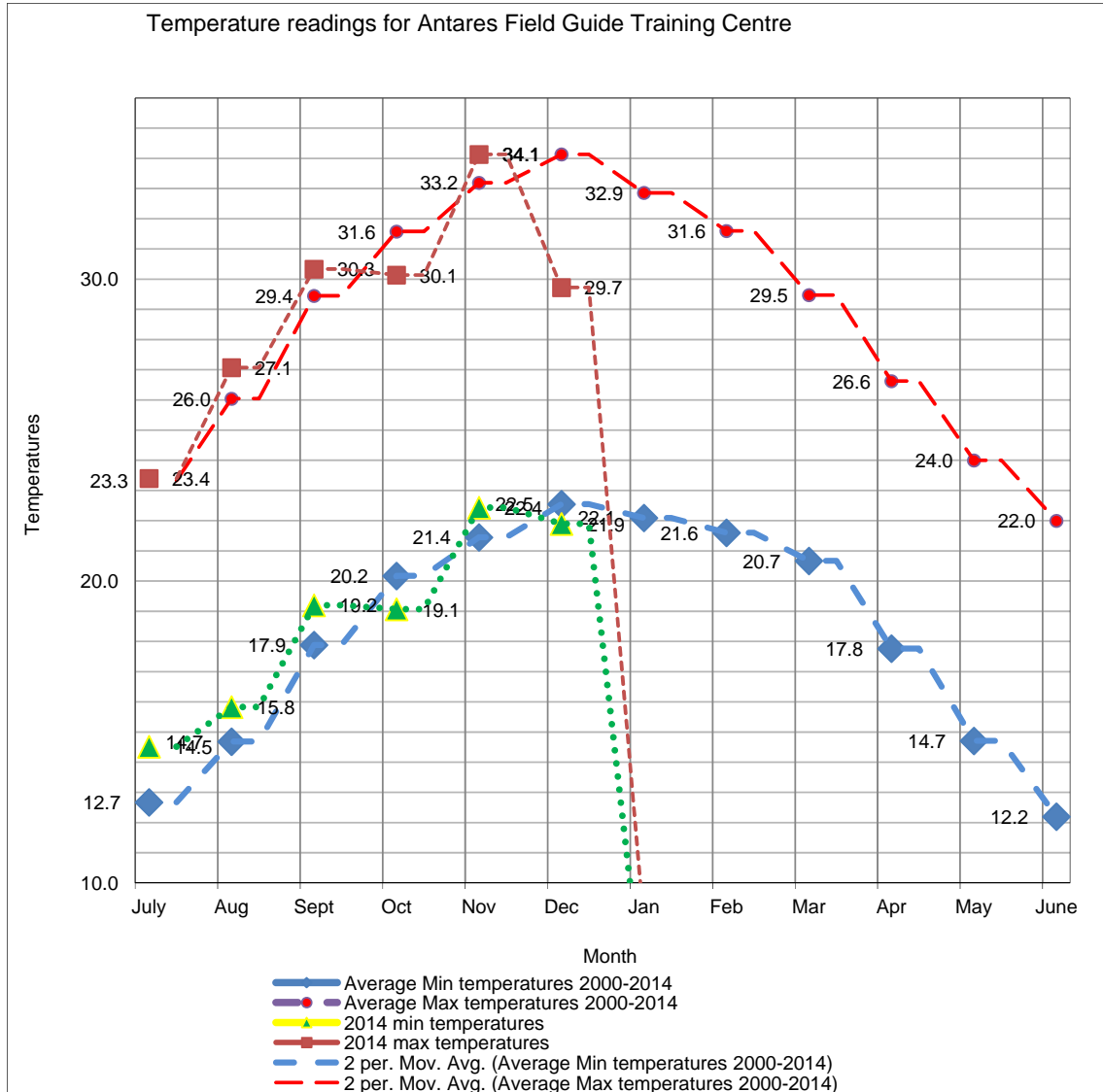
Have you ever cursed those elephants that knock down your sign boards? Now you can get a 90% elephant-proof support for your sign. These concrete sign supports can be purchased from the warden at R150 per support. Please place your order through grietjiecomms@gmail.com.

Truck incident 10th January

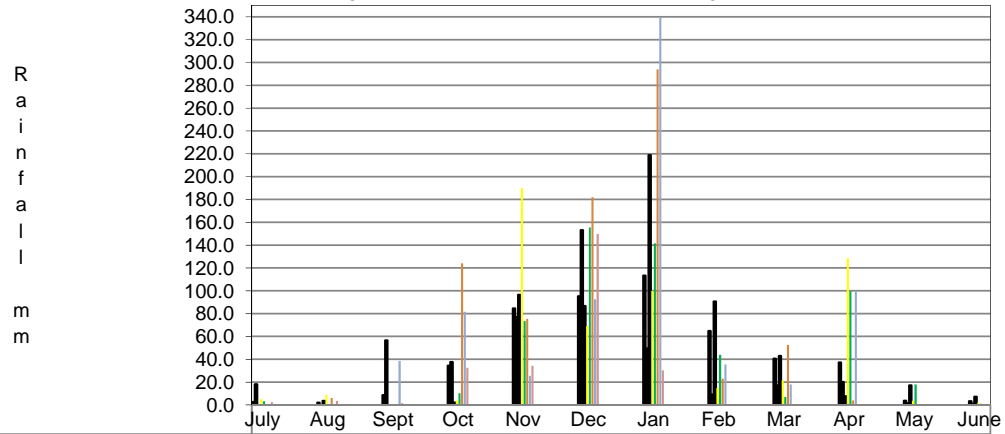
A BUCO delivery truck got stuck at the bottom of Marble hill and damaged the road. The driver had ignored the "NO TRUCKS" signs at both entrances to this section of road. This highlights the responsibility of owners to ensure that when ordering materials the supplier be made aware of the difficult accessibility of roads on

Grietjie. The owner and supplier responsible for this transgression have been informed in writing and an invoice to cover the cost of repair has been issued. As a direct result of this incident, no trucks greater than 7 tonne payload, and no horse & trailers or interlinks will be granted access to Grietjie. If entry is required for any truck greater than specified, the owner must get prior approval from the Warden and the owner must escort the vehicle from the gate to its destination and then back again. The owner will then take all responsibility for inconvenience and any possible damage.

RAINFALL AND TEMPERATURE STATS by Ian Owtram

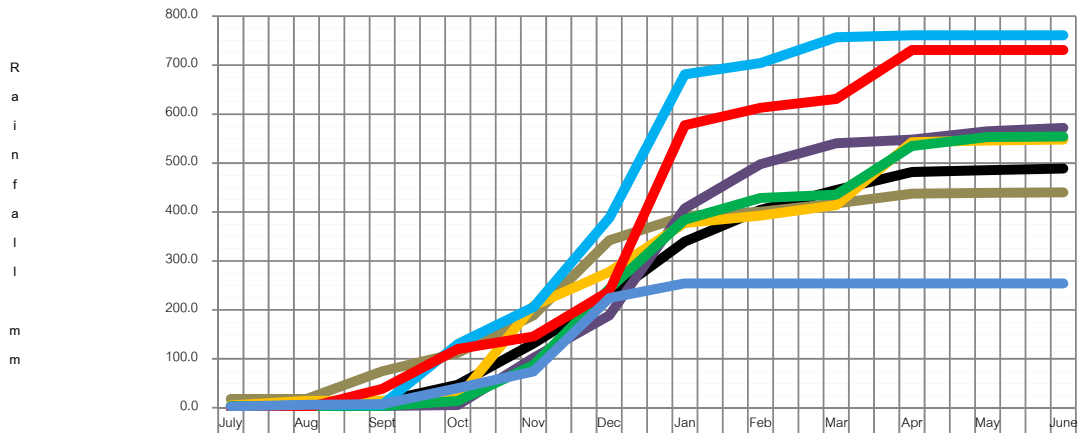


Rainfall readings for Antares Field Guide Training Centre



■ Average monthly rainfall since 2000	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June
■ 2007/2008 Rainfall	18	0.	56	37	77	15	49	9.	17	20	1.	1.
■ 2008/2009 rainfall	0.	3.	0.	2.	96	86	21	90	42	7.	17	7.
■ 2009/2010 rainfall	5.	9.	0.	4.	19	69	10	15	21	12	3.	2.
■ 2010/2011 rainfall	3.	0.	0.	10	73	15	14	44	7.	99	18	1.
■ 2011/2012 rainfall	0.	6.	0.	12	75	18	29	23	52	4.	0.	0.
■ 2012/2013 Rainfall	0.	0.	38	81	25	92	33	35	18	10	0.	0.
■ 2013/2014 rainfall	2.	3.	1.	32	34	14	30	0.	0.	0.	0.	0.

Cumulative rainfall totals over recent years



	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June
■ Average running total	2.4	4.3	12.	47.	131	226	339	404	444	481	485	488
■ 2007/2008 running total	18.	18.	74.	112	189	342	391	400	417	437	439	440
■ 2008/2009 running total	0.0	3.5	3.5	5.5	102	188	407	497	540	548	565	572
■ 2009/2010 running total	5.0	14.	14.	18.	208	277	377	392	414	542	546	548
■ 2010/2011 running total	3.3	3.8	3.8	14.	87.	243	384	428	435	535	553	554
■ 2011/2012 running total	0.0	6.0	6.0	130	205	387	681	704	757	761	761	761
■ 2012/2013 running total	0.0	0.0	38.	120	145	238	577	613	631	731	731	731
■ 2013/2014 running total	2.5	6.0	7.5	40.	74.	224	254	254	254	254	254	254

Month



Crocodile with baby hippo carcass seen at the picnic site on 18th January

DEATH OF TILAPIA IN OLIFANTSRIVER EAST CONSERVANCY

In October last year, the majority of *Tilapia sparrmanii* fish in an Olifantsriver East Conservancy died overnight. The owner initially suspected cyanide poisoning as a method of poaching. However tests proved that the cause of the mass death of fish was instead due to a herd of over 50 buffalo visiting the dam the previous day!

Apparently the buffalo created a massive upwelling of sediment whilst wallowing and drinking. The sediment clogged the gills of the fish and also increased the turbidity of the water, thereby decreasing the quantity of dissolved oxygen available for the fish to breathe. They simply died of asphyxiation. The dead bodies of fish naturally produce ammonia, and as some fish died this contributed to the death of more fish. The only species of fish found dead in the dam were tilapia.

Reference: ENDIP Consulting Wildlife Management
October 29, 2013
Emilee Millet

ONE HOUR IN GRIETJIE by Maxine Smith

Over the holidays, we had some family over from the UK. Two of the three had never visited South Africa, let alone the 'Bush'. So, one hour of one day in the bush is the tale I have to share.

It started with sundowners; we wanted to share this popular South African practice with our guests and found a great high spot on the border of #10. We settled down with the G&T's and beers, all enjoying the evening. After the sunset we were starting to pack up, when we were rather rapidly galvanised by the sudden 'bark' of a leopard from a bush immediately to the side of us. Unbeknown to us, one of the group (who has a bit of a hearing problem) clearly did not hear the sudden panic and he decided, (at the same time as the 'bark'), to 'go and find his own leopard' and take a leak! As you can imagine, once we had quickly packed and were about to make off, we realised we were one man down. Shouting didn't help (remember, he is pretty deaf), so we had to wait, with baited breath, wondering if he was ever to re-emerge from the shrubbery intact! Thankfully he did, blissfully unaware of the danger and slightly bemused when we told him.

Off we went, back to #10 to prepare for our braai. Now driving in darkness, we turned into the top of our road in our game viewer. Ian always keeps the windscreen down, so as we ambled along one spider appeared on the top of the canopy, which my sister promptly noticed (with a bit of a shriek). As soon as we looked up another one appeared, then another; before we knew it there were spiders coming in from all directions, all over the Landie and climbing all over us! Ian, astutely aware of 2 major spider phobes on board, quickly jumped off to pull up the windscreen in an attempt to stop them falling into our faces. Then, out of nowhere,

a beautiful African wood owl swooped down, almost kissing Ian's ear, then gliding past his shoulder away behind him. We were stunned in absolute amazement and silent wonder at what we had just seen, all with open mouths, staring and gaping. Ian looked up at us and noting the looks on our faces, asked what on earth the matter was! We stammered telling him what had just happened.

After eventually getting through what is now known as 'spider alley', we finally got back to the house. I, as usual, cautiously got out of the vehicle, whilst Ian unloaded and our guests merrily jumped off, pretty much by now looking for a drink and to share the tales of the last 30 mins. As I walked to the kitchen door, something caught my eye. I quickly recognised it as a Black Mamba, and a beautiful specimen. I put my arms out to stop everyone moving forward and as sternly as I could called out 'Black Mamba!' This had the desired effect, with everyone stopping dead in their tracks, (even my partially deaf brother-in-law). My sister was screaming at me not to let her see it or she would be on the first plane home. My daughter was pushing me so she could see it as she is very curious and already loves the bush and all of its delights. My brother-in-law just wanted a drink! Ian came through and ushered us all safely into the house whilst he monitored the snake to make sure it moved on and away from the building.

Once inside, my daughter and I were in the kitchen pouring everyone a pretty stiff drink while we were all rambling on about the evening's chain of events and my sister was nervously sitting in the lounge looking for her much needed stiff drink. I was talking to her through the kitchen hatch when I saw something swoop down right past her face. I couldn't believe the bad timing of the Angolan free-tail bat. Well, let me tell you, Usain Bolt should be very worried, he has real competition! My sister leapt from the lounge into the kitchen (I swear she must have dived through the hatch), because she was there before I could finish my words. It was the funniest sight. My daughter and I just collapsed in hard belly laughter. It took a while for us to stop and recover as Ian caught the poor confused bat, showing it to a curious Renae before letting it go.

As Mr Smith and I often say "another s*@t day in Africa eh!" Needless to say, no-one braai'd that night and my sister's next trip to South Africa (if she ever makes it again), will only be to Cape Town...shame!