



JANUARY 2017



Picture courtesy of: Aruna Mohan

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT by Mike Joseph

UNDER THE LEADWOOD:

Informal feedback on the Declaration process will be given at Muweti (#38) on 25th February at 10h00. This is a repeat of the last feedback. Please bring your own chairs; coffee and tea will be provided.

At the same time the latest available on the inclusion of Maseke into Balule will be given to attendees.

Besides cocklebur and moonflower, which are exotic riverside invaders, there is also a daisy type plant that is also exotic and seems to have invaded the riverine areas substantially this season. It goes by the name *Verbesina encelioides* (I know no vernacular for it). Again an appeal to people living on the river (and on the banks of the Swartspruit) to attempt to remove these invader species. Perhaps the EIG might try to arrange something with respect to this.



The reserve has taken an unprecedented step in blacklisting a tourist from Grietjie. This was done due to his continued disregard for speeding, as well as basic decency around game sightings. We appeal to ALL owners and lodge operators to instruct your families and friends about Reserve regulations and common respect to other users of the reserve, as well as the wild inhabitants of our reserve.

The reserve is busy with the first speed and water run off structure on the tar road (Darisandi). The intention of this is to reduce speeding and hopefully reduce the amount of pothole repairs in certain sections of the road.

The road sign project will be ending in due course as many of the signs are already up, and only a few remaining ones are still to be built. We are thankful to all the sponsors of these signs and the sponsor will be acknowledged on the sign.

We had a meeting with various landowners and a staff member from DIGES (the company doing the EIA for Eskom for the 400kva line). About 10 landowners were present. It was agreed that our concerns are more or less the same so we will approach this as a group (but each person reserves the right to object etc in his/her own right).

We listed our concerns and areas that needed clarification, answers and explanations. WE will receive in due course minutes of this meeting where these concerns will be minuted.

It was also agreed that if we act as a group, Eskom will come down with technical specialists to explain and answer our concerns. On the basis of these answers, our objection will be lodged or not.

We do have, at arm's length, access to a previously high placed Eskom official (retired) who is able to assist us from a technical point of view if the need arises. There will be more on this as and when it occurs.

Until next time from

Under the Leadwood.

RESERVE MANAGER'S REPORT by Gerrie van Zyl

SECURITY AND ACCESS CONTROL / FENCE

- Fences repairs has dropped to +-1 every two days.
- Road blocks performed by Mambas and APU members on going.

GAME MANAGEMENT:

- All animals in good condition.
- Saw the first Kudu calf.
- Lions still very active all over Grietjie.

VEGETATION:

- All trees green and lush.
- Good grass in places, weeds took over on overgrazed areas.

CLIMATE / RAINFALL:

- Weather in the mid-30th with occasional thunderstorms.
- 65 mm for January measured at the gate.

ROADS:

- Lots of storm damage on gravel roads.
- Repaired damage and graded Darisandi road.
- Repaired Maggie`s hill. Again.

OTHER MATTERS:

- The following concrete/rock signboard are finish;

- | | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1) Main Crossroads | 2) Picnic spot 1 | 3) N`Kaya/Grysbok junction |
| 4) Doreen/waterbuck junction | 5) Marula/Grysbok junction | 6) Scorpion/Darisandi junction, |
| 7) Zebra/Darisandi junction. | | |

Other Projects:

- install fan in Gate guard's room.
- Provide 3 pedestal fans for rangers.
- provide ply board for staff to put under their mattresses.

- Solar geyser with pressure pump installed.
- Desk fan for guard house.
- Upgrade of Electrical Distribution Board.

(I want to say thank you to the Shines, Mike Joseph, Marc vd Walt, Loek Bleeker, Deon Nieuwoudt and Liz Lewis for their generous donation and work toward lifting up our staff quarters)

Tractor:

I am pleased to say that the Tractor starts and run like a dream. I replaced the blocked fuel line, fuel filter and holder, and cleaned the fuel line and tanks.

Game drive and other vehicles stickers.

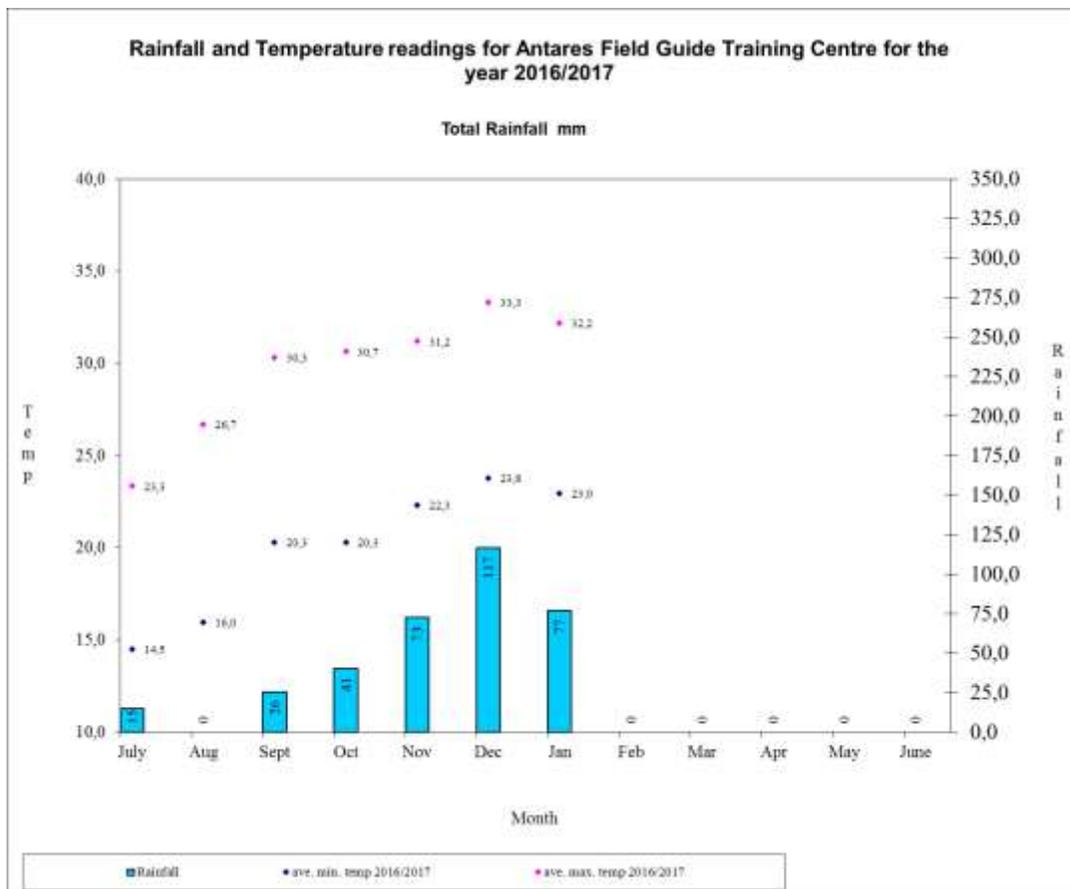
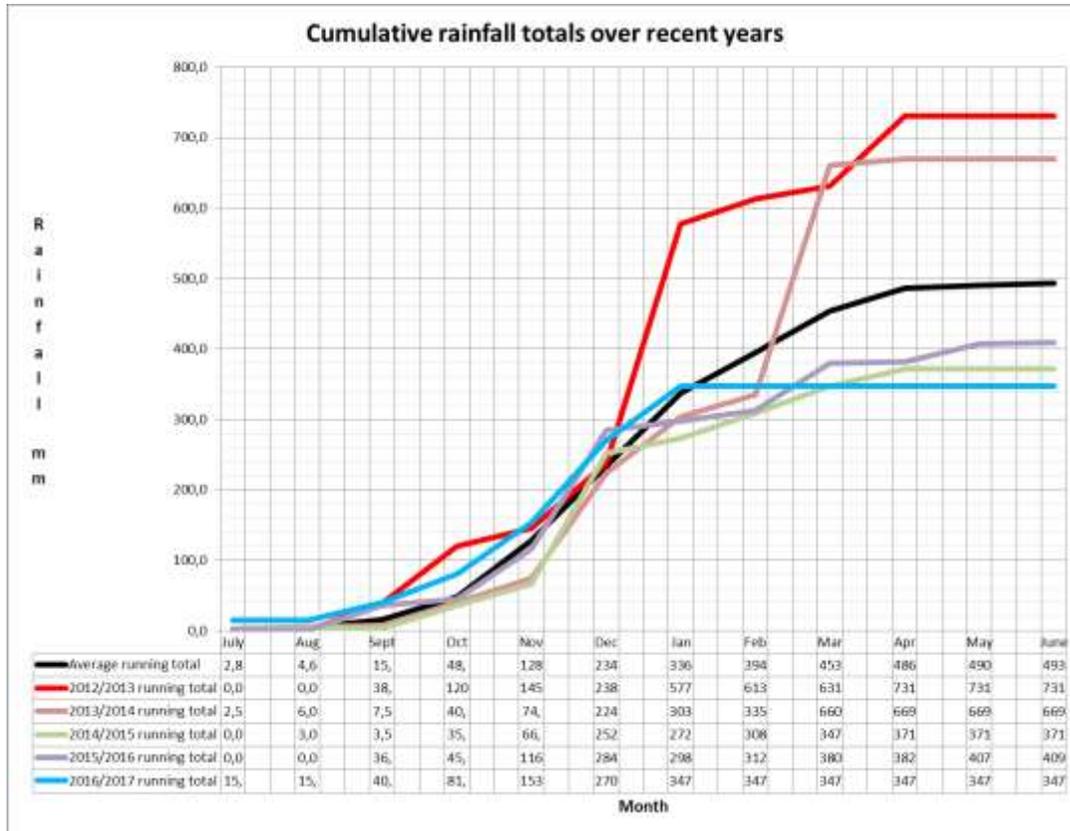
I notice there are still Game drive vehicles without Grietjie stickers. I made a fool of myself Saturday when a Game viewer drove in front of me with an Olifants North sticker towards 117. I phoned the Manager next door and ask who these people were and he said it was a Grietjie owner that has traversing rights on Olifants North. If it is difficult for you to get those stickers I will gladly get them and ask our treasurer to send you an invoice. It is a safety matter to protect us from outsiders. If you want to put them on your regular car while on Grietjie we can order those with a magnet.

AROUND THE CAMPFIRE

One morning when I went to check my cameras I came across Oom Skillie (an ancient old Tortoise – must be older than Oom Theunis!). Morning Oom Skillie I said. *Morning Mr. Warden I am looking for you. What can I do for you Oom. I came all the way from Blackies place, the journey took me six months to see you.* I am listening, what can be so urgent. *Well you see Mr Warden I was on my way to a waterhole on Blackies place, half way there I had to take a siesta, a big noise woke me up and the next moment there were Elephants all around me.* That must be very scary Oom. *You tell me, well it happened to be an Elephant meeting, and my understanding is that they want to establish a party, Elephant Freedom Front (EFF). After a while they started to Toi-Toi and almost stepped on me. Scary stuff Mr. Warden.* Gee Oom Skillie I can just imagine, what was there concern. *All I could hear was something about freedom of movement and the next thing they start shouting Fences Must Fall-Fences Must Fall, I don't know it was getting dark .*

Thanks Oom it sounds serious I will definitely forward this information to the Committee.

RAINFALL AND TEMPERATURE STATS by Ian Owtram



INTERESTING ARTICLES

CO-EXISTING WITH NATURE IN A SUSTAINABLE AND BUSH-FRIENDLY MANNER

A GPNR forum on guidelines relating to the interaction between humans and the natural environment

This month we deal with another frequently asked question pertaining to living in the bush in a responsible manner.

GUIDELINE 4

WHAT MUST I DO WITH MY RUBBISH?

As you know, there is no rubbish removal on Grietjie, except by the baboons – and rubbish removal by baboons is quite clearly not a solution to the problem! What are the options?

• Should I burn my rubbish?

- Burning is NOT an acceptable method for getting rid of rubbish.
- Burning rubbish is dangerous and may cause veld fires. For this reason, the **Forest Act 122 of 1994** and the **National Veld and Forest Fire Act, 101 1998** provide that during certain periods it will be illegal to make any fires in the open, if so decreed by the relevant governmental authorities. Make sure that you do not fall foul of any of these provisions, since the penalties involve heavy fines and/or even imprisonment.
- Burning pollutes the environment. It releases toxic fumes into the air and allows plastics and various other pollutants to contaminate the soil.
- Many items, such as glass, cans and bones do not burn properly, or not at all. These and other half-burnt items accumulate and pollute the area. They also encourage baboons and other animals to scratch in the ashes and scatter various items of rubbish all over the reserve.
- Half-burnt items pose a serious hazard to animals. Many animals have been found with foreign objects around the hooves, legs, necks or mouths, causing some animals to die.
- Fire pits and drums are unsightly and out of keeping with the natural bush environment that we love so much.

• Should I bury my rubbish?

- Burying rubbish is NOT an acceptable way to dispose of rubbish, because many of the problems associated with burning are exacerbated when we bury rubbish.
- Burying rubbish merely hides it until the next rains come, or until baboons and other animals find it.
- Burying rubbish could amount to the feeding of animals and/or the introduction of alien vegetation into the veld. Please see our previous guidelines which explain why these two things are so undesirable from an environmental perspective.

- Burying rubbish **pollutes** the environment and poses a serious **hazard** to animals, as discussed above.
- Many items do not decompose for many years. They pile up over the years, causing environmental degradation, and are a nightmare to remove. Exposed rubbish and rubbish pits are obviously hideous in a bush environment.
- **Removal of rubbish to the municipal dump or bins in Phalaborwa**
 - The removal of rubbish is the most eco-friendly way of dealing with our rubbish, because it ensures that rubbish ends up where it belongs, namely at the municipal dump.
 - There are many bins in town, and it is also a lot less onerous to pop our rubbish into a bin instead of burning it or burying it. Here are a few things to remember:
 - Do not let the rubbish pile up, but regularly take it to town. It is not at all difficult to get rid of one or two bags at a time.
 - Make sure that the place where the rubbish is kept until removal is secure. Many owners have a lockable cage, room or container in which the rubbish is kept.
 - Keep the bags or bins well sealed and under no circumstances leave food items in view of animals, because it will encourage them to congregate around the area and to try breaking in.
- **Recycling and making compost**
 - Recycling is of course an even better way to get rid of rubbish, and recycling is very easy in Phalaborwa.
 - There are various recycling points:
 - The municipal dump in Phalaborwa. The entrance is situated on Spekboom Road, which is the road going to Selonque, on the boundary of the town. There are people at the dump who sort the rubbish; or you can take your recyclable items in separate bags.
 - Phalaborwa Recycling, in 6th Ave, Heavy Industrial Area, Phalaborwa, tel: (015) 781-3710. They take, and pay for, scrap metal and glass. They take paper, but do not pay for it.
 - Making **compost** from vegetable cuttings and other organic matter for use in the garden, could be a good, eco-friendly way of dealing with this type of rubbish. However, it is very important that animals cannot see the compost matter, or get into the place/container where the compost is made. Should they be able to do so, the same problems relating to the feeding of animals and the introduction of alien plant seeds could apply.
- **What can I do with building rubble?**
 - Clearly, building rubble cannot simply be taken away in black bags, and many owners have opted for burying theirs. However, it is a most unsatisfactory solution, because the same principles apply

as for the burying of ordinary rubbish, discussed above, except to a greater extent. There are also other differences:

- The sheer volume of building rubble tends to be much greater than that of ordinary rubbish.
 - Building rubble does not decompose.
 - It therefore interferes with the growth and distribution of natural vegetation.
 - Many products used in building are highly toxic and detrimental to the environment.
 - The visual impact remains for a long time, even if the rubble has been buried carefully.
- The good news is that **Phalaborwa Recycling** in 6th Ave, Heavy Industrial Area, Phalaborwa, tel: (015) 781-3710, will bring a skip to your property and collect it again when it's full. This involves a fee, but consider the money well spent as it prevents the degradation of your property.
- **Lastly, it is vitally important that we instruct and monitor our staff and visitors not to pollute Grietjie, and to make proper arrangements for the removal of their rubbish.**

Compiled by Liz Lewis

We wish to thank Andie Rodwell and Sharon Schmid for the useful advice and information supplied.

New discovery by Wits researchers: Puff adders use 'lingual luring' to hunt

2017-02-01 09:17

Kaveel Singh, News24



Johannesburg – After painstakingly analysing thousands of hours of video footage, two Wits University researchers have shown that puff adders actively lure their prey into striking range using their tongues.

The new discovery comes after researchers Xavier Glaudas and Graham Alexander confirmed that the adders use "lingual luring" to attract amphibian prey.

The duo, who were funded by the National Geographic Committee for Research and Exploration, tracked 86 puff adders over three years at the Dinokeng Game Reserve, about 100km north of Johannesburg.

Glaudas, a herpetologist and postdoctorate fellow at the Alexander Herpetology Laboratory at Wits, said that a puff adder's strike is typically no longer than 10cm in distance.

"So it needs a strategy to attract potential prey to come within that striking range in order to catch it," he said.

Glaudas said their research showed that puff adders positioned their tongues to resemble an invertebrate animal that frogs feed on, thus attracting them to the snake.

Distinguishing between prey

Even more surprising was the fact that the snakes only used lingual luring to attract amphibian prey.

"All the cases of lingual luring that we have observed, occurred with frogs, which suggests that puff adders are able to distinguish between amphibian prey and other prey like small mammals," Glaudas said.

Glaudas captured wild snakes and tracked them by surgically implanting radio transmitters into the snakes and releasing them at their place of capture.

"We really wanted to have a closer look into the secretive lives of these fascinating animals, and specifically study their foraging ecology," he said.

To aid their research, Glaudas and Alexander set up video cameras in front of puff adders lying in ambush position.

"We placed our cameras mounted on a tripod about 70cm away from the snake, and the camera continuously recorded what was going on. We came back the next morning to get the memory cards and reviewed everything that happened during the night," said Glaudas.

Findings 'complete luck'

The researcher said they gathered more than 4 600 hours of video footage of snake foraging, amounting to around 193 days of continuous footage.

Glaudas said that even though they knew snakes used their tongues to pick up scent cues, what they saw during their research was "complete luck".

"We know that snakes use their tongues to pick up scent cues in their environment, but these snakes were extending their tongues out of their mouths for up to 30 seconds, which is dramatically longer [than] what they do when they are just using their tongues to 'smell' their environment."

Glaudas said researchers know that several species use tongue luring to attract prey.

"Some wading birds, like egrets, do it, as well as alligator snapping turtles and some aquatic snakes, but this is the first time that it is reported in a terrestrial snake."

The researchers found that puff adders also used the waving of their tails as lures. However, none of the tail luring behaviour attracted prey within the camera's field of view.

"We suspect that this behaviour is also used to attract prey as it is pretty common in snakes, including adders, but we weren't able to observe prey capture with the videos," Glaudas said.

Where does silk come from?

The cocoons from the Mulberry Silkworm are processed into the most beautiful threads.

The Mulberry Silkworm (*Bombyx mori*) live on the mulberry leaves. To get the silk from the cocoons you have to boil the cocoons in hot water until they are soft. This method is to get a shiny and fine silk. Sometimes when you spin the silk off the cocoon, one cocoon can produce a 1.3 km long strand of silk.

Another method is to cut the cocoon open and take the larvae out. Then it is boiled to soften it, it is then stretched on a 30 cm nailed board. Once it has 30 or so layers it is taken off, washed and brushed, then it is spun in to a thread and woven.

The Mopani worm also produces silk. This silk is an earthy colour. Unlike the Mulberry silkworm cocoon the Mopani worms cocoon is hard, because of this it has to be put in a wet hessian bag and buried under ground for 2 weeks which softens it up. Then it is washed, brushed and spun ready for weaving.

By Savanna Owtram age 8



FIRE WORM

GONAMETA POSTICA

HOST PLANT: ACACIA TREE - THORNY BUSCH

REGION: NORTH WEST PROVINCE AND NAMIBIA



MOPANI SILK WORM (NOT EATING WORM)

GONAMETA RIFOBRIINNEA

HOST PLANT: MOPANI TREE

REGION: NORTHERN PROVINCE

MULBERRY SILK WORM

BOMBYX MORI

HOST PLANT: MULBERRY TREE

REGION: ORIGIN FROM EASTERN COUNTRIES



MOON MOTH OR MAROELA WORM

ARGEMA MIMOSA

HOST PLANT: MARULA AND TAMBOTI TREE

REGION: NORTHERN PROVINCE

MOPHANI EATING WORM (NOT SILK WORM)

IMBRASIA BELINA

HOST PLANT: MOPHANI

REGION: NORTHERN PROVINCE



ANIMAL FACTS

Martial Eagle

Polemaetus bellicosus



Martial Eagle © Brett Hilton-Barber

Appearance



They are the largest of the African eagles and incredibly powerful, capable of knocking an adult man off his feet. They reputedly have enough power in one foot to break a man's arm. The largest eagle in Africa, the Martial eagle weighs in at almost 14 pounds (6.5 Kg.) and has a wingspan of about 6 feet 4 inches. It is 32 inches long. The upperparts are dark brown with a white belly with black streaks, the legs are white and has very large talons. The immature bird looks quite different from the adult.

Diet

In some areas birds form an important part of the diet, including guineafowl, francolins, bustards, and poultry. Birds as large as a European Stork are recorded to have fallen prey to the Martial Eagle. In other areas the diet is largely mammalian, especially hyrax and small antelopes. Animals as large as an Impala calf are taken, and some monkeys, also occasionally young domestic goats, and lambs. Carnivores like mongoose are sometimes taken, even occasionally Serval Cat and Jackal; also a few snakes and large

lizards. It will evidently eat whatever is available, with a preference for game-birds, hyrax, and poultry. It is not known to eat carrion at all except possibly dead lambs.

Breeding



Nests are built invariably in trees, at any height from 20 to 80 feet above ground, but often in the largest tree in the area, growing on a steep hillside or in a gorge, where the bird has a clear sweep off the nest. Pairs have one or two nests, which are used in alternate years if more than one, but for successive breeding attempts if only one. They are huge structures about four to six feet across and up to four feet thick, and often basin-shaped when new - much broader than they are deep. They are made of large sticks up to one-and-a-half inches in diameter, lined with green leaves. They may be used by a succession of birds for many years. The breeding season may thus begin in various parts of the range in a wet season, the early dry season, or late in the dry season, and some part of the cycle must extend through rainy periods. Incubation is normally by the female, but a male has been known to sit. The female leaves the nest to feed and is not usually fed by the male at the nest.

The incubation period is probably about 45 days. The young is very weak and feeble when first hatched, but becomes more active after about twenty days. At 32 days feathers show through the down, and completely cover the bird at 70 days. The young is fed by its parent till it is about 60 days old, and well feathered, when it starts to tear up its prey itself. During the early fledging period the female remains near or on the nest, and the male hunts and brings prey. The female remains in the area and receives prey from the male for about 50 days. After that she hunts or brings prey to the nest herself and the male seldom appears. The young one is closely brooded in its first few days, but after fourteen days the female does not brood it except at night. The young bird, after making its first flight (at about 100 days), may return to roost in the nest for some days, and thereafter moves away from it. It remains loosely attached to the nest site for some time, and may be seen not far from it for up to six months.

Behaviour

The largest eagle in Africa, this is a bird of the uninhabited stretches of thornbush and savannah found over much of Africa, occurring also in open plains and semi-desert country. Martial Eagles spend on average 85% of their time perched and take to the wing predominantly in the late morning (10am). This behaviour drops off sharply from around 3pm and is largely driven by thermal availability. Martials are thus also predominantly opportunistic perch and ambush hunters.

Martial Eagles will soar for hours on updraughts without hunting, and with a full crop, but it does most of its hunting from the soar also, killing or attacking by a long slanting stoop at great speed, or a gentle descent into an opening in the bush, the speed of the descent being controlled by the angle at which the wings are held above the back. It may kill from

a perch, but does so seldom, and most of its kills are surprised in the open by the speed of the eagle's attack from a distance.

A pair of Martial Eagles may have a home range of anything up to 50 square miles, and they wander about over most of it. They often hunt for several days in one area and then move on to another, since complaints of kills are often voiced for several days in succession in the same area. It is much shier than the other big eagles of Africa, and generally keeps away from man. Although not migratory in the strict sense it makes local movements involving flights of several hundred miles, and a pair may not habitually be found near their breeding locality. It is by habit a hunter of game-birds and small mammals out in the open, but also preys upon man's domestic animals, though it certainly kills much less than it is often accused of killing. Probably on balance it is a beneficial bird to man.

Where they are found



The Martial Eagle is to be found in the savannah and thornbush areas of Africa south of the Sahara, from Senegal to Somalia and south to the Cape. It is also found in open plains and semi-desert country, but not frequenting forest, although it occasionally breeds in forests on the edge of open country.

Source: http://www.krugerpark.co.za/africa_martial_eagle.html

CLASSIFIEDS

Please submit any small classified adverts that you want published every month to grietjecomms@gmail.com and we will gladly provide free publication thereof.

If you are interested in purchasing property within Grietjie please contact the committee as we have a good selection of properties for sale by their owners.



Shuttle transfers from Hoedspruit's Eastgate airport to your doorstep at Grietjie. From as little as R350, contact Hennie on 072 640 8033

Greyhound now provide a daily return bus service between Phalaborwa via Nelspruit to Johannesburg.

Contact www.citiliner.co.za or Krish on 071 000 7727