



December 2014

NEWSLETTER



COMMITTEE UPDATE by Hans Schmid

New owners

Nine properties are still in the process of being sold (since August 2014) but transfers have been held up for various reasons and so we cannot welcome any new owners as yet. These properties include Tulani (4 plots to a consortium of business men from Parys), and plots 76 and 83 to individuals. Sean Nielsen (Maseke) has also confirmed that he has purchased plot 106 on Grietjie.

Tractor and trailer

We have specified the tractor we need and have been searching regionally for the last 3 months. Three trips were made by Peter Meier, Blackie de Swardt and Theunis Trollip to look at prospective tractors in the Tzaneen/Lydenburg area but we have not yet been successful in sourcing what we need. We will persevere until we find the tractor. A trailer should be easier to find.

Permanent staff accomodation

A solution to the permanent staff accommodation must be found soon. The quality of the existing buildings is sub-standard and is deteriorating. The baboons broke into Nelson's timber structure recently and ransacked the place. We are revisiting the portable building option again as we do not have much time left.

Roadworks supervisor

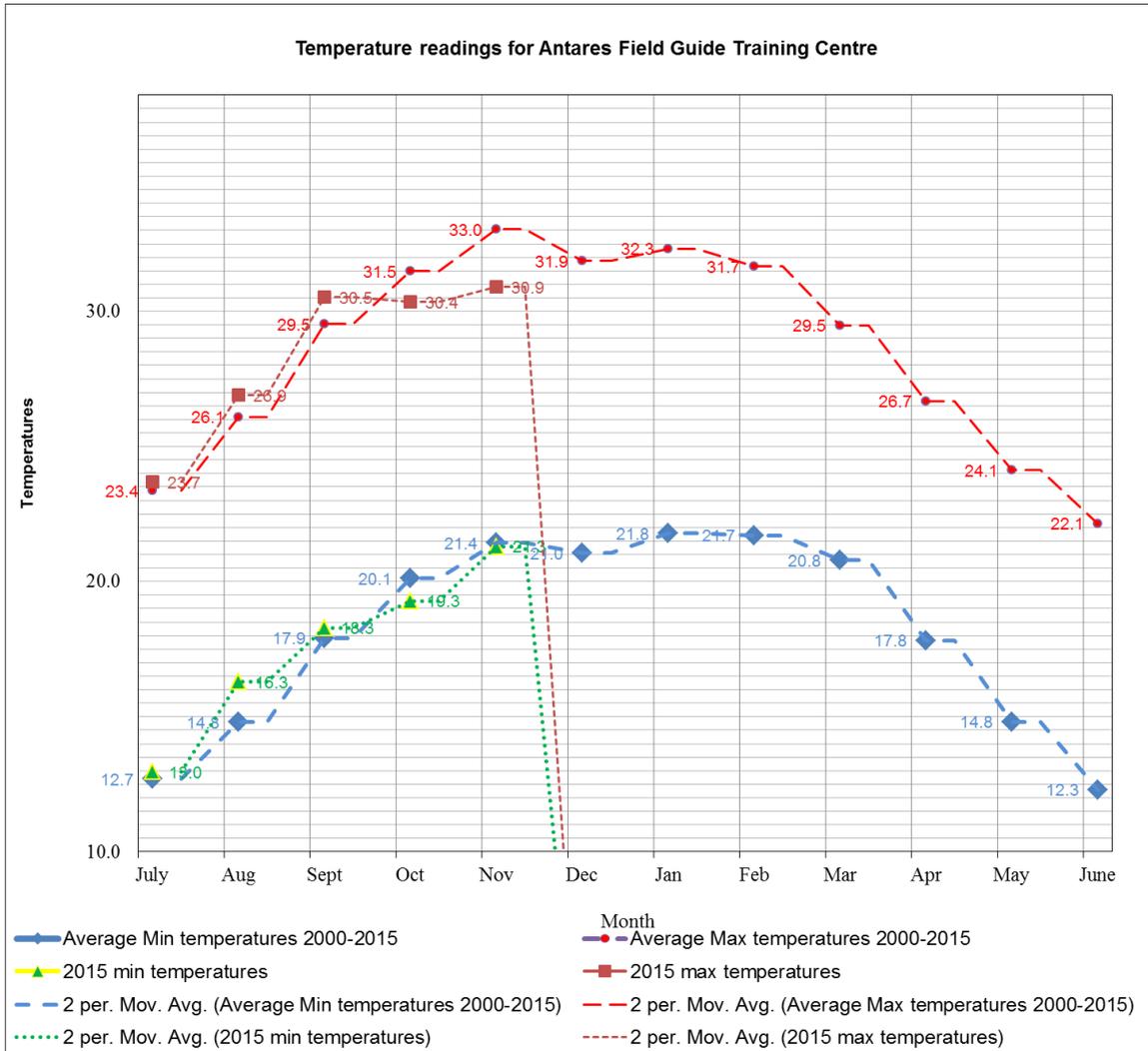
Neil Bridges has improved Maggie's Hill, Darisandi Road, Zebra Lane and Scorpion Road substantially; it was the right decision to engage a roads supervisor. Working on the roads is not easy, especially if you have to sweat it out on a hot day in 35+ degrees, but the results are obvious. Thank you, Neil, for the hard work; we all appreciate your efforts and are looking forward to the further improvements you will bring to our roads.

Access control

The 2015 vehicle stickers will be made available at the main gate as of 16 December. The vehicle registration numbers must be specified by each owner before a sticker is issued. Each resident owner is entitled to 2 stickers if he has 2 vehicles. Members in good standing will be issued with 2 stickers per plot and/or additional house paid for. Extra stickers can be applied for at the gate and when granted will be sold for R30 each. As per the access control rules, this sticker must be affixed to the passenger side of the windscreen.

Compliments of the season

We wish all of you a peaceful and merry Christmas and a prosperous and healthy New Year.



WHY VULTURES DON'T GET FOOD POISONING

S Schmid

Photograph: L Bleeker



My son sent me an interesting article on vultures the other day. (We share the habit of filling our heads with useless snippets of information).

We all know that vultures fill a key niche in the eco-system. We'd probably have to contend with millions of flies like the Aussies do if we didn't have vultures. And we know that their stomach acids have evolved to become so strong that

they are unaffected by the toxins secreted by bacteria thriving on the rotting meat.

Lars Hestbjerg and a team of researchers recently compared the bacteria found on the heads of 50 vultures with the germs found in the large intestines of the same vultures, and published their findings in *Nature Communications*. Of the 528 types of bacteria found on the heads of the vultures, including germs that cause botulism, gangrene, tetanus, and septicaemia in other species, only 15% of these were found in the intestine. Interestingly, the two most significant bacteria that remain in the gut are *Clostridia* and *Fusobacteria*, both extremely nasty. However, further studies revealed that zoo vultures harboured the same bacteria although they were eating fresh meat whereas other raptors didn't. This leads to the speculation that there is an old and beneficial partnership between vultures and these bacteria. Scientists speculate that the bacteria are assisting in breaking down nutrients for the vultures.

<http://www.iflscience.com/plants-and-animals/why-vultures-dont-get-food-poisoning>

<http://www.4vultures.org/2014/12/01/on-vultures-rotting-food-and-nasty-germs-new-research-on-the-bacteria-living-on-vultures/>