



JULY 2017



Photo submitted by: Martin Hefti

**CHAIRMAN'S REPORT by Mike Joseph**  
**UNDER THE LEADWOOD:**

Dear all

**AGM:**

Final reminder about the AGM on 26<sup>th</sup> at VEK (#1) at 11h00. Please be so kind as to bring your own chairs just in case. This year we have to thank VEK for the use of their facilities as we had a little difficulty securing a venue.

Also remember please that after the AGM, there is an owners' meeting to decide on the positioning of the entrance gate.

## **POACHING:**

A recent newsflash informed us of a poaching incident involving a staff member of a non-resident owner.

There has been requests from some owners to name and shame the workers. By association this would impact on the owner concerned. In the past, various committees have not been keen on a name and shame approach but we would like to hear some feedback on this sort of approach. It is of course a possibility that this might be raised at the AGM.

A final from under the Leadwood.

## **VICE-CHAIRMAN'S REPORT by Marc van der Walt**

Firstly, I would like to thank all my fellow committee members that I have had the pleasure of working with over the last couple of years. Because of the integrity and honesty of each committee member, making decisions has been a relatively easy process. It should be noted that no decision(s), no matter how big or small, was made by one committee member alone. It was always a democratic process with the most votes winning the day.

It has to be said that it is terribly disappointing to see how a few land owners have attacked and sometimes insulted our current committee Chairman over the last few months w.r.t. Maseke joining Balule. I truly believe that Mike always has, and always will, have Grietjie's best interests at heart. No matter what. Contrary to what some believe, the decision for Maseke to join Balule was NOT taken by Mike alone. He was merely the spokesperson for Grietjie and therefore blaming him, as some have done, is unfair and unwarranted. It is truly ironic to note that those that have the most to say are the same ones that contribute the least (financially) towards the everyday running of Grietjie. These same people took it upon themselves to distribute your, and my, email addresses across the world for all to use at their will. A total disregard for our right to privacy that the committee has for so long protected.

Secondly, the Reserve Manager, Gerrie, deserves a special mention. His love of the bush, and especially Grietjie, is evident with everything that he has achieved since taking over as Warden. From constructing authentic sign boards to fixing our boundary fence every hour to making sure that everyone's problems on Grietjie are resolved, the man is unstoppable. Well done and thank you for the incredibly hard work you do. I hope the incoming committee will provide you with the support that you have received and sorely deserve.

Lastly, thank you to all who contributed towards making the newsletter so interesting to publish every month. Especially the contributions from Liz Lewis and Ian, Cary and Savanna Owtram. You guys rock!

We have reclaimed our Facebook page and although I don't have enough time to post as much as I would like to, the opportunity does exist to use this platform to broadcast our great reserve to the world. The communications portfolio within the committee is an interesting one and I wish the next person stepping into this portfolio the best of luck.

## **RESERVE MANAGER'S REPORT by Gerrie van Zyl**

### **SECURITY AND ACCESS CONTROL / FENCE**

- Removing fence between Grietjie and Maseke . From the gate to Grietjie mountain and from the mountain to No 81 has been removed.
- No foreign human tracks found through Grietjie.
- No reports of theft.
- Repairs to Doreen fence continue.

## **GAME MANAGEMENT:**

- All animals in good condition.
- Lions still very active all over Grietjie.
- Good sightings of Leopard on a kill.
- Caught another snare poacher, removed and blacklisted him.

## **VEGETATION:**

- Bush bone dry.
- No grass along river with a few patches to the north.

## **CLIMATE / RAINFALL**

- No rain for July
- July cold in morning and cool during the day.

## **ROADS:**

- Smooth out the Darisandi gravel road, thanks to Bernard.

## **OTHER MATTERS:**

- Removing fence between Grietjie and Maseke is very time consuming, rolling up the old fence and pulling out the Y-Standards.

## **RAINFALL AND TEMPERATURE STATS by Ian Owtram**

**No charts are available this issue**

## INTERESTING ARTICLES

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

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

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#### Guidelines 3 and 4 from our Constitution:

1. *To allow the unhindered movement of game (clause 7.7.1)*
  
2. *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)*

#### Comments received from readers (abbreviated)

1. *To allow the unhindered movement of game* means that all obstacles should be removed to create a broader wildlife community and a more entire ecosystem. This obviously means removing fences (only one to go) and obsolete gates, but in a wider sense should also include the removal of “plot-rot” or old wire, rusting metal, rubbish pits, old reservoirs and any other thing which could hinder or injure game.

***To act at all times in line with the ethos of a nature reserve and not to disturb fauna, flora or any other Members:***

All of us who have chosen to live in the bush are responsible for preservation of this environment. **And selective responsibility is not an option.** If we all excuse ourselves from one or two points, we will destroy this bush we love. Keep in mind that we are fortunate to live in the Greater Kruger, **and yet you would complain bitterly if you experienced in the Kruger some of what you are doing on your land.**

- Minimise noise, as honestly, who wants to hear dogs barking and roosters crowing in the Kruger Park?
- Be sensitive to visual pollution. Before you build any structure on your land, consider the visual impact it will have on others. Would you like to look every day onto your type of structure on your neighbour’s property?

- Therefore, remove derelict structures, wrap highly visible water tanks in latte poles, and keep lights pointing downwards - and switch off those spotlights.
- Remove invasive plants from your land. The most common are cacti (queen of the night, prickly pear, devils rope) and syringa or bessiesboom. (*Melia azedarach*). Birds eat the syringa berries and spread the seeds. The continual eradication of this plant in the Kruger is time consuming and expensive. Actually, the berries and leaves are poisonous to animals and humans.
- Please don't introduce non-indigenous plant species to your gardens.
- Do not feed animals.
- Running a business which is not pertinent to a game reserve will devalue the reserve.

## 2. I decided to keep it simple and look at what is actually happening on Grietjie, for example:

Content removed to protect land owners.

3. ***To allow the unhindered movement of game:*** To be as unobtrusive towards game as possible, within the confines of one's own property or when travelling in a vehicle on the Reserve. Do not encroach upon the obvious immediate territory, or cross the path of the game in a manner which could startle, threaten, frighten or cause game to take flight, or react in an aggressive manner. Allow the peaceful and relaxed movement of game at all times.

***To act at all times in line with the ethos of a nature reserve:*** To "tread lightly" at all times, treating the land as a scarce and irreplaceable resource, always cognizant of the fact that it belongs to future generations, and should eventually be left in a better state than the one in which we found it.

## 4. ***To allow the unhindered movement of game:***

- Each landowner should ensure that any manmade structures (especially fences, buildings etc.) has the smallest possible footprint and does not unnecessarily impede the thoroughfare of wildlife.
- All persons should act in such a manner as to reduce their impact on the natural movements of wildlife. For example, affording animals enough space to cross a road unhindered by not cutting them off or not approaching them so closely as to force them to alter their direction.
- Any artificial source of food or water is technically a hindrance in the NATURAL movement of game.

***To act at all times in line with the ethos of a nature reserve:***

- Maintaining an awareness of the impact of your actions on everyone and everything other than yourself.
- The objective of a Nature Reserve is to protect Nature and maintain its integrity by LEAVING natural components as intact as possible by not removing/disturbing anything, *thus don't*.

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Thank you for your contributions

## **ANIMAL FACTS**

With so many Leopard sightings on Grietjie recently, I thought it fitting to end my tenure compiling the newsletter with.....

# **Leopard**

*Panthera pardus*



Picture courtesy of Cherele Chrystal

## **ABOUT THE LEOPARD**

Leopards are graceful and powerful big cats closely related to lions, tigers, and jaguars. They live in sub-Saharan Africa, northeast Africa, Central Asia, India, and China. However, many of their populations are endangered, especially outside of Africa.

## **Hunting Skills**

The leopard is so strong and comfortable in trees that it often hauls its kills into the branches. By dragging the bodies of large animals aloft it hopes to keep them safe from scavengers such as hyenas. Leopards can also hunt from trees, where their spotted coats allow them to blend with the leaves until they spring with a deadly pounce. These nocturnal predators also stalk antelope, deer, and pigs by stealthy movements in the tall grass. When human settlements are present, leopards often attack dogs and, occasionally, people.

Leopards are strong swimmers and very much at home in the water, where they sometimes eat fish or crabs.

## **Breeding**

Female leopards can give birth at any time of the year. They usually have two grayish cubs with barely visible spots. The mother hides her cubs and moves them from one safe location to the next until they are old enough to begin playing and learning to hunt. Cubs live with their mothers for about two years—otherwise, leopards are solitary animals.

## **Leopard Spots**

Most leopards are light colored with distinctive dark spots that are called rosettes, because they resemble the shape of a rose. Black leopards, which appear to be almost solid in color because their spots are hard to distinguish, are commonly called black panthers.

Source: National Geographic

## **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