



NEWSLETTER

MAY 2016



Submitted by: Cherele Chrystal

"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

Time flies and before we even feel the cold of winter it is time for the Annual General Meeting.

This is a reminder that you that you consider to make yourself available as committee member for 2016/17 year.

The unexpected rain in May was like an early Christmas gift and we are grateful for this.

Finances

Our financial position remains sound as a result of all the off takes completed and numerous donations received and we should therefore end the year without depleting our reserves. Thanks to our Treasurer, Loek Bleeker that is doing a sterling job to ensure we spend our money wisely.

You can contact our treasurer Loek Bleeker at [gnrtreasurer@gmail.com](mailto:gnrtrreasurer@gmail.com) to obtain your latest outstanding balance on your Grietjie account.

Access control and Security

It was a safe month on Grietjie yet again with no known burglaries or security incidents. A big portion of your levy goes into access control and security. It therefore “pays” to “pay” your levies. Whether a member or not, contributing financially to Grietjie benefits every owner in some way.

As reported in April we have requested legal advice on the duty and accountability of the committee and owners to ensure the safety of people entering the Reserve in so far the risk of wild animals. We are still awaiting the report from the lawyers.

Our Reserve Manger has done an assessment based on pedestrians found on our internal roads and those reporting to the gate to determine how many of the employees on Grietjie do not have any means of transport. The assessment shows that the Grietjie community employees circa 97 employees. Of this 97 there are 22 that have no other means of transport than by foot. The purpose of the exercise was to establish how big the risk is and what can be done. The assessment has identified the workers by property that has no alternative transport. Now that we have this information one can start to work towards a solution.

We will continue to work towards a solution.

Grietjie Staff

All the GPNR positions are filled and we have a stable workforce. We thank our devoted staff for serving Grietjie.

Work to upgrade the staff accommodation at the main gate is continuing and tiling is nearly done. We hope to have this done by end of June.

Roads

The pre-mix to repair the tar roads has arrived and Gerrie has started with repairs. Thanks for your patience.

You also might have noticed the resealing of the test portion that was done on the Darisandi road. A reminder that the purpose of this test is to determine whether we can economically justify to extend the life of the tar roads and whether the current solution is technically acceptable. It was not a road rebuild project. We will now monitor this portion of the road and take regular photos to compare over time.

A report will be submitted at the AGM on the costs of lifting the tar compared to the current reseal option.

Thanks to Pierre, Gerrie and Hans who have all assisted to make this possible.

The Darisandi road test project



Before



During



After

Fences and Infrastructure

Normal fence maintenance is continuing as and where required.

More redundant buildings/infrastructures are being demolished and we thank those that have assisted with this. As I have said before, Grietjie is improving day-by-day.

Game and Vegetation

We are grateful for the rain but it is unlikely that it will change the grazing conditions. We pray and hope that we see early summer rains. No poaching or snared animals were reported.

General feedback and comments from the committee meeting

The next committee meeting will take place on 4 June 2016 with the main focus on preparing for our financial year end and AGM.

The local Phalaborwa Herald newspaper of 27 May 2016 reported on the financial compensation paid to land claimants that was repossessed in the past.

President Zuma reported and referred to the outstanding claims that are being attended to and specifically referred to the Makhushane lands claim which is the community for which the Lands Claim Commissioner has indicated financial compensation as per the letter received in April 2016.

We hope that the attention given to this by the President will result in the claim on Grietjie to be resolved soon.

You will note the article of the anti-poaching unit in this newsletter. We would like to extend our appreciation for the work that is done by this team. Johan Grobler, Jan Caspers as well as Craig Spencer and the Mambas whom are working day and night to ensure our animals are protected from poachers and indirectly also ensuring our safety. Our Facebook page has published an interesting article outlining the courage and commitment of these remarkable people.

RESERVE MANAGER'S REPORT by Gerrie van Zyl

SECURITY AND ACCESS CONTROL / FENCE

- No theft / break-ins were reported.
- At full moon, 3 sets of poacher tracks were found entering Grietjie from Maseke and exiting at plot #3 into Olifants South. They poached an impala and exited the same route back into Maseke where they poached a waterbuck. No arrests were made.

GAME MANAGEMENT:

- Found 1 dead waterbuck bull with hole in stomach because of fighting.
- Animals still in good condition except for hippo.
- Reports of elephant damage on a daily basis.

VEGETATION:

- The bush is rapidly changing colours due to winter approaching.
- Very little grass left for grazer`s.
- Leaf cover for browsers still in abundance.

CLIMATE / RAINFALL:

- Climate very comfortable during day and cools down at night.
- +- 25 mm rain on May 26.

ROADS:

- The 100m resurface test on the Darisandi road was completed.
- Busy filling potholes with Asphalt premix. This is an on-going task.

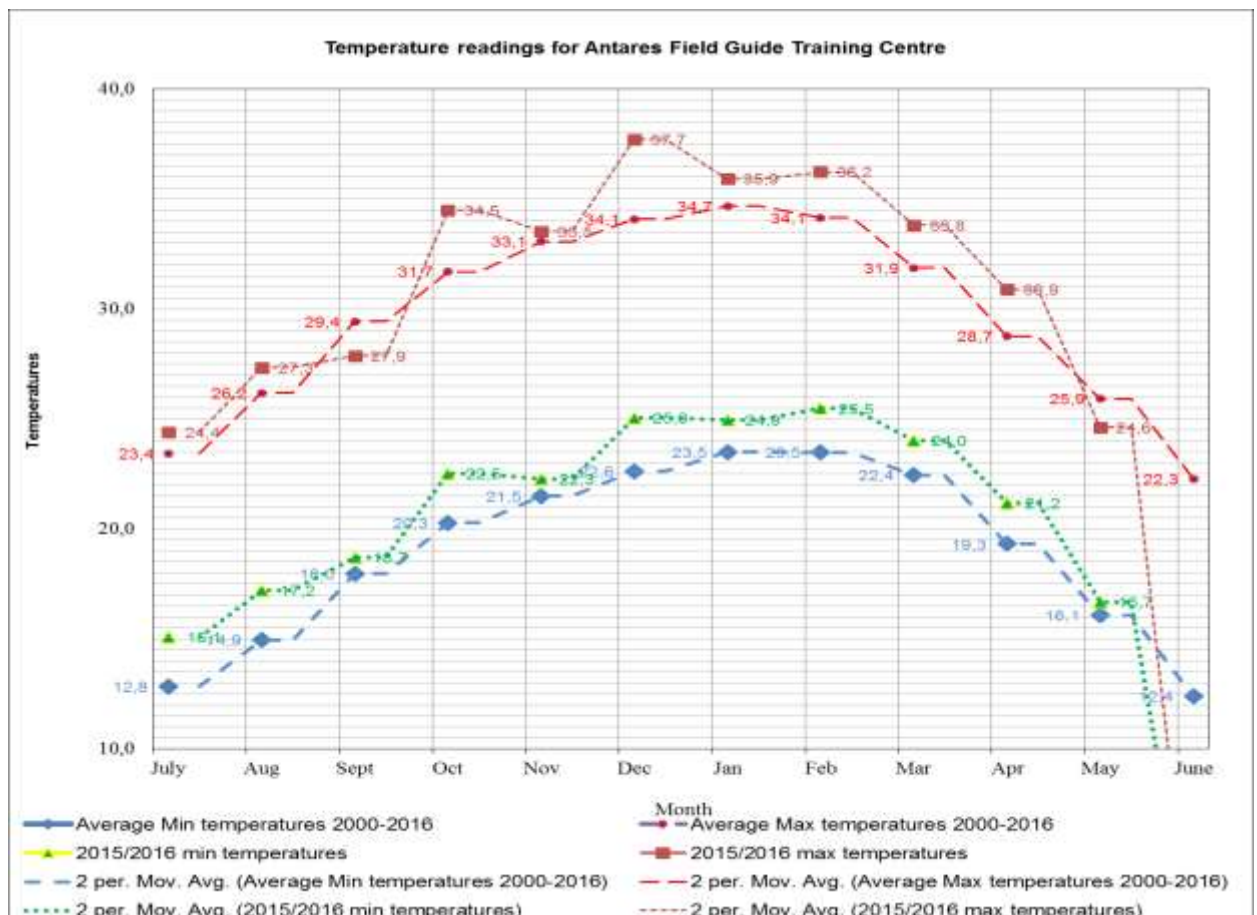
OTHER MATTERS:

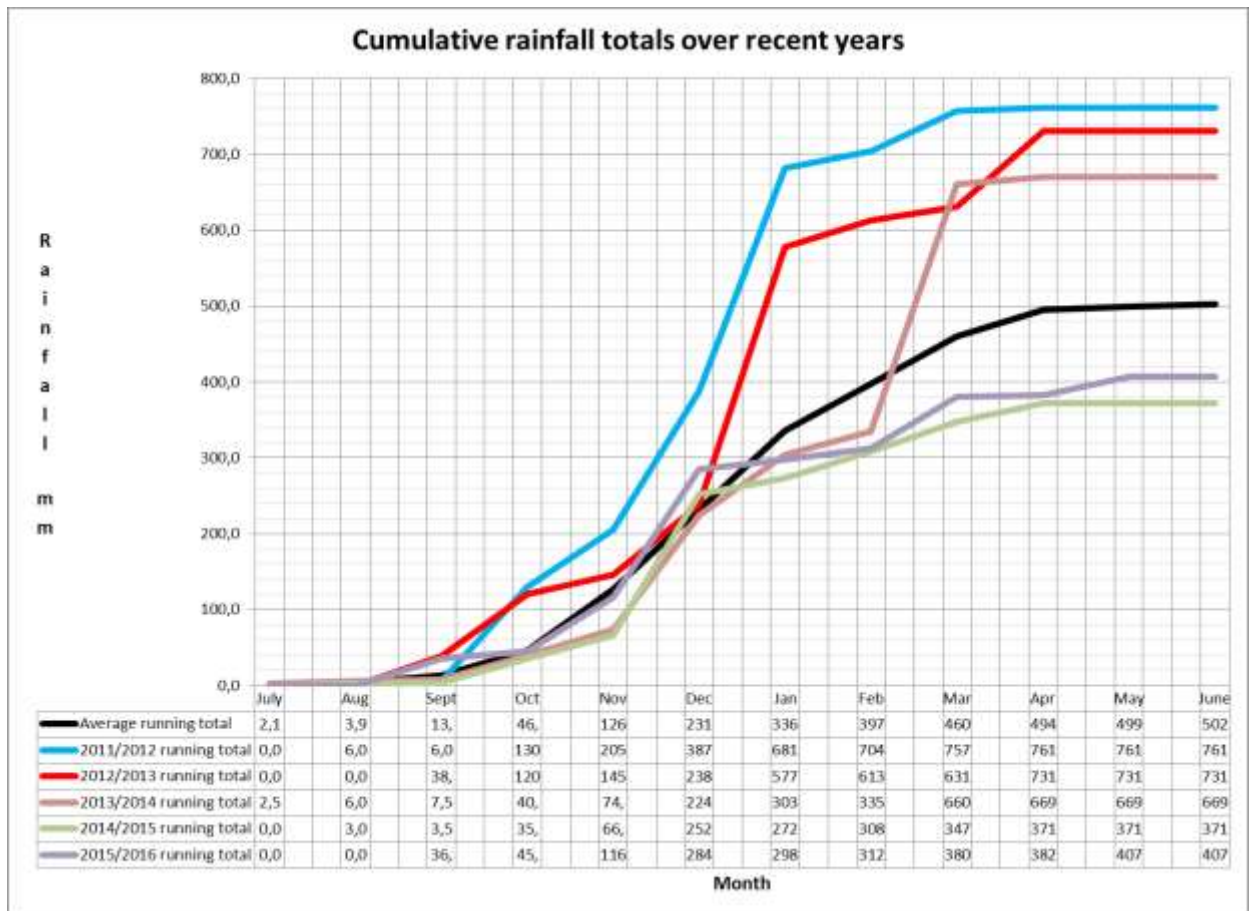
- In the process of re-tiling the gate guards shower and toilet.

DID YOU KNOW

Female Hyenas are larger than males and dominate them.

RAINFALL AND TEMPERATURE STATS by Ian Owtram





INTERESTING ARTICLES

Addressing the problem of vulture electrocutions in South Africa

Since early 2016, the Eskom/Endangered Wildlife Trust strategic partnership has seen an increase in the number of powerline mortalities being reported by members of the public. This escalation in reporting gives rise to a growing concern over the number of vultures being electrocuted on electrical infrastructure across southern Africa. Vultures are especially vulnerable to powerline electrocution due to their large wingspans, heavy bodies and gregarious nature. When combined with contributing factors like treeless environments that force birds to sit on electricity poles, wet feathers which increase conductivity, sunning behaviour, artificially supplied food sources (such as vulture restaurants) and a concentration of carcasses often located in close proximity to power lines, vultures are the birds that are at highest risk from powerline electrocutions.

Recently a number of vulture incidents have been reported in the southern Free State. The latest incident was reported by a farmer between Aliwal North and Reddersburg. He discovered a number of vultures lying under the powerlines on his farm, and notified the Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT) who immediately sent out field worker, Ronelle Visagie, to investigate the incident. Amongst the mortalities, Ronelle also found an injured bird which was transported overnight by the Eskom/EWT partnership field workers to the VulPro vulture rehabilitation centre near Hartbeespoort Dam, North-West Province.

“Most powerlines built before the 1990s were not subject to environmental impact assessments and the structures were not designed to be bird friendly. This means that we are sitting with thousands of kilometres of power lines across South Africa which are

extremely dangerous to birds. Eskom's biggest challenge is to ensure that these old designs are phased out as soon as possible and that all new power lines being erected are bird friendly" said Constant Hoogstad – Manager of the EWT's Wildlife and Energy Programme.

Eskom takes the electrocution of birds on powerlines extremely seriously and over the past few days Eskom has already started to mitigate powerlines in the area that have been identified as areas of concern, and has arranged emergency mitigation measures to address these particularly troublesome powerlines. During the last financial year Eskom changed more than 1,215 poles to bird friendly, insulated 63 transformers/strain poles, fitted 724 spans with bird flight diverters which amounted to more than 12,108 units.

While progress has been made in the past to reduce bird electrocutions, the increasing number of reported incidents signals a need for a step change. Eskom has identified high risk areas through the use of bird sensitivity maps developed by the EWT and Eskom Research to better inform Eskom where to proactively mitigate powerlines. Eskom is strategically committed to both proactively and reactively deal with bird interactions on powerlines. Eskom and the EWT will be engaging closely with other interested and affected stakeholders to ensure that the issue of bird electrocutions is addressed appropriately.

To continue to assist in decreasing the number of bird mortalities on powerline infrastructure, the EWT would like to encourage members of the public to report any wildlife and powerlines incidents to wep@ewt.org.za , 011-372-3600 or 0860-111-535.

Please visit www.ewt.org.za or contact Wildlife and Energy Programme Manager Constant Hoogstad (constanth@ewt.org.za) for more information about the EWT-Eskom Partnership and the Wildlife and Energy Programme.

Trapdoor Spiders

Have you ever seen a flap of sand in the ground? If you have it's a trapdoor spider's nest. There are two orders of spiders, Mygalomorph and Araneomorph.

Mygalomorphs are hunting spiders and their fangs go up and down. Araneomorphs are web spinning spiders and their fangs go across their face from left and right. Trapdoor spiders are Mygalomorphs and have powerful jaws and large fangs. There are about 2200 species of Mygalomorphs worldwide.

Trapdoor spiders have short, thick legs and a fat body. Their colour ranges from reddish brown to black and yellowish brown. The trapdoor spiders dig their burrow with their jaws, roll the sand into ball and toss it out. They dig their burrow 15 cm deep. Trapdoor spiders make a waterproof mix with sand and saliva to coat the wall of the burrow and then they line it with silk until the entrance hole is sealed.

Different species make different burrows.

These are some of them:

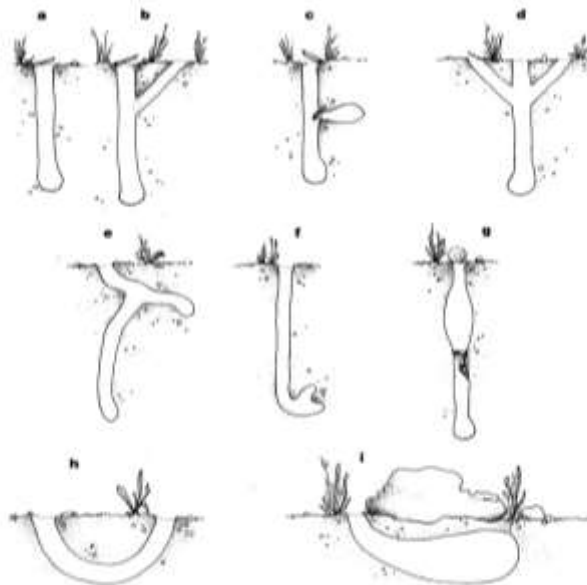


Fig. 5. Burrows of mygalomorph spiders. a: simple vertical burrow with wafer-lid; b: Y-shaped burrow; c: burrow with side shaft closed with a trapdoor; d: burrow with two side shafts; e: burrow with chamber to the side; f: burrow with chamber at bottom; g: burrow of *Galeosoma* sp.; h: curved burrow with two entrances; i: retreat chamber below a rock.

To make the door they cut through the silk at the opening and leave a bit attached to make a hinge. They camouflage it with sand and natural things.

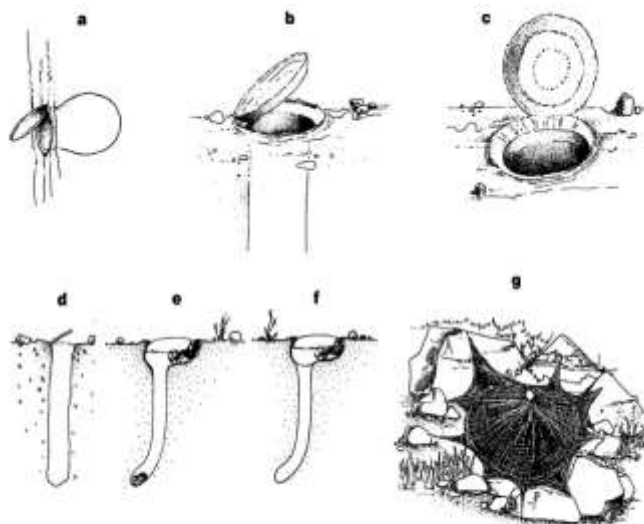


Fig. 6. Retreats, trapdoors and webs of mygalomorph species. a: sac-like retreat of a migid in a tree; b: cork-lid trapdoor; c: underside of a trapdoor; d: burrow with a wafer-lid; e, f: burrow of *Colonnato* with (e) and without (f) eggs; g: web of a diploid.

The trapdoor spider feeds on crawling insects and small vertebrates. Trapdoor spiders are predators and they are prey to other

predators. Some of the spider's predators are spider wasps that will kill the trapdoor spider and then lay her eggs in its body.

Trapdoor spiders mate inside the burrow, and the female hangs the egg sac on the wall. The male will die shortly after mating and females can live between 5 and 20 years.

My brother Cary found a trapdoor spider by our school house.

By Savanna Owtram

Age 8 years.

ANIMAL FACTS

Giraffe

Giraffa camelopardalis



Giraffes are the world's tallest mammals, thanks to their towering legs and long necks. A giraffe's legs alone are taller than many humans—about 6 feet (1.8 meters). These long legs allow giraffes to run as fast as 35 miles (56 kilometers) an hour over short distances and cruise comfortably at 10 miles (16 kilometers) an hour over longer distances.

Behavior

Typically, these fascinating animals roam the open grasslands in small groups of about half a dozen.

Bulls sometimes battle one another by butting their long necks and heads. Such contests aren't usually dangerous and end when one animal submits and walks away.

Size

Giraffes use their height to good advantage and browse on leaves and buds in treetops that few other animals can reach (acacias are a favourite). Even the giraffe's tongue is long! The 21-inch (53-centimeter) tongue helps them pluck tasty morsels from branches. Giraffes eat most of the time and, like cows, regurgitate food and chew it as cud. A giraffe eats hundreds of pounds of leaves each week and must travel miles to find enough food. The giraffe's height also helps it to keep a sharp lookout for predators across the wide expanse of the African savanna.

The giraffe's stature can be a disadvantage as well—it is difficult and dangerous for a giraffe to drink at a water hole. To do so they must spread their legs and bend down in an awkward position that makes them vulnerable to predators like Africa's big cats. Giraffes only need to drink once every several days; they get most of their water from the luscious plants they eat.

Female giraffes give birth standing up. Their young endure a rather rude welcome into the world by falling more than 5 feet (1.5 meters) to the ground at birth. These infants can stand in half an hour and run with their mothers an incredible ten hours after birth. Giraffes have beautiful spotted coats. While no two individuals have exactly the same pattern, giraffes from the same area appear similar.

Source: National Geographic

CLASSIFIEDS

Piano or Keyboard

wanted



Please contact Maxine Smith
Grietjie #10 cell: 078 789 4095

Properties for sale by owner:

Share for sale in house #1, plot 117.
The unit represents approximately 12
weeks a year of occupancy.

Terms may be offered to a qualified
purchaser.

Please contact Grant Doubell
Cell: 082 605 1193
Email: grant@thedivecentre.co.za



Shuttle transfers from Hoedspruit's
Eastgate airport to your doorstep at
Grietjie. From R250, contact Hennie
at 072 640 8033

Vacant land, plot 70.

Magnificent views over the
Swartspuit and interesting rocky
outcrops.

Please contact Ian Lourens
Cell: 082 440 9683
Email: IanL@onelogix.com

