

Bries Breeze

AUGUSTUS / AUGUST 2003

ROOIELS BELASTINGBETALERSVERENIGING (REBV) POSBUS 89 BETTYSBAAI 7140
ROOIELS RATEPAYERS' ASSOCIATION (RERA) PO BOX 89 BETTY'S BAY 7140

REDAKSIONEEL

"DIE AARDE IS DEUR 'N DIGTER GEMAAK."
- T T CLOETE

Op Rooiels maak die die grootsheid van die Skepping 'n totale aanslag op mens.

En wanneer ek 'n tydjie weg was en weer tuis kom, tref dit my soos 'n reuse brander en slaan my asem weg. Want daar is niks kleins of harfhartigs of beheersd aan hierdie plek nie. Dink maar net aan die wilde krag van die branders, die onwrikbare ruheid van Klein-Hangklip en die ontombare wind. Terselfdertyd, amper paradoksaal, vind die oog soveel detail, soveel broosheid en deernis. Soos die fynste pienk pypies en fluweelblommetjies. Of die perfeksie van die oranjebors suikerbekkie, met veertjies so fyn soos haartjies - elkeen op sy plek.

Hoe verstommend om te dink dat hul elkeen, selfs die heel geringstes, hul eie lewe het! 'n *Eie* lewe wat nie om jou of my draai nie en wie se betekenis en waarde nie van jou of my oordeel afhang nie.

Ek wonder soms wie van ons sou Rooiels met soveel grootsheid en tergelykertyd met soveel teerheid, deernis en detail kon maak? En wat maak ek met hierdie grootsheid om my? Wat is *my* rol? Wil ek dit domineer, verander, omskep, uitwis? Wat verg hierdie grootsheid van my?

Ek dink dit verg respek en erkenning. Dit verg dat ek probeer om bedagsaam te leef teenoor die natuur en teenoor andere. Dit maak dat ek bereid is om die uniekheid en wonder van andere, alle lewe, raak te sien en te waardeer. Dit verg dat ek soms my eie belange en begeertes vir 'n oomblik opsy skuif en kyk of daar nie dalk 'n hoër belang is nie.

Die Bewarea is 'n manier om erkenning te gee aan die waarde van almal en alles wat in hierdie Biosfeer leef. Dit is 'n manier waardeur ek en jy met mekaar kan ooreenkom om ons erfenis te bewaar, om hierdie wonderlike vreugde en vrede wat Rooiels ons bied, te koester en om mekaar te help om saam 'n hoër belang te soek.

ESTELLE RAYMOND
VOORSITTER:
ROOIELS BELASTINGBETALERSVERENIGING



KOM ONS ONTWERP 'N LOGO VIR BEWAREA CONSERVANCY LOGO UNDER CONSTRUCTION

ONS SOEK 'N KENTEKEN VIR DIE BEWAREA

Net om ons aan die dink te sit het Chris Burlock 'n paar voorlopige ontwerpe vir 'n logo voorberei.

Wat dink jy behoort dit te wees?

Dalk die Fisant - soortgelyk aan die Tarentaal van baie ander Bewareas? Die Otter as simbool van 'n ongeskonde omgewing (land sowel as see) of die endemiese Suikervoël op 'n Protea? Of wat van die Witkruisarend wat hoog teen Klein-Hangklip 'n nes het? En wat van die pragtige Berglyster?

Elke lid van die Bewarea sal 'n klein kenteken ontvang wat hulle by hulle huise kan aanbring as teken van hul verbintenis tot die bewaring van Rooiels.

Stuur gerus jou eie ontwerp of kommentaar aan Chris Burlock by izulu@mweb.co.za

IS IT A BIRD? IS IT AN OTTER?

We're looking for a logo for the Rooiels Conservancy.

Just to get us thinking, Chris Burlock designed these logos.

What animal, bird or plant do you think best represents Rooiels?

Should it be our local version of the "Famous Grouse", the Francolin, which is similar to the Guinea Fowl logo used by so many other conservancies? Or perhaps the delightful Otter as a symbol of a pristine environment? Or the endemic Sugarbird perched on top of a Protea? Something else?

Please let Chris Burlock izulu@mweb.co.za have your input and designs.

ONS VERBINTENIS

VERENIG IN ONS PASSIE VIR DIE NATUURLIKE GROOTSHEID VAN ROOIELS,
BELOWE ONS DAT DIE GEMEENSAP EN DIE NATUUR GEKOESTER SAL WORD,
DAT PLANT-, DIERE- EN SEELEWE BESKERM SAL WORD,
DAT ENIGE IMPAK OP DIE NATUUR BEPERK SAL WORD
EN DAT ONS KURATORSKAP GERESPEKTEER SAL WORD
SODAT ONS LEWENS EN DIÉ VAN DIE GESLAGTE NA ONS
DEUR HIERDIE ETOS VERRYK SAL BLY WORD!



CONSERVANCY ROOIELS!

"THE JOURNEY OF A THOUSAND MILES BEGINS WITH A SINGLE STEP."

On Saturday, 4 April, a well-attended meeting was held at Ian and Shirley Richter's home in Rooiels. This meeting was held to ascertain the wishes of the community as regards the establishment of a village conservancy.

It was very pleasing to see that many of the different organisations that are represented in the community were present. Once our guest, Tony de Silva, (Chairman of the Western Cape Nature Conservation Board) had addressed the meeting, Rob Fryer facilitated proceedings. Once the Conservancy concept was clarified, an open and lively debate allowed people to pose their questions. All the issues that were raised were captured for future consideration.

Most encouraging was the consensus that was reached. A motion to the effect that the "Vision" committee and any person who wished to be co-opted, proceed with the establishment of a conservancy, was adopted. Some 15 people volunteered their participation in this expanded committee!

At this point the "Vision" committee, (a committee drawn from the diverse Rooiels community) is finalising a draft of the "Vision for Rooiels" for comment and approval of the community. It is envisaged that this "Vision" becomes the foundation on which a conservancy will be managed. Once this work is completed, the work of the wider Conservancy committee will then dovetail with that of the "Vision" committee.

DEBBY DE VRIES AND ROB FRYER



GASSPREKER TONY DE SILVA,
VOORSITTER VAN DIE WES-
KAAP NATUURBEWARINGS
RAAD HET SY STEUN AAN 'N
BEWAREA VIR ROOIELS
TOEGESÊ



DRESSED FOR THE OCCASION: HELEN JONES
AND ALISON AYRE WITH SPECIALLY MADE
T-SHIRTS: "CONSERVE WILDLIFE! HOLD MORE
WILD PARTIES!"



WE'RE IN!!! GRISELDA AND TONY HALL PLACE A
STICKER ON THEIR PROPERTY, INDICATING
THEIR SUPPORT FOR THE CONSERVANCY

WE HAVE NOT INHERITED THE EARTH, WE HAVE BORROWED IT FROM OUR CHILDREN

LAKESIDE CARE CENTRE OPENED

The first phase of the new Community Care Centre in Lakeside Drive, Betty's Bay was opened on Wednesday 2 July 2003. A chilly wind failed to dampen the enthusiasm of those who gathered around Mayor Smuts as he declared the Centre open.

The Centre is run as a satellite of the very successful Kleinmond Fynbos Centre. Although the building is an extension of the Lakeside Chapel, it is an undenominational, community-based outreach programme that aims at ensuring the well-being of all residents in the Hangklip area. Nursing care, provided by qualified volunteers and supplementary to that already offered by local doctors and provincial clinics, is provided three mornings a week from 09h00 to 11h30. Services include measurements of blood pressure, cholesterol and sugar, dressing of wounds, removal of stitches and injections. In addition to her nursing skills, our own Lynne Fryer spends one morning looking after unhappy feet, and a team of volunteers is currently being organized for home visits to the house-bound.

JENNY STARK



VOLUNTEER LYNN FRYER DOING A PEDICURE

IN MEMORIAM

MARGE WILLIAMS

Marge passed away on 31 April aged 82 years. She and Dave retired in Rooiels and lived here for more than 10 years. After Dave's death, Marge moved to Stormhaven in Somerset West. She had loved Dave dearly and it was a time of great loss for Marge after 51 years of happy marriage. Now she is re-united with Dave once again.

GERHARD BROWN

Gerhard is op 28 Mei onverwags aan 'n hartaanval oorlede op die ouderdom van 49 jaar. Hy was 'n internasionale amateur stoeier en 'n bestuurskonsultant. Gerhard was 'n geliefde, sterk en wonderlike entoesiastiese mens, wat vir baie mense as inspirasie gedien het. Ons dink aan Marthie en Deon.



GERHARD BROWN EN MARTHIE HATTINGH

WOORDE IN DIE WIND

GEORGE WEIDEMAN

VIR ROOIELERS EN HULLE VRIENDE

DATUM:

Saterdag, 23 Augustus 2003

TYD:
19:00

PLEK:

Willie en Martie Pienaar

BRING SAAM:

Eie wyn en glas.

Sopbakkie en lepel.

R20,00 om skrywer te betaal.

Nog geld vir boeke koop.

LAAT WEET VIR:

Martie Pienaar

0219391423;

0823251437

Hester de Villiers

(028) 273-8163;

082 5754749;

Hesrooiels@telkomsa.net

Dine van Zyl

Dinevzyl@iafrica.com

THE OPENING OF THE ECO-CENTRE

SOMETHING TO BRAG ABOUT

THE first Biosphere Reserve Eco-Centre was opened in Rooiels on the evening of 2 May, 2003. This Eco-Centre was created by Rooielsers for Rooielsers. The project was initiated by the Biosphere Reserve Action Group (BRAG) and organised by Chris Burlock who designed the layout etc. The aim is to raise awareness about the Biosphere Reserve and all its wonders. Jo Henson made space available for the Eco-Centre, free of charge. The entrance to the centre is via the Rooiels Village Shop.

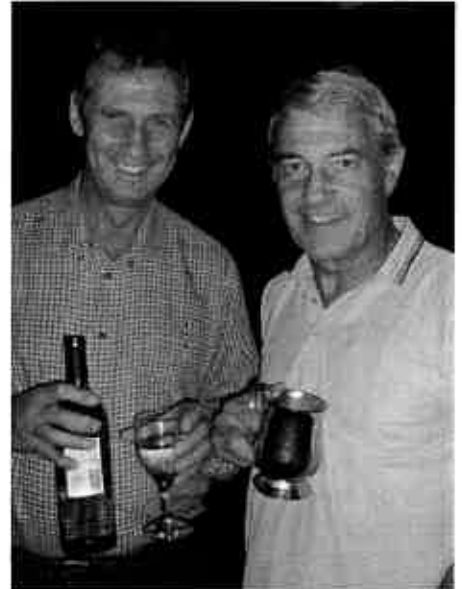
To raise funds for the project, BRAG organised a raffle. Many Rooielsers donated objects and services; a gourmet Thai meal cooked by Dawn Kempen and a pedicure by Lynn Fryer, paintings and artworks by Chris Burlock and Genny Schilds, a sculpture by Evette Weyers and more! A visitor from New York was so taken by the project that he donated a week's accommodation for two in his hotel in Washington DC!

The opening was an open-air event with a sheep on the spit by the Drummond Arms. (2 sheep were needed to feed the 130 attendees. It was a lively evening with perfect weather and live accordion music enhancing the evening.

Local traffic officer, Jaco Stemmet, made the PA system of his car available to address the large crowd. All the speakers squeezed into the car to make their speeches. (Louis van Heerden, the tall KOBIO chairman, had to fold double.) He congratulated Rooiels on their initiative before he opened the Centre, cutting a ribbon decorated with nautilus and other shells.



PIET UYS



IAN RICHTER AND KOOS SMIT

Much of the text in the Eco-Centre is in a user-friendly "question and answer" format. There is a theme board with a new theme each month. The June theme was Proteas. E.g. How do you know which protea seeds to plant, as less than 5% will germinate? (That was all explained out of Gerald Mc Cann's book on Proteas, *Seven Years amongst the Giants*.) Presently the theme is "Whales" and an actual baleen plate is on display (on loan). "Hairy Tails" will be the next theme, going up soon.



PAT AND KERRY DEVINE

Rooielsers challenged the other villages in the Biosphere to create their own Eco-Centres. Annemarie Breytenbach immediately took on the challenge of initiating one in Pringle Bay and has progressed rapidly, with a very good collection of exhibits. She is aiming at a December launch.

The Betty's Bay group has been offered a stand on the BP garage property and also free building materials! The building plans were revealed at their first fund-raiser at the Whale Talk.

If you pick up anything interesting that is suitable for the Eco-Centre, please contact Chris Burlock at 028-2738278. The active participation of the community is part of the success of our Biosphere Reserve Eco-Centre.

EVETTE WEYERS

FOKUS OP ROOIELSERS

MARIUS WEYERS TUSSEN DIE LYNE

MARIUS WEYERS TREE TANS IN LONDEN OP IN DIE ALMEIDA-TEATER, WAAR HY DIE ROL VAN VERWOERD VERTOLK. HIER IS 'N UITTREKSEL UIT 'N ARTIKEL WAT DINE VAN ZYL OOR HOM GESKRYF HET IN DIE JULIE-UITGAWE VAN DIE TYDSKRIF INSIG.

"Dis so goddelik wat ons hier (op Rooi-Els) het," sê Marius, terwyl die fisante skrop tussen die surings en vygies. "Ons kan nie sommer net onoordeelkundig ontwikkel en straatligte en teerstrate aanbring nie. Ons moet dink en verantwoordelikheid neem vir wat ons doen. Ons is tydelik hier. Ons moet die fynbos en die natuur bewaar vir die geslagte na ons."

Diere weet waar hulle welkom is. "Daar is skilpaaie wat kom wei op die gras, en die muishonde kom bedel vir kos. Gister het hier een buite op die klip kom sit. Ons was blykbaar 'n bietjie laat, en hy het ons stip dopgehou. Maar hulle is nie so mak dat jy hom met die hand kan voer nie, ons probeer dit ook nie doen nie. Maar hy kom sit op sy plekkie en kondig etenstyd aan."

Die fisante kom al nader, en pik op die gras voor die deur, waar krummels vir hulle uitgegooi is. "Die honde het hulle eers verjaag, maar ons het hulle geleer, nou stap Tokkelos en Gabi langs die fisante verby."

Dan is daar die bobbejane. Eendag kom Evette by die huis en die trop het hulle tuisgemaak in die sitkamer. Ma, pa, kindertjies en die hele uitgebreide familie. Hulle wei aan die vrugte in die bak, spring op die stoele en bemors die plek. Sy probeer hulle uitkry, die spul raak paniekerig. Dis 'n gedoente van skreeuende bobbejane, klaterende breekgoed, blaffende honde, en die televisie wat met 'n groot knal aan flenters val.

Toe het Marius spesiale bobbejaan-gaas aangeskaf, 'n uitvindsel wat mens aanhaak aan die raam as die bobbejane in die gebied is, en weer afhaal as hulle verder wei. Dan kan mens darem jou venster ooplos as jy nie diefwering het nie. Want die bobbejane moet ook hul plek gegun word tussen die seeghwarrie en die stroomseldery, en ook hulle moet bewaar word.

Maar die see is sy groot passie. Eintlik ken hy die kusgebied onder die water beter as die fynbos, sê Marius. Hy duik graag, en weet waar die perlemoen tussen die seekastaiings en bamboes skuil, die kreef oor die rotsbodem kruip, en die kolsterte wei met hul gesigte na die gety gedraai. Hy is lid van Seewag, en menige stroper moes al gedwee sy duiksak leegmaak voor 'n man wat wraggies baie na Marius Weyers lyk.

Marius en Evette stap elke dag. Soggens gaan hulle dié kant om met die honde, so 'n lekker ver end deur die fynbos, smiddae weer daai kant om, groot strand toe, waar hulle bamboes vir die honde gooi en kyk hoe lyk die duiktoestande. En Sondae is dit die kusroete, om te sien wat blom op die duine, of om die otterspoor te volg en te sien waar hy sy brekfis geëet het. Of op die uitkyk te wees vir stropers.

Die wind kom op, waterspoke draai op die see, die stof dwarrel in die pad. Ek staan op, kry my goed bymekaar.

DINE VAN ZYL



6

"EVERY ONE OF US IS, IN THE COSMIC PERSPECTIVE, PRECIOUS. IF A HUMAN DISAGREES WITH YOU, LET HIM LIVE. IN A HUNDRED BILLION GALAXIES YOU WILL NOT FIND ANOTHER."

- CARL SAGAN



KLIPSWEET OP DIE CAMINO DE SANTIAGO 800 KM TE VOET

Pierre en Louise du Toit het op 15 Junie teruggekeer van Spanje, waar hulle die Camino de Santiago, 'n middeleeuse pelgrimsroete gestap het.

Vanaf St Jean Pied-a-Port in Frankryk, oor die Pirinee tot in Santiago de Compostela was dit 800 km - te voet!

VRA VIR ERNST

Ernst Thomson as boorling van Malmesbury het as kind naweke die kopies en velde van die Swartland ingevaar op soek na slange en insekte. Dit was ook die oorsaak van menige pakke slae as dié "goggas" uit gevangenskap ontsnap, en in die huis beland het.

Hy het in 1974 sy Nasionale Diploma in Tuinbou verwerf, sy Nasionale Hoër Diploma en ook die Nasionale Diploma in Parke en Ontspanningsbestuur in 1985. Terwyl hy by Escom in diens was, het sy liefde vir die fynbos van die Kaap hom baie handig te pas gekom by duineherwinnig en fynbos rehabilitasie. Rooiels met sy unieke fynbos, is vir hom 'n baie teer saak en bied hy sy hulp en kennis met die aanplant van die regte bome en struike vir hierdie area aan. Kontak hom gerus!



IT DOESN'T INTEREST ME WHAT YOU DO FOR A LIVING.

I WANT TO KNOW WHAT YOU ACHE FOR, AND IF YOU DARE TO DREAM OF MEETING YOUR HEART'S LONGING.

IT DOESN'T INTEREST ME HOW OLD YOU ARE.

I WANT TO KNOW IF YOU WILL RISK LOOKING LIKE A FOOL FOR LOVE, FOR YOUR DREAM, FOR THE ADVENTURE OF BEING ALIVE.

(EXTRACT FROM: THE INVITATION)



'N NUWE GENERASIE ROOIELERS!

DEON BURGER

Sedert 3 Junie 2003 is daar 'n nuwe kleinding op die berg! Na 'n moeilike swangerskap is ons baie bly om Deon op Rooiels te verwelkom. Geluk aan Darelle en Ferdi.

TESSA DU PLESSIS

Congratulations to Tanya Goodman and Charl du Plessis on the arrival of their daughter, Tessa on June 25 in Virginia, USA.

METAMORFOSE

Toe ek nege jaar gelede by Rooiels afgedraai het omdat ek dors was, was al wat ek oor die dorpie in my persoonlike "databank" kon vind, iets van wind. WIND in hoofletters. 'n Skrikwekkende wind wat nooit ophou waai nie. Maar daardie dag was windstil en die hele ent pad vanaf Gordonsbaai die berg goudgeel oortrek met Leucodendrons? Leucospernums? Ek het nog nie kon onderskei nie. Twee dae later op nog 'n windstil dag het ek 'n huisie, heelwaarskynlik die kleinste op Rooiels, gekoop 'n huisie wat gesellig nestel onder die pad, en het ek vir almal vertel wat wou luister op my erf groei proteas, wittes, fynbos en dat wasgoed ophang 'n ander dimensie gaan kry want ek hoor en ruik en sien die see.

Vyf maande later het ek vir die eerste keer kom kuier die berg kuslans was swart gebrand. Die wind het daardie eerste nag so gewaai dat ek bang was. My volwasse seun kon my nie troos nie hy was ook bang. BANG met hoofletters. Ek het later aan die slaap geraak terwyl ek die ritme van elke aanslag en alternatiewe stilte van die Suidoos afgetel het. Die bobbejane het die volgende dag bergaf gesak. Charlie van destyds het op 'n rots waar nog geen huis was nie plaasgeneem en wag gehou oor die trop wat vullisdromme omgekeer en sakke oopgeskeur het. Nie een het naby die huis gekom nie, hulle het meesal in die strate beweeg. Ek het hulle nooit na 4nm in die dorp gewaar nie. Deure en vensters is oopgelos, selfs as jy gaan kuier of stap.

En stap kon jy oral verby rye huise sonder siele oor duin en rots klouter langs eensame paadjies deur fynbos van ongekende weelde. Jou oë op die berg, soekend vir die witkruisarend, vir die walvis se spuitfonteinjie ver see-in, jou elke sintuig ingestel vir elke ritsel in die gras, elke volmaakte klein blou of geel of wit blommetjie, jou sakke bultend van skulpe na 'n seewandeling. Ek het onthou van die pragtig geillustreerde boek, *Wild Flowers of the Cape of Good Hope*, wat my suster iewers in my vroeë jeug aan my geskenk het. Voor in het sy geskryf :

"EN WANNEER JY OP DIE BERG IS, GENIET DIE VERGESIGTE MAAR VERGEET OOK NIE DIT WAT NABY IS, ONDER LANGS JOU VOETE!"

En so onder my voete beland eendag amper 'n yslike rob wat sy oggendslapie vang in die son op die kuspaadjie. Net betyds gewaar ons mekaar en skommel hy lomperig oor die rotse seewaarts. Dit was ook op hierdie oggend dat die egiptiese eendmoeder met haar vyf kleintjies in die poele tussen die rotse geswem het, en 'n seevoël met sy voet vasgevang in vislyn desperaat die lug ingevlieg het voordat ons hom kon red.

Hier stap ek graag alleen. Hier word ek stil. Een met die skepping. Dankbaar teenoor die Skepper. En bly my verwonder oor die wonder van my hierwees: ek flits vreugdevol saam met die suikerbekkies groen en oranje en langstert tussen die repense en ericas, suig die soet nektar uit hul kelke. Ek rol en duik en flip saam met die robbe en walvisse, verbeel my ek hoor hul paringslied, sweef saam met die arende teen die kranse en hardloop, spring, hop skip en jump vlugvoetig met die bobbejane bergop, sit laatmiddag styf teen die lyf van my mannetjie op 'n rots en staar filosofies na die berg, profiele sterk afgeets teen die laatmiddaglug Ek wil uitvind hoekom staar hulle na die berg? Waarom nie na die son wat rooi in die Weste sak nie?

Soos my *homo sapiens* maats. Ek verheerlik my oor hulle wonderlike diversiteit, gasvryheid, eenvoud, kompleksiteit, talente, belangstellings, hulle passies, hulle huise en paleise. Hulle is heerlik opwindend, die mense van Rooiels. Ek weet want ek eet loop grap en gesels met hulle en ek verbeel my ek dra 'n stukkie van hulle almal in my. En omdat ek deel is van hulle en hulle van my en ons van die groter geheel, ons almal hartstogtelik verknog is aan hierdie stukkie lap aan ons toegedeel, swaai en stoei ons saam met, en teen die elemente, stoei ons saam of teen mekaar oor *issues*, en durf ons tog elke aand op die stoep staan en saam wag dat die lig dalk groen flits voor die son oor die einder verdwyn.



MAGIC MOMENTS

A TALE OF THREE BILLY GOATS GRUFF GETTING ONE'S GOAT!

GOATS ARE THOROUGHLY UNREASONABLE UN-COOPERATIVE CREATURES!

This truth was brought home forcibly by a recent event. It all began with a late-afternoon phone call from Andre Wagener, who with a distinct tone of disbelief in his voice, reported that there were three goats, three black-and-white goats, feeding on the lower slopes of my smallholding!

Naturally this matter called for immediate investigation. Confirmation was soon forthcoming. There were indeed three black-and-white goats coming down the mountain and onto Porter Drive. They set off on a sedate pace towards Rooi Els and the main road.

In considering the appropriate action to take, the thought struck that these animals' welfare was at stake and that KAWS, the organisation involved in animal welfare was well represented in Rooi Els. But unfortunately the KAWS representative was not at home at the time, making it necessary to seek alternative action...



THE LONELY GOATHERD

Back on Porter Drive the goat trio were traveling along sedately, making good progress towards Rooi Els. Then a second idea struck. If the goats could be herded down to my house, they could be put in the enclosed yard where they would be perfectly safe until their owner could be traced.

The first step towards accomplishing that was for me to turn the goats around in the opposite direction. After much dashing from one side of the road to the other and much vocal encouragement, that was achieved and headed South, direction Pringle Bay. However the change of direction had been the cause of some agitation on the part of the goats and their previous sedate pace had turned into a really smart trot with much bleating in protest. In fact, they were proceeding so fast and with no inclination of slowing down, that it was obvious that they would dash past my turning unless they were headed-off somehow.

WE ALL PROCEDED AT A CRACKING PACE...

To head them off necessitated passing them and getting ahead of them. Getting ahead of them necessitated overtaking the goats by going faster than they were. That is where a real problem arose; any increase in speed on my part, merely resulted in a corresponding increase in speed on the part of the goats being herded. We all passed the road turn-off at a cracking pace!

The attempt to get the three to make a complete about-turn once more was made on the run and only resulted in the goats, silly creatures, breaking ranks. One headed back to Rooi Els, the other two towards Pringle Bay, and all three bleating furiously. By dint of much dashing, gesticulation and shouting the three were brought together again, but traveling in the wrong direction. They made it abundantly clear that nothing or no-one was going to make them go where they had no wish to go. When last seen they were heading Southward at a very rapid trot. Clearly the job of the lonely goatherd is not an easy one...

All of this, of course, gives rise to two questions. From where did the trio of goats come and where did they go to that afternoon? Is there anyone out there with the answers?

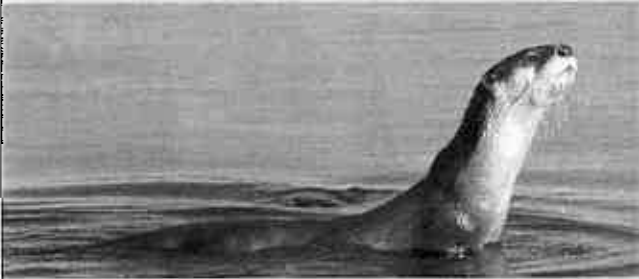
MIKE HARRISON

ROOI ELS MAY DAY, A DAY OF FIRSTS!

May 1st 2003 was one of those truly heavenly Rooi Els days that almost defy description- not so much as a zephyr, an azure sky with skeins of white silk for clouds, the sea a mobile reflection of the sky. An early low tide sent us post breakfast across the beach to harvest supper. At first we were oblivious to our travelling companions, a small family of baboons walking peacefully at a respectful distance in the same direction.

We set about our task of mussel collecting and took little notice of our followers. A chance upward glance saw the adults watching us with great interest but they then resumed their shared grooming activities. As we prepared to leave the rocks a female became attentive to us again. When we had reached a 'safe' distance she came down the rocks to our picking area and deftly plucked a mussel, cracked it open and ate it. She then repeated the process moving quickly upwards to avoid the incoming wave.

There is film footage of similar foraging activities, mainly with limpets, in other Cape Reserves but we have never observed this in Rooi Els before - has anyone else?



As sunset beckoned we took ourselves down to the rocky pools on the sea side of Rocklands Rd. to sit at the water's edge and be at one with Nature grateful for the glorious day we'd enjoyed. We were not to be disappointed. The sea slowly turned from its daytime colour of aquamarine into a crimson undulating sheet and thence to the purple of evening tide. Stunning and captivating as it was, we sat longer and drank it all in.

Birds returned to their varied roosts, as bats took their place in the growing dark, suddenly a distinctive sound cut the silence, then a second, a third until we heard a whistling chorus. Bemused as to the voices owners we searched our grey-matter for a match. Otters! Quite inadvertently we had sat ourselves in their 'homeward' path to the lagoon and either our chatter or presence had startled them, perhaps the intensity of their 'debate' was how to overcome this 'obstacle'.

We knew they were very close to us but in the dramatically fading light a sighting was hopeless. We solved the problem by reluctantly leaving mainly because of the very real danger of breaking a leg! Another first, for we have never been so close to otters in this area of Rooi Els and seem fated not to see them as the southern Rooi-Elsers so often do... (Yes, you do detect a touch of envy there!)

May Day was indeed a day of firsts for us and a reminder of just how special a place Rooi Els is and how privileged we are to call it home.

ALISON AYRE

KEEP THE OUTDOORS OUTDOORS!

For long, too long in fact, the peace-loving residents of Rooi Els have had to put up with the invasion of their homes by the denizens of the wild. Why, only this afternoon the latest in a long series of such intrusions occurred. A door was left open and a back turned briefly for less than two minutes and the unwelcome intruder entered...

A large Rock Jumper, strutting coolly through the entrance hall and into the sitting room. My Siamese cat was sleeping in a patch of sunlight in the room. It is just not right that a poor innocent feline should be subject to such agitation and that in his own home too!

Much chasing and waving of arms was necessary to induce the wild intruder to leave the way it entered. It even had the audacity to pause on the doorstep, whilst fluffing out its feathers and glaring defiantly with its beady eyes before it condescended to leave the premises.

It must be borne in mind that this was the latest in a whole series of such intrusions. Since only the beginning of this year there have been similar intrusions in my home by Mongoose, Genet, Chat and Cape Robin. Surely, something must be done about all this!

MICHAEL HARRISON

NS. Rooiels is een van die min plekke waar die Kaapse Berglyster (Cape Rock Jumper) by seespiëel gesien kan word. (Hulle is eintlik bergvoëls) Selfs oorsese voëlkykers kom hierheen vir hierdie interessante voëls.

HELP BEPERK FOSFATE IN RIOOLSTELSEL

Die munisipaliteit het laasjaar 'n pamflet uitgestuur oor die hantering van ons rioolstelsels. Die sisteme werk goed as dit goed ontwerp en goed onderhou word.

Hulle aanbevelings is:

- Afvloeiwater uit jou kombuis en badkamer moet eerder verby die tenk in die syferput ingelei word.
- Moenie olie en vet by die drein af gooi nie.
- Chemikalieë, verf asook growwe stowwe soos koffiemoer, sigaretstompies, doeke, ens moet uit die sisteem gehou geword.
- As die gras geil groei oor jou syferput, is daar moontlik fout erens. Maak dit oop en kyk of dit oorvol is. Maak die tenk in elk geval een keer per jaar oop en roer die inhoud om met 'n stok.
- Waspoeiers en huishoudelike skoonmakers moet fosfaatvry wees. (Die pamflet het 'n analise ingesluit van algemene produkte soos Sunlight, Gill, Dove en Skip se fosfaat inhoud. Almal het fosfate in en party is betreklik hoog. Daar is egter geen alternatiewe voorgestel nie.)

Rodine Wahl het 'n tyd terug 'n demonstrasie kom gee op Rooiels van fosfaatvrye skoonmaakmiddels. Dit word deur AMWAY vervaardig en word van die VSA ingevoer. Dit is duurder maar is so effektief dat dit baie langer hou, beter resultate gee en dus baie koste effektief is. (Mens gebruik ook kleiner hoeveelhede.) Dit word ook in omgewingsvriendelike verpakkingsmateriaal geberg. Party van ons gebruik nou reeds die produkte met groot welslae. Kontak Rodine (021 8523981, of 082 215 6971) om meer inligting te kry of kontak my vir 'n brosjure.

EVETTE WEYERS

DO THE RIGHT THING - TAKE OUT ALIEN INVADERS

The detrimental effect of alien invader plants on our natural resources and vegetation has been well researched, documented and publicized. We now have the Conservation of Agricultural Resources Act, No 43 of 1983(CARA) with its recent amended promulgated Regulations 15 and 16, which holds landowners responsible for the control of invading alien plants on their properties. Most of us are also aware of the work done by the National Working for Water Programme whose efforts has not only shown ecological benefits but also resulted in social up-liftment.

Although most people might understand and appreciate the need for controlling weeds and plant invaders, they are often selective in which plants need to be controlled. People in general do not object to the control of the more untidy looking weeds but provide great resistance in the control of those alien species that are more decorative. There also seems to be resistance in seeking alternatives to the exotic variants. We have such a variety of plants to choose from that we do not have to go the exotic route. We live in a country that is known for its floral diversity and attracts researchers from all over the world. It seems that man has this inborn need to transform his surroundings for some purpose or satisfy some need. Such transformation however is not always feasible or practical. For example, we live in an environment that is dominated by fynbos vegetation, so why try and establish a garden with plants that are not adapted to our conditions and were never meant to grow in our area in the first place? If a garden with large, shady trees and shrubs typify your ideal garden then you would do better to live in an area where conditions are conducive for the establishment of such a garden.

Fynbos has shown itself to be very susceptible to alien plant invasions, this not only applies to your more well-known invasive species such as Port Jackson, Pines, Rooikrans and *Eucalyptus* trees but also include grasses such as kikuyu (*Pennisetum clandestinum*). This susceptibility to alien plant invasions compounded by continued development places the functioning of one of the most unique vegetation types as an ecological unit in jeopardy. The word fynbos typifies a vegetation type that has earned world status and recognition. If the world can recognize its uniqueness and importance, why can't we?

DARELLE SNYMAN (NAT. DIP. NATURE CONSERVATION)



KEN ONS STERRE: DIE SKERPPIOEN

As die jagter Orion in die wintermaande saans met die son gaan slaap en bedags saam met die son jag, verskyn die Skerpioen in ons aandhemel. Orion en die Skerpioen is byna regoor mekaar in die ruimte, uit die aarde se oogpunt waargeneem. Daarom kan die twee selde saam gesien word. Afgesien van die Suiderkruis en Orion, is die Skerpioen die mees herkenbare sterrebeeld in die naglug. Met 'n bietjie verbeelding lyk dit nogal na 'n skerpioen. In die suidelike halfrond kan ons die hele Skerpioen sien, maar die mense in die noordelike halfrond sien nooit sy kenmerkende stert nie.

Vanaf die Suiderkruis kan 'n mens baie maklik by Scorpio uitkom. Verleng die afstand tussen Beta Crucis en Alpha Centauri tweemaal en mens kom by die Skerpioen se stert uit, waar dit in die melkweg sleep.

Die helderste ster in die Skerpioen is Antares, die hart van die Skerpioen. Hoewel Antares sowat 520 ligjare ver is, is dit die 15de helderste ster in die aarde se naglug. Dit is omdat Antares so ontsettend groot is met 'n deursnit van ongeveer 560 miljoen km. Dink bietjie daaraan - die son is maar 150 miljoen km van ons af! Om so 'n kolos soos Antares te probeer visualiseer gaan 'n mens se verstand te bowe.

UIT "KEN ONS STERRE - 'N GIDS VIR DIE
GROENTJIE" DEUR FRANZ CONRADIE,
ISBN 0-620-15932-4, KRANSBERG
KOMMUNIKASIES.

"EN MAG DIE SUIDERKRUIS EN NEGESTERRE
WITTER
AS DIE STADSLIGTE IN JOU SIEL BLY SKITTER"

= DJ OPPERMAN



DIE LEGENDE VAN DIE SKERPPIOEN EN ORION

Die magtige, vreeslose jagter Orion het eenkeer gespog dat hy al die diere op die aarde sou doodmaak.

Gaia, die aardgodin, was sy woedend toe sy dit hoor. Sy het die Skerpioen, die een diere wat Orion nie maklik sou bemerk nie, na Orion gestuur.

Die Skerpioen het hom in die hak gesteek en so die ondergang van die groot jagter bewerkstellig. Dit is waarom as die Skerpioen in die Ooste opkom, Orion in die Weste ondergaan.

DIE BURGER: WETENSKAP VANDAG,
23 JULIE 2003

Die aantal sterre in die verskillende galaktikas (7 gevolg deur 22 nulle) is waarskynlik tien keer soveel as al die sandkorrels op Aarde, het internasionale sterrekundiges op 22 Julie 2003 tydens hul jaarkongres in Australië aangekondig.

"MAAK ONS EENVOUDIG
SOOS HULLE WAT NABY DIE AARDE STAAN,
DIE STERRE SIEN,
DIE WINDE HOOR EN GLO"

- ERNST VAN HEERDEN



WEES VERLIG - SKAKEL AF

CLOSE ENCOUNTERS WITH MARS

MARS MAKES HISTORY

NEVER AGAIN IN OUR LIFETIME WILL THE RED PLANET BE SO SPECTACULAR!

In August the Earth is catching up with Mars, an encounter that will culminate in the closest approach between the two planets in recorded history.

According to both the U.S. Naval Observatory and NASA the encounter will culminate on August 27th when Mars comes to within 55,758,006 km and will be (next to the moon) the brightest object in the night sky. The last time Mars came this close to Earth was 57 617 BC, when Mars came within 55,718 million km from the Earth.

Mars will be easy to spot. At the beginning of August Mars will rise in the East at 10 p.m. and reach its azimuth at about 3 a.m. But by the end of August when the two planets are closest, Mars will rise at nightfall and reach its highest point in the sky at 12:30 a.m. That's very convenient when it comes to seeing something that no human has seen in recorded history. A small backyard telescope will show as much detail on Mars as the naked eye can see on the moon.

Mars is the 4th planet from the sun; Earth is the 3rd. When Earth passes Mars in its orbit, we make our closest approach and Mars appears relatively bright. When Earth and Mars are on opposite sides of the sun, Mars is at its most distant and appears relatively dim. But if the Earth passes Mars when Earth is near aphelion (when the Earth is at its greatest distance from the sun), and Mars is near perihelion (when Mars is at its closest distance from the sun), Earth and Mars come much closer to each other than at a 'normal' close approach. This happens roughly every 15 years, and these are the 'great oppositions'. Some are 'greater' than others. The last time Mars was nearly this close was in 1924, while the opposition of 1988 (15 years ago) was not quite as good.

BUT WHY IS THIS YEAR THE BEST IN NEARLY 60,000 YEARS?

Both Earth and Mars follow elliptical orbits around the sun (i.e. not circular), and their shape slowly changes. The orbit of Mars has been gradually getting more elliptical, which means that Mars is making slightly closer approaches to the sun now than, say, 20,000 years ago. In 2287, Mars will be slightly closer to Earth than it will be even this August.

So catch the Red Planet this year. No one alive today will ever see this again!

KNOCK LIGHT POLLUTION LIGHTS OUT!

"Telescopes are in some ways like time machines. They reveal galaxies so far away that their light has taken billions of years to reach us. We in astronomy have an advantage in studying the universe, in that we can actually see the past.

We owe our existence to stars, because they make the atoms of which we are formed. So if you are romantic you can say we are literally starstuff. If you're less romantic you can say we're the nuclear waste from the fuel that makes stars shine."

SIR MARTIN REES; ASTRONOMER ROYAL OF GREAT BRITAIN

"WE HAVE LOVED THE STARS TOO FONDLY TO BE FEARFUL OF THE NIGHT."

- TOMBSTONE EPITAPH OF TWO AMATEUR ASTRONOMERS

HUISDIERE IN 'N BIOSFEER



Die verbintenis tussen mens en dier is seker so oud soos die berge. Langenhoven vertel dat toe God die kloof tussen mens en dier oopgespalt hê (na die sondeval) het die hond met sy voorpote oor die afgrond gespring sodat die kloof nie te groot word nie (en dis hoekom ons honde teen ons opspring.)

Daar is egter al gepraat oor die wenslikheid om huisdiere in die biosfeer reservaat te hê, al dan nie, reeds weens die skade wat huisdiere al aangerig het. Swarttobies was van hulle neste afgehou deur honde, 'n otter welpie kon nie byhou by sy ouers toe honde hulle gejaag het nie, êns.

Volgens Craig Spencer saai katte egter ongesiens die grootste verwoesting weens die voëleiertyes wat hulle eet en veldmuise, voëltjies, geitjies en klein skilpadjies wat hulle vang.

Hoe nou gemaak? Huisdiere is soos familie vir sommige en verryk ons lewens. Hulle is die gepreksgenote en warmte in baie mense se lewens, sekuriteit. Hulle is die spits ore vir gaste of bobbejane se aankoms. En die mens rig tog baie meer skade aan in die biosfeer as katte en honde!

Wat van 'n goue middeweg? As ons huisdiere het, moet ons volle verantwoordelikheid vir hulle aanvaar. Moet nooit dat die hond op sy eie deur die dorp gaan loop nie. Honde jag in troppe. Twee of meer honde wat saam rondloop om te jag of aas kan baie skade aanrig. Hou jou honde tuis of onder beheer as jy met hulle gaan stap. Honde leer gou om nie die fisante, wat op die werf kom eet, te verwilder nie. Sit 'n klokkie om jou kat se nek om die voëls, muise, geitjies, ens te waarsku.

Ons kan voortdurend beter leer saamleef tot die voordeel van almal in die biosfeer.

EVETTE WEYERS

LET'S KEEP OUR BEACH PRISTINE. PLEASE TAKE ALONG A "DOGGY BAG" WHEN TAKING YOUR DOG TO THE BEACH AND CLEAN UP.



LEARNING OUR LOCAL CROAKERS: PART 3

ARE OUR CACOS A DISTINCT SPECIES?

Another frog species occurring in the Rooiels Reserve is the Common Caco (*Cacosternum boettgeri*) which is widespread from Agulhas to Addis Ababa. However, populations in the Cape, including Rooiels, are currently under study by researchers at the University of the Western Cape and the Transvaal Museum. These populations may be considered to be a distinct species restricted to the Fynbos biome.

Cacos are small tubby frogs, around 25 mm long, with short legs, long toes and a raised white gland beneath their eye. In general, the fynbos Cacos have mud-brown coloured backs, perhaps with a greenish sheen, but their most distinctive features are big black spots on their white tummies.

At Rooiels, Caco choruses form after the first soaking rains in May - June and continue calling until mid-October. The call is a rapid, accelerating ratchet sound, a bit like a marble dropped close to the floor, but merges into a penetrating continuous roar in larger choruses. In contrast to the other species Cacos form huge congregations around seepage pools in the reserve, particularly those just above the high tide mark on the western side of Long Pool. This is surprising as these pools endure constant salt spray and periodic swamping by waves. The Cacos certainly cannot survive in brine.

After the great 24th / 25th May 2002 storm, which removed vegetation in excess of two metres above the pools, the pools were kelp-filled and silent. Not even a month and a half later, we found the Cacos bravely calling at their pools again! No self-respecting female could have been tempted to deposit her eggs in that rotting kelp sludge, but the heavy rains had obviously rinsed enough salt from the water for the zealous males to return to station.

The prescribed fire in the reserve, five years ago now, had severely burned this area and had dampened the enthusiasm of the Cacos somewhat, but the choruses have been gradually building up again over the past winters. Chorusing Cacos are less secretive about their individual calling spots, usually perched on a restio, sedge or other vegetation just where this enters the water, but the real difficulty is to pick out an individual from the chorus. Scattered itinerants can be heard from other pools in the reserve, but these tend to be very shy, away from the aural shelter of their kind.

MICHAEL CUNNINGHAM & KATE HENDERSON

FROGGING EVE: ENDANGERED MICRO FROG WINS HEARTS

In our first "Learn your Local Croakers" evening, held on Monday 21st July, around 25 biosphere reserve residents and other interested people braved the cold to discover some frogs of the Kogelberg coast. The dry winter has left many species without their usual breeding sites and together with a brisk wind on the night, this ensured that many fewer frogs were calling than expected for this time of year.

Not to be put off by a chilly breeze, we began with an aural tour in the western corner of the Rooiels Nature Reserve where Clicking Stream Frogs 'tock' among the wet Restios and Common Cacos, in seepage pools just above the spring-tide line, sound like packets of bouncing marbles competing with the waves below. The next stop was at Lorna Lindsay's dam above Rooiels where we encountered adults and tadpoles of the imperturbable Clicking Stream Frog. Along with several small males was a much larger female frog who had already laid her eggs for the season - at least someone was making the best of a slow year.

By this stage it was well into the evening and only an occasional squelch was heard from the day-calling Banded Stream Frogs in the surrounding winter wetland. Another diurnal species, Villiers' Chirping Frog, is very abundant in these wetlands but its cricket-like calling generally ceases at dusk. Our final stop was at Rondevlei in Betty's Bay where we found large choruses of Micro Frogs prevailing over the wind. This critically endangered Kogelberg coast specialty prefers to call from vegetated shallow water around the edge of the lake. After a brief struggle to access a chorus, we regrouped at the waters edge near the chapel path. In spite of a howling gale and few frogs calling on our side, we soon discovered several juvenile Cape River Frogs and the gem of the evening - a wee Micro Frog. Although frogs were the subject of the moment we could not but notice a very healthy population of the indigenous freshwater fish, *Galaxias*, in Rondevlei.

To round off the evening's frogging we retired to the Henderson house in Rooiels for Gluhwein, snacks and lively discussions - out of the wind.

BEAR AWARENESS

During a recent visit to the Yosemite National park in California, we as visitors were expected to sign a Bear Awareness clause, part of the conditions of admission to the park and all its hotels, lodges and camps. This obliged one to be 'bear aware' - no food or aromatic cosmetics are allowed to be stored in a car overnight. When camping in the formal camps in the park village, no food is allowed in the tents. Everyone has to use the steel food lockers that are provided away from the tent.

The list of do's and don'ts for backpackers through the back and high country is even longer. Safety for visitors is one of the reasons for this clause, but it is also a conservation measure. Bear numbers grow slowly. A bear that has become 'addicted' to human food and constantly visits human habitation to obtain this, has to be exterminated. This is too high a price to pay for the bear population living in its natural environment.



If a visitor's recalcitrance or carelessness does attract a bear, resulting in vehicle damage, not only will he probably not be compensated, but he will probably receive fines for attracting bears to human food and habitation and have to pay for any other damage that this careless or selfish behaviour has brought about.

Living in the Biosphere, I wondered whether it may be time to introduce a Baboon Awareness document, that obliges the visitor, resident or owner to sign that he is aware that he has opted to holiday or live in a baboon area. This is a habitat that shrinks daily as man develops and destroys more and more of baboon feeding range. (Estate agents, would be obliged to inform would-be purchasers of the biosphere and the responsibilities entailed, including the clause, while travel agents and the hospitality services in the area would have to inform clients of the clause).

In Yosemite, one is not given a choice about whether you like or want bears in or around the villages. They are part of the scene. Your behaviour has to be adapted to the wild, not the other way round. Should one be injured or suffer damage because of inappropriate behaviour, one will also be penalised for this behaviour in an environment set aside for the conservation of fauna.

In Rooiels the residents, visitors and owners need to be made responsible for coming to live in a 'wilder' environment. The onus is on them to ensure properly designed homes and lifestyles that suit the environment. Human impact has already meant that the environment has had to adapt and if living in a biosphere means interfacing and living together harmoniously, man has to give up some of his city ways - just as the environment has already had to forfeit through the impact by man.

CAMPAIGNS TO BEARPROOF ALL GARBAGE CONTAINERS IN WILD AREAS HAVE BEEN DIFFICULT BECAUSE, AS ONE BIOLOGIST PUT IT, THERE IS A CONSIDERABLE OVERLAP BETWEEN THE INTELLIGENCE LEVELS OF THE SMARTEST BEARS AND THE DUMBEST TOURISTS!

We need to know our place in the ecology of this place. The move to tame it - to remove all the irritations of living out of the city, especially by those who only visit randomly and intermittently, is not acceptable. If the spiders and ants are unacceptable, the grysbokkie is eating the leaves of a precious shrub, the baboons are trying to break into the homes, the porcupine digs up bulbs **and these things anger you, know then** that you are not living in the correct place for you. Those who choose to live here in community with each other and in harmonious rhythm with our wild co-habitees, are the richer for it.

DEBBY DE VRIES



PLEASE DON'T FEED BABOONS - A FED BABOON IS A DEAD BABOON!

RESCUING THE MARSH ROSE A PHOENIX RISING OUT OF THE ASHES

Fifty years ago the Marsh Rose (*Orothamnus zeyheri*) was to be found fairly widespread in the Kogelberg mountains, especially on the south-facing damp slopes. Its beautiful flower attracted both the botanists and the public and it is reported that, at one stage, the flowers could be bought at the flower market in Cape Town. This practice of picking the flowers seriously reduced Marsh Rose colonies. Eventually the only known source of the Marsh Rose was on private land at Maanskynkop to the North of the Hermanus mountains.

The department of Forestry was aware of the danger facing the survival of the Marsh Rose in the Kogelberg and the whole area was closed to the public. Nevertheless, by 1966 the situation had become critical and only one known colony remained. This consisted of 11 plants in an area of about 400 square metres on the uppermost, soggy south-facing slopes of the peak to the West of Voorberg. In an attempt to protect this from further plundering, it was decided to fence it off. Materials for a high fence of meshed barbed wire were laboriously carried to the site, a strip astride the fence was cleared of vegetation and the fence duly erected.

Imagine the surprise and delight of departmental staff when, a few months later, numerous Marsh Rose seedlings appeared in the cleared strip astride the fence. The surrounding vegetation on this damp and misty site consisted of a dense growth up to three metres high, overshadowing a thick surface mat of slowly decomposing leaf material. It was thus assumed that this leaf material had prevented the Marsh Rose seeds from reaching mineral soil in order to germinate which they had done rapidly along the fence. It was also assumed that the seeds were relatively long lived and could therefore still be viable at other sites.



During 1967 high level meetings were held with departmental research officers and Kirstenbosch staff with the object of deciding how to encourage germination in all potential sites, although such sites had not been identified. The whole of the Kogelberg had been successfully protected from fire for a number of years and much of the vegetation was mature or even moribund. It was agreed that the best way, theoretically, to stimulate the regeneration of the Marsh Rose was to burn the whole of the Kogelberg, preferably at the height of the dry season, as would have been the case under natural conditions.

Knowing the risks involved in any large block burn, even out of the high fire hazard period, regional management was unable to accept this recommendation, but did agree to burn the whole of the Kogelberg in four naturally divided sections in autumn/winter during the ensuing four years. The first burn took place in July 1968 and involved the simultaneous lighting of the block perimeter from its four corners by a force of over a hundred Forestry staff. This took from 9:00 to 14:00 before all the lines joined and the interior was allowed to burn itself out. It was a still and warm day and that evening from Cape Town one could see the full moon rising through an immense mushroom cloud of smoke. It was an amazing sight and made one think, hopefully, of the Phoenix rising out of the ashes. The operation was a success, as were the three succeeding burns.

During this period, Dr Charlie Boucher of the Botanical Research Institute was conducting a survey in the Kogelberg and he was invaluable in recording the germination of new colonies of the Marsh Rose. In all, at least a dozen colonies were found throughout the Kogelberg, mainly on south and east facing slopes affected by sea breezes, mist and cloud. It was found, however, that the Marsh Rose is highly susceptible to root rot fungus (*Phytophthora cinnamomi*) so access to the sites was made by boardwalks or limited pathways, since damage to the root system by trampling often resulted in the death of the plants.

The important lesson learnt from this operation is that fire is a vital function in the ecology of fynbos. Total protection from fire, can sometimes do more harm than good. In this case, the fortuitous clearing of the strip astride the fence probably saved the Marsh Rose from potential extinction.

JOHN E COBBY
DISTRICT FOREST OFFICER 1964-1973
REGIONAL DIRECTOR OF FORESTRY 1985-1989

BIRD CHAT

DID YOU KNOW?

The first true bird (i.e. with feathers) was *Archaeopteryx* which was found in Bavaria, Germany. There were other flying reptiles at the same period but their "wings" were made of stretched skin much like a modern day bat. It is feathers and flight that identifies an animal as a bird. *Archaeopteryx* closely resembled several small meat eating dinosaurs of the period. Further scientific evidence and new discoveries of similar fossils have led to the widely accepted view that birds are the descendants of certain types of dinosaurs.

SURPRISE!

Despite its rich plant diversity the fynbos biome is relatively 'poor' in bird species and numbers relative to other biomes in Southern Africa. However it is pertinent to remember that there are 900 + birds in South Africa alone! Of these 99 are endemic (i.e. they are found nowhere else on Earth) and 72 are near endemic (i.e. found only in close proximity of South Africa).

Over a period of 16 years we have recorded over 160 birds in Rooi Els and its immediate environs. 27 of these are endemic and 8 are near endemic; therefore the area is a terrific place to learn about birds!

We are often asked about bird watching, where to go, what to look for etc. So for this Bird Chat I thought it would be helpful to give a few 'pointers'.

WHAT DO YOU NEED TO IDENTIFY BIRDS?

1. Your ears and eyes are a great start! Bird calls have been recorded on tapes and CDs and do help enormously but are not essential to start with. However a pair of binoculars really is a must. Telescopes and specialised birding scopes are much more expensive and also more difficult to learn to use - by the time you've focused on the bird it's all too often flown!

2. A field guide and/or a bird handbook should be on the shopping list. One book is not always enough, some drawings, photographs, etc are better in one book than another.

3. Specialised clothing isn't required unless of course you want to study pelagic seabirds - where a s'wester and waders would be rather more sensible than takkies and t-shirt!

OK, I'VE GOT THE GEAR, WHAT DO I LOOK FOR?

1. WHAT SIZE IS THE BIRD QUESTION?

Think about a bird that you are familiar with. Is this new bird larger or smaller than the original? An approximation is all that's required.

2. WHAT SHAPE AND COLOUR IS THE BILL?

The shape is indicative of diet; e.g. a short chunky bill suggests a seed-eater, a short slender bill an insectivorous bird. The colour gives a diagnostic aid to the bird watcher.

3. WHAT COLOUR AND SHAPE ARE THE LEGS?

Colour again is a diagnostic aid and the length of leg suggests the type of bird; e.g. medium to long legs would be indicative of a wader or water bird.

4. WHAT ARE THE STRIKING FEATURES OF THE PLUMAGE?

Look for the colours, any strong markings; e.g. eye stripes, chest barring and tones of colour. The eye itself often gives valuable information.

5. WHERE IS THE BIRD?

Did you see it in a bush, scurrying along the water's edge, near fresh or salt water, on the ground, in a rocky habitat, etc?

6. WHAT WAS THE BIRD DOING?

Behaviour is a massive help in identification - was it eating and if so, what? Its flight pattern? Was it probing the ground? Was it hawking insects? Acting aggressively towards others?



Birds provide endless pleasure simply by being SO varied. As winter's chill sends us on a sweater hunt and the shortening days produce the sweet smell of wood smoke in Rooi Els, keep an eye open for the petrels, shearwaters and even albatross, the worse the weather the more likely you'll see them skimming the wave tops and grumpy-grey seas of winter.

Have fun and happy birding!

ALISON AYRE

WAT GROEI OP ONS EILAND?

ERICA GENGOLD - DIE GOUE HEIDE



Erica Gengold is 'n nuwe hibried wat hier uit ons gebied kom, dis skaars, en dit staan op die Groot Eiland.

Die storie begin by *Erica nana*, wat net in die Hottentots-Holland- en Kogelberge voorkom. Dis stadiggroeiend, en kruip oor klippe en rotswande. Dit kan polle van so 1 m in omtrek vorm, wat slegs 300mm hoog is. Dit word as "skaars" geklassifiseer ek weet van net een plant teen Klein Hangklip, wat elke jaar skreeugeel blom.

As *Erica nana* die mamma is, dan is *Erica patersonia* die pappa. William Paterson het in die 1777s saam met sy vriend, kol. Robert Gordon al met die kus langs om die koppe gekom. Gordon het 'n kaart van die gebied getrek, en die eerste baai na Kogelbaai na Paterson vernoem. Vandag heet dit Rooi-Els.

Paterson, 'n Britse naturalis, het die plante aangeteken en by Hangklip die mooiste blomme in sy lewe gesien en beskryf: *Erica Patersonia*. Dis die goudegeel heide wat sulke selfvoldane plate staan en blom by die afdraaipad na Bettysbaai. Mielieheide, is die volksnaam, en dit kom voor vanaf Kaappunt tot Hermanus waar sy habitat nie oorgeneem is deur behuisingsontwikkeling nie. ('n Paar Rooi-Elsers, soos Hettie Claassens, het daarvan in die tuin, dis soms te koop by die Harold Porter.)

Nana en *Patersonia* het mekaar in die Harold Porter Natuurtuin ontmoet, een ding het gelei tot 'n ander, en toe Alfred van der Zeyde, die kurator van die sewentigerjare weer kyk, staan daar klompe kindertjies. Hulle het al die beste eienskappe van die ouers geërf: 'n mooi kompakte plant soos die *Erica nana*, met digte blaargroei soos die *Erica patersonia*. Steggies het ook maklik gegroei daarvan.

En toe kom die blomme. Pragtig geel en somer sulke dik trosse daarvan in September, Oktober. Dolf Schumann, medeskrywer van "Erikas van Suid-Afrika", het die naam Erica Gengold voorgestel, en die kind het naam gekry. Die pragtige digte plant aard goed in potte en rotstuine, waar dit laag groei en oor die rotse tuimel. Dit kan redelik skadu verduur, maar moet baie lig hê, en blom beter in die vol son.

Dis moeilik bekombaar net kwekerye wat gelisensieer is daarvoor mag dit verbou, en Kirstenbosch het verlede jaar 'n skamele 300 beskikbaar gestel. Daar loop ek dit sowaar raak by die Fynbos Kwekery in Meulstraat, Caledon, en koop twee vir die Groot Eiland!

Hierdie lente dus, as dit geel blom en dit lyk soos heide, is dit *Erica Gengold*, en dis *ons* s'n. Hopelik maak hulle nog kindertjies.

© DINE VAN ZYL

BRONNE:

BURMAN, LEE EN BEAN, ANNE: HOTTENTOTS-HOLLAND TOT HERMANUS, VELDBLOMGIDS VAN SUID-AFRIKA 5, BOTANIESE VERENIGING VAN SUID-AFRIKA
ANTHONY HITCHCOCK: ERICA GENGOLD THE GOLDEN HYBRID. VELD & FLORA, SEPT. 2002
PATERSON, LT WILLIAM: NARRATIVE OF FOUR TRAVELS INTO THE COUNTRY OF THE HOTTENTOTS AND CAFFRARIA, 1778/9. LONDON, J. JOHNSON 1789.

LIDMAATSKAP OF SKENKINGS

REBV BANKREKENINGNOMMER:

ABSA 29-0016-6152

TAKKODE 334-712

STUUR LIDMAATBESONDERHEDE AAN: DIE SEKRETARIS, REBV, POSBUS 89,
BETTY'SBAAI, 7141.

RERA COMMITTEE 2003

Chairperson, Public Relations & Breeze:

Estelle Raymond
tel: h: (021) 976 7116
Cell: 083 230 9658
e-mail: eraymond@mweb.co.za

Treasurer, Federation of Ratepayers'

Hacks:

Shirley Richter
tel: (028) 2738027
e-mail: irichter@mweb.co.za

Secretary & Website :

Julia Aalbers
tel: (021) 976 4378
e-mail: jaalbers@icon.co.za

CBD & Liason:

Hettie Claassens
tel: (028) 273 8472
e-mail: comzone@global.co.za

Conservation

Debby de Vries
tel: (028) 273 8037
E-mail: rooiels@isat.co.za

Conservation:

Kate Henderson
Cell: 072 447 4485

Small Holdings, Federation of Ratepayers' Postbox & Council Watch:

Mike Harrison (Co-opted)
tel: (028) 273 8569

Roads, Security & Vison Development:

Rob Fryer
Cell: 082 801 5280
E-mail: fryerr@sans.co.za

VISIT/BESOEK: WWW.ROOIELS.ORG.ZA



FOTO: DINE VAN ZYL

UNITED BY OUR PASSION FOR THE NATURAL SPLENDOUR OF ROOIELS,
WE PLEDGE THAT HERE..
NATURE WILL BE NURTURED,
FLORA, FAUNA AND MARINE LIFE PROTECTED,
OUR EVERY IMPACT ON THE ENVIRONMENT LIMITED
SO THAT OUR LIVES.. AND THOSE OF GENERATIONS TO COME..
WILL CONTINUE TO BE ENRICHED BY THIS ETHOS.