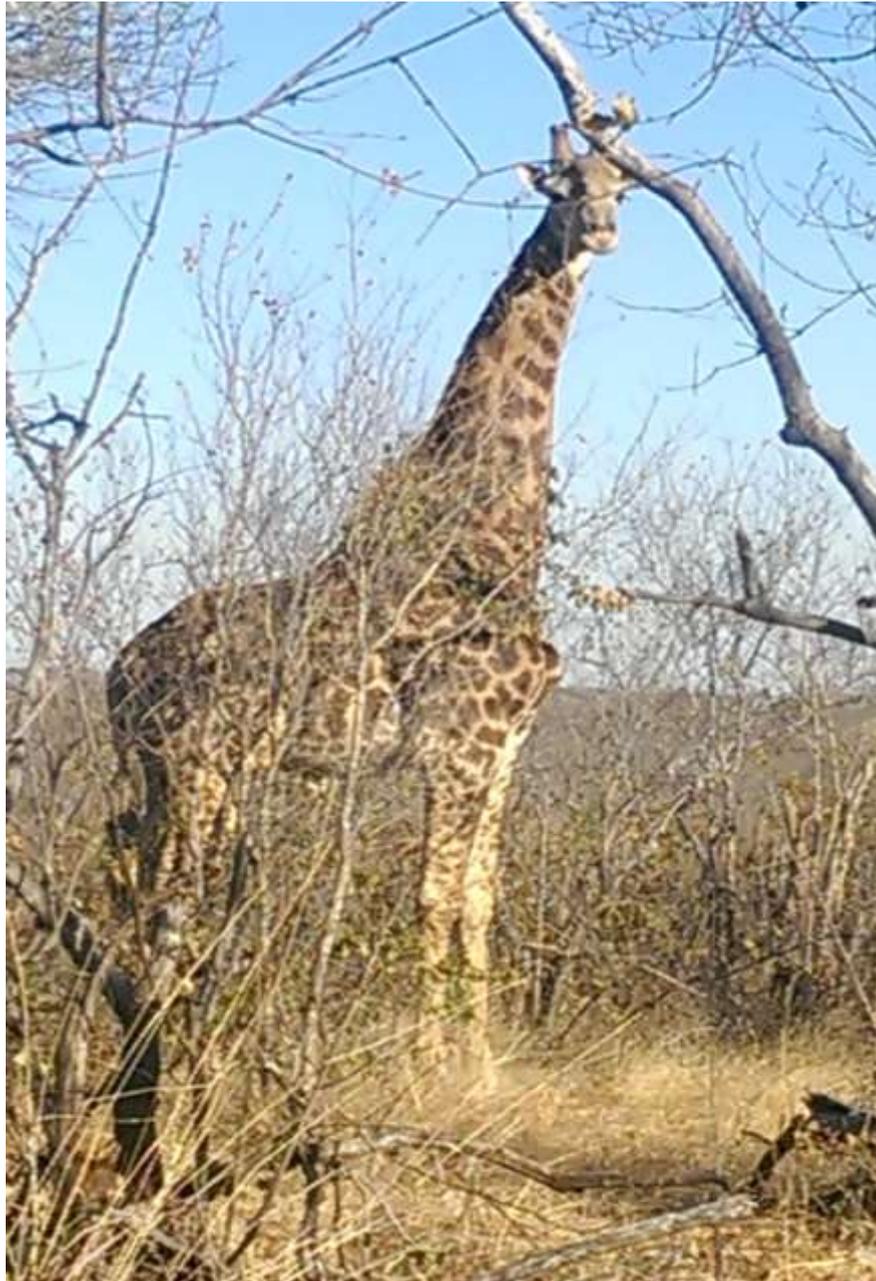




NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2015



Photographer: Sharyn van der Walt

“We encourage owners to send their best Grietjie photographs to grietjiecomms@gmail.com and we will, with your permission, post the best photograph on the cover of our monthly newsletter”

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT by Marius Porteus

On behalf of the Grietjie Committee I would like to take this opportunity and wish all owners a blessed Christmas and wonderful new 2016. I am not a great supporter of new-year resolutions because so few are actually achieved. I will however try to capture our plans for the remaining half of the financial year and trust we will achieve our objectives.

Our main objective will be to start with the upgrade of the Doreen (Eastern boundary) and Morelag (Northern boundary) fence. The road sign project will also be completed and we intend to upgrade the main entrance gate. The upgrade of a portion of the tar road as a test will also commence in the new calendar year. Since August as far as we have been informed four properties were in the process of changing hands and indications are that all new owners will sign up to the Grietjie Constitution and the committee will continue to engage with estate agents and new owners to ensure all new owners sign-up and support our objectives.

We want to again extend a hand to all non-member owners to sign-up to the constitution. Our strength and future success as a well functioning nature reserve and land owners is in a unified Grietjie.

My final wish and hope for 2016 is to see the Land Claim finalised through financial compensations as informed by the Land Claim Commissioner. We have the confirmation in writing and now await the finalisation of the process and a slow process it is.

May 2016 exceed our wildest expectations!

Access control and Security

Owner entry stickers for 2016 will be available at the entrance gate in the new year and we thank Michael for arranging this.

As far as we know, no theft or other serious security breaches were reported in December. The Christmas weekend was also incident free. If you are aware of incidents that we have not reported on please inform Gerrie.

Grietjie Staff

All our staff positions are filled and majority of new staff appointed since August have received all necessary training. PSIRA certification as required for all security staff has been received.

Thanks to Mike and Gerrie who has hosted a Christmas function for our staff in December. We are grateful for the work done by our staff.

Roads

As reported previously a portion of the tarred road has been identified to be used as a test portion to see how well a certain method of sealing will last. This project will also commence in the new calendar year. A road maintenance strategy for gravel roads has been compiled and we thank Hans Schmid for making this available. With the equipment we have and to the best of our abilities we endeavour to stick to the guidelines. If there is specific requirements to grade gravel roads where you feel it is needed please contact Gerrie. We do try and cover all gravel roads. Please note that Gerrie does offer assistance to owners to grade private roads and the fees for this can be obtained from Gerrie.

One of our sponsored projects is to improve road signage and make road users more aware of speed limits. Gerrie has made good progress in having the concrete blocks casted and signs made. Below are few examples out there. "Thanks for your support Ian".



Fences and Infrastructure

The committee has now approved the Grietjie fence upgrade project. This will be done in three phases and progressing to the next phase is dependent on availability of funds:

Phase 1 – install additional supports to ensure current fence is kept standing

Phase 2 – Replace/upgrade required portions of the current fence

Phase 3 – Upgrade the perimeter fence to Balule standard

As indicated previously to replace and upgrade the current fence in full will cost circa R70 000 per kilometre. We just do not have these funds and have opted for the phased approach. Phase 1 will cost R 10 000 and Phase 2 circa R 12 000 per kilometre. Work will start in January. This is currently our highest priority project. Please contact myself or Pierre Ackermann if you are able to assist with this project. Any help will be appreciated and beneficial to all land owners.

Game and Vegetation

Despite the poor rainfall throughout the country, Grietjie was blessed with some good down pours in December and vegetation is not that bad. My borehole, 80 m deep is still yielding sufficient water for household consumption so we hope that more rain will fall to ensure we have water. With the rain and better vegetation also came the new born. Reports of baby Impala, zebra and warthog has been reported and with some follow up rain we trust they will survive.

It was also nice to notice the return visit of the buffalo herd. Trees unfortunately continue to fall victim to elephants and Gerrie has his hands full clearing trees from the main roads.



Finances

Cash flow (mainly monthly levy payments minus operating expenses) is positive but does not leave us with much extra. We trust we will receive some income from the last off takes for this season (3 animals). We however manage with the day-to-day requirements but have to cut back on spending on major projects. If the off takes do not realise between now and April we will have to draw from our investment account to conclude the phase one tar road test project.

As before, we encourage owners who can pay their full levies to please do so. This goes a long way for the committee to commit to projects.

RESERVE MANAGER'S REPORT by Gerrie van Zyl

SECURITY AND ACCESS CONTROL

- No reports of theft in the month of December

GAME MANAGEMENT

- No poaching reported
- Elephants still doing a lot of damage.
- Our first impala babies were spotted on the 3rd Dec.
- The big buffalo herd are regular visitors again.
- I spotted wildebeest and zebra babies.

VEGETATION

- Due to the good rains the bush is lush and green but unfortunately not much grass.
- The count on the trees removed on the main roads caused by the elephants is 106.

CLIMATE

- I Measured 71mm rain for Nov.
- Still very hot in the upper 30`s

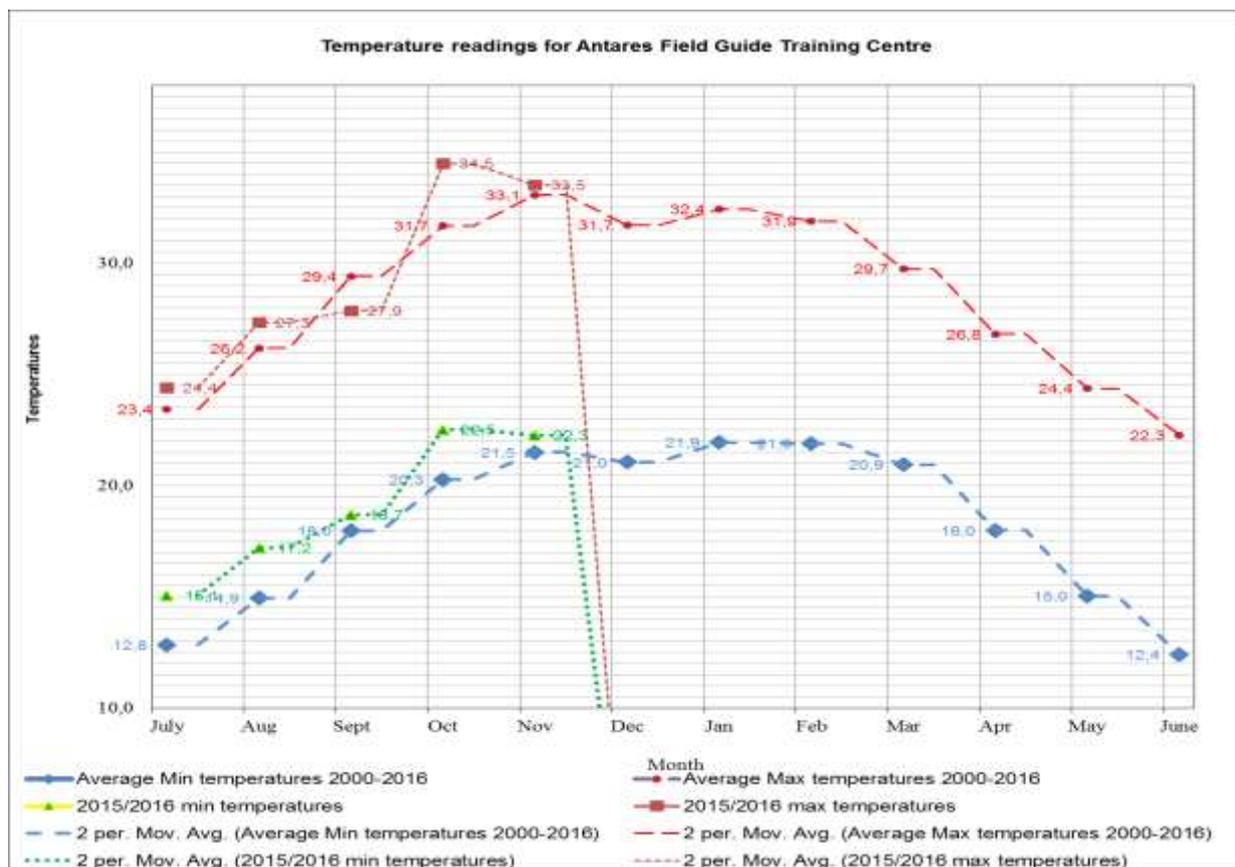
ROADS

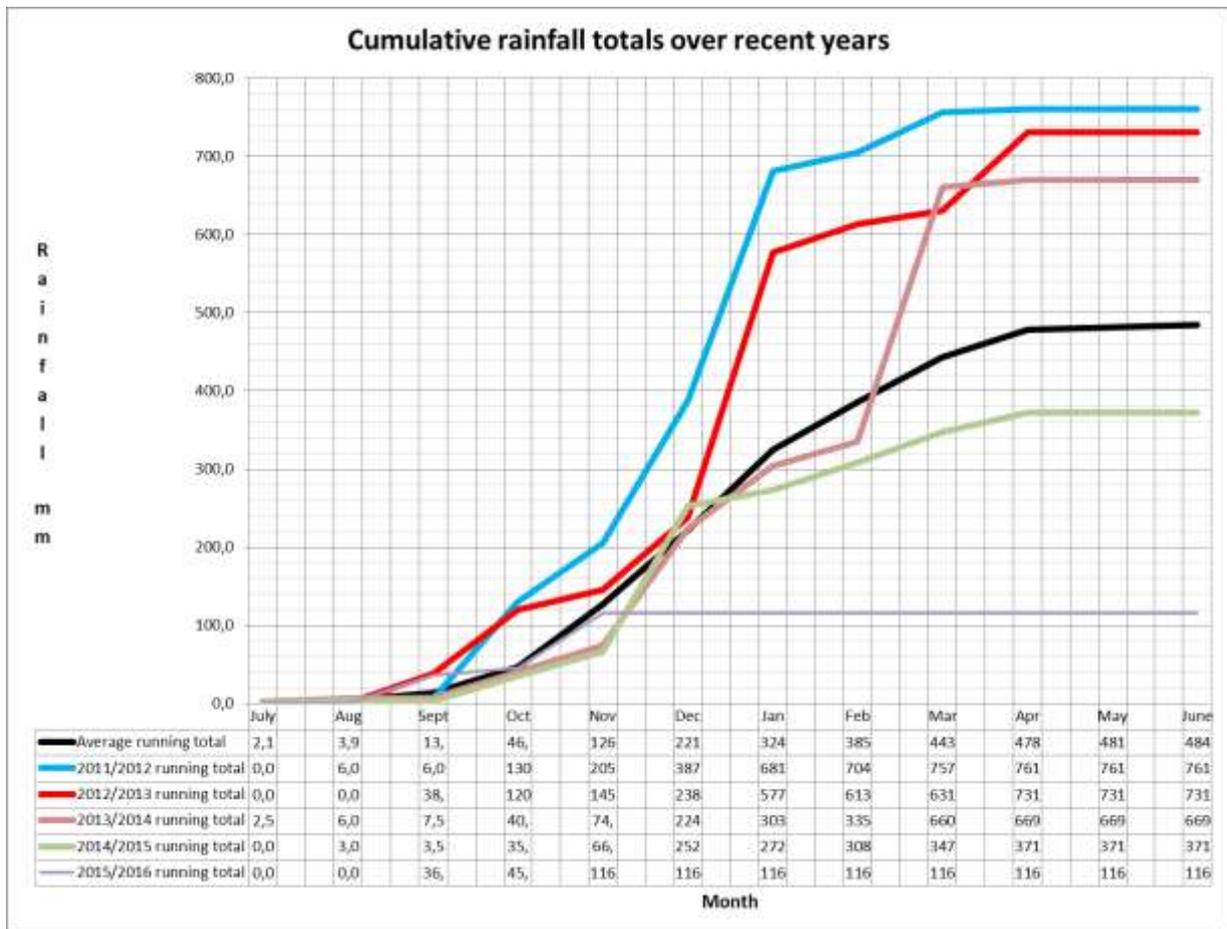
- Road repairs is an ongoing process
- The Darisandi road has been graded
- I placed road names on some of the concrete blocks

SIGHTINGS

- Spotted a Pels fishing owl in the Swartspruit about 200 m upstream from the vulture restaurant.
- 3 Ground hornbill are regular visitors .

RAINFALL AND TEMPERATURE STATS by Ian Owtram





DID YOU KNOW by Gerrie van Zyl

The name Buffalo is derived from the Portuguese word BUFALO.

Sparman first described the Africa Buffalo as Syncerus Caffer in 1779 after seeing them in the Sundays River Valley in South Africa. Now they are generally known as the Cape

INTERESTING SIGHTINGS

Oli from plot #6 submitted another sequence of fantastic photos taken by Roy Terlien. Thanks for sharing these with us Oli. Much appreciated.





Please post any / all interesting sightings on our Facebook page for everyone to enjoy.

ANIMAL FACTS – National Geographic

Mongoose

Herpestidae



Mongoose are primarily found in Africa, their range covering most of the continent. Some species occupy parts of southern Asia and the Iberian Peninsula. They are generally terrestrial mammals, but some are semi-aquatic, and others are at home in the treetops.

Ranging in size from the 7-inch-long (18-centimeter-long) dwarf mongoose to the 2-foot-long (60-centimeter-long) Egyptian mongoose; these sleek mammals have long bodies with short legs and tapered snouts.

They normally have brown or gray grizzled fur, and a number of species sport striped coats or ringed tails.

Mongoose live in burrows and are nondiscriminatory predators, feeding on small animals such as rodents, birds, reptiles, frogs, insects, and worms. Some species supplement their diet with fruits, nuts, and seeds. Creative hunters, they are known to break open bird eggs by throwing them with their forepaws toward a solid object.

Famously, some species of mongoose will boldly attack venomous snakes such as cobras. The most celebrated of these is Rudyard Kipling's fictional Rikki-tikki-tavi, based on an ancient fable and included in *The Jungle Book*.

In the 1800s mongooses were introduced to several islands in Hawaii and the West Indies in order to control the rodent populations on sugarcane plantations. Today this effort has come back to haunt these islands as mongooses threaten the survival of various native species, particularly birds. However, in their natural environments mongooses are currently threatened themselves due to habitat loss.

Source: National Geographic



The GPNR Committee wishes

all owners and their families a safe and enjoyable festive season.