



MAY 2017



Photo submitted by: Ian Owtram

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT by Mike Joseph

The chairman is away on a well-deserved break, so there is no chairman's report this issue.

RESERVE MANAGER'S REPORT by Gerrie van Zyl

SECURITY AND ACCESS CONTROL / FENCE

- Fences repairs continues.
- No reports of theft

GAME MANAGEMENT:

- All animals in good condition.
- Lions still very active all over Grietjie.
- Duiker found in snare, removed 8 more snares. Worker removed from Grietjie and put on blacklist.

VEGETATION:

- Trees changing colour rapidly
- Grass has turned yellow

CLIMATE / RAINFALL

- Winter is upon us, cool evenings and pleasant during the day.
- 5 mm rain for May measured at the gate

ROADS:

- Repair work on Maggie`s hill is finished.
- All rock signs have been built and are in place.

OTHER MATTERS:

- Unfortunately there are still reports of speeding on the reserve in spite of all the gully`s, speed bumps, and signs that we put up. I urge people to please keep to the speed limit, not only for safety or for animals but also to control the dust. At dusk you can see a dust cloud in the valley below Grietjie Mountain and some of us live there.
- I want to thank owners who offer their staff to Grietjie to help us in our daily task. If you want to get involved, please contact me.

AROUND THE CAMPFIRE

I was invited to a "Dhaka boy" reunion at a mud hole on 81 (Old Buffalo bulls are called Dhaka bull`s. Dhaka is the Shona name for building mortar -pronounced daga-. Buffalo bull`s like to wallow in mud which reminds us of dhaka)

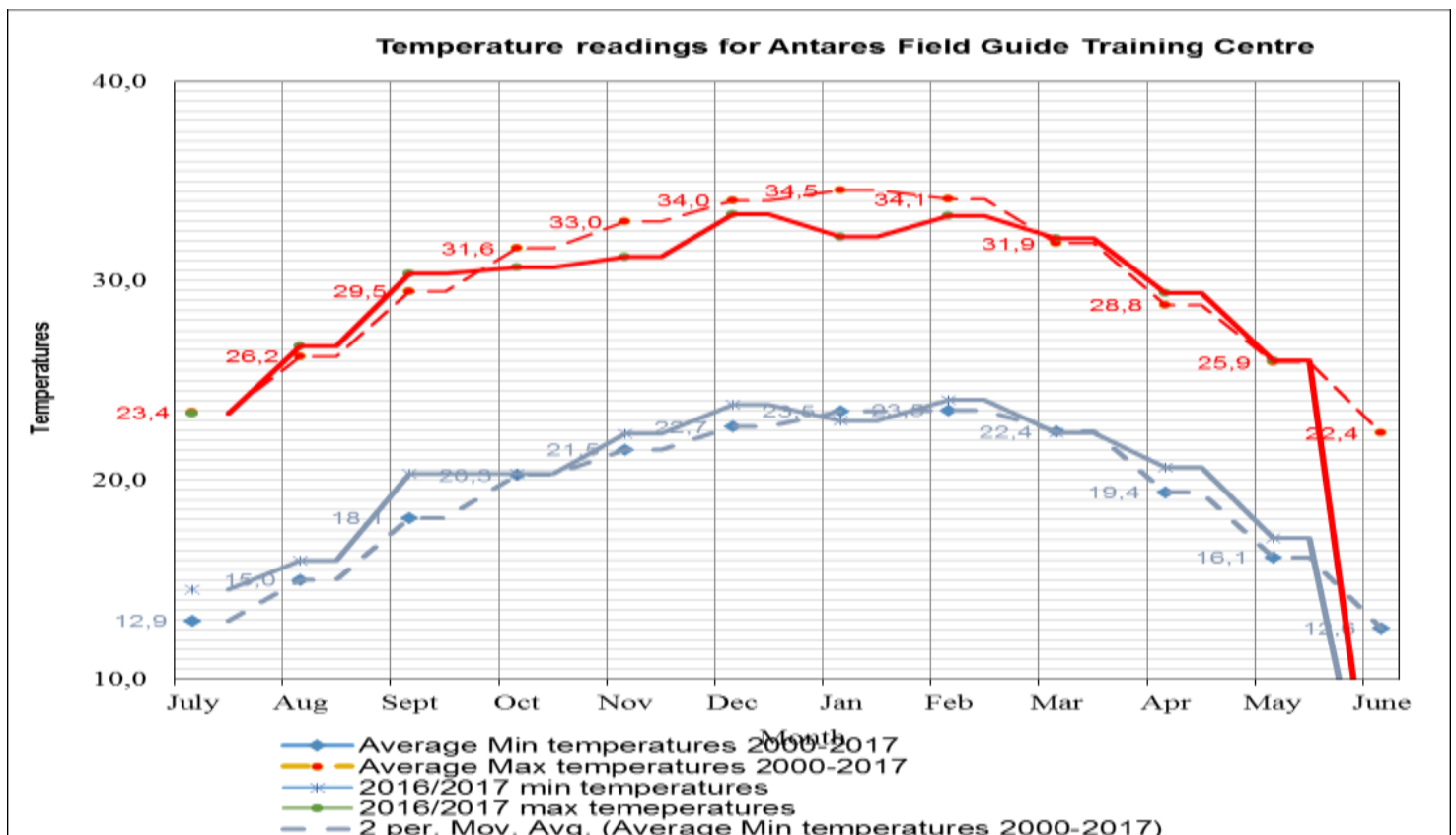
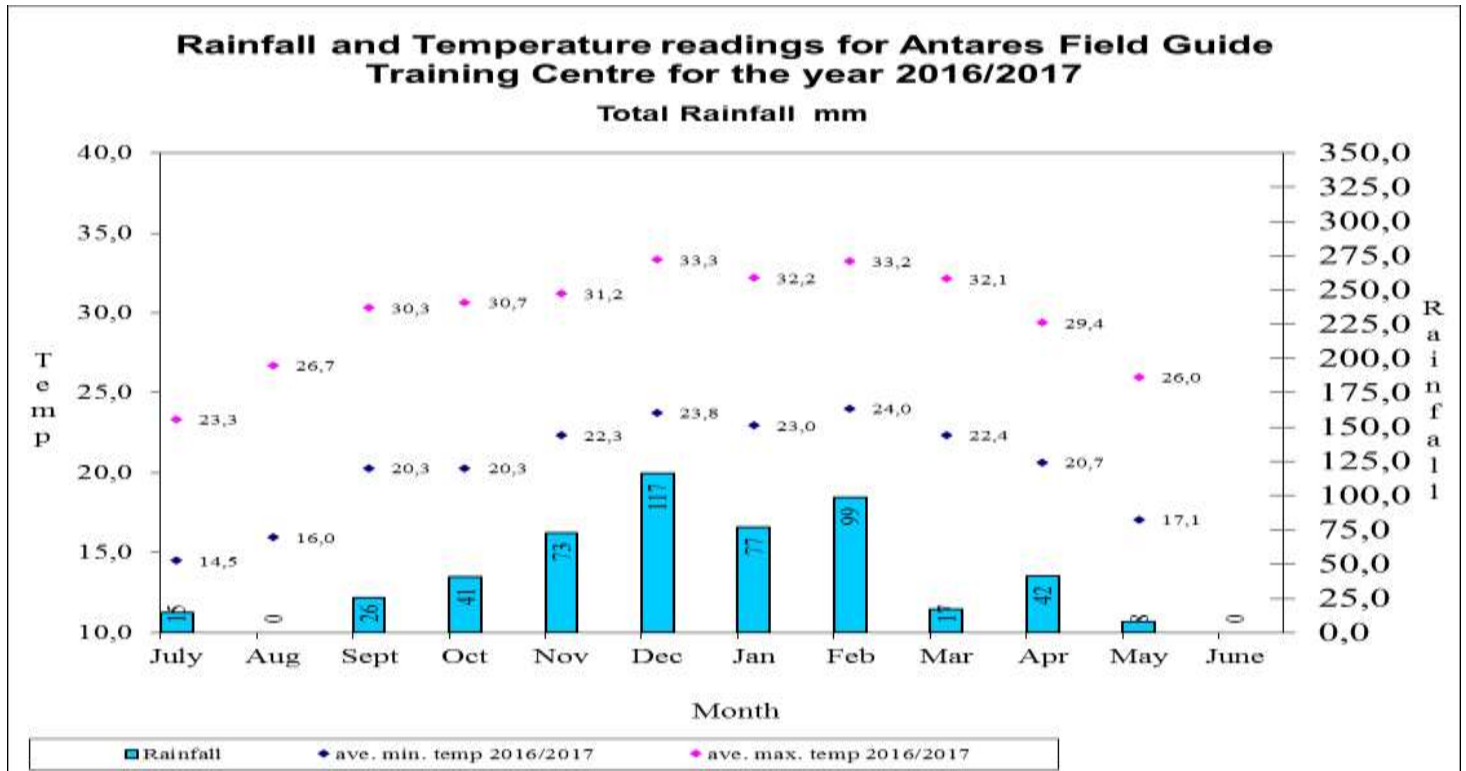
Present was four Dhaka Boy`s, Theunis (the Detective), Blackie (The Handyman) Hans (The Technical one) and Hendrik (The Wise one).

Afternoon I said to the Old Bull`s, Afternoon Mr. Warden glad you could make it, please make yourself comfortable in the mud. I am curious now please tell me how did you guys meet, Well it was many years ago one day when we all end up at the same mud hole, naturally we all wanted to wallow but unfortunately there was not enough space. A fight broke out and because of the weight benefit Oom Theunis was the champion. After that we became best friends and stayed together. We fought many Lions and realize if we want to survive we must stand together.

Oom Theunis, I believe you are also called the Detective, please explain. Well Mr. Warden you see I like to interact with other Buffalos and always know what is happening. Blackie is the handyman and he likes to fix things, Hans is our chairman and if we want to build a new mud hole he will design it and old Hendrik the Wise one know the area`s and where all the succulent new grasses are.

Rumour has it that there are a new herd of Dhaka bulls on Grietjie but that is a story for another day.

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

For the next few months we'll be looking more closely at the GPNR Constitution and the valuable objectives and principles it contains.

Please send us your input and interpretation of the objectives and principles contained in the Constitution, such as:

- 1. Sustainable conservation of the ecosystems of the reserve in their most undisturbed state possible (clause 7.2).*
- 2. To promote bush atmosphere and appearance within the parameters of the Reserve (clause 7.7).*
- 3. To allow the unhindered movement of game (clause 7.7.1).*
- 4. To act at all times in line with the ethos of a nature reserve and not to disturb fauna, flora or any other Members (clause 11.1).*

Send your comments to liz.lewis.sa@gmail.com

Guideline 1 from our Constitution:

Sustainable conservation of the ecosystems of the reserve in their most undisturbed state possible (clause 7.2)

Comments received (slightly abbreviated)

1. Grietjie and other nature reserves form an important part of the Greater Kruger National Park ecosystem. **With conservation bigger is always better.** The bigger an ecosystem the less intervention/management is required and the more natural ecosystem drivers will be present. If Grietjie were on its own we would not be able to have large predators and mega-herbivores because it is too small.

We at Grietjie are therefore really privileged to be custodians of a small portion of a much bigger picture.

Section 17 of the Protected Areas Act clearly states the purpose for the declaration of protected areas, including nature reserves. We are therefore not a zoo or game farm but part of a larger ecosystem where natural processes play out. Some of these processes go against our human nature, hence our desire to assist animals that suffer, control veld fires, create rehab centres and sometimes feel like providing fodder and water. These kinds of **interventions normally work against the natural selection processes** necessary to keep animal populations resilient and healthy. I don't mean that there is no place for interventions, but we always have to consider them carefully.

2. We need to recognise, that no matter how big the ecosystem we are dealing with is, it cannot be regarded as a natural system (even the Kruger), as the social, physical and economic impact of humans is huge. Our constitution also talks about an environment for both humans and (other) animals. This suggests that **we have to find the most pragmatic balance between the needs of humans (on Grietjie) and the need for maintaining as natural an environment as is possible** - and I believe the crux of the drive should be:
 - a. To try to be involved in the growth of the "open" area so that more natural processes can be enjoyed;
 - b. To ensure no further degradation of our micro system (Grietjie);
 - c. To improve the resilience of the micro system by being able to draw from the larger open area for those natural processes to be more effective;
 - d. To support interventions when necessary and as described by those charged with these, including the wardens, the ARC, SANparks, etc;
 - e. To ensure that there is understanding that the achieving of, and maintenance of the system in the required/possible state of the system, is **the responsibility of all who reside on Grietjie** and not just the committee. It **needs the input from all** in terms of finances, behaviour, policing and commitment to the system.

3. It is understandable that things would have had to change, and will continue to change appreciably going forward. To have the memories of yesteryear's freedoms be replaced with imposed limitations and the rigours of a larger disparate community must be unsettling to many, to say the least.

However, **the privilege of having a home INSIDE the parameters of such a large and open ecological system as we now have, is absolutely invaluable from an investment as well as an emotional perspective.** Space is the ultimate commodity and to be part of one which includes such wildlife and habitat diversity as Greater Kruger, cannot and should not be jeopardised through the long-term inconsequential and petty disagreements which can fragment communities.

This precious tract of land is so much more than the total sum of its parts. Concerns about the off-take of some individual animals is understandable, but **sight must not be lost of the bigger picture**...that of a large intact habitat which can sustain natural populations in greater numbers and resilience than what the historically fragmented and smaller area ever could, **which is more important than personal differences.**

To this end it would be prudent for every single stakeholder to take a drive to a favourite spot and quietly settle in for a moment and re-evaluate what is really important. Habitat integrity is paramount for any chance of a long-term future for the wildlife which we so love. Ecologically the health of a system depends on diversity of utilisation, size and the **maintenance of an approach which places the interest of the land and wildlife on an equal footing to that of the human residents.**

4. Clause 7.2.1 demands **adherence** to the **APNR Master Plan** with respect to the **scientific preservation and management of the RESERVE'S fauna and flora**: We have to **minimize the effect that human settlements have** on the environment (reducing our foot print, exposure, noise and light pollution, bush clearing, waterholes etc.) and **optimize on how humans can assist the environment** (locally: eradicating alien plant species, erosion protection, anti-poaching etc. and regional: joining existing open areas to ensure that the fauna can migrate to better feeding grounds, to escape over-population and other threats or only to optimize their natural ranges, etc. this would then give the flora a better chance to recover). We thus must **abide by the principles and guidelines of the APNR.**

Clause 7.2.2 is encouraging **(a) participation in research programmes** (On Grietjie we have not done too well here; the Ecological Monitoring program by ARC [Mike Peel] however continues.); and

(b) implementing management plans (There is a lot more we can and should do: we need to control the land use of Grietjie and its associated over-development and must be able to legally enforce our current and future rules/regulations. It is also not good enough if we have say 60% compliance to our "voluntary" Constitution and the remaining 40% do their own thing.); and

(c) implementing maintenance plans (We have rangers patrolling the Reserve, we have the Black Mambas for anti-poaching and do maintain our infrastructure – I think we are doing reasonably well in this regard).

TO ALL THOSE WHO RESPONDED:

THANK YOU FOR YOUR INSIGHTFUL COMMENTS!

ANIMAL FACTS

The Brown Hyena



What type of hyena is that? I have never seen one before, because it's a brown hyena.

The brown hyena is 1.3 m long (4.25 feet) and the tail is about 21 cm (8.5 inches). It weighs 38- 47 kgs (84-105 lbs). It can live for up to 12 years. The shaggy coat

is dark brown with a pale brown colour on their neck and banding on their legs. A brown hyena can smell rotting meat from over 1 km away. There are around 5,000 to 8,000 left in the wild.

The brown hyena is found in the Southern part of Africa, specifically in Zimbabwe, South Africa, Mozambique, Botswana and Angola.



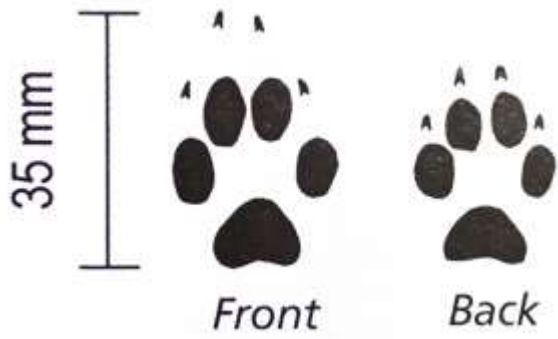
The brown hyena lives in families called clans, which will consist of up to 6 hyenas. The cubs are protected and raised by all the members of the clan. Wandering males mate with the clans females. These males may or may not join the clan.

Gestation is about 3 months. The females will have 1-3 young. The female lives separate to the clan for a few months for her babies before joining the rest of the clan again.



3 young.
caring

Brown hyenas mark their territories with a paste from their anal glands. They do this on grass stems around their territories.



*This is the Brown hyena spoor.
Brown hyena scat*

Brown hyenas mainly scavenge for food but they also catch live prey such as small mammals, fish, and insects. They will also change their diet to Unlike spotted hyena, brown hyenas do not hunt groups. They also regularly catch more than enough food which is usually eaten the following



will
birds,
fruit.
in
night.

By Savanna Owtram, age 9

CLASSIFIEDS

Please submit any small classified adverts that you want published every month to grietjiecomms@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.

FOR SALE

Plot 70 - Please contact Ian Lourens @ ian.lourens@onelogix.com

Plot 125 - Please contact Mrs Nellie Vosloo @ nellievosloo125@gmail.com



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