



Under the Baobab

Editor: Michel Zwaan

Chairman's report by Ian Nowak

ON THE BANKS OF THE OLIFANTS:

Greetings from a lovely and green Grietjie! Another busy month is behind us. I would like to thank everyone that attended the Protected Area information presentations. **It was great to meet so many owners and to see the positive reaction to this process. If you haven't already done so, please send the required documents to us as a matter of urgency. The closing date is the 25th of January. This will however be leaving it rather late, so if possible please try and attend to this before the festive break.**

If you would like a copy of the presentation, please contact me directly at ian@msels-reserve.co.za. As mentioned last month I will only be away for a week from the 17th to 24th of December, for the rest of the festive season I will be available to meet with any owners that still have any questions or would like more information on the PA application.

I would like to thank the Vice Chair, Antoinette and her husband Adrian for making their place available for the presentations and providing the eats, week after week. Antoinette also deserves thanks for her extreme efforts to get as many people to attend the presentations as possible.

PEDESTRIANS: I am very concerned about the amount of pedestrian traffic occurring all over Grietjie at the moment. Currently, and in the recent past we have had elephant bulls in musth on the reserve. I urge all owners to please try and make transport arrangements for their staff as it is extremely dangerous to have them walking long distances in the reserve.

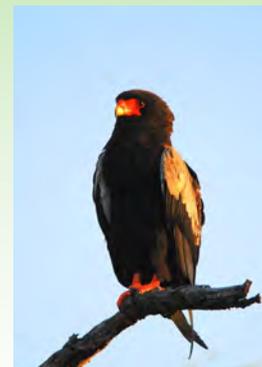
ROAD/GATE: Our legal investigations are complete and we believe a solution that would suit all Grietjie owners is possible. Early in the new year these suggestions will be circulated to all owners for comment and a vote.

STAFF: A job well done to Gerrie and his team this year. I also thank all the owners that have given the staff something for Christmas, this goodwill is much appreciated by them all.

I wish all owners, residents, staff and their families a merry Christmas, and a happy New Year! Travel safe.

Until next time,

From the banks of the Olifants.



The Warden's Indaba

YEAR END

Another year is gone and we had a BRAAI for the Staff and helpers at the gate.

It is a small token of our appreciation for what they did in the heat during the year.

From Grietjie side thank you for the following people that supplied us with labour;

Peter Meyer, Nellie Vosloo, Pam & Ail Bennet and Mariaan Visser. Much appreciated.



A great thanks also go to the following people that so generously made this Christmas so special by giving money and gifts to the staff and helpers.

The Shines, Bennet's, Harmse and the Hayes families.

We look forward to a very interesting year ahead. Blessings to all the Grietjie owners and families for 2018.

Gerrie and the Grietjie Staff



Editor's note

As this year grows to an end and the festivities are upon us I would like to wish all of our readers a very happy and prosperous 2018.

a Newsletter is just as good as the copy it get's.

I have noticed that all of us likes to read but not participate in it. That is a real shame as there is so much going on in our small little community.

Please people.
For the newsletter to stay informative and fun to read we need copy.

Write some fun stories.
About what you have experienced.
Some excerpts of what your guests have experience while staying in your lodge or B&B.

Make an effort to participate and make it a newsletter by the people, for the people.

I also want to thank Ian Owtram for all the years of tirelessly participation with his weather report. He and his family has moved to Hoedspruit and therefore he cannot continue these reports on monthly basis. We wish them all the best of luck in their new home



From the vice chair

As I sit and put pen to paper, reflecting back on the past couple of months, I realise that Grietjie is not only about the animals, but also the people which form an integral part thereof.

We have amongst us owners and residents who have been awarded some high accolades recently. I would like to congratulate Gerrie van Zyl for obtaining the **“Reserve Hunting Representative Bordering Kruger National Park” certificate. Gerrie is the first Regional Warden to achieve this qualification in the Balule Reserve.** Well done and thank you for keeping Grietjie well represented, always available to assist owners and your total commitment.



As some of you might have read in the media, we have another owner to congratulate. Dr Freek Venter of #92 recently received a Kudu Award from SANparks. The **“CEO Special Award” was bestowed for the impact he had in his operations for SANparks. Dr Freek has been in loyal service of SANparks for over 30 years.** Well done and we as the Grietjie Community are very proud of you!

I also have to thank some people often not seen, but always very present on our Reserve. Johan Grobler and the Mambas do a very important job to protect our vulnerable endangered species. They make a real and positive contribution to not just Grietjie, but also the rest of Balule Game Reserve. Thank you for your commitment and dedication often under potentially dangerous conditions. Another person that needs a special word of acknowledgement is Jan Caspers. Thank you for your continuous visibility and keeping us all safe here on Grietjie.

The **“Mhangela Baby Impala Challenge”** was very successful and the competition was very high amongst the residents and owners. Some owners told me how they were driving around searching for the first Impala lamb! Mhangela has informed us that this challenge will be an annual event. Thank you, Jens and Jaco, for your sponsorship. Cherelle Crystal #83 was the lucky person to spot the first baby impala. Well done! Cherelle has donated her prize money of R1000 to Grietjie. That is very kind of her and we await details of where she would like the funds to be spent.



The **“Capture the Moment”** competition is still on-going. There were many entries for the month of November. Thank you to the Grietjies that contribute to this fun competition. Please carry on sending your entries each month to antoINETTE@malapo.co.za **Let us keep “The Judges” busy!**

Ian and I hosted 5 Protected Area Application Information sessions here at #80 during the past month. The response has been absolutely PHENOMINAL! We had the opportunity to also meet most of our Fellow Grietjies. Thank you for making the time to attend and your positive feedback.

The time has now arrived to get the required documents for the Protected Area Application to me as soon as possible. I have **already received a large percentage of properties’ documents.** I would like to remind you that we need the ORIGINAL COMMISSIONED AFFIDAVIT and commissioned copies of the rest of the relevant required documents. Please email all documents to the email address provided. Please send the original affidavit to the Postnet suite address (Phalaborwa) as provided. It would be faster to send the document from Postnet to Postnet, if at all possible. If you receive any tracking number, please email me and I can follow up from this side.

The festive season has crept up on us really fast and before we know it, it will be 2018. I wish all of the Grietjie Community a very blessed Christmas Season.

Until next year.

Bateleur

What is the bird with the red face? It’s a Bateleur!

Fun facts

The Bateleur is the most famous snake eagle and is French for tightrope walker. This name was probably chosen because of its distinctive aerial acrobatics.

Appearance

Its pitch black feathers with white under the wings, bright red face and legs with a black beak are characteristic markings. Unlike most creatures, female Bateleur eagles are larger than males. The feathers are a uniform dark brown colour for a one-year old Bateleur. After three years it turns in to the colours of an adult Bateleur which are black, white and grey. It can take 8 years to shed all of their brown feathers to have full adult colours. You can see that the Bateleur’s feet extend past their tail when they fly because they have a short tail; **they also have exceptionally long wings. The Bateleur’s brown eyes are surrounded by plain, bright red skin (no feathers).** Their feet have the same colour as the face with no feathers. The female’s upper wing-coverts are brown, while the secondary flight feathers are mainly grey.



Diet

They will eat baby antelope, mice, snakes, carrion, lizards and especially road kills, it normally hunts for 8-9 hours per day.

Breeding



The male will find and collect sticks for the nest in the high tree which offers protection for the mother that incubates her single egg. The male has to get food for the mother, for 52-59 days whilst she incubates the egg until the baby Bateleur hatches. 110 day on it will leave the nest but still come back for another 100 days to feed from its parents; sadly only 2% of hatchlings survive until adulthood.

Behaviour

Bateleurs stay in the same nest for several years but stay a pair for life. Unpaired adults can sometimes be seen near a nest site. This bird is not rejected by the mating pair and does not help with the nesting. The Bateleur is most commonly seen in rapid or direct flight which is its preferred method for hunting. The Bateleur may cover 300 miles in up to an eight hour long daily searches for food.

The breeding display is spectacular, with deep dives from the males and the females roll on to her back, presenting her claws and then rolls over to right herself as he hurtles past. There may be follow-the **leader dipping and rolling flight, there may be 360 lateral ‘barrel’ rolls, which is often accompanied** by a very loud slapping of wings together. This may be heard by humans for some great distance. All of this may be heard accompanied by very loud crowing calls. Bateleurs often sunbathe and when they do they stand upright and hold **their wings straight out to the sides and tip vertically, a classic ‘phoenix’ pose, and they turn to follow the sun.**

Habitat

The Bateleur ranges over most of Africa, grasslands, Acacia Savannah and south of the Sahara desert where there is no thick forests, because it wants open land. It is reduced or extinct in most of its southern Africa range. The Bateleur eagle is found throughout Africa south of the Sahara. It prefers tree and bush Savannah.

The Latin name for Bateleur is *Terathopus ecaudatus*.

Written by Savanna Owtram age 9

Have a happy Christmas

“Capture of the moment” competition

Photo 6: Grietjie sunsets, the best in the world



Photo 12: Satellite dish

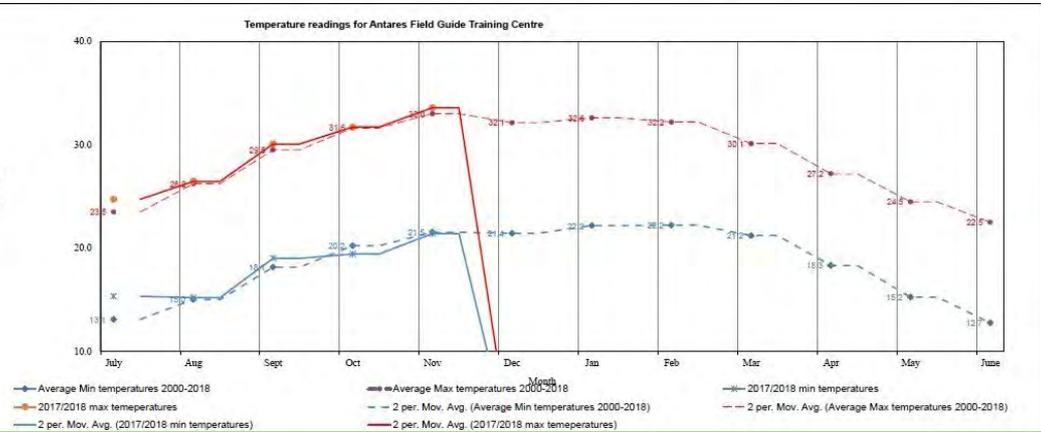
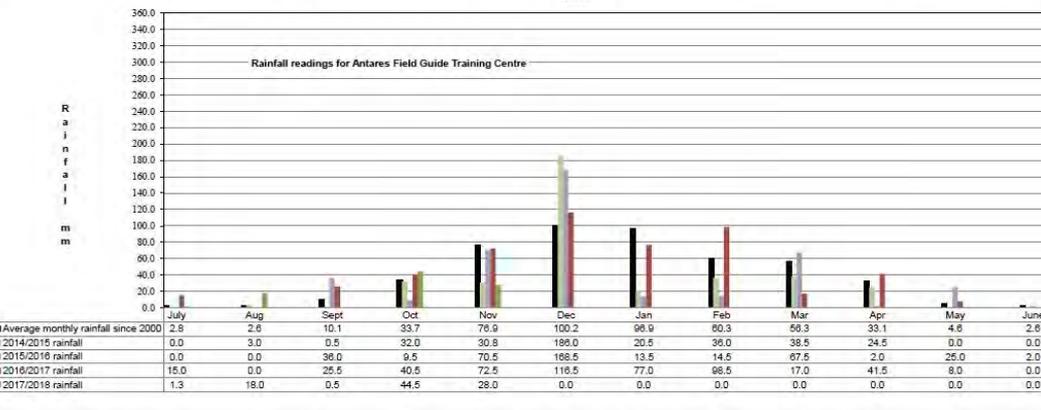
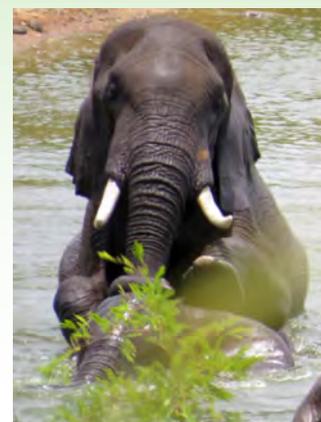
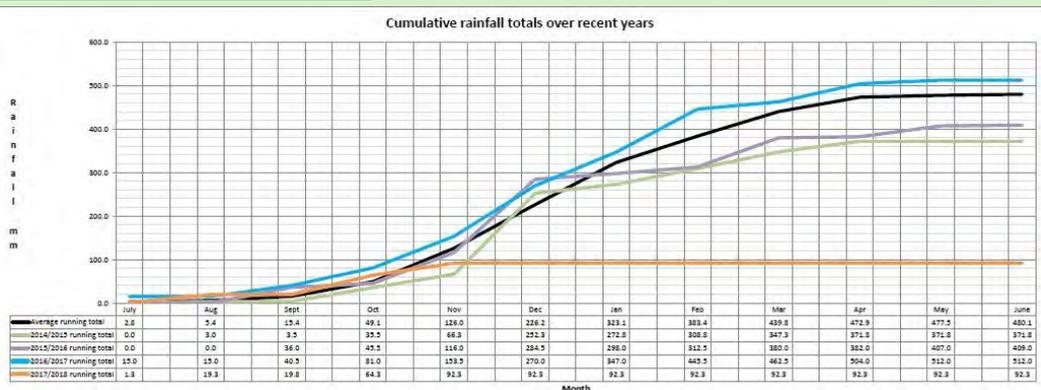


Photo 14: Just too big to play hide-and-go-seek



Photo 15: : Turf war

Rainfall and temperature stats by Ian Owtram



African poetry

Elephant Heaven.

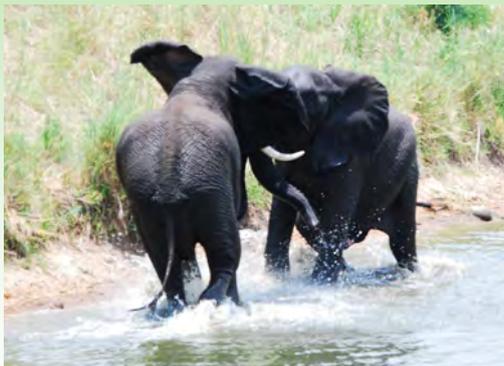
The sun was hot, the breeze was cool,
The day had just begun...
The elephant must find a pool
Where he could have some fun!
So off he went, his trunk held high,
Remembering the past!
With one huge twinkle in his eye
Till he arrived! At last!

The water waited patiently...
Warmed by the sun above...
The giant slipped in daintily...
His heart so full of love!
'This is the place! I'll stay awhile...
'I'll rest and take my ease...'
He slurped the water with a smile,
'I'll do just as I please!'

With that, he splashed and thrashed around!
The fish fled for their lives!
They'd lost the sense of peace they'd found!
God knows how each survives!
The elephant then had a whim...
Submerging like a whale...
'I'll show these fishies how to swim!'
Flat out, he swished his tail!

The fishies looked enthralled, amazed!
Astounded he could float!
If men had seen this, they'd be dazed,
For he was like a boat!
The elephant went on his way...
Refreshed, revitalised!
At last, he bid them all good day...
Gob smacked... and still surprised!

Michel Zwaan
2015



GNPR Buy and sell

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 #17 - vacant river front, 8.5 hectares.

Plot #18 - river front, 8.5 hectares, 4 bedroom, 3 bathroom, lounge, dining, kitchen, strong room, 2Xstaff quarters, carpools, large deck, thatched house overlooking river. Furniture negotiable and Landrover included.

Please contact mr Colin Robertson if interested @ arobert@mweb.co.za



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

