



NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2016



Submitted by: Gerrie van Zyl

"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

Committee meeting number five for the 2015/16 year took place on 4 June 2016. The focus of the meeting was to review objectives for the year to date and all the administrative things that comes with year-end preparations i.e. workman compensation submissions, reviewing of the financials, updating of the asset register and insurance cover, etc. The owners and members list were also reviewed and updated.

During June we have received numerous calls from estate agents enquiring on behalf of interested buyers so obviously there must be sellers. We have again engaged with estate agents to ensure that when they market GPNR, they do so by selling the Grietjie constitution too. We currently have three estate agents that have taken up our offer to be linked to our website subject to an annual fee. Please support these agents.

Finances

At the end of May our financials show a forecasted positive cash flow for the year. This is mainly due to the full off-takes done for the year and generous donations received from some members. Game off-takes is an extra income that we cannot rely on as there is no guarantee that this will continue in the future. Our expenditure for the year is within budget.

The Grietjie Land Cruiser that is used extensively to access the more remote and difficult areas of Grietjie for fence inspection and repairs, as well as other equipment, has now decided it is time to retire. It has become very expensive to maintain and the committee has decided to obtain an official opinion whether it is worth trying to repair or not. If so it is going to cost a substantial amount. We will inform you in the July newsletter what the outcome is.

You can contact our treasurer Loek Bleeker at gnrtreasurer@gmail.com to obtain your latest outstanding balance on your Grietjie account.

Access control and Security

As agreed at the committee meeting of April, visitors and contractors will have to provide proof of identity when accessing Grietjie. This can be in the form of a passport, a green ID book or official drivers licence. This measure has been implemented for everyone's safety, including the animals.

No burglaries or security incidents were reported in June.

Grietjie Staff

We are fortunate to have a stable workforce. During the 2nd half of 2016 Nelson and Hendrik will celebrate 10 and 20 years' service respectively. We thank them for their dedication and loyalty to Grietjie.

Roads

Since September last year the committee has on numerous occasions debated how roads in Grietjie should be maintained and we are now formalising a report.

With regards to gravel roads the following must be considered:

- a) Width of the road
- b) Drainage
- c) Speed humps
- d) Smoothing with tires vs grading
- e) Road filling (source of filling material i.e. burrow pits, external supply)

With regards to tar roads the following must be taken in consideration:

- a) Repairing potholes and road edges
- b) Economic viability and affordability to rebuild/re-tar
- c) Resealing on predetermine intervals and affordability
- d) Cost of reseal/maintain tar roads vs that of gravel roads

The above will be reviewed and captured in a report to be discussed at the AGM.

Fences and Infrastructure

We would like to thank the various owners who continue to assist us by making resources and equipment available. It is this support and commitment that makes Grietjie a wonderful place.

The drought is starting to show its side effect and elephants are now moving beyond normal routes to obtain food. Our fences have felt the impact of this and maintenance thereof is a daily activity. We will replace energisers to ensure the voltage is correct and we would also like to thank owners who have allowed us to tap power from their properties in this regard. You would have noticed the article in the Phalaborwa Herald where a number of elephants have broken through the Balule fence and onto the Phalaborwa-Hoedspruit road. Hippos are now also seen in areas far from water and grazing during day time. Please be very cautious when travelling at night.

Upgrade of the staff accommodation at the main gate is progressing well and will be completed soon.

Game and Vegetation

As indicated above, the drought is taking its toll. The main issue is not water but grazing. As much as we want to please do not feed animals. Let nature takes its course. Grietjie is not an enclosed game ranch and animals can roam freely, so let's not interfere with nature.

General feedback and comments from the committee meeting

Take note of the Balule AGM that is scheduled for the beginning of July. Grietjie will be represented by our Reserve Manager and certain committee members. We will provide any relevant feedback from this meeting in our July newsletter.

We would also like to extend a warm welcome to all our new owners and members. Ian Black has purchased plot 126 from Dr Engebrecht following his purchase of plot 113 and 114 a short while ago. This shows confidence in Grietjie as a safe and sound investment. We would like to take this opportunity to thank the Engelbrecht family for their years of devoted service to Grietjie. We are pleased to hear that they will still be regular visitors.

Also a warm welcome to Michael & Barry Takis and their extended family(ies) who are now the proud owners and signed up members of plot 26.

Other Matters

Yet again there have been complaints about people riding quad bikes, jogging, cycling and walking within GPNR. This is very irresponsible behaviour and incredibly dangerous. We appeal to all owners and their guests to refrain from such activities and to only traverse in roadworthy motor vehicles. All owners are responsible for your families and guests safety, and actions, whilst they are on GPNR property.

There is a lack of bush etiquette by some people that need to go to the toilet whilst in the bush. We appeal to everyone to have a spare plastic bag in your vehicle and to pick up used toilet paper with the plastic bag and dispose of it when you get back home. Digging a small hole and covering the affected area with sand will also be appreciated. It is not a pleasant task picking up what someone else has left behind. Please be considerate towards fellow nature lovers.



RESERVE MANAGER'S REPORT by Gerrie van Zyl

SECURITY AND ACCESS CONTROL / FENCE

- No break-ins / thefts were reported.
- 3 sets of tracks were tracked in and out at no 38. No arrests were made.
- Elephant`s and Giraffes broke the Maseke / Doreen fence 23 times this month.

GAME MANAGEMENT:

- No dead animals found.
- Animals still in good condition.
- Reports of elephant damage on a daily basis.

VEGETATION:

- The bush is getting dry and open with only a few green trees left.
- No grass left for grazer`s.

CLIMATE / RAINFALL:

- Winter is very pleasant, day temperature middle to high 20`s and evening 9-14.
- No rain in June.

ROADS:

- Drag all dirt roads twice with tyres.
- Busy filling potholes on Doreen / Waterbuck roads.

OTHER MATTERS:

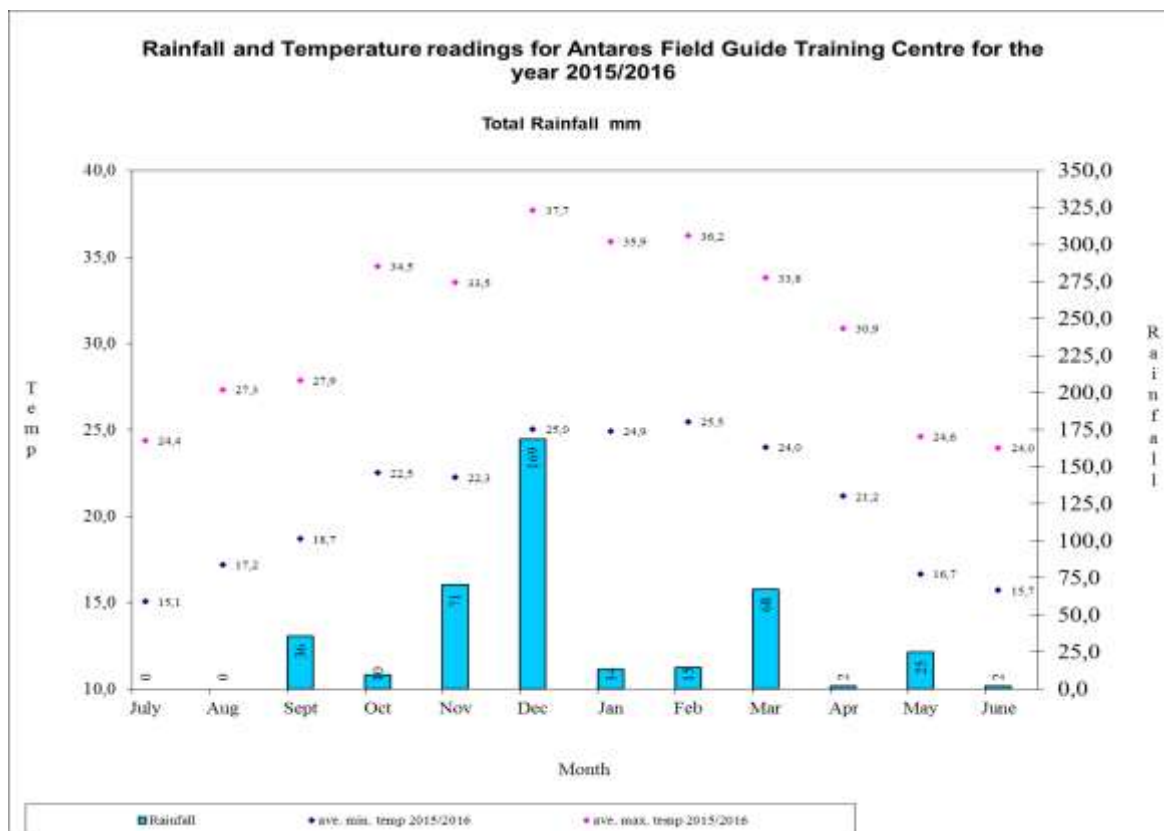
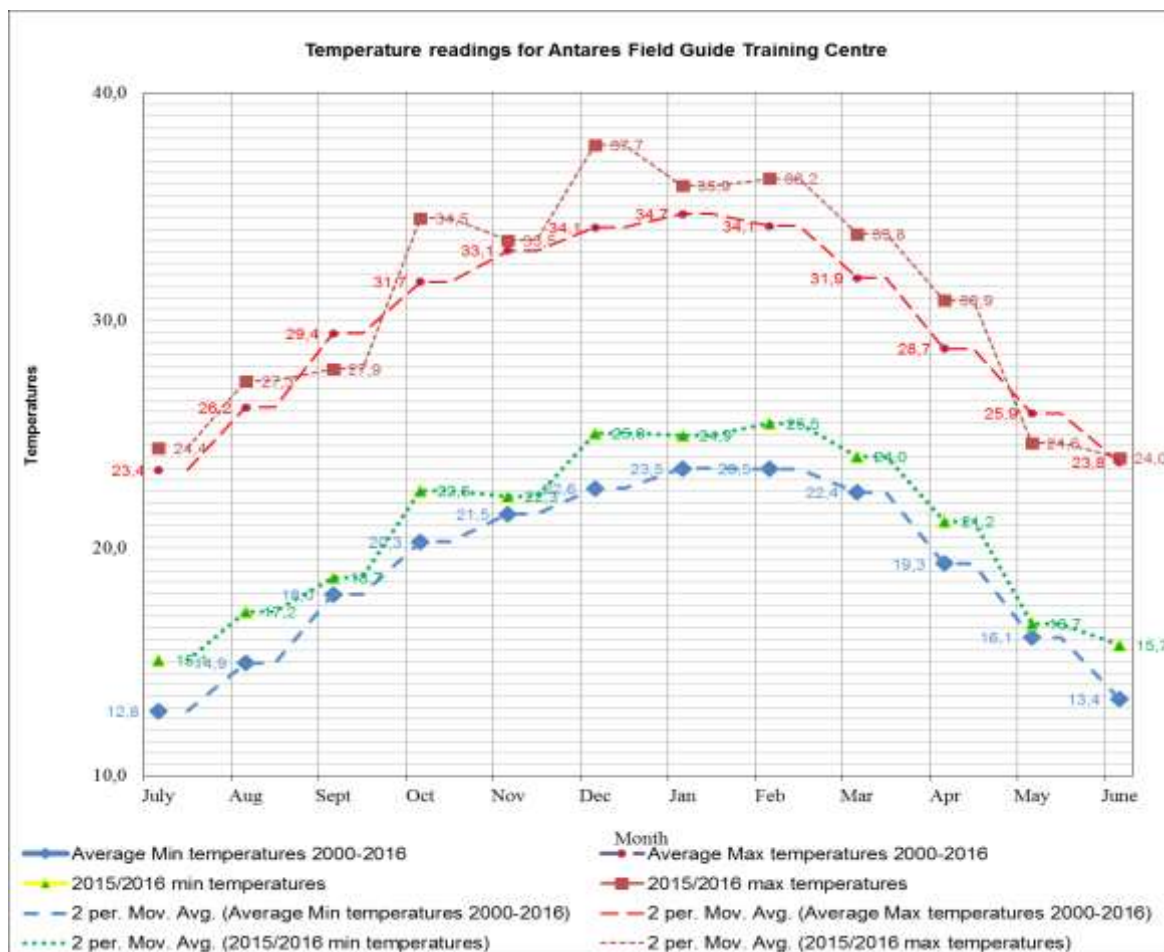
- Busy breaking and removing old structures.

DID YOU KNOW

In the Namib Baboons manage to go for as long as 20 days between drinks by selecting food with a high water content.



RAINFALL AND TEMPERATURE STATS by Ian Owtram



Wild Dogs

Wild dogs are also known as Cape hunting dogs or the Painted wolf because of their coat. Each dog has a different coat pattern and always has a white tip to the tail. They live in packs of up to 30 dogs. The Alpha female is the only dog to breed and will give birth to 6-16 puppies after a 69-73 gestation.

Wild dogs are the most endangered carnivore in Southern Africa. Only an estimated 6,600 individuals and 660 packs are left. This is a worry because of the recent distemper virus outbreaks which will cause their numbers to further decrease.

On the 21-22nd May 2016 the entire Lower Sabie pack was killed by the distemper virus!

Canine Distemper is a highly contagious disease. It affects the gastrointestinal, respiratory and central nervous systems. The symptoms may include a fever 39-41c, loss of appetite, depression, cough, nasal discharge, vomiting, diarrhoea, eye inflammation and pneumonia. Dogs may also get neurological symptoms such as seizures, muscle twitching, loss of mental abilities and of motor skills, paralysis and increased sensitivity. The virus is spread through urine, faeces, and other secretions from an infected dog.

The Lower Sabie pack probably got the virus from a feral dog from a township. We can prevent the disease by vaccinating our domestic dogs.

SANParks wants any reports of wild dogs seen in Kruger and surrounding Nature Reserves so they can monitor the packs.

Please report any sightings to Grant Beverley at EWT

Ph: 071 470 7112

Email: grantb@ewt.org.za

By Cary Owtram, 11yrs

**WANTED URGENTLY
AFRICAN WILD DOG
SIGHTINGS**

Details needed:

- Location
- Date
- Number of dogs
- Photographs if possible
- Your name
- Your phone number

**South African
NATIONAL PARKS**

REPORT TO:
Grant Beverley
Endangered Wildlife Trust
Phone: 071-470-7112 | Email: grantb@ewt.org.za

**ENDANGERED
WILDLIFE TRUST**
www.ewt.org.za

The effects of drought on birds behaviour

As you know we are in a drought and we worry about the grazers and the browsers but we don't worry about the birds, although we should. The birds also suffer like the grazers and the browsers.

You will see more birds gathering in small areas like waterholes, which will increase the spread of disease. Some species will split up to improve their chances of finding food for themselves. They also tame up easily, by man feeding them food including the normally shy species.

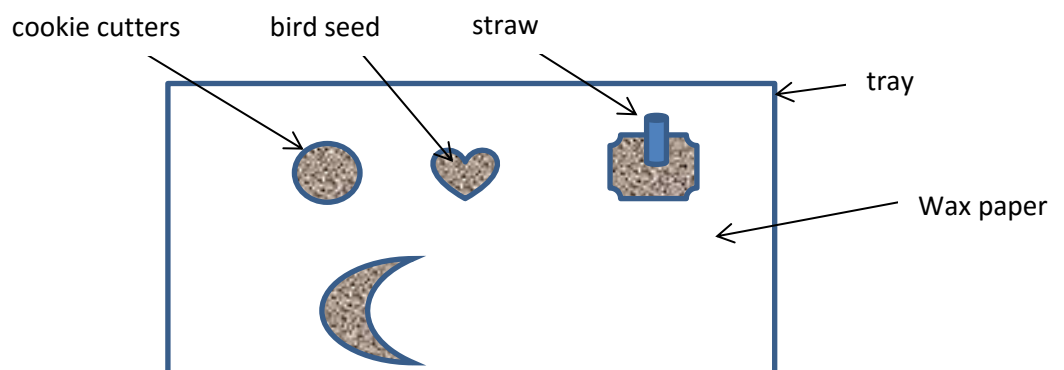
Predatory birds become opportunistic and they have to change their hunting methods because of the change in their habitats. Birds will feed from out of season food and are forced to eat food they wouldn't normally eat.

We can help the birds by putting out bird feeders.

How to make bird seed cupcakes

Materials:

Bird seed
Wax paper
Cookie cutters
Gelatine
Straws
Baking tray
Bowl
Wooden spoon
Water
A cup



Method:

1. Dissolve the gelatine in a cup of water for 5 minutes.
2. Add the dissolved gelatine water to two cups of bird seed and mix well until all the seed is covered in the gelatine mix.
3. Put the wax paper on the baking sheet.
4. Place the cookie cutters on the wax paper and fill with bird seed mix.
5. Place a straw into the bird seed near the top of the cutters. This will make a hole for threading string to enable you to hang it.
6. Leave overnight to set.

By Savanna Owtram, Age 8yrs

Hippopotamus

Hippopotamus amphibius



Hippopotamuses love water, which is why the Greeks named them the "river horse." Hippos spend up to 16 hours a day submerged in rivers and lakes to keep their massive bodies cool under the hot African sun. Hippos are graceful in water, good swimmers, and can hold their breath underwater for up to five minutes. However, they are often large enough to simply walk or stand on the lake floor, or lie in the shallows. Their eyes and nostrils are located high on their heads, which allows them to see and breathe while mostly submerged.

Hippos also bask on the shoreline and secrete an oily red substance, which gave rise to the myth that they sweat blood. The liquid is actually a skin moisturizer and sunblock that may also provide protection against germs.

At sunset, hippopotamuses leave the water and travel overland to graze. They may travel 6 miles (10 km) in a night, along single-file pathways, to consume some 80 pounds (35 kg) of grass. Considering their enormous size, a hippo's food intake is relatively low. If threatened on land hippos may run for the water—they can match a human's speed for short distances.

Hippo calves weigh nearly 100 pounds (45 kg) at birth and can suckle on land or underwater by closing their ears and nostrils. Each female has only one calf every two years. Soon after birth, mother and young join schools that provide some protection against crocodiles, lions, and hyenas.

Hippos once had a broader distribution but now live in eastern central and southern sub-Saharan Africa, where their populations are in decline.

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

