



APRIL 2014

NEWSLETTER



COMMITTEE UPDATE by Hans Schmid

March Rainfall

The monthly rainfall of 325mm in March this year was the second highest recorded by Ian over the past 14 years, only surpassed by the January 2012 floods when 339mm was measured over 2 days!

At the end of February when the grass was sparse and yellowing, we were afraid that we may be facing a drought as recorded rainfall was only 335mm, but that nearly doubled to 660mm by the end of March. The trees have exploded in an unbelievable growth spurt and the grass has recovered well. It's almost as though we are experiencing a second spring. Of course it would be better for the grasses if the rainfall wasn't so erratic, but we are grateful for every drop that fell on Grietjie.

Although the rivers flooded, they fortunately didn't reach the high levels of January 2012. However the flooded Swartspuit caused a bit of excitement among owners trapped on the South side of the river as there were 'planes to catch and appointments to be kept!

Committee & Members

You elect a committee to administer Grietjie, and have requested that the committee regularly communicate with you so that you are conversant with decisions and actions being taken on your behalf. Well, this works two ways – the committee would also appreciate communication from you.

We asked all owners with invasive cacti on their properties to contact us as Johan has gone to considerable trouble to breed Cochineal insects and phycitid moths to control the cacti. Three members and three non-members have replied.

We asked for interested volunteers to join the ecological sub-committee that would determine the procedures and rules for the fauna, flora and the water holes. Only two members replied, one joined and the second was unsure of a positive contribution due to his absence from Grietjie.

Please...get involved with the maintenance and improvement of our reserve.

Balule Feedback

Rhinos: As you are aware, the slaughter rate of rhinos in South Africa is on the increase; 668 in 2012, 1004 in 2013 and 277 to date in 2014. More funding is needed for private endeavours to combat poaching as the authorities don't seem to be taking the problem seriously. Recently, Balule has had some anti-poaching success. A poacher's assistant was shot and apprehended and a suspected poacher carrying R70,000 cash was arrested. If you can help, our three Grietjie rangers need small LED torches of 700 lumens or more (about R800 each) and army surplus rucksacks (about R750 each).

Elephant management: The APNR is seriously concerned with the ever increasing elephant numbers in the APNR and KNP areas and will set up a committee to discuss the way forward.

Maseko Game Reserve (Sean Nielsen) inclusion into Balule: Regretfully Balule has not sent the letter of minimum compliance to S Nielsen but we were assured that further meetings will be held. Therefore we anticipate no developments in the near future.

Threatening developments: PCM (Palabora Copper Mine) are currently recycling their substantial magnetite stockpiles for enrichment and export to China. The rail and road traffic will have to double up to remove this extra tonnage from Phalaborwa. Balule is registered as an Interested and Affected Party and will act as the spokesperson for all Balule regions. Clarifications and certain objections have already been sent to PCM.

Balule to standardize security system: Balule wants a standard system for all regions. This may take some time to achieve as regions have different systems and requirements. Any improvement to the security system will be beneficial to both owners and game.

Takeoffs

The full allocation has been approved by the committee for takeoff. The full kudu quota may however not be utilised. We are awaiting a quote from the van Zyl's for 1x elephant, 2x buffalo, 5x waterbuck bulls and 2x kudu bulls. Johan will be responsible for the 100 impala, 10 warthog and 3 kudu cow take off.

Impala carcasses will be for sale to owners again at R500 each. Prices for kudu and warthog carcasses will be forthcoming. Veterinary regulations currently require that no carcasses may leave the Grietjie main gate. Meat has to be de-boned and permits will be required to take meat off Grietjie. Johan will find out further details concerning these new regulations.

It is anticipated that takeoffs will commence after June this year.

Collection of Road User Fees for Contractors & Deliveries (AGM 2013)

We have had no response from the members challenging the Committee's decision as stated in the last newsletter, so this issue, raised at the last AGM, is deemed to be approved by the members and is now closed.

Finances

We are still on budget with the expenses, a further income of R83,000 over the months April, May & June will ensure a break even for this financial year.

AGM

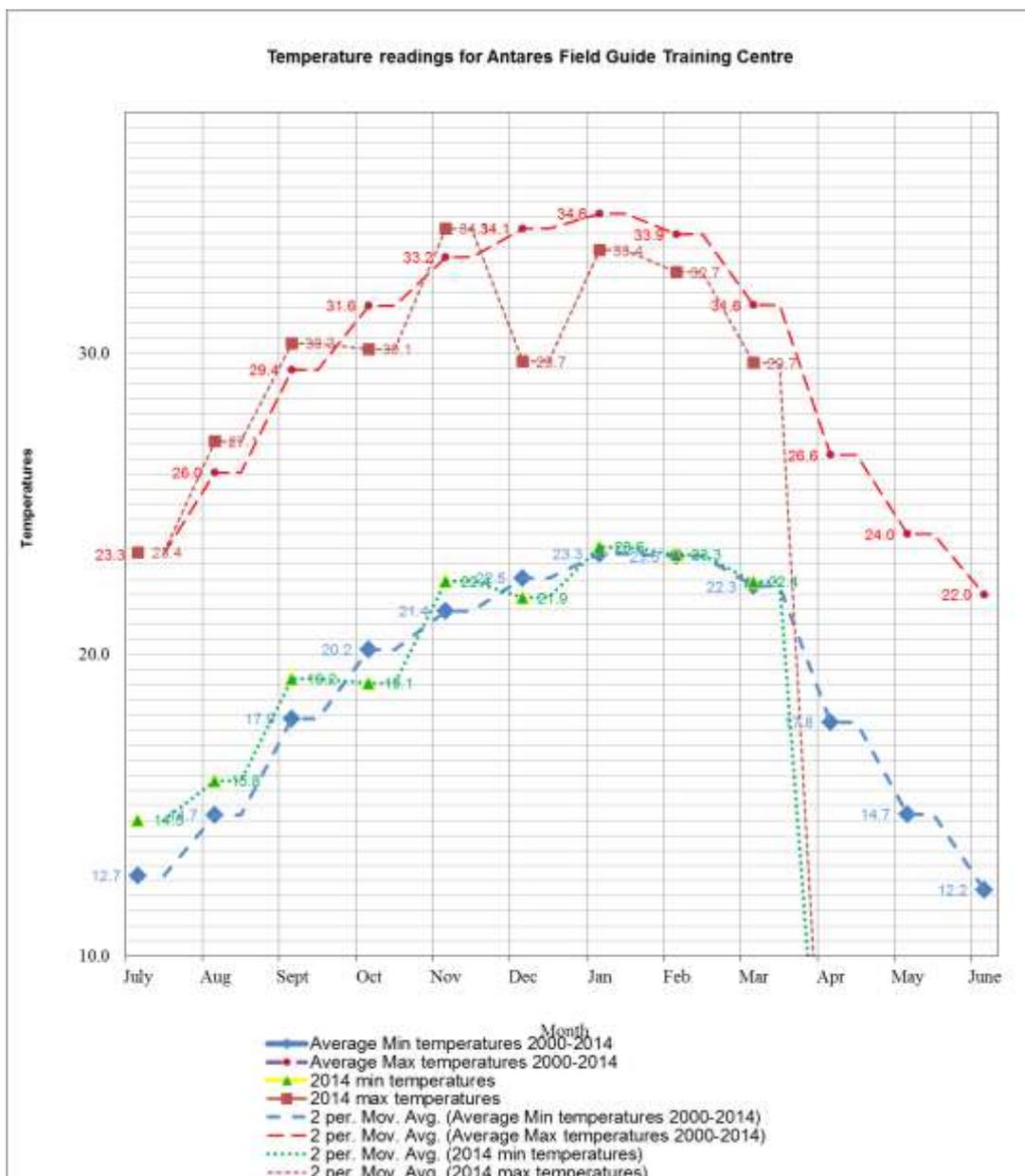
A tentative date for Saturday 30 August 2014 has been set for the 2014 AGM. We hereby invite the members to re-analyze the Constitution and the SOP and propose any amendments or changes that you deem necessary. These proposed changes should reach Grietjiecomms not later than 30 June 2014. The latest Constitution and SOP can be obtained from the Grietjie Private Nature Reserve website <http://grietjiepnr.co.za>.

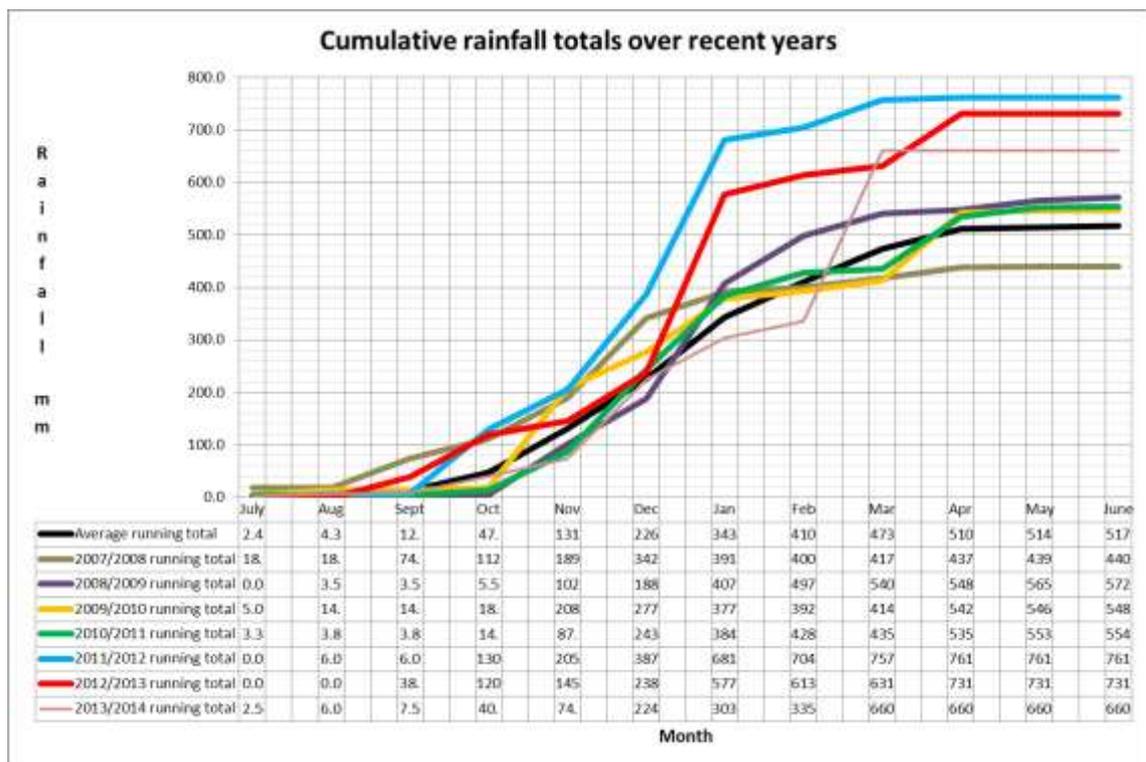
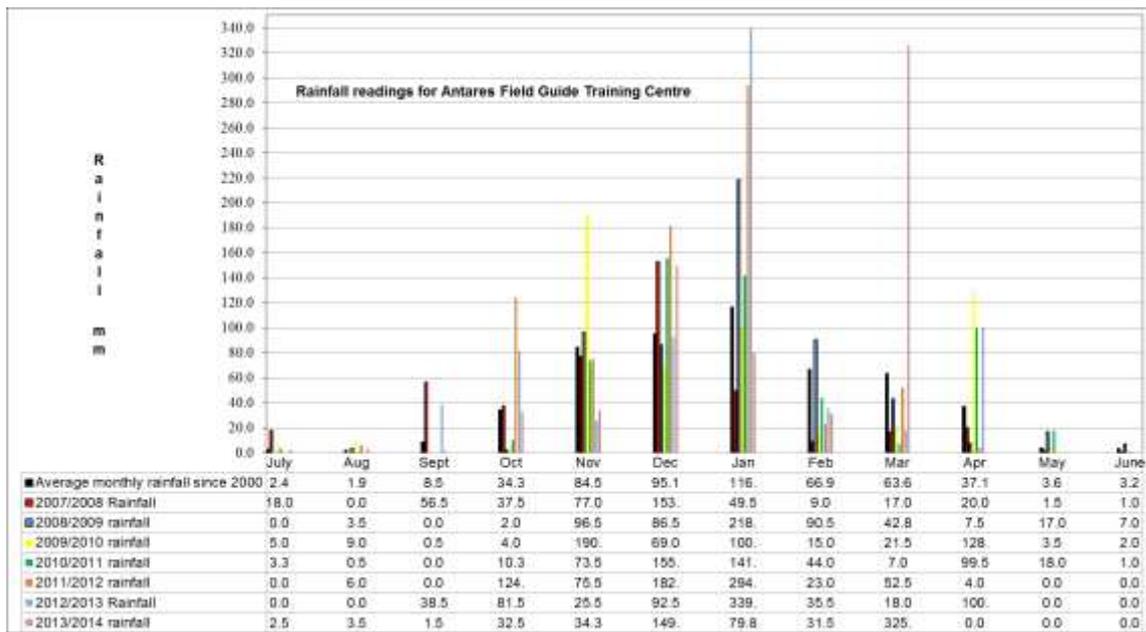
Words from the Warden (March 2014)

It is of great concern that Johan still finds snares on Grietjie. Although some of the snares were old, new snares were also found. We appeal to you to search your properties for snares and to make your staff aware that snaring is illegal. There is obviously less supervision of staff on properties where owners are not permanently in residence and we believe that most snaring is occurring on these properties. Your cooperation is appreciated.

RAINFALL AND TEMPERATURE STATS

by Ian Owtram





Casart Lodge Wine Tasting.

If a couple dressed in formal black tie rattled past you in their game viewer on a Saturday afternoon, they were Ian and Mel on their way to a wine tasting held by Jan and Sonia of Casart Lodge. Grietjie lodge owners (in good standing) were treated to a deliciously informative and progressively jolly afternoon presented by Charl and Glen of Hoedspruit's Safari Wine Club. Sonja had laid out the yummiest selection of snacks and cheeses, and while sipping some superb wines we were taught how to pour and present wines. The wine club offers a holistic service to lodges, from designing and producing professional menus, to training in wine and food pairing. If you were busy over the long weekend and could not attend, contact Glen at glen@safariwineclubs.co.za cell +27 83 5677756 to arrange a wine tasting or to obtain further information.

