



JUNE 2017



Photo submitted by: Aruna Mohan

## **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT by Mike Joseph**

### **UNDER THE LEADWOOD:**

Dear all

#### **CSOS:**

The reserve has registered with the scheme in terms of the legal requirements, and as a reserve we have paid on behalf of members in good standing two(2) payments to the scheme. Please refer to previous correspondence on the statutory requirement.

Due to the administrative burden of invoicing members each month for small amounts, the committee will consolidate these amounts and invoice periodically. For the immediate future, those amounts outstanding (that have already been paid) will be invoiced to members when their new invoices after the AGM go out. On that invoice will be a separate amount for the next period going forward as well.

Please remember, this is NOT an invoice for the reserve's benefit. It is a legal requirement of all community schemes, and the amounts are nominal. We ask all those who are thus affected to kindly pay these fees back to the reserve which has and will pay in advance these fees to the scheme.

Insurance for the scheme has been agreed by the committee, and it requires only the formal signing of the insurance contract.

We need to thank Hans Schmid in particular, Liz Lewis and Loek Bleeker for their efforts in getting us compliant with the scheme.

#### **MASEKE and POTENTIAL RESPOSITIONING OF ACCESS GATE TO NEAR ROB5:**

The inclusion of Maseke into Balule is already showing benefits to Grietjie as a reserve. Despite all the negative propaganda that does the rounds, the working relation between GNR and Maseke at warden level is outstanding. A recent incident demonstrates this point. Our APU recently observed a person who ran away from them every time they approached him. The Maseke wardens responded to our calls for assistance and within 15 minutes the person was apprehended. Although no direct evidence of poaching was conclusively determined, the person has been blacklisted from Balule, and this happened because of co-operation instead of antagonism.

The committee has been advised by our warden that in the last few months not a single human incursion has happened on GNR across our northern fence line (our boundary with Maseke). This has been ascribed to the APU activities within Maseke from our Balule APU people as well as Maseke's own efforts in this regard. According to Gerrie this is most noteworthy situation for GNR as it was definitely not the norm in the past. And in comparison to other areas of Balule this benefit is just not something to dismiss lightly.

Maseke has also barricaded most of the roads close to the GNR border to assist in accidental entry of vehicles from Maseke onto GNR. These gestures represent huge progress in our relationship and this just serves to counter the negative spin that is being put on Maseke.

The fence between GNR and Maseke will start coming down in the coming days and weeks. Starting from the gate, going over Grietjie Berg, up to and including plot 77. Plots 76 and 75 have denied permission for GNR to remove their portions of the fence. They are determined to keep their fences up. This is their right in terms of the law. However, it is in contravention of the goals of the association, as well as directly contravening clause 9.1.7 of the Balule constitution. Technically GNR is now in breach of its duties as per the Balule constitution, and whilst we have assurance from Balule for now that no action will be taken, it once again puts GNR back in the Balule fold as the problem child, an image that we successfully ejected over the last few years or so.

In terms the minutes of the meeting to discuss the gate on the D2263 held on 06 May 2017, the following proposal is to be put to all owners at the end of the AGM.

We as Grietjie stay as we are for now, with our current access control gate where it is.

Grietjie Nature reserve applies to the necessary authority to move our current access gate from where it is now, to near Rob5 (the old Freddie's minerals).

This proposal will go out with the AGM pack, and after the AGM, all owners will be asked to vote on this proposal. A proxy form will also go out so that if you cannot make this meeting you will have a chance to vote on the form or to give a proxy to someone else to vote on your behalf.

#### **AGM:**

The AGM has been set for 26<sup>th</sup> August 2017 at 11h00. Venue still to be advised. The AGM pack will be sent out in due course. We urge all members who are not in good standing to contact Loek Bleeker, the treasurer, to bring yourself up to date at an agreed time so that you have the right to vote at this meeting.

This is a request for members in good standing to consider offering their service as one of the portfolio holders for the year 2017/2018. A number of the current committee will be standing down, and the association will need a committee with portfolio holders to conduct business on behalf of the association.

#### **BALULE MATTERS:**

The following is of importance to us as GNR:

It was agreed at the recent Balule AGM that Rob Garmany remains as chairman, Andy Dott as vice Chairman and Siggy Morgenrood as treasurer.

A full time paid Balule warden will be employed. It was agreed that Craig Spencer will fulfil this role.

Reporting to the warden, a SECURITY MANAGER will be employed.

To accommodate the financing of these last 2 personnel, in terms of the Balule budget accepted at the AGM, each reserve will be required to pay a R25/ha levy to Balule. With the new arrangement concerning GNR, this is not material and will be discussed when our budget is presented at the AGM.

From under the Leadwood.

### **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.
- Caught another snare poacher, removed and blacklisted him from Grietjie.
- Kudu with broken front leg was taken out.
- Cheetah in very bad condition was darted and removed to Kapama's quarantine area, He was eating well and getting stronger every day but sadly passed away because of pneumonia.

**VEGETATION:**

- Trees changing colour and shedding their leaves rapidly .
- No grass along river with a few patches to the north.

**CLIMATE / RAINFALL**

- Rainfall for the season from July 16 to June 17 = 376mm (at the gate)

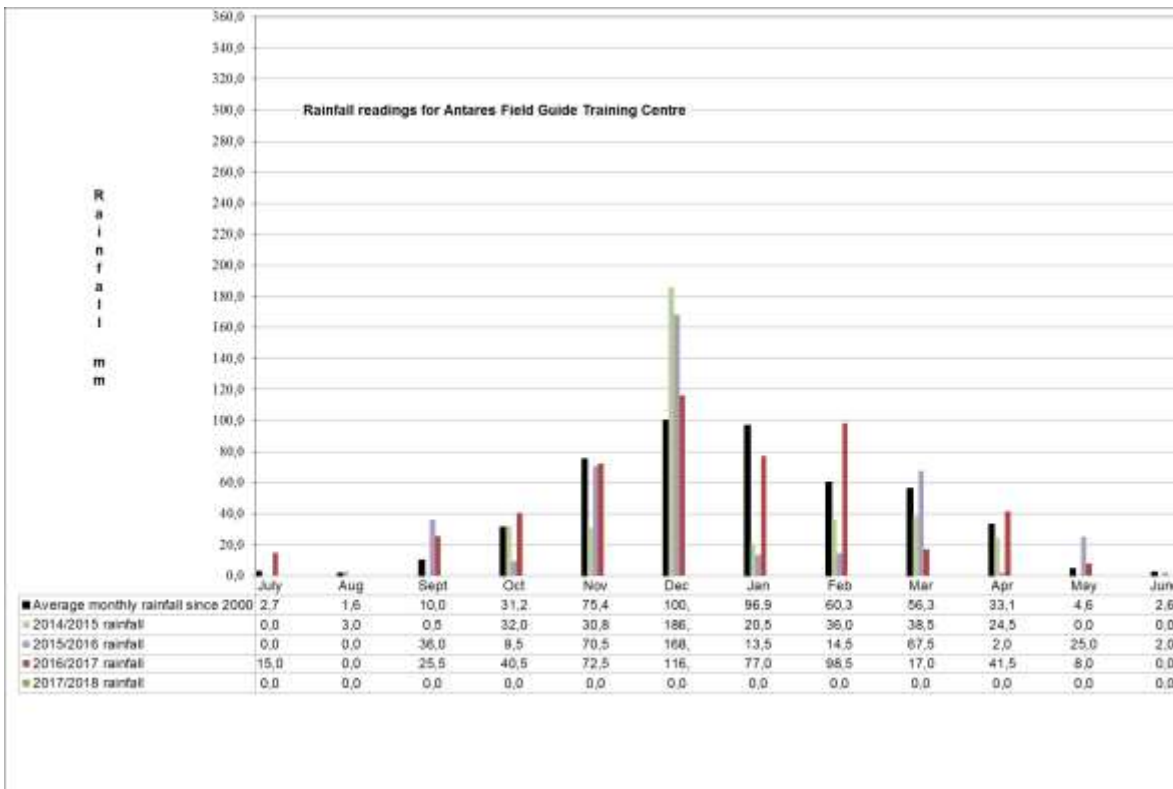
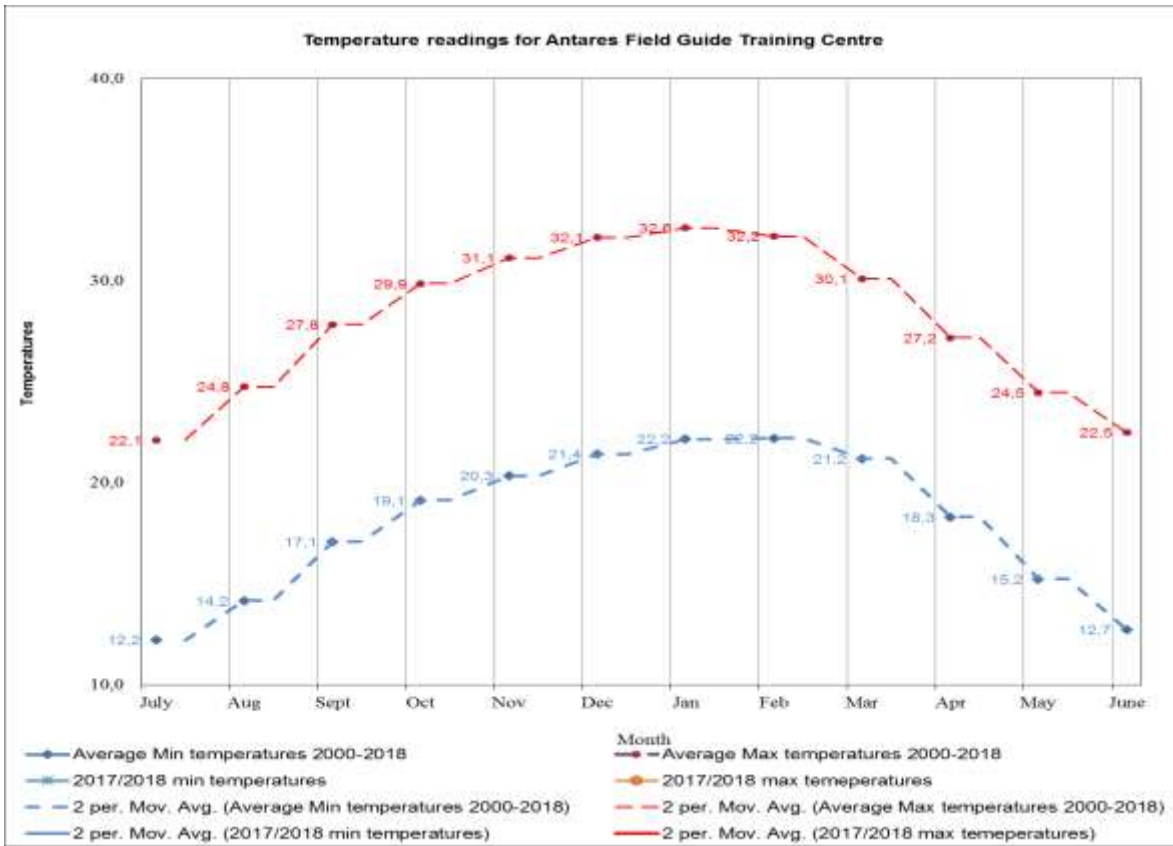
**ROADS:**

- GPNR purchased a concrete mixer to assist with mixing slurry for the tar roads.
- Repair work on tar portions of the road.

**OTHER MATTERS:**

- There are still game drive vehicles without Grietjie stickers on the door and back. Please get stickers because people phone me all the time if there is an unmarked game viewer.
- I am very concerned about one lioness acting strangely when approached by a vehicle. I came across her a week ago and she came right up to the truck and stretched her neck to look inside the back of the truck. This is typical behavior of a lion that's been fed. She's did it a second time a while later. I hope it is not the case because it is illegal to feed animals and this makes it very dangerous to all game viewers. She was with the Grietjie pride when I saw her but she kept her distance from the pride. There were reports that a game viewer wanted to chase her away with his vehicle. This behaviour is not acceptable. Please just get out of her way and leave her alone.

# 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*

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#### Guideline 2 from our Constitution:

***To promote bush atmosphere and appearance within the parameters of the Reserve (clause 7.7).***

#### Comments received from readers (abbreviated)

1. **Bush atmosphere refers to** a sense-of-place, wildness and natural character. It is possible to successfully conserve nature but completely mess up the aesthetics of an area. To a large extent this relates to limited infrastructure and careful management intervention in a reserve. It also refers to architecture of buildings and other infrastructure. These should fit in with the character of the area.

2. **“Bush atmosphere and appearance” is determined specifically by what we see and hear:**

a. Auditory

The less unnatural (human produced) sounds there are the greater the sense of wildness.

Audible intrusions into the fabric of wilderness include:

- Loud music and conversations/shouting,
- Generators, concrete mixers etc.,
- Vehicular noises like revving engines and tyre-noise from vehicles, especially speeding ones, rattling trucks and trailers, trains, car alarms or hooters, leaving the engine running unnecessarily,
- Domestic animals, especially barking dogs,
- Hammering and other noises from construction sites.

b. Visual

Some types of impact are subtle and others less so. Here are a few which might be overlooked because they have been in-situ since time-immemorial:

- Fences and gates (especially ostentatious entrance gates and “sculptures” to individual plots),
- Dilapidated and unnecessary buildings, fence posts, building rubble, cables etc.,
- Litter like tissue paper and cigarette butts in the bush, particularly at the Picnic Site,  
*(See this forum in the January 2017 Newsletter for notes on what to do with rubbish and rubble.)*
- Alien (and illegal) plants and unnaturally green and lush gardens filled with exotic decorative plants,  
*(See this forum and other articles in the November 2016 Newsletter for information about alien plant species.)*
- Obnoxiously bright and exposed or plentiful external lights causing light pollution and irritating neighbours in a wide radius,
- Unnatural manipulation of habitat i.e. excessive clearing/wood collection, dam construction, irrigation etc.  
*(See this forum in the December 2016 Newsletter for the do’s and don’ts of collecting firewood.)*
- Overhead powerlines
- Disrespect for wildlife in terms of not giving them right of way, cutting them off,
- Speeding vehicles AND not slowing down when approaching another vehicle, engulfing them in a trail of dust.

### **3. Bush atmosphere is:**

Creating a reserve where owners and visitors can experience a natural wildlife encounter with as little outside disturbance as possible. I think we all accept that, due to human impact and intrusion, true wilderness is something impossible to achieve in many areas of the world today. As such, we need to accept the fact that humans have left footprints almost everywhere, but what is important is to reduce the visible impression we create. We can achieve this in a number of ways.

We can attempt to hide human dwellings from passers-by by building in areas where there is low visible impact, or in cases where this is not possible, we should try to blend buildings into the environment by using natural colours and substrates.

We need to reduce the visibility of any rubbish and remove any that is found. It is important to encourage owners to remove their rubbish or reduce, reuse or cycle where possible.

We have already achieved a lot with making signage around the reserve more consistent and creating a standard which is less intrusive.

We need to encourage and promote the idea of not dumping rubble in the bush and either removing it from the reserve, or if not possible, at least burying it effectively.

It also includes sound impact. We need to ensure that any audio impact on others should be reduced to an acceptable minimal level and allow people to enjoy the natural bush sounds. This equates to not allowing excessive noise from music, machinery, domestic animals and people.

All in all bush atmosphere must be summed up as the ability to enjoy the aesthetics and wonders of the natural environment as much as possible with as little intrusion from human influence and interference.

**4. To create bush atmosphere, we should be more specific about certain things:**

- a. Finish buildings to blend in with the bush: Brown earth tones are best. Avoid terracottas, ochres, creams and whites.
- b. Visible water tanks can be disguised by wrapping them in latte poles.
- c. Unnecessary sheds and reservoirs should be demolished.
- d. Spotlights left on at night are intrusive and generally unnecessary. If they are essential, they should point downwards and not outwards.

***Thank you for your contributions!***



ANIMAL FACTS

# THE SERVAL



What is that animal that  
looks like a  
Cheetah but it is  
smaller?

**It is a Serval.**

Serval in portugese is wolf-deer, some other names of the serval are “bush cat or giraffe cat. “ Many people keep them as pets and have bred them with a domestic cat that has made a breed called the Savannah.



50% of their time catching prey is successful. It is the fastest running cat other than the cheetah. The Serval is part of the *Felidae* family which means cat family.



The serval can jump about 3m high. It hunts rodents, birds, hares, hyraxes, snakes, lizards and insects. No other cat can leap like the serval. 90% of their prey weighs less than 200g. Servals are crepuscular, meaning they hunt in the early morning or dusk. They usually sleep in the middle of the day and a very short time at night. In the daytime, a serval can be very hard to see, because of its camouflage fur.

Servals are very rarely seen.



A Serval only lives in the South Eastern Africa, Northern Africa, the Savannah and the Grasslands. There is a very limited Northern Africa population, with no confirmed sightings in Algeria, Tunisia, or Morocco since the 1930's. They prefer scrub bush, tall grass, and dry weed beds near water.

in higher altitudes (up to there is a source of water serval.

Servals are mostly solitary, to mate. The kittens are kittens are old enough to the male kittens out. The years old.



Melanistic (black) servals are found 10,000 feet) in Kenya, provided nearby. This is a picture of a black

living in their territories until it is time born in litters of 4. As soon as the hunt themselves, the female drives female kittens stay until they are 2

Why I decided to write about the serval is because there was a rare serval sighting on the 10th of July.

My mum really wants to see a serval, it is her favourite animal.

By Savanna Owtram age 9.

## **CLASSIFIEDS**

Please submit any small classified adverts that you want published every month to [grietjecomms@gmail.com](mailto: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.**

### **FOR SALE**

**Plot 125 - Please contact Mrs Nellie Vosloo @ [nellievosloo125@gmail.com](mailto: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](http://www.citiliner.co.za) or Krish on 071 000 7727