

BRIES ~ BREEZE

Rooiels 2023

Nuus van die mense, Belastingbetalersvereniging, Bewarea, Sekuriteitsassosiasie, en Bootklub
News from the people, Ratepayers' Association, Conservancy, Security Association, and Boat Club



20 YEARS of
CONSERVATION

WhatsApp groups



Rooiels Communications, for information, official notifications, and also for urgent communication on immediate issues

Village People - chat group to connect, share photos, event notices, and request information (KEEP IT LIGHT AND DON'T SPAM WITH ADVERTS)

Rooiels Matters - where villagers can debate issues and discuss the pros and cons of projects to help them make informed decisions about the village (DO NOT ADVERTISE, ANNOUNCE, OR CHAT HERE)

ReWild - where nature lovers share numerous photos and information on flora, fauna, and nature in general

The official Safety and Security group, **Rooi Els Block Watch**, is for Rooielsers to alert fellow villagers about incidents - *not to chat about the efficiency of processes*. To be added to this group, please send a WhatsApp message to: Peter Koning on 0824911463 or Hilgard Muller on 0828988202.



Mailing List

The Rooiels Associations use a mailing list system, called Mailchimp. Several settings in this system determine whether you will receive a general or topic-specific email.

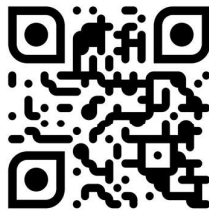
When people subscribe to the Rooiels mailing list system, some interests are set automatically. At the bottom of each email you will note three links: **why did I get this?, unsubscribe from this list**, and **update subscription preferences**.

If you unsubscribe, you will receive NO FURTHER EMAILS until you resubscribe. No one can undo that setting on your behalf.

It is better to update your subscription preferences where you can view your current preferences and select/unselect topics that interest you.

To subscribe, scan the code or go to:

<http://eepurl.com/hDA3kD>



COVER PAGE:
WILLIE DU PLOOY
FYNBOS GARDEN:
KOGELBERG NATURE
RESERVE

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BOB BAIGRIE ✿ ESTELLE RAYMOND ✿ STEVEN MULLINS
DEBBY DE VRIES ✿ KAY LERESCHE ✿ IVAN BECKER

WELCOME

We must find the words to encourage others for the greater good.



WILLIE DU PLOOY

Thank you sincerely for the warm reception of last year's Breeze. It's truly inspiring to see how our exploration of the village's history has enlightened even the most knowledgeable villagers. For those who haven't yet had a chance to read it, a few copies might still be available through RERA.

As we delve into Breeze 2023, we shift our spotlight from RERA to REC, highlighting the remarkable conservation efforts that make Rooiels unique. The contributions within these pages come from individuals deeply dedicated to our village's future. Equally invaluable has been the meticulous effort of our sub-editors and proofreaders, whose keen eyes and dedication to detail have greatly enhanced the quality of this edition. Their tireless work behind the scenes has been instrumental in bringing these stories to life, ensuring that each word resonates with the care and passion reflective of our community.

Once again, I extend my appreciation to everyone in Rooiels who contributes their time and energy. Your steadfast commitment is what keeps our village's spirit alive and thriving. You are the true heroes of Rooiels, transforming it into more than just a location on the map. Thanks to your sacrifices and joint efforts, newcomers can discover and appreciate this exquisite piece of paradise.

In our quest for deeper understanding, it's important to recognize how easily our perceptions can be skewed. Often, quotes are misattributed to figures like the Roman emperor, Marcus Aurelius, but they still ring true. Like this one: "Everything we hear is an opinion, not a fact. Everything we see is a perspective, not the truth. Our understanding of events and situations is filtered through our personal biases, experiences, and interpretations. This reminds us to question and seek a deeper understanding [and truth] rather than accepting things at face value."

Our inherent focus on the negative is deeply rooted in our survival instincts. This tendency, known as negativity bias, often causes us to linger on less favourable experiences or disagreements. Yet, it's this very instinct that can become a catalyst for positive action, particularly in safeguarding our cherished environment. The apprehension about potentially losing the natural

beauty of our surroundings can inspire us to redouble our conservation efforts. Importantly, this inclination towards caution should not prevent us from placing our trust in others or from actively contributing to the realisation of the Rooiels Vision. By acknowledging and redirecting our natural tendencies, we can transform them into powerful drivers for communal harmony and environmental stewardship.

As we look to the future, let's challenge ourselves: Are we adding to the positivity or lingering in past disputes? A good test for when you do or say something, is to ask yourself: "Am I being helpful or hurtful?" Perhaps the time is ripe for us to regroup and start anew, finding ways to collaborate with those we've disagreed with and move past old hurts. Our aim should be to build a brighter, more unified Rooiels, transforming every challenge into a chance for growth and unity. Let's stop dwelling on the past and instead find ways to inspire and encourage one another for the greater good of our community.

So, as you delve into the reflections and stories of the past year, let each page inspire you towards positive action and a shared vision for our village. Together, we can transform challenges into stepping stones for a thriving, united Rooiels.

Integrity has no need of rules!

Albert Camus

Willie



TERESA ELS

Congratulations on the 20th anniversary of the Rooiels Conservancy. You should be very proud of your sheer determination and hard work over the years. I know that Rooielsers have cared for the environment long before the establishment of the Conservancy and I know that your legacy will inspire future generations to tread lightly and live in harmony with our natural world.

“Life is what happens to us while we are making other plans.”¹

Mother Nature – life – truly threw some curveballs this year. We had grand plans but when the rains came in May and ended in such a severe storm in September, it was inevitable that we would divert attention and resources to where it was needed most while planned projects had to be paused. As I write this, work on roads and stormwater systems has started and is progressing well. In Rooiels, repairs to the damaged paved roads have started and I believe that new street name signs have been supplied. Please be patient with the repairs of the rest of the roads while the teams catch up on their backlog.

The waterpipe replacement project, which had been completed for Rooiels in 2022, has now also been completed for other areas and work has begun at the wastewater treatment plant which will be upgraded over the following three years. The storm has caused some delays for that project, but they are mostly on track.

Fortunately, most of our areas did not suffer water outages because of the storm, but as you are aware, several roads were affected with the Palmiet Bridge and the section of Clarence Drive between Rooiels and Steenbras River suffering the most damage. Work on both sections is progressing well and hopefully, by the time you read this, one lane and a stop/go system should be in place on Clarence Drive.

For the most part, citizens are using the Pringle Bay household waste drop-off point, the Betty’s Bay garden refuse drop-off point, and the Kleinmond waste transfer plant appropriately. When you transport garden refuse in an open vehicle, such as a bakkie, it must be covered with a net. If you deliver garden refuse to the drop-off point in bags, these must be emptied at the site and the bags must be taken away.

Sadly, the odd repeat offenders and weekenders remain the weak points in our aim to live in harmony with wildlife. We still experience inappropriate waste management in that people put household waste out on the wrong days, or when they leave bags unsecured at the Pringle Bay drop-off point. This drop-off point is cleaned up and closed at 16:00 every day, and residents should then make every effort to ensure that late drop-offs are done responsibly so that animals cannot get to it. The garbage collection days for the areas are Rooiels on Mondays, Betty’s Bay Sunny Seas area on Tuesdays, the rest of Betty’s Bay on Wednesdays, and Pringle Bay on Thursdays. People, especially weekenders,

should not put bags out on days when they won’t be collected. Last year monitors were appointed to alert residents of poor waste management, but fines are now being issued to offenders. Public bins should be emptied every day (and weekenders should not use these for household waste). If you spot a bin that was skipped, kindly log it on the Collaborator app.

Preventing access to food sources through responsible waste management or entry to homes remains the number one factor to successful coexistence with wildlife. Baboons, mongooses, crows, and even pets may tear garbage bags in search of food. Pet food and birdseed attract baboons which may become a nuisance to others. While we are on the topic of baboons, I can report that the early warning system we have in place for two baboon troops in Betty’s Bay and Pringle Bay serves to alert residents about the presence of one or more baboons. Remember, individual baboons sometimes stray a bit from the rest of the troop and may surprise an unsuspected resident. Remain vigilant and expect baboons – and other wildlife – to be in the vicinity. No firm decisions have been made about the future of any baboon management programme and as you may be aware, this is not an activity that the municipality receives funding for. I remain hopeful that the successful coexistence model that Rooielsers have achieved, will also work for other areas. Please remain mindful that it is illegal to feed or harm a baboon.

Speed management on the R44 and the safety of village entrances remain on our radar and forms part of the draft Ward 10 Integrated Development Plan (IDP). This plan is in its final review stages and will shortly serve in front of the budget steering committee.

We are putting the final touches on new welcome signs for the three villages and the administration is hard at work to ensure that public spaces and services are ready for

¹ John Lennon used this phrase in his 1980s song “Beautiful Boy (Darling Boy)”, but it is attributed to Alan Saunders who used it in the January 1957 issue of Reader’s Digest. <https://www.snopes.com/fact-check/john-lennon-life-happens-quote/> (accessed: 15 November 2023).

holidaymakers. Please help educate visitors about keeping dogs on leashes and picking up droppings, and to stay clear of bird breeding sites on beaches. We have submitted a request to the Kelp collectors to refrain from removing kelp around breeding sites. This, and the fact that kelp collectors traverse sensitive dunes, have been discussed on several committees and we remain hopeful that we'll find an acceptable way forward.


I am pleased to report that citizens are using the Collaborator app very well, and that the odd glitches with the app are resolved quickly. This remains the preferred way to report incidents and to order tanker services. Two other tools have become available more recently. One is the Kogelberg Coastal Area Reporting and Engagement (C.A.R.E.) app to report incidents of poaching, pollution or marine wildlife strandings. Users can also quickly report sightings of wildfires in the fynbos-heart of the Kogelberg. The other is the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment's (DFFE) e-Permit online process (see QR code on the Boat Club page) to obtain recreational fishing permits.



Once again, congratulations on your Conservancy anniversary. The tireless commitment from Rooielsers who hack, clean beaches, rehabilitate dunes, and educate neighbours is truly encouraging.

As a very challenging year draws to a close, my wish is that you and your loved ones will be able to enjoy some quality time together. May you have a wonderful festive season and all the best for 2024. *S*



	Overstrand Collaborator App	
Android		Apple

	Overstrand Ward 10 (3) WhatsApp Community
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Eskom Alfred Chatbot https://alfred.eskom.co.za/chatroom/	
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	Kogelberg Coastal Area Reporting and Engagement (CARE)	
Android		Apple

	EskomSePush (ESP)	
Android		Apple

	Load Shedding Notifier	
Android		Apple





PIET VAN RENSBURG

- Open communication and bridge-building with everyone
- Transparency so that Rooielsers know what we do and plan to do
- Consultation with Rooielsers on important Exco decisions
- Accountability of Exco through open meetings and the AGM

RERA COMMUNICATION, CONSULTATION, AND BRIDGE-BUILDING

Throughout the year we sought to meet with, listen to, and keep in touch with everyone in our village and the municipality. We held open meetings in April and November, covering RERA and Ward 10 matters while Tom and Achim as our bridge-building team met throughout the year with members of previous ExcOs, residents, and other Rooiels associations and groups to learn about their perspectives.

We published a quarterly Rooiels Newsletter featuring information from various Rooiels organisations and Ward 10 meetings. We also responded to requests and challenges raised via WhatsApp and issued six notices seeking feedback and communicating our views and decisions. Finally, we regularly published the minutes of our meetings on the Rooiels website.

Building on valuable work undertaken by several Rooielsers, we revitalised the process of amending RERA's Constitution by conducting a survey, organising a workshop and making a small number of initial proposals to make the RERA Constitution more inclusive. We hope that this work can continue next year through an open process so that all villagers can shape our Ratepayers' Association.

During the worst of this winter's weather and road closures, we maintained telephonic communications with the Overstrand Municipality (OM) Mayor

and the Ward 10 councillor, passing on via WhatsApp verified and up-to-date status reports during and after the storms when the roads to and from Rooiels were closed, houses were flooded, and the Eskom power interrupted for days.

ENGAGEMENT IN OVERSTRAND POLICY MATTERS

RERA engaged extensively with OM on policy initiatives and land use matters, considering the views of those villagers who responded to our requests for feedback. The main topics addressed include the Firewise Vacant Erven plot-clearing policy, road calming measures, the Rooiels Overlay Zone (RECOZ), the proposed Lighting by-law under the Hangklip Villages Conservation Overlay Zone (HCOZ), and the Overstrand Integrated Development Planning (IDP), and the 2022 to 2027 budget preparation. In some instances, we were heard and successful, but many initiatives have not yet been concluded, so our work, often with our counterparts in Pringle Bay and Betty's Bay continues as we aim to ensure that OM decisions align with the Rooiels Vision.

Exco gauged the opinion of RERA members and residents on several occasions and obtained clear guidance to inform the Exco's decisions. These led to engagement with OM on specific land use matters focused on several reports of illegal structures that were built without plans, deviated from plans, or were in violation of OM regulations, as well as issues about derelict houses.

One specific decision to highlight is that RERA would not join the action brought by three parties against the OM relating to the process followed in the appeal against the planning permission for a distillery on Portion 141 of farm Hangklip 559. We did so in

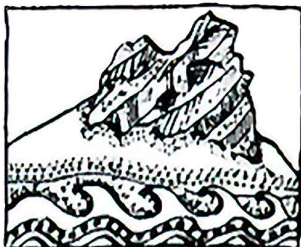
During 2023 the RERA Exco endeavoured to stay true to the RERA Constitution's Vision which aspires to create and maintain an ecologically well-balanced area in which indigenous flora, fauna, marine, and human life can coexist and thrive in harmony.

With this Vision in mind, we aimed to promote the interests of Rooiels ratepayers and residents. We coordinated and cooperated with governing authorities and other villages and associations, and encouraged ratepayers and residents to protect the fauna, flora, and marine life within Rooiels and the surrounding area.

OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Early on in 2023 we developed, pledged, and communicated to the village several principles for good governance that have guided our work throughout 2023:

We value transparency and dialogue



response to views expressed at our first RERA open meeting in April 2023 and in line with our commitment that Exco would not make any major decision without consulting with members and residents.

MAINTENANCE OF WALKWAYS, ROAD RESERVES, AND ROOIELS GARDENS

In collaboration with the Rooiels Conservancy (REC) and with support from villagers and an agreed-on Terms of Reference, important routine maintenance of our walkways, road reserves, and village gardens was coordinated by Achim and Ralph. This work was done by volunteers and with the generous contributions of several Rooielsers. A special thanks to Yoram and Lauretta, Rix and Holger, Piet, and a few anonymous donors for their support, which included some making their local gardeners available. Many thanks also to Tania, Lee-Ann, Ivan, Mike, Fiona, and Kay for assisting in various ways.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM OTHER 2023 RERA ACTIVITIES


- During the first quarter RERA initiated the Rooiels Sustainable

Energy Project (RESEP) with Ralph Pina as the convener.

- RERA Exco continues to support REC who is working with Ward 10 on the extension of the Rooiels Nature Reserve (RENr).
- A great effort was put into the road calming measures for the safety of pedestrians and the large number of animals killed by speeding vehicles. RERA, in conjunction with Mike Mac Carthy, is in direct contact with the Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE), Barbara Creecy, Western Cape Premier (Alan Winde), and Minister of Mobility, Ricardo Mackenzie, to get these measures implemented in Rooiels.
- With support from our Ward committee and well ahead of the latest storms, repairs to the Rooiels bridge on the R44 were completed.

CONTINUATION OF WORK ON CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGE

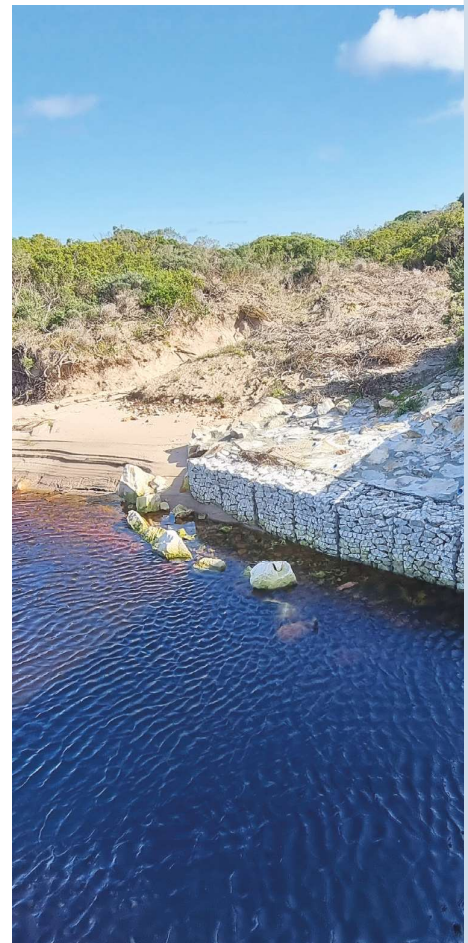
Lastly, in the second half of the year, we reviewed previous work done on the RERA Constitution and have initiated a process whereby all Rooielsers will have a say in

delivering a new, more inclusive Constitution. This will ensure that the RERA Exco considers and represents all views in the village in everything that it does. A proposal for a resolution to set up a participatory process in 2024 to amend the Constitution will be tabled for voting by RERA members at the AGM on 22 December. All Rooielsers, whether members or not, are welcome to attend the AGM. 

Notice of the 51st Annual General Meeting

22 December 2022 - 10:00
Pringebay Community Hall

Kennisgewing van die 51^{ste} Algemene Jaarvergadering



PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION



STEVEN MULLINS



Landscapegear

A part of the Rooiels Vision expresses our pledge that, united by our passion for Rooiels, here:

- Nature will be nurtured;
- Flora, fauna, and marine life protected;
- Our every impact on the area limited

In keeping with this promise, the theme for this year's photography competition is "Interdependence on the Natural World". At the heart of this is the idea that humans are just another organism coexisting in this space with all of the other flora and fauna that inhabited the area before us, and wherever possible we have a practical and ethical responsibility to try to limit the negative effects that our presence has on the world around us.

Living in Rooiels puts us in the enviable position of being situated in the heart of the Kogelberg, South Africa's oldest biosphere, surrounded by the most diverse floral kingdom on earth and an incredibly rich animal population including more than 3 500 marine species. Being located in an environment where we are so closely intertwined with nature, provides us with both the benefits and challenges of trying to live harmoniously with the natural world.

We are fortunate to be able to observe the baboons foraging and playing in our gardens, while at the same time being responsible for ensuring our bins aren't accessible, that we don't walk with visible food and that our doors and windows are secured to prevent them from gaining access to our houses.

We get to appreciate whales breaching off our shores, pods of dolphins leaping out of the water as they chase bait balls, and bright blue bioluminescent waves crashing on our shores, but share a responsibility for picking up plastic waste off our beaches and verges and minimising our impact on the environment where we can.

We are able to share our nights with porcupines, owls, and bats and appreciate the majesty of the Milky Way stretching across the night sky, while bearing a responsibility to turn off our external lights to minimise light pollution and its subsequent positive impact on nocturnal inhabitants of the area.

This year's photography competition was judged based on the relevance to the theme as well as the artistic and technical merits



Ist Place Winner: *Cara Wade - Beach Cleanup*

The image of Rooiels residents clearing plastic from the sand during a beach cleanup perfectly exemplifies the theme of the competition of people playing their role in reducing the impact of the plastic waste that is produced by our day to day living and its potential harm to marine life. The Kogelberg mountains and turquoise ocean provide a stunning backdrop to this activity.

of each photograph, with five separate prizes on offer:

- R3 000 Online voucher – donated by Hougaard Malan from Landscape Gear
- 2 hour Photography coaching session – donated by Steven Mullins from Manipulating Light
- 3 x Online Photography Courses – donated by Orms Cape Town School of Photography
 - Introduction to Photography
 - Smartphone Photography
 - Lightroom for Photographers

Congratulations to the winners and thank you to everyone who submitted photographs.



4

4th place: Carina Venter - Rooiels at Sunset

As your day ends, there's no journey required to witness the clouds aglow from the stunning sunset over Container Bay, embracing tranquility right where you are.



2

2nd place: Izak Smit

This image of a tortoise that has become entangled in plastic waste provides us with a stark reminder of the impact that our littering and plastic pollution can have on the natural residents of the area, and the impact that picking up a single piece of litter could have on the life of another creature in the biosphere.



5

5th place: John Charalambous - Rooiels River

The Rooiels river glistens in the sunlight as it flows beneath the bridge, steadily making its way towards the sea in a picturesque scene that embodies the tranquil harmony of its natural journey.



3

3rd place: Estelle Raymond - Green Protea Beetle visiting a Protea compacta

The theme of interdependence extends to the symbiotic relationship between flowers and the birds and insects that pollinate them as can be seen in this image of a green protea beetle visiting its namesake.

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FROM THE REC TEAM



RALPH PINA

Marion and I moved to wonderful Rooiels to settle permanently in February 2022. After observing the dynamics within the village for almost a year, I felt ready to contribute more formally by becoming a Conservancy committee member in December of 2022, given that I am an unapologetic environmentalist, or “treehugger”, and that we settled here because of Rooiels’ relatively unspoilt nature. When Ian Lewis stood down as Acting Chairperson in March of 2023, having completed his term in 2022, I was prevailed upon to take up the role.

I am very honoured to be serving as chairperson in the Conservancy’s 20th year of existence, and to follow in the footsteps of its pioneers and illustrious former committee members. However, it

quickly became apparent that the Conservancy is still recovering from a period of post-pandemic instability, so the new committee spent significant time initially to reflect on the Conservancy’s mission and focus. One of our priorities was to differentiate the Rooiels Conservancy (REC) from the Rooiels Ratepayers’ Association (RERA) as a distinctive organisation with its own mission, membership and committee. Another was to delineate the respective roles of the organisations, which was done in concert with the RERA executive committee.

It is clear that the Conservancy’s committee and members believe that it should focus on the conservation, preservation and enhancement of Rooiels’ nature, biodiversity and natural beauty. This renewed focus is also underlined in the proposed, amended constitutional proposals, which are discussed in brief below.

ROOIELS NATURE RESERVE MANAGEMENT AND EXPANSION

One of the Conservancy’s key purposes is the stewardship of the Rooiels Nature Reserve (RENr), as well as its management in concert with the managing authority, Overstrand Municipality. We report on its status, importance and expansion elsewhere in this issue of Breeze . Formalisation of

the management protocols and administration around transfers and zonings for expansion, in collaboration with the municipality, are perhaps some of the more challenging aspects of executing the Conservancy’s mission.

COLLABORATION AND PARTICIPATION

We believe that Rooiels does not exist on an island; it is an intrinsic part of the Kogelberg Biosphere Reserve and the communities (human and others) that live within it. Consequently, the Conservancy:

- Reached out to neighbouring conservancies and volunteer groupings, with some positive responses, to work together;
- Has become an affiliate member of the Kogelberg Biosphere Reserve Company, the umbrella organisation for the biosphere reserve;
- Has become a member of Protected Area Advisory Committees for two neighbouring protected areas:
 - The Stony Point Nature Reserve and Betty’s Bay Marine Protected Area, managed by CapeNature;
 - The Steenbras Nature Reserve, which extends northwards from southern Kogel Bay, managed by the



City of Cape Town.

- The Conservancy is open to working with any volunteer grouping, organisation or individual within Rooiels in striving towards the Rooiels Vision and contributing towards attaining conservation objectives.

LIVING WITH WILDLIFE

One of the blessings - and challenges - of living in Rooiels is the wildlife on our doorstep, marine and terrestrial. Since 2011, many volunteers, some of whom are not with us anymore, have placed and serviced wildlife cameras at strategic positions around Rooiels. These cameras, of which there are currently four, are serviced regularly by a dedicated group of members. The images and videos are analysed and shared on various media occasionally. We have regular sightings of leopards and upload these images to the Cape Leopard Trust's Data Portal for their research purposes.

Besides the leopards, the cameras regularly "trap" klipspringers, porcupines, spotted genets, mongooses and the Rooiels baboon troop, of course. The latter provides hours of entertaining footage.

The Conservancy remains committed to implementing the Baboon Coexistence Model that emanated from the 2021 Baboon

Indaba. This includes appointing and deploying Baboon Information Officers in the Rooiels CBD during holiday periods, to assist the (visiting) public and businesses in being aware of baboons, their behaviour, and avoiding incidents.



The continuing wildlife carnage on Clarence Drive has been distressing to observe, and the Conservancy, in concert with RERA and others, supports urgent traffic calming measures, especially on the section that sweeps through Rooiels and up the pass.

CLEARING ALIEN INVASIVES

On the first Saturday of every month, small groups of Rooiels volunteers venture into the village, the estuary or onto the mountain slopes to hack out alien invasives which are some of the most dangerous threats to Kogelberg's biodiversity. Elsewhere in this issue, long-time Rooielsers recall how the old village was returned from a rooikrans forest to its

indigenous roots through the efforts of volunteer hack groups over many years. Nowadays, while follow-ups in the village are required regularly, the group ventures into the estuary and up the mountains on the smallholdings to help hold the invasions at bay.

While sampling species in iNaturalist during the City Nature Challenge in April, a small group of Conservancy members spotted Hakea sericea, marching up the high eastern slopes of the coastal range south of Klein Hangklip. A hacking group, including volunteers from the Mountain Club of SA (Stellenbosch section), was mobilised on 30 July and took out 500+ trees and removed 43 kg of seed pods from the smallholdings with the permission – and gratitude – of the owners. A follow-up was arranged with the Kogelberg villages' Wednesday Hacking Group, and 27 of them, including a handful of Rooielsers, cleaned the lower slopes in no time on 9 August. There are still more, and follow-ups will be arranged.

Other significant efforts were the elimination of mature rooikrans (*Acacia cyclops*) trees from the estuary above the bridge, and around the reservoir.

continued on page 12



Ralph Pina: Rooiels Estuary

A WARM WELCOME



JOHN & MARY-ANNE SIMPSON

John and Mary-Anne Simpson have been drawn to the Overstrand for many years. They looked at loads of houses in Betty's Bay, Pringle Bay, and Rooiels. And trawled the property ads for years before finally buying their house in Rooiels.

"There is something extra special about the secluded enclave that is Rooiels," they say. "Homes tucked into the fynbos, dassies sunning themselves on the rocks on the koppie, the sunbirds, and of course, the baboons that come into the garden to forage. The little ones sliding down the windscreen rolling off the bonnet and climbing back up again for another go."

They were initially very worried about the safety of their feisty Pomeranian around baboons but soon learned there was nothing to fear. Initially, the dog was very cautious and kept his distance, but once he had seen them in the garden a few times he became curious and tried to follow the troop to their next destination thinking they could be friends.

The Simpsons quickly learned to keep the doors and windows locked and if baboons do manage to get in, to just leave the entry point open and usher them out without being afraid. Their special thanks go out to Gavin and Lesley Lundie who popped in on their very first

BARBARA & CHRISTOPH WEICHLER

Barbara's brother Achim Halpaap and his wife Bea introduced the Weichslers to Rooiels. They were attracted to the Cape after visiting the Halpaaps in Cape Town 20 years ago. At around the same time, they also became fans of the Azores Islands, another beautiful rocky setting along the Atlantic Ocean.

When the Halpaaps became house owners in Rooiels five years ago, the Weichslers visited them again to fulfil Barbara's wish to spend her November birthday in bright sunshine. They fell in love with the beautiful Rooiels and its nature-oriented community.


They have since become the happy owners of a house in Rooiels and enjoy nature and the community during each visit. "It is a pleasure and so inspiring to socialise with villagers who have open minds and doors regarding the values and goals of RERA, REC, RESA, and Outreach," they say. "This, along with outdoor activities we love so much, like hiking, biking, swimming, canyoning, sailing –

again by joining people with the same set of interests".

Barbara, a physician who began her career working in clinics, is still active in the practice she started 18 years ago. Christoph started as a derivatives trader and risk manager and switched to consultancy for financials as well as regulators, central banks, and governments on crisis management. He is also involved in financial markets infrastructure setups and, more recently, in the field of healthcare.

They have two children with whom they spend as much quality time as possible, but because they are already independent, it offers them a bit more flexibility.

They close their introduction with:

"We would like to see Rooiels remaining a facet-rich and open-minded community making progress on self-management, nature-conservancy, security, energy, and social engagement. The conditions indeed are quite challenging. On the other hand, we have met so many people with inspiring drive, knowledge, and talent to take things further. We will be happy and thankful to become part of it!" 

weekend with advice on how to be vigilant and unafraid of the baboons.

John and Mary-Anne enjoy spending time in Rooiels, surrounded by fynbos and animals in their natural habitat, which is a rare gift that will not be there 50 years from now if not actively protected. They believe they're curators and feel a deep sense of gratitude towards those who live here full-time and care about the biosphere.

They feel privileged to have made wonderful friends in Rooiels and feel that coming through to Rooiels after a busy week is food for the Spirit and soul. 



GOOD-BYE JILL



Most of us have likely encountered, heard about, or read stories of Richard (Dick) and Jill Lockley, whose active involvement in various facets of village life left a lasting impact. It was with great sadness that we bid farewell to Dick in 2022. Following this, Jill faced the tough choice to leave her cherished Rooiels and reunite with her family in the UK. We extend our heartfelt appreciation to Jill and remember the Lockleys for their significant contributions and remarkable kindness towards our community.

CONSTITUTION

The Conservancy committee embarked on a constitutional review process this year. At present it is following a defined participatory process with its members towards the approval of constitutional amendments at the Conservancy's AGM in December.

The rationales for the amendments are summarised as follows:

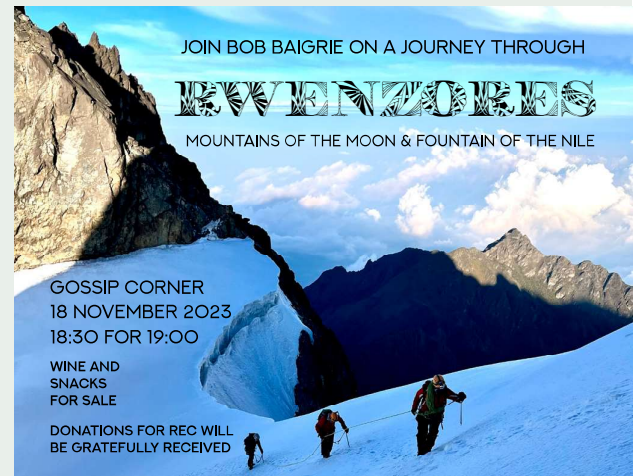
- Modernise the document and clarify the Conservancy's vision, mission and objectives, with a focus on conservation;
- Introduce a new membership category, affiliates, which broadens REC's support base and better defines membership to eliminate current vagueness and multiple interpretations;
- Modernise the document to recognise and employ modern meeting practices;
- Close governance loopholes in the constitution;
- Ensure that REC could register as a Nonprofit Organisation (NPO).

EVENTS, TALKS, AND COMMUNICATION

In line with its mission of informing, educating, and collaborating and debating with its members and the community about conserving Rooiels' nature, landscapes, night

sky and seascapes for future generations, the Conservancy has made a start in organising regular events and talks again. The effort is still in its infancy, but it did manage the following in 2023:

- In association with Dine van Zyl and Graham McLeland led an iNaturalist City Nature Challenge walk through the first two smallholdings to the south in April;
- Attended the Western Cape Snare Response Plan information session, convened by the Cape Leopard Trust in Hermanus in May. SnareFree was launched on 1 August 2023 and the Conservancy has helped to spread the knowledge;
- In association with Steven Mullins, hosted an Astrophotography Workshop attended by 17 enthusiasts, with the Drummond Arms kindly providing the venue;
- In association with Bob Baigrie, hosted his talk, "A journey through the Rwenzores, Mountains of the Moon & Fountain of the Nile", in November with Gossip Corner kindly providing the venue.



We aim to line up a schedule of events and talks in 2024.

Through the efforts of committee members, Tracy Cronje and Lesley Lundie, the Conservancy also launched its Facebook group page at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/rooielsconservancy>. The group's membership has grown rapidly, and it is an important channel in communicating information and content, and interacting, with the Conservancy's members, the community, and many others beyond the Kogelberg who share our values.

Special thanks to members who donated funds and their time to the Conservancy's activities, and to the Rooiels Boat Club for its financial support. A big thank you too to all the others who quietly expressed their support and appreciation privately.

Finally, I would like to thank the Rooiels Conservancy's 2023 executive committee members, Tracy Cronje, Lesley Lundie, Ian Lewis, Gavin Lundie, Frank Raymond and Eldie Brink (while he was still on the committee) for their committed volunteerism, institutional memory and wise counsel. I trust that a new and dynamic committee will be elected at the AGM to continue the Conservancy's mission and legacy with energy and wisdom. 



Safety starts with each of us



MARK BUTLER

After a quiet lockdown, the last two years have seen a significant increase in crime in the village. In 2022 we witnessed 29 confirmed break-ins and 19 attempted break-ins. At the time of writing (early November) there have been 19 break-ins and four attempted break-ins this year.

This escalation in crime is part of a regional – and national – trend that, sadly, shows no sign of abating and so the onus is really on us, the Rooiels community, to redouble our efforts to make the village a safer and more secure space.

To that end we have welcomed active participation from many of you. The RESA open meeting in late March was extremely well attended and a significant proportion of the village's households responded to the security survey distributed in August to assess the viability of appointing a service provider to provide a 24/7 security presence.

While that proposal failed to garner the necessary support, a supplementary question indicated that there was strong interest in exploring the merits of establishing a Special Ratings Area (SRA) which would collect funding from all property owners to ensure the costs of security were spread equitably.

Conversations around the SRA topic will continue in the coming months across all of the village's representative organisations.

MEMBERSHIP GROWTH

We are delighted to report that RESA membership is currently at its highest levels for many years with 160 paid-up subscribers. While this represents around 80% of the village's developed erven and 70% of ASK customers, the more members we have, the more we can invest in improved security. So, if you are not yet a member, please join by emailing resa@rooiels.org.za.

Members' fees have enabled us to purchase new motion-sensitive cameras with alternative power supply and we have contracted ASK to monitor these 24/7. During the year number plate recognition cameras were also installed on the R44 and at the entrance to the village. These are patched into the SAPS Navic system and are intended to provide alerts when suspect vehicles are spotted.

We were also able to refurbish the RESA office and purchase a new increased capacity inverter to ensure our equipment can operate during loadshedding.

In addition to our members' annual fees, we're grateful to the individuals who made additional donations, in particular the Boat Club who, apart from their ongoing support, made a substantial contribution their crayfish competition spit braai. These funds are earmarked for fire response equipment and other additional funds raised will enable us to buy more motion-sensitive cameras to replace some of the older CCTV points and extend our coverage across the village.


COMMUNICATION

Our social media channels, especially the closed patrol group WhatsApp channel and Blockwatch, have proven to be invaluable tools in sharing information and mobilising support. Fast communications led to the arrest of a burgler in October. It is the first time in several years that someone has been apprehended on the crime scene.

We are also happy to report that our radio network functions effectively during prolonged power outages. During the September storm, when the village and surrounding area had its electricity supply cut off and the cell phone tower failed, our radio system continued to operate, enabling us to maintain an open line of communication with each other. This could prove invaluable in the event of a fire or other such incident that interrupts the power supply.

Over the course of the year we have also actively engaged with the Hangklip and Kleinmond Community Police Forum (CPF) and the Kleinmond Police Joint Operations Committee (JOCOM) while supporting our neighbouring neighbourhood watches.

THANK YOU

Finally, a huge and grateful thank you to the RESA members for their financial support, to the patrol group, and in particular to Elisabeth Moss for her tireless monitoring of the radio channel, to the team at ASK, and to the RESA operations committee for all their efforts in trying to make the village a safer place for all. 



ESTELLE RAYMOND
RERA Chair 2002
REC Chair 2005

TIME FLIES WHEN YOU'RE HAVING FUN

IT ALL CAME ABOUT THROUGH THE VISION

ROOIELS CONSERVANCY 2003 - 2023

Since the beginning of our village, Rooielsers have had an ethos or a vision for living in harmony with nature.

Over the years this vision has been expressed in several formal written documents. There was the original pre-1996 "rules" version, the 1995 - 1996 Exco redraft, the inclusive redraft of 2002 - 2004 under Rob Fryer's calm facilitation and the current informative document compiled by the talented Chris Burlock. Over time the language of the Rooiels Vision gradually evolved to become more friendly and less prescriptive, but its central theme of sustainable living has remained strong and constant. Nevertheless, the Rooiels Vision is not a destination, but rather something that lives in our hearts and with which we engage daily — an attitude of treading lightly.

RERA GIVES BIRTH TO REC IN 2003

The Rooiels Ratepayers' Association (RERA) has always accepted the Vision as its primary guiding principle and the Vision is referred to in its constitution. At each AGM members usually formally validated and re-affirmed our commitment to the Vision.

The Vision promotes ideals for Rooiels, such as not fully fencing our properties and retaining as much of the natural fynbos as possible while

clearing invasive alien plants. This creates the natural and open feel of our village, protects biodiversity and promotes the natural movement of wildlife. We accept that the wind, the starlit night skies, the leopards, baboons, snakes, and a myriad of other creatures all belong here, are valuable, and create a special sense of place.

The Rooiels Conservancy was founded as a natural extension of the Rooiels Vision and the Conservation portfolio on the RERA Exco. Around 2002 it was felt that everything that connects to the natural environment — be it fynbos, sea life, beach, wildlife, mountains, hiking, birding, stargazing, peace, and quiet — forms such a vital and central part of our way of life as a community that a whole organisation with its own Exco should be exclusively dedicated to such a purpose.

Debby de Vries, the enthusiastic and indefatigable RERA member for Conservation at the time, did most of the groundwork for the establishment of our conservancy. A well-attended meeting to which all were invited, was held at the home of Ian and Shirley Richter on 5 April 2003. It was a joyful and hopeful occasion. We were addressed by the chairman of the board of CapeNature. Rooielsers indicated their support for the Conservancy by placing a sticker on their erven on a Rooiels map at the event.

Grizelda and Tony Hall were among the first to do so. Helen Jones and Alison Ayre arrived in style with T-shirts which read "Conserve Wildlife! Hold more wild parties!". A steering committee was appointed at the meeting and a constitution was drafted.

Debby de Vries became the first chairperson of the Rooiels Conservancy and steered it through its first two years. Its formal approval and registration with CapeNature was obtained in March 2004.

WHY A CONSERVANCY?

A conservancy is a voluntary agreement between landowners to work together in managing their individual properties on a sound conservation footing so that biodiversity and natural resources are protected. As a result, economic and aesthetic value improves, and environmental awareness is promoted.

We had hoped that a Rooiels Conservancy would give practical power to the ethos of the Rooiels Vision, as each member of the Conservancy commits to adhere to the Vision in the management of his or her land.

Our commitment to a Conservancy for Rooiels was also founded on our enthusiasm for the newly established Kogelberg Biosphere Reserve of which we are a part. This is a remarkable area

which contains the highest density of different plant species in the world (around 1 600 of them).

In this year, the Rooiels Conservancy celebrates 20 years of promoting sustainable living in Rooiels. Sustainable living means minimising our human impact as much as possible. It means caring for and respecting our breathtaking natural environment, always letting it have a place of honour.

Rooiels has been cited as an example of a village actively living with and supporting the protection and restoration of biodiversity. The Rooiels Conservancy has received various awards through the years for this. While there may also have been a few mishaps or losses over the years, these 'sore thumb' incidents remain the exception, rather than the rule.

Rooiels does not belong to any of us. Others were here before and many generations will follow. We have a duty to sustain rather than to destroy, keeping future options open. In the end, all we can hope for is to leave a legacy of respectful custodians who have given back to Rooiels more than we have taken.

Debby de Vries was instrumental in the establishment of the Rooiels Conservancy (REC) and chaired it through its first two years. She recalls Estelle Raymond as being the driving force in getting REC established. In August 2002, Estelle organised a meeting at the Harold Porter Gardens with Elizabeth Dostal to canvass support for a conservancy. At the time, there was a rival organisation to the Rooiels Ratepayers' Association, called REIA, with a pro-development vision for Rooiels.

Despite vastly different individual outlooks, the question about what it was that all Rooielsers had in common, pointed to the beauty of the area, and its importance as a conservation area for fauna and the fynbos.

The fynbos around us are one of the six floral kingdoms, and even though it covers a small area when compared to the other kingdoms, it vastly outstrips the others in diversity and number of species. The conservation of this environment in all its aspects included actions such as encouraging leaving road verges as 'nurseries' for species that might be eradicated from the gardens in the village to adapting to live with the baboons, tortoises, snakes, ants (that bury Proteaceae seeds that then survive fires – the mechanism of fire function in fynbos areas), advising municipality on guidelines for builders working in a conservancy, addressing light pollution, recording and promoting endemic species, and persuading other villages to follow suit. Pringle Bay and Betty's Bay established forms of conservancies after Rooiels led the way.

It should be noted that in its infancy, this tiny village – nowhere as developed as it is today – raised millions to take on SOMCHEM (then an ARMSCOR subsidiary) that was testing missile fuel, with all the implications of industry and pollution in the pristine mountains behind Rooiels. Notably, Prof. Denis Cowan led the strategy in court that eventually forced SOMCHEM to settle on a time by which they would leave the area. As it turned out they left earlier than planned, having restored the site as best as possible to its original state. These events, as well as the mission to have the Kogelberg Reserve declared an international biosphere by UNESCO, which would not endorse it whilst Apartheid South Africa existed, were all precursors to the eventual creation of the REC.

Debby reminisced how, back in the day, these part-time Rooielsers who lead the way, would meet in the old Sea Horse restaurant. They would travel in on cold, wet nights to attend town council meetings to ensure that the ethos of the village and its environment remained

conserved. She remembers how, as a child, she played on the beach with only Eerste Huis visible above the sand dunes and a handful of other houses along rough tracks. The peaceable encounters with the baboon troop on walks, the otters at dawn, the meadows of Red pagoda (Eng.); Rooistompie (Afr.) (*Mimetes cucullatus*), the restios waving in the wind, the gorgeous displays of pink and white heide (*Erica perspicua*), the meadow of Painted lady (*Gladiolus carneus*), and the old Waboom trees (*Protea nitida*) at Easter Cave in the Klein Hangklip mountain that have survived all the seasons of fire. The flight of the black eagles, the inquisitive rock jumpers, the song of the visiting whales, me swimming with a dolphin and her calf beyond the breakers at the estuary, the local leopard causing panic for the baboons against the cliff at night, rescuing pyjama sharks caught in the pools after spring tide, and so much more. Fond memories, indeed!

The preservation of the area for all fauna and flora was the unifying thread that brought Rooielsers of diverse backgrounds and views together. Sadly, it is the little plants that are disappearing as the village becomes more urbanised. I have tried to spot the *Diastella fraterna* (formerly *D. thymeloides*) on trips back to South Africa. I fear the new water pipe along the road to the smallholdings has permanently destroyed their habitat. Missing too, as I walk the village, are the *Manualeas*, the star grass, *Agathosma* species, the china flowers (*Adenandra*), the scented *Hermannia*, *Erica mammosa*, *E. plukenetti* and the myriad of other miniature beauties in the fynbos. Fortunately, both the *E. mammosa* and the *E. plukenetti* are still fairly abundant and the *Diastella* is very prolific against the mountainside above Roella Road.

FROM THE PATROL GROUP

SAFEGUARDING OUR COMMUNITY TOGETHER



PETER KÖNING

Again, this year, our dedicated patrol group, consisting of selfless volunteers, has been instrumental in keeping our village safe. Braving storms and late-night hours, they've shown extraordinary community spirit.

However, our patrol team is dwindling, and the burden is increasingly falling on just a few. Compared to neighbouring Betty's Bay and Pringle Bay, we have fewer patrollers per capita, and our average patroller age is 65 — 25 years older than in the other villages.

Our remote location from Kleinmond also means we see fewer police patrols, leaving us more vulnerable in a time of rising crime rates. Despite hopes, the temporary closure of R44 at the start of the year and after the September storms hasn't led to a decrease in crime.

Although difficult to quantify, there is evidence that active patrolling deters crime. A neighbouring area with vigorous patrolling reported fewer break-ins. Our patrollers proved their value in October by cornering and apprehending a thief inside a property, showcasing the impact of active neighbourhood watch. As could be expected, the Kleinmond police were 30 minutes out, so our patrollers had to wait until they arrived and arrested the culprit.

All indications from our camera system are that most of the break-ins

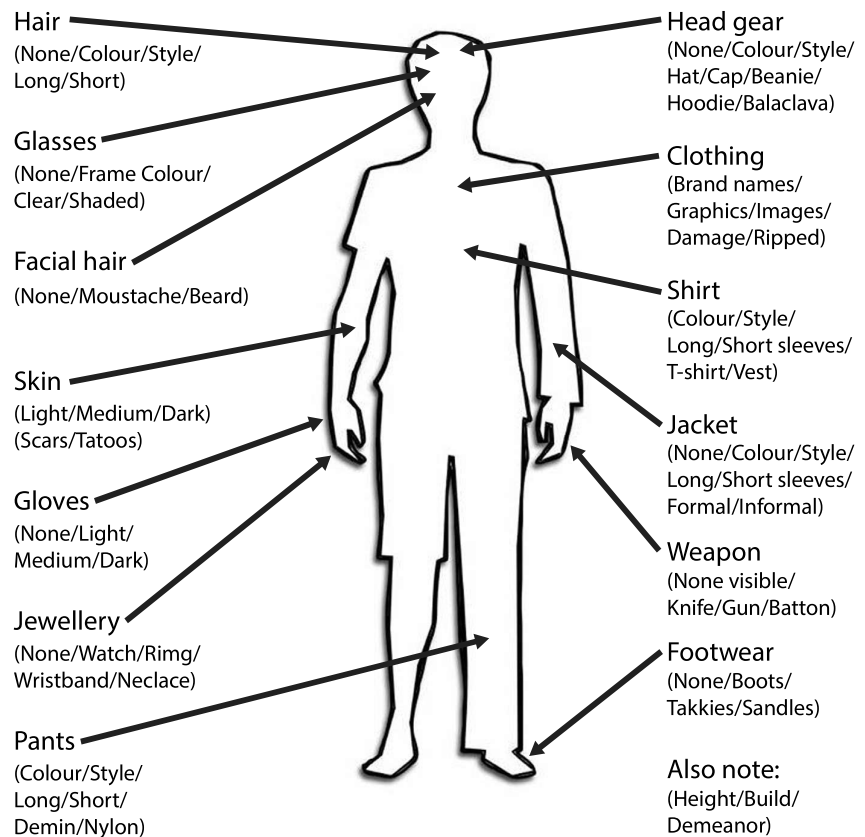
Vehicle Identification



Other questions:

- Tracking system installed?
- Anti-hijacking system installed?
- If so, expected cut-out time?
- How much fuel is in the vehicle?
- In which direction did it go?

Suspect Identification




are from persons that reside in the village and then exit with normal traffic during the mornings when they remove the stolen goods from the village. There is clear evidence that the criminals are aware of movement in the village and are observant of people's movements.

We urge residents to join our patrol group. Contact Griet at the RESA office or email resa@rooiels.org.za to get involved. Given our declining membership, we are exploring alternative security measures. Unfortunately, a proposed security solution was voted down due to its high cost per household and we are now considering the option of a Special Rating Area (SRA) to distribute costs more evenly among all ratepayers.

Our radio and fire teams also need more volunteers. The fire team, crucial during the 2017 village fire, is integral to our safety. The radio network is a valuable alternative when other forms of communication fail.

On a brighter note, we're optimistic about the new AI CCTV alert system. It promises enhanced security as and when funds permit its full implementation.

A heartfelt thanks to all our volunteers and donors for their dedication over the past year. Your participation makes a difference. Together, let's strengthen our village's safety and community spirit. Join us in making Rooiels a safer place for everyone. 



In February 2023, Willie du Plooy embarked on an intensive journey into the world of reptiles by participating in a Snake Awareness and Venomous Snake Handling Course. This was followed by a challenging Venomous Snake Handling Bootcamp, where trainees were tasked with entering various buildings and structures to locate and safely capture snakes of differing shapes and sizes. Highlighted here is the magnificent yet exceptionally perilous Cape Cobra (*Naja nivea*). Willie has been accepted into the Snake Rescue Association of the African Snakebite Institute.



The 6th of April 2023 marked a day of miraculous fortune for both the residents and the natural landscape of Rooiels. A series of swift and heroic actions played a crucial role in averting a potential disaster. "Well done John who saved the driver's life by removing him from the vehicle. Well done Izak for immediately phoning and Gerda for reporting on our street emergency number. Well done Graham for using the fire extinguisher. Well done Gerda for hosing the fynbos."

Dine van Zyl, posted on Village People

***"Dream Beach Clean Team" – Baigrie family
(submitted by Tom Baigrie)***

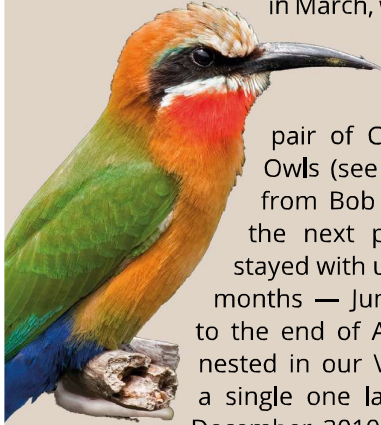
Diarmuid was the original beach litter picker back in the 89's and must surely have picked up more rubbish than anyone else in Rooiels over all the years. He goes out almost daily when he's in town. He's not got that long left — I watch him and my other brother Jim ageing with both sadness and wonder — and it's a joy to see him and Jenny leading a pack of three generations into the little dopamine hits that make litter picking fun!



Clarence Drive experienced significant damage due to the heavy downpour in December 2022. The subsequent road works were efficiently managed, with a stop/go system implemented for several months. Just as residents adjusted to the road's reopening, an even more severe storm in September 2023 caused further destruction. This time, different sections of the road were completely washed away, indicating a need for extensive additional repairs. The community is now hopeful that a new stop/go system will be established soon to mitigate the inconvenience of the lengthy detours experienced over the last two months. (Yes, that is what's left of sections of the road.)



HELEN JONES



There have been three rarities this year, four White-fronted Bee-eaters in March, which were last seen in June 2020, a pair of Cape Eagle-Owls (see the article from Bob Baigrie on the next page), who stayed with us for three months — June through to the end of August and nested in our Valley, with a single one last seen in December 2010. Added to the Rooiels birds list, which was begun in 1987, was a single Black-eared Sparrow-Lark, seen at The Point in May.

There is a Southern Africa Rarities Committee, and this was “put forward” to them with photographs and it was therefore accepted which brings our Rooiels list up to 208. This year to date 91 different birds have been seen and recorded. A GREAT happening for one of our pairs of Egyptian Geese was that

they managed to rear six chicks to adulthood which is an amazing feat. One bird which unfortunately is now here more often is the Pied Crow which we really need to discourage because they are horribly aggressive and thrive on bird eggs and chicks. There have been a pair here almost daily since March.

Nesting birds are continuing to have a difficult time in our area and some species are becoming endangered (such as the White-fronted Plover, the African Black Oystercatcher, and the Verreaux’s Eagle) because of their choice of a nesting area. The Cape Sparrow and Helmeted Guinea Fowl, being ground nesters, are “easy work” for White-necked Ravens, mongoose, baboons, and snakes. The House and Grey-headed Sparrow delights in “taking over” Greater-striped Swallows' nests. The Cape Wagtail is never quite sure where to nest, so it can build up to eight nests and some, like the Karoo Prinia and Bar-throated Apalis, just make so much noise that they are instantly targeted

by a predator.

If you find a bird's nest being used or constructed it would be great if you could let me know so that it can be recorded. The “sensible birds” this year, have nested four to six weeks later due to adverse weather conditions.

If bird identification is rather a mystery to you. Select one bird that you are absolutely positive about and use this as your “yardstick”. For example, its size, type of beak, and where you saw it (habitat). This can then lead you to what that bird eats, whether it is male or female etc. and you will be off into a world of birding adventures that will include photography, bird lists, discussions and discoveries in different countries and continents! PLEASE keep an annual or monthly Rooiels Bird List. The full list is on our website.

Come along to the Eco Walk on Friday, 5 January 2024, which is led by enthusiasts in their particular field. Let’s hope the weather plays along.

Happy birding!

Tweet



IT TAKES EAGLE EYES TO IDENTIFY AN EAGLE OWL

BOB BAIGRIE


The November issue of *Promerops*, journal of the Cape Bird club, has on its cover a magnificent orange eyed Cape Eagle-Owl (*Bubo Capensis*). Except it isn't! The journal states "Spotted Eagle-Owl (confirmed)" (*Bubo Africanus*). I, like most, believed orange eyes to be diagnostic of Cape Eagle-Owl (CEO), but it turns out the invariably yellow-eyed Spotted Eagle-Owl (SEO) can have orange eyes, especially in arid regions.

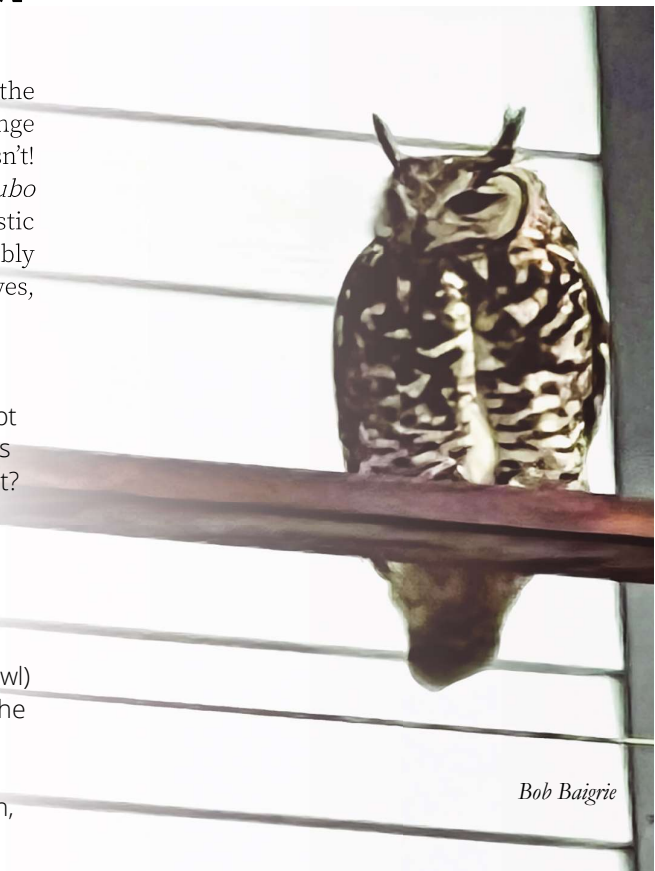
Why the interest in this rarely seen Eagle-Owl? On 31 July, I was gardening mid-afternoon and looked up to see an Eagle-Owl sitting on my neighbour's balcony. I crept through the proteas and then did a double take... this was not an SEO, it was, amazingly, a CEO. Why the amazement? This Eagle-Owl was once regarded as rare and the first SA Red Data Book in 1976 listed it as uncommon and vulnerable. It is now known to be neither, and there are likely undiscovered mountain populations. But it is a very rare sighting, not only because it is nocturnal (most owls are), but because, unlike other owls (besides the Marsh owl) it doesn't roost in trees where we can spot them during the day, but hangs out in mountainous areas on the ground behind cover, or in small caves.

Yet here it was sunbathing mid-afternoon! Callan Cohen, a real expert, confirmed its identity and I posted it on Rooiels Wild. He suggested it might be from the CEO group sometimes seen in the late evening on the Brodie Link in Pringle Bay, a location many twitching pilgrims seek in the hope of ticking it. Over the next period, a pair of them was seen by several villagers, again in daylight. Madeleine posted a picture of a big orange eyed CEO (look at the big feet!) from their house in 2014, and Helen, our local pro, confirmed the Overberg Bird club had reported it in the Rooiels valley in 2010, but never in the village.

It is a huge bird (F>M), the female (1.3 - 1.8 kg) weighing twice that of the SEO (700 g). It's larger weight, feet, and talons mean these Eagle-Owls hunt different prey and so can co-exist without competing for food. Whereas the SEO hunts rodents, reptiles, small birds and insects, the CEO preys on hares, hyraxes, and larger birds. There is an even larger subspecies up north called McKinder's Eagle owl which approaches Verreaux's Eagle-Owl's size. McKinder's hangs out in mountains above 2 400 m, where I had my only previous sighting on the way up Mt Kenya, at about 3 000 m.

Typically, the orange eyes are diagnostic, and it has bold black and rufous blotches on the breast while the belly has broad black, white and tawny barring. The ears are long and, if visible, the feet are very big. The yellow eyed, smaller eared SEO is greyer, with less blotching and finer barring. Both calls are evocative, but the SEO's is a very familiar one.

So next time you spot an Eagle-Owl with particularly long ears, take a second look... perhaps its eyes are orange and you've bagged yourself a birding lifer! 



Bob Baigrie



Lynette Rudman

White-fronted Bee Eater (Merops bullockoides); Charles J. Sharp;
CC BY-SA 4.0; <https://creativecommons.org/version4/>

Black-eared Sparrowlark (Eremopterix australis); Alan Manson;
CC BY-SA 4.0; <https://creativecommons.org/version4/>





JOHN BIESMAN-SIMONS

A strange thing happened at the Rooiels Boat Club (REBC) this year. Last year I reported in the RERA 50th celebratory edition of Breeze that membership had dropped not so slowly, but very much surely over the years. However, by 28 February this year, our financial year-end, membership increased from 24 to 26 and then dramatically grew by three more in the following month. Three in one month, *unbelievable!*

As the chairperson, or as Bob Baigrie suggested I be referred to, the *Rear Admirral of the Fleet*, it is my pleasure to extend a warm welcome to Colin Muller, Ockert van der Walt, Jackie Leppan, Johan de Jager, and Pieter Labuschagne,

pronounced the proper Afrikaans way, unlike the Aussie cricketer, which rhymes with Champagne.

I may stand corrected, but I think Jackie is the first female member since the late Allison Ayre / Helen Jones combination graced the Rooiels waves. I think Jackie is the only other female skipper in the history of the REBC. And she soon learned the hard way that you must warm up your engine with the “ earmuffs”. Haha, Jackie, we discovered back in 1991 when we got our boat that you should also flush out the salt water from your engine after use. Nevertheless, despite flushing it out once we learned that we should be doing so, we unfortunately needed to buy a new engine much sooner than normal. These rookie mistakes can happen to any of us. There have been other mishaps too, most recorded in earlier Breeze editions.

Horror of horrors! We now have water bike members for the first time. Relax everybody, a water bike is a finely tuned machine. Typically, these crafts have four-stroke engines that are quieter than most of the two-stroke engines that power the boats that launch from our slipway. Besides, Johan and Pieter

understand that water bikes may be noisy and raise concerns and they are mindful of keeping the peace.

Following comments about how the boom at the slipway entrance limits access for prams, wheelchairs, and the less fleet of foot, the club decided to remove the rock on the western side of the boom and build a little path around it. While this makes it easier for small craft and paddlers to also access the slipway, at least the area is now more accessible for pedestrians. Besides, the boom hasn't done much to limit access for others over the 30+ years that it has been there.

CRAYFISH NEWS

Following a hiatus of two years due to the pandemic, we had a highly successful competition in December 2022 followed by a joyous community get-together. But before we tell you about this year's competition, a quick word about last year's one.

The competition for the biggest crayfish was once again, yawn, won by none other than, yawn, Derek Esterhuysen. Great news about his resounding victory was that, for the first time in absolute ages, the winning weight of 0.71 kg was an increase on the prior year – may this trend continue. To rub salt in the dented egos of the other competitors, Derek also won the biggest four (which excludes the weight of the biggest one). The biggest eight was won by Wimpie Stals, the biggest 12 by Kevin Andersson, and the biggest 16 by Mark Butler. The smallest crayfish, tipping the scales at 0.41 kg, saw the Boltmann family prove that previous victories in the competition count for nothing, unless of course if you are Derek Esterhuysen and a couple of others who have long since retired as skippers.

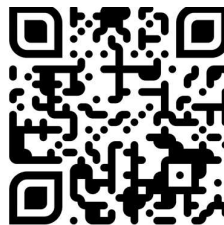
When Mark Butler was collecting the trophies to get them engraved,



West Coast Rock Lobster

(WCRL/Crayfish) dates 2023/2024:

- 16-17 December 2023 (2 days)
- 23-24 December 2023 (2 days)
- 26-31 December 2023 (6 days)
- 1 January 2024 (1 day)
- 1 April 2024 (1 days)



DFFE Fishing permits

Persons over 12 (twelve) may obtain a recreational fishing permit, allowing fishing, collecting, keeping, controlling, landing, transporting of, or possession of not more than four (4) WCRL per day. WCRL may be caught between 08h00 and 16h00 daily and the bag limit is eighty (80) millimetres of carapace length. They must be transported in a whole state.

Derek was overheard saying in a deadpan manner: "Save yourself some trouble and just put my name on for the next few years." Congrats Derek, a worthy champion once again.

The biggest overall winners of the day were REC, REDI and Outreach who benefited from the proceeds, which was 100% of ticket sales. The fun that people had at the spit braai was lovely to see and there have been many inquiries about whether this will become an annual event.

Thanks to all those who sponsored gifts (Western Province Caterers, owned by Kevin Douglas), Robert Stals's partner, Esmarie Fourie, who arranged the wine, and others. A huge thank you to those who helped clear up afterwards, especially Wolf Steinbach and Hilgard Muller.

The crayfishing dates for this season are 16 and 17, 23 and 24, and 26 to 31 December 2023, 1 January 2024, and then again 1 April 2024 (Easter Monday).

Last year's function cost the club over R27 000, which the AGM resolved was not sustainable. So, this year we will be donating a minimum of 50% of the proceeds from ticket sales to local beneficiaries. The club will still incur a loss, but a more moderate one. Like last year, the function is open to all; not just REBC members. Other activities which took place as per normal, were the AGM and the safety survey, both followed by refreshments.

DONATIONS


The REBC is proud that they have been able to make various substantial donations over the years. In the 2023 financial year, we supported the following entities:

- NSRI: each year we purchase 13 tickets in the car raffle (R10 400) and this year we sponsored three more pink buoys at R1 500 each;

- RERA: we paid 50% towards the printing of the Breeze (R9 925); and
- REC, REDI, and Outreach (R8 200 each).

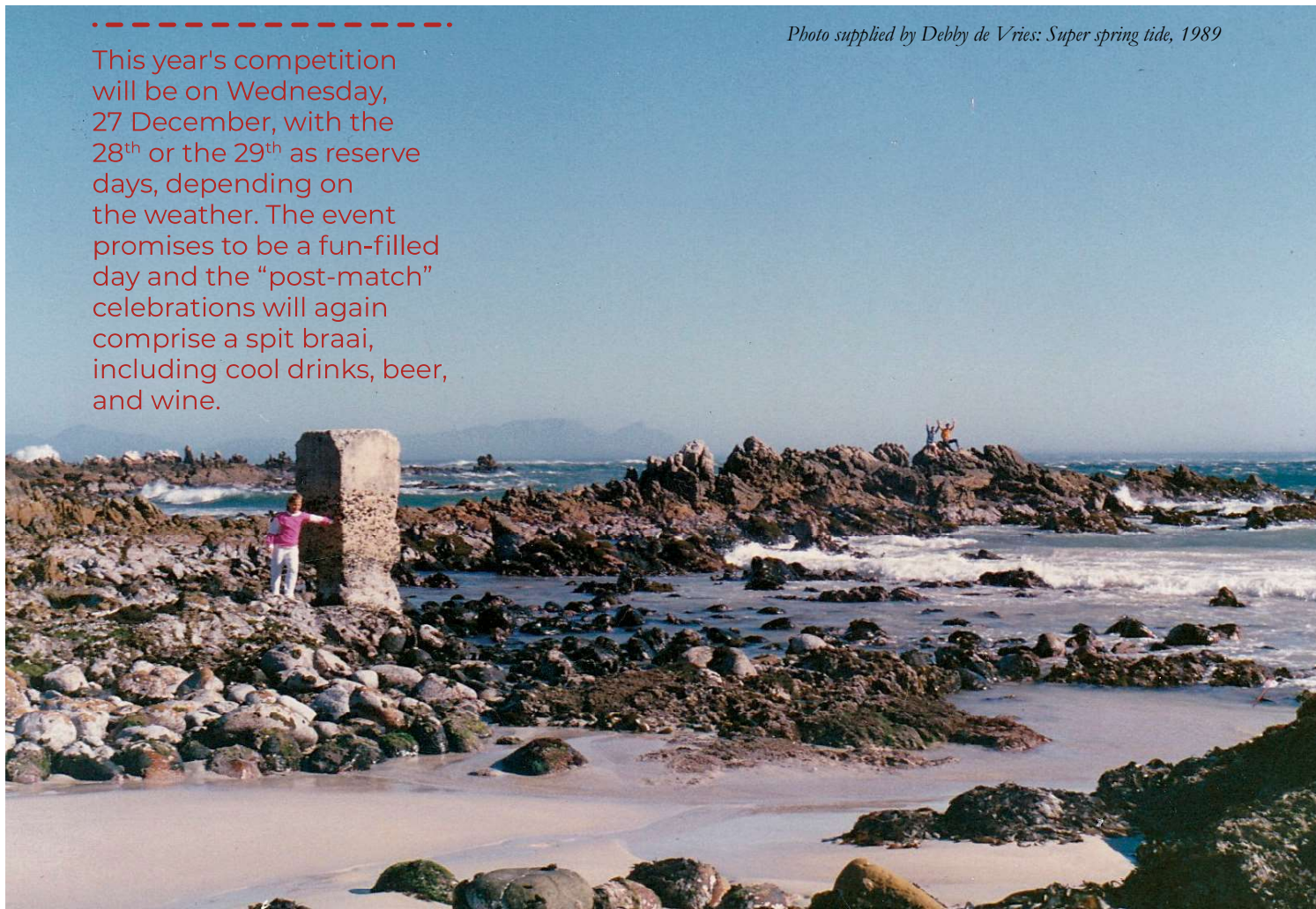
THANKS

Thanks to everyone who assisted the club during the year. Some are mentioned earlier and others include Griet, for the admin around the issuing of keys and decals, Ian Alison for driving out to do the safety survey, and the many others who helped on competition day. Here's hoping I have not left anyone out. And, of course, thanks to the REBC Committee for their contributions and hard work, especially around competition day.

We hope to see as many of you as possible on Wednesday, 27 December. Keep an eye out for further details. 

This year's competition will be on Wednesday, 27 December, with the 28th or the 29th as reserve days, depending on the weather. The event promises to be a fun-filled day and the "post-match" celebrations will again comprise a spit braai, including cool drinks, beer, and wine.

Photo supplied by Debby de Vries: Super spring tide, 1989



Helping others survive a stormy year

With no hint of a storm on the horizon, we started the year off by paying the Kleinmond netball team's annual membership fee to Netball South Africa as they were short on funds. Having access to a social activity like netball has enabled young girls to be part of a positive environment.

Then the Cape winter storms arrived with a vengeance and many residents in the informal settlements of Kleinmond and Mooiuitsig in Bettys Bay found themselves in desperate need of aid. Clothes, food, and home supplies were collected and delivered to Child Welfare in Kleinmond for distribution. School uniforms and shoes were supplied to children affected by the storm. Building materials were also donated to members of the community whose informal dwellings were destroyed by the severe weather.

During a chilly winter, in collaboration with Child Welfare, a "blanket drive" was initiated. The RE villagers outdid themselves by donating more than thirty blankets. In addition, warm clothing was donated and distributed to those in need.

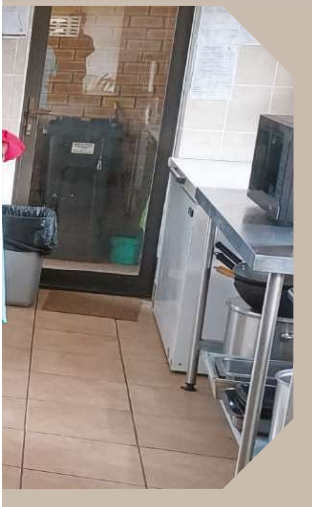
The twenty-six residents of the OYCC (Overstrand Youth Care Centre) were assisted with clothing, with every child receiving a new winter uniform donated by Rooiels Outreach.

Not only does the village always come together wonderfully when asked, but there is a constant flow of items donated to the Outreach program. These items find new homes and bring great joy to the new owners. Assorted items are also donated to KAWS, welfare schools and other charities.

THE VILLAGE SHOP

Wimpie Stalz, the kind owner of the Village Shop, always makes the shop available for activities and drop-offs. It also plays host to the much-appreciated Honesty Library of donated second-hand books, managed by the Outreach team. People are free to take out books, enjoy a good read, and return them to the library. Residents of Rooiels, as well as weekenders and holidaymakers, make use of this great initiative.





The Boat Club, Wimpie, and members of the Outreach team have helped to make our village more inclusive for residents and visitors by upgrading access for wheelchairs and prams to the slipway beach. An area next to the slipway was also paved, allowing for the placement of benches.

HAVING SOME FUN

Brigadoon, a care facility for people with dementia, became a place of great excitement when members of the Outreach team spent a fun-filled morning enjoying soft-serve ice cream with staff and residents. This was the second fun activity enjoyed by the residents and staff, the first being a 'pannekoek' morning cooked up by Tania and Reuben.

The Hangklip Community Care Centre (HCCC) is a community-based organisation which provides meals to vulnerable members of the community. To help keep the fires burning the Outreach team was able to donate a gas cooker and gas to HCCC, enabling the ladies to continue providing desperately needed meals. Kitchen knives were also donated.

THE LEGO PROJECT

The Lego project continues to grow at a fast pace. Several preschools, The

Association for the Physically Disabled in Kleinmond and Brigadoon were approached to take part. Teachers/carers have now received Lego kits for educational purposes and have been fully trained. The Lego project has been a huge success, with positive feedback from the teachers and children alike.

For Mandela Day a soup kitchen was set up at Kleinmond Welfare. Rooiels Villagers kindly supported this event, and 100 loaves of bread and soup ingredients were donated.

The Outreach chairperson, Fiona Christellis, was invited to attend the mayor's inspirational Women's breakfast on Saturday, 18 August to represent Rooiels Outreach. Approximately 100 women attended the breakfast, representing all the various Wards in the Overstrand. The address by Executive Mayor, Dr Annelie Rabe, appealed to all to continue doing everything possible to uplift and empower the women and children in our community. 

LOOK BUT DON'T TOUCH?

HIKER AND MOUNTAINEER ACCESS TO ROOIELS'S MOUNTAINS

BY RALPH PINA, IN HIS PERSONAL CAPACITY AS A LIFELONG MOUNTAIN HIKER AND LONG-TIME MEMBER OF THE MOUNTAIN CLUB OF SOUTH AFRICA

Many people, perhaps most, have settled in Rooiels because it is located in the Kogelberg Biosphere Reserve and is surrounded by relatively unscathed nature. “Development” came late and gradually to the area after the Second World War on the heels of a military road along the coast. For centuries the Hangklip area had been remote, difficult to access, and frequented only by hunter-gatherers, Khoi-San, runaway slaves and adventurers. Consequently, the Kogelberg hinterland has to a large degree retained its ecological integrity. Unsurprisingly, CapeNature regards it as the “heart of the Cape Floral Kingdom” and “the finest example of mountain fynbos in the Western Cape”. This World Heritage Site harbours approximately 1800 plant species of which about 150 are endemic and noteworthy.

Rooiels may be unique amongst the coast’s villages in that it abuts the biosphere reserve’s “core” zone, the Kogelberg Nature Reserve, to the northeast of the estuary, without a “buffer” zone in between. To the east and south-east, undeveloped privately held smallholdings form “buffer” zones and are all designated as Critical Biodiversity Areas (CBAs).

So, Rooiels clings to a narrow rocky cape and to its east lies a mountainous wilderness. But visitors and some Rooielsers may be surprised to learn that only the beach, the rocky shore, and the

sea are accessible to them. The mountains of the reserve are out of bounds, and so are the privately owned peaks west of the R44 towards Pringle Bay. It is a case of look but don’t touch; admire the blue beauty of the peaks, but you can’t go there. The situation is analogous to banning people from kayaking or swimming in the Betty’s Bay Marine Protected Area off the main beach, also a “core” zone – which is of course not the case, because it would be ridiculous.

There are undoubtedly sound, ecological reasons why much of the Kogelberg Nature Reserve, and the adjacent Steenbras Nature Reserve, are kept “people-less”. Endemics and threatened species/communities must be protected. These communities’ and species’ locations are known to the conservation agencies.

One of the major threats to this reservoir of biodiversity is invasion by alien species. Some studies indicate that hikers can carry alien seeds on their boots, clothing and equipment. However, the suspicion is that historical plantings of alien invasives, subsequent propagation through fire, wind and water courses, not to mention the failure to enforce NEMA¹ regulations relating to alien invasives on private and municipal land, escapees from residential gardens and the construction of infrastructure, overwhelmingly drive the spread

of aliens in reserves and in the mountains.²

If CapeNature (CN), or the City of Cape Town (CoCT), believe that nobody ever hikes to and climbs these peaks, or takes the trail up the Rooiels River, and that they (CN & CoCT) exercise adequate access control, then they are somewhat deluded.

Proclaimed protected areas and permit requirements have never prevented those with nefarious intentions, like poaching, hunting, flower-picking, vandalising, etc. from doing so, especially in these austere times when rangers are thin on the ground. Were it not for the vigilance of a group of locals who were walking – “illegally” - up the Rooiels valley, there might now be a very damaging mountain bike trail which was being marked out.

CapeNature has designated hiking trails, all of which start at the Oudebosch office near the Palmiet mouth. Similarly, CoCT has designated trails at Kogel Bay and Steenbras mouth. This means that if a Rooielser wants to head into the mountains for a nature stroll, he/she will have to drive either 10 km north or 20 km towards Kleinmond. But with burgeoning residential populations in the Kogelberg villages, many settling here to be “close to nature”, there is growing

¹ National Environmental Management Acts.

² Part III: Drivers of Invasion in the ebook *Biological Invasions in South Africa* (2020), edited by Brian van Wilgen, John Measey, David Richardson, John Wilson and Tsungai Zengeya, provides insights into pathways of introduction and dispersal.

pressure on these limited hiking and climbing opportunities. “Illegal” ingress into the “core” zone is inevitable.

However, it can be persuasively argued that having more feet and eyes on the ground in the form of permitted hikers and mountaineers, honorary rangers and volunteers, can be of great benefit to conservation agencies and enable them to regain some semblance of control. In my experience, most mountaineers and hikers that I know have a well-developed nature ethic: they care about these places and advocate only leaving footprints, yet don’t believe that they should only be admired from afar.

Honorary rangers and registered or permitted hikers and mountaineers in the remote recesses of Kogelberg on additional permitted routes can contribute the following services³ to CapeNature and CoCT:

- Ecological surveying and monitoring as citizen scientists;
- Honorary ranger duties, such as:
- monitoring for trespassing, poaching, flower-picking, hunting, littering, snares;
- monitoring for alien plant infestations;
- hacking alien plant infestations;
- maintaining hiking trails;
- combating erosion.

In short, all the tasks that the agencies do not have the capacity to fulfil at present. There are precedents in other protected areas in the Cape, such as Friends of Table Mountain in Table Mountain National Park, special hiking permits for the Mountain Club in the Hottentot Holland/Jonkershoek complex, etc. A voluntary group maintains hiking trails in the Helderberg Nature Reserve, at no cost to the CoCT. CapeNature is apparently developing its honorary



Photos supplied by Debby de Vries:
 1. Jan Louw Collection - Rooiels, 1940
 2. Jan Louw Collection - Rooiels, 1999
 3. Rooiels view from Klein Hangklip, 2010



³ Wilderness search and rescue is a service that is already provided by volunteers. <https://wsar.org.za/organisations/>


continued on page 26

continued from page 25

ranger and volunteer policies, while South African National Parks has a well-established honorary ranger programme.

A large group of hiking and mountaineering enthusiasts, clubs and associations, under the banner of a nascent Friends of Hottentots Holland grouping, has been engaging intensively with CapeNature about the creeping closure of established hiking trails and incremental rolling back of access in the CapeNature's Boland Central Landscape (HHNR and Jonkershoek NR), with promising results. The engagement addresses many of the benefits listed above.

Another possibility is that an established conservation organisation such as the Rooiels Conservancy, which is registered with CapeNature, could partner with the agency to maintain existing, but currently "illegal", trails such as the Rooiels River trail and issue permits to the public on behalf of CapeNature, within the carrying capacity of the trail. There are precedents for this too. Alternatively, members of the local conservancies could be granted special permits to undertake tasks in support of the above benefits.

Then there would be some semblance of control. And the good residents of Rooiels could enjoy their mountains legitimately. 

*Joselyn Mormile:
Indy and babies*



TWENTY YEARS

Reflecting on the past 20 years of the Rooiels Conservancy (REC), it's clear that our achievements didn't come easily. Among these, a notable milestone is Rooiels' designation as a buffer zone in the Kogelberg Biosphere. Yet, much remains to be done and maintained in our town.

Anuta Scholtz, who chaired the REC for seven years, found the role both rewarding and challenging. She recalls the invaluable support and cooperation from the late Janette Yeats, whose extensive knowledge of contacts, regulations, and procedures was indispensable. The REC, particularly through Jeanette's expertise, has earned high regard in conservation circles. Regular high-level discussions and cooperation were instrumental in establishing this reputation.

The volunteer hack group comprising members who have served loyally for many years, would surely welcome new and younger volunteers to continue its proud legacy of 50 years. Older residents will recall a different Rooiels landscape when groves of Rooikrans (*Acacia cyclops*) still covered the Rooiels Nature Reserve (RENr). The seeds of this species have a remarkably long life, remaining viable

— WHAT A RIDE !

for several decades. This long seed viability is a key factor in the species' invasive potential — before you know it, there is suddenly a young Rooikrans in your yard or on the road reserve!

One of the most significant tasks undertaken by Anuta, Janette, and the committees at the time was the stabilisation of the dunes. They laboriously anchored materials like fishing nets, kelp, and tree branches to dunes to prevent erosion, a continuous battle that has seen substantial progress. Today we can admire and enjoy our dunes while many other areas are trying desperately to establish and fund dune rehabilitation projects.

The wooden and chain paths were planned and built in consultation with the municipality and the management plan of the RENR. A private contractor was hired to construct them, and supervision ensured that they met the requirements.

Today, these paths over the sensitive and wet areas allow us to walk comfortably through the reserve — we should not forget to maintain them.

Another major initiative was relocating the waste transfer station.

The efforts of Hettie Claassens and Jill Lockley were crucial in managing the station, leading to a cleaner and more appealing town entrance. The REC committee also focused on public waste bin management and promoting baboon-proof bins, despite occasional resistance.


Janette Yeats identified a significant challenge with the invasive Bottle Brush (*Callistemon*) in the Buffelsdam area, leading to a collaborative effort with the South African National Botanical Institute (SANBI) to control its spread.

Similarly, vigilance against other

invasive species like the Dune Daisy or “Bloublommetjie” (*Felicia echinata*), which originates from the Eastern Cape, is essential.

REC has been deeply engaged in an ongoing debate with Overstrand Municipality (OM) about their proposed plot-clearing policy. Right from the policy's initial introduction¹, REC has been vocal in its opposition, advocating for adjustments that are more aligned with the specific needs of buffer zone areas. The voluminous exchange of information between REC and OM underscores the depth and seriousness of this issue. This is an ill-considered policy which is applied without distinction to the entire Overstrand, including built-up towns like Hermanus. Such a blanket approach could significantly harm the biodiversity of Rooiels.

Anuta also brings attention to other significant projects. Notably, there was the controlled burn in the RENR in 1997, and the establishment of a herbarium in partnership with Prof. Anthony Hall and the Bolus Herbarium at Stellenbosch University, which later became part of the Harold Porter Botanical Gardens. Additionally, the Conservancy played a role in traffic calming initiatives on the R44, held sessions on living peacefully with baboons in a Biosphere Reserve, and regularly organised clean-ups of the beach and town areas.

As we continue to shape our history as a conservation-minded community, we owe immense gratitude to all who have and continue to contribute to these efforts. 

¹ Fire Hazards Management Policy, September 2013; see Breeze 2022, page 38

MY LASTING IMPRESSION IS HOW DELICATELY
OUR ECOLOGY IS INTERTWINED AND HOW
EVERYTHING IS INTERDEPENDENT.
A GOSSAMER INTERWOVENNESS.



COASTAL FORAGING



KAY LERESCHE

Our coastlines have been providing food for our ancestors for millennia. The nutrient-rich cold tides that blow in provide ideal conditions for the seaweed, mussels, limpets, and sea urchins found in our rock pools. There are more than 700 different seaweed species and only one is inedible – the acid weed (*Demarestria firma*) – and apparently even that is used by some as the acid agent for pickling. I have not yet found it in Rooiels bay and it was not found in a survey of marine benthic flora of the Hangklip area¹. So, feel free to experiment with all that you find.

¹ J.J. Jackelman, H.S. Stegenga and J.J. Bolton., The marine benthic flora of the Cape Hangklip area and its phytogeographical affinities, S.Afr.J.Bot 1991,57(6): 295 – 304. Although *Demarestria* can cause severe digestive problems, because the sulfuric acid tastes extremely sour, they are very unlikely to be eaten in harmful quantities.

Photography: Mike Leresche

Seaweed is extremely nutrient-dense and can be harvested sustainably, making it a very valuable food source deserving more attention. You can feel confident using any of it. Add a little to soups, stews, and spaghetti sauce. Dry it or roast it and crush it to sprinkle into rice dishes, quiches and omelettes for crispy crunch and health. Chop it up finely and use it in salads. Make your own agar, pickle young kelp stems, and use kelp fronds for Banting-friendly pasta or roast nori to replace potato crisps. Seaweeds are also good for your skin and make reinvigorating baths.

I have only tried a very few of the most common seaweeds and there are many riches for foragers to try. See the Rooiels website for some ideas – follow the links on the Nature menu item. You need a permit, which can be purchased at a post office or online at <https://www.fishing.dffe.gov.za> (see QR code on the Boat Club page). You get an 'Annual Recreational Fishing Permit' which excludes abalone but includes mussels and other molluscs, octopus and squid, worms and other invertebrates, and aquatic plants. It allows an individual to collect up to 10 kilograms of fresh seaweed mass per day which is considerably more than you are likely to collect in a year!

The seaweeds found across the world have similar species and properties to those found here. There are also some local cookbooks – Loubie Rousch is the most well-known – and there are various foraging courses that build

your confidence and experience. My early exposure came from experimenting when I first came to Rooiels at a stage in life when money was short and time was plentiful. I have used local nori or laver (*Porphyra capensis*) to make crisps, but you can also use it in pasta sauces and savoury oatcakes. The lovely bright green sea lettuce (*Ulva fasciata*), chopped finely in salads and as a garnish also makes great crisps. I wasn't very successful at using kelp (*Ecklonia maxima*) fronds for pasta, but the young stalks make good pickles. Evette Weyers was known for the seaweed jelly she made from the red seaweed plants that produce agar (*Suria vitato*).

Marine plant compounds have antioxidant, anti-allergenic, and other disease-fighting properties and they are a source of soluble fibre and prebiotics. Seaweed is the best dietary source of iodine, a good source of plant protein, and contains other vitamins and minerals, particularly K and B vitamins, zinc, magnesium, and iron. There are so many of our sea plants that can be used. Attending a foraging course is helpful and the courses usually include making the most of our mussels and sea urchins.

Gathering and cooking your own mussels is a satisfying, easy task and delicious. Most of the mussels you find on the Rooiels shore are actually invasive alien mussels that have overtaken the local species – they came on the hulls of ships centuries ago from Europe. On the plus side, they provide both humans and oyster catchers with food! The best time to collect them is at spring tide (when there is a full moon or no moon) and the tide is very low. About every two weeks around 09:00 to 11:00 for three or four days each time. Tide Tables are available online. Put the collected

mussels in seawater (tap water will do) for several hours so they can expel any sand. It also helps to only collect those with minimum encrusted growth and those that are not growing down in the sand. If you are going to be cooking them in wine to use for a sauce, pull off their beards and clean the shells well. There are many delicious recipes for doing this. But they are also really good if you just pop them (with little or no water) in the microwave for two minutes until the shells open. Let them cool a little and serve as a snack — hold the mussel by the beard and enjoy it as is – or dip in garlic butter. When microwaved they are intensely flavourful and salty. You can also put them on the stove with just a little water if you don't like using a microwave.


Don't confine yourself to the sea, though. We also have other plants that can add crunch, flavour, and nutrients. Many of the plants make excellent teas, there are some you can use as spinach (*Tetragonia decumbens*) and many to add interest to your salads including the brown Salvia (*Salvia africana*) flowers, and the suuring (*Oxalis*) leaves and flowers that are everywhere in spring.



Malva flowers (*Pelargoniums*) add colour to salads and desserts. Confetti bush (*Coleonema album*) is a fragrant herb and wild rosemary (*Eriosephalus africanus*), while unrelated, is good in place of the domesticated species (*Rosmarinus officinalis*) you are familiar

with. The crunchie, salty "carpet" of soutbossie (*Bassia/Chenolea diffusa*) at Otter's Cove and the beach is fun in potato salad.

Experiment — there is much joy in discovering a new flavour or texture to add variety. But use only a few from time to time — the baboons and birds all love the flowers and the berries! Another baboon favourite is the guarri berries (*Euclea racemosa*). They are hard work to prepare but make the most delicious and beautifully rich deep purple/maroon jellies and sauces. Bitou (*Chrysanthemoides monilifera*) is another baboon favourite and along with some of our other plants, including the milkwood (*Sideroxylon inerme*), their berries can be used in cooking. Sour fig (*Carpobrotus edulis*) leaves are great for preventing and soothing sunburn in addition to using their dried fruits in jams or adding them to casseroles. A 2016 study identified 58 edible, indigenous plants that were used by descendants of the Khoe-San living in the Still Bay area. There are thought to be some 140 edible species in that area².

Take the time to wander and experiment – there is a wealth of health and beauty all around us. 

² de Vynck, J.C, B.-E. Van Wyk and R.M. Cowling (2016) "Indigenous edible plants used by contemporary Khoe-San descendants of South Africa's Cape South Coast" *South African Journal of Botany* 102 pp 60–69

In Memory



EVETTE WEYERS
11 JULIE 2023

Evette se uitvaart was op die helderste dag ooit op Rooiels. Die dag toe die dolfyne haar kom haal het.

Evette, jou nalatenskap en eggo's sal nog vir baie jare teen Klein-Hangklip vasslaan in die Ottergat ronddryf en in die fynbos vaswaai.

Haar gesprekke was altyd verkenningtogte deur landskappe deurdrenk deur mitologiese figure, gedigte, nuwe woorde en idees. Sy was van 'n hoër orde en sy het 'n taal soos geen ander mens gepraat nie. Haar beeldhouwerke het verlengstukke van haar liefde vir Afrikaanse poësie geword (veral die werke van Breyten Breytenbach). Haar verwysingsveld was sferes wat ons gewone mense nog nie ontdek het nie.

Evette het die lewe magies-realisties geleef. Sy het werklik geglo haar ma het haar dye vir die see oopgemaak toe sy swanger was en geboorte aan haar geskenk. Sy, Evette, het die see en die golwe gehoor en uitgeswem die lewe in. Die golwe het haar skoongeek. So het sy dit verkondig.

Gewone praatjies was daar nooit. Sy het in beeldspraak gepraat. Dit was 'n taal van verkenning, mitologie, verbeelding op die hoogste sferes, kuns- en letterkundelandskappe. (Ons het na Breyten se Boklied by die KKNK gaan kyk. Min mense het die omvang van Breyten se ryk verwysingsvelde verstaan. Baie het opgestaan en uitgeloop. Daar word toe 'n besprekingsessie ingepas waar Breyten dit kon toelig. Dit is waar Evette toe so ewe kordaat opstaan en aan Breyten sê: Hoe durf jy my laat dom voel!)

Gesprekke en briewe aan mekaar oor hoe om ironies te lewe sal my altyd bybly en dit het 'n soort leitmotif in my eie lewe geword. Ook oor The Suspension of Disbelief. Gesprekke met Evette het die vermoë gehad om jou denke dieper as die oppervlakte te dwing. Sy het die vermoë gehad om grense nie net in haar kuns nie, maar ook in die psiges van mense om haar te verskuif. Die titel van een van haar tentoonstellings was juis Moving out of Fixed Conditions.

Sy het Rooiels omhels. Van die miskruiers en verkleurmanneltjies tot die seekatte, bobbejane, walvisse en bokkies, wat toe nog volop in die Rooielsnatuurreservaat was.

Sy het almal om haar se lewens wonderbaarlik verryk. By haar het ons geleer om die geheime van die see te ontdek en te verstaan. Ons het menigmaal



WOLFGANG MARTIN DIEZEL
16 JUNE 2023

Growing up as a child, my father was my hero. He was a man with no fear. He dived to the deepest ocean depths and always caught the biggest perlemoen, crayfish, and fish. Before I was old enough to join his diving expeditions, he would describe his morning dive in the most colourful way possible. I learned of the dangers of the ocean and how he once wrestled a shark in the depths to protect his catch.

His favourite place to dive in the 70s was Rooiels – it was his happy place. He fell in love with the village and, despite plot sales being slow due to the wind, he decided to buy one. No matter the time of the year or the weather conditions, if he could light a fire and braai something, he was happy. On camping trips when the men were discussing retirement plans around the campfire, my father would just say that he would want to live in Rooiels until the day he died. He didn't need much and would live off the sea as long as he could.

He was indeed a free spirit. He used to say that a rolling stone never gathers moss. He was extremely impulsive and would go on an adventure without a plan or schedule. He lived for the moment. He believed overthinking could result in missing out on great experiences.

I recall him picking me up one December school holiday in 1983 and my mom asking where we were off to so that she could pack for me. He responded that we were just going for a short ride on his new motorbike to look at the flowers up the West Coast.

om rotspeele soos dissipels aan die voete van 'n groot leermeester gesit en haar kennis verteer. Oor die bewaring van die seelewe was sy fanaties. Sy was 'n stigterslid van Seawatch, wat stropery van perlemonen probeer keer.

Mettertyd het ons lewens vervleg geraak. Veral wanneer Marius weg was het sy daaglik oorgestap na ons toe, lang kiere in die hand. Ek hoor nog hoe sy met haar houtklompe die houttrappe opklim na ons kantoor. Sy het nooit geklop nie, net aangemeld. Dan staan sy daar met 'n boodskap van die gode.

Deur haar het ek en baie ander, geleer om alle aspekte van Rooiels te respekteer, die natuur altyd vooraan. Respek vir die kleinste lewe tot die groot berg wat soos 'n oerwese oor ons hang.

In my laaste gesprek met haar het haar oë verby my gekyk. Sy het ander horisonne gesien. Ek het ontsteld huis toe gestap en hierdie haikoe op my vingers getrommel:

in welke klipgrein kan ek jou weerloosheid vind en dit net aanraak?

Ons ken die heroïese liefdesverhale van Abelard en Heloise, Romeo en Juliette, Dante en Beatrix... Dan is daar die versorgende en hegte liefde tussen Marius en Evette. Onafskeidbaar. Ondersteunend. Beskermend.

Marius, namens Rooiels dankie vir jou begeleiding van ons dolfyn die dieptes in. Wees verseker sy baljaar saam met die ander. En hulle luister as sy fluister.

Gerard Scholtz

Seeing that the roads were so accessible, and he felt like testing the motorbike properly, we ended up going much further north. Of course, without planning. We slept under bridges in the sand and saw Lüderitz, Keetmanshoop, the Rock Finger ("Finger of God" near Asab), the Fish River Canyon, Windhoek, Walvis Bay, Swakopmund, and so much more.

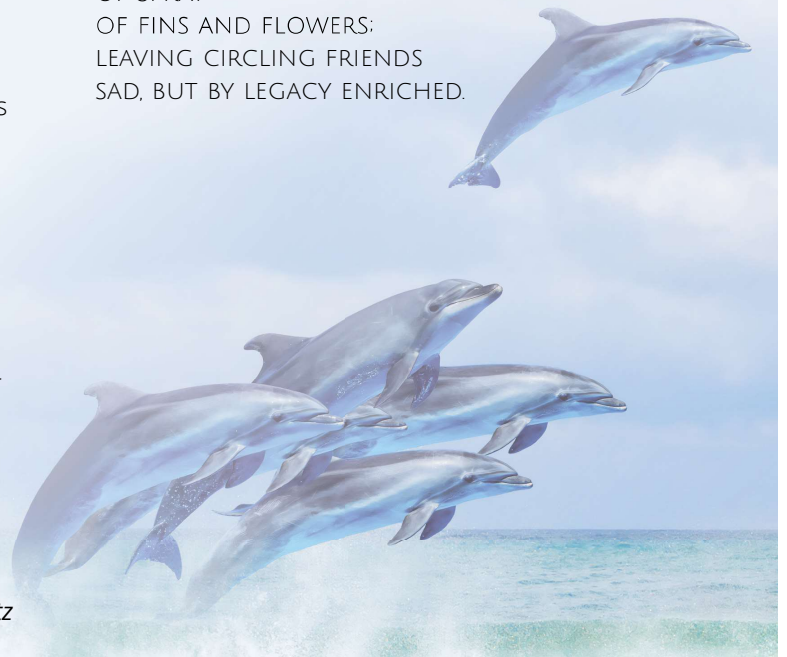
While working, he lived for the weekends. He would always remind me that it is two or three more sleeps and then it is THE WEEKEND! His passion was fishing and diving, and on the weekends that I was with him, we would go camping or do something next to the sea. Once again, no planning. No looking at the weather report. We would just take everything in our stride.

Later, my father would travel all over South Africa with his old-time friend, Uncle Mike Mulder. Uncle Mike would handle the planning and my dad would just fall in and adapt to whatever came. The setup worked for him, and he enjoyed those trips so much. Sadly, Uncle Mike passed away 12 years ago, and my father was completely lost without him. He still wanted to see so much, but without

EVETTE II

Bruce Relly

RARE IS THE SPIRIT
SETTLED SO MODEST-BRIGHT
IN A FAVOURED LAND
NURTURING ITS COASTAL CHARMS
WITH ARTFUL SIGHT,
CREATING PRODUCTS OF HER MIND AND HANDS
SUPPORTED BY HER FRIEND,
HER MAN;
BUT SHINING NOW IN OTHER REALMS
OF SPRAY
OF FINS AND FLOWERS:
LEAVING CIRCLING FRIENDS
SAD, BUT BY LEGACY ENRICHED.



his planner, nothing materialised. Spontaneous trips were no longer an option.

My father could speak to anyone. He didn't put anyone on an altar. To him, it didn't matter if you were a professor or a nobody. He would treat you the same, make the same jokes, and always manage to make people laugh. He was uncomplicated and down to earth.

The Rooiels community witnessed him getting sick and the Outreach program assisted him so graciously. They made sure he had food and clean clothing. A special thanks to Tania and Delicia who were there for him and unselfishly assisted him. Also, thank you to Ivan, Wolfgang, Fiona, Wimpie, and everyone else that we didn't know about. The world needs more people like you.

Martin will be greatly missed and our time at Rooiels will never be the same. We will always cherish the wonderful memories of an incredible father and grandfather.

Walter Diezel

Combating Alien Invasive Plants

PROTECTING THE UNIQUE FYNBOS ECOSYSTEM

The concept of "alien invasives" refers to species that are introduced, intentionally or accidentally, into a new environment where they are not native. These species are termed "alien" because they originate from different geographic regions. The term "invasive" is used because these species often spread rapidly and aggressively in their new habitats.

In the Western Cape, many alien species have been introduced from other parts of the world, either intentionally for agriculture, forestry, or as ornamental plants, or accidentally through global trade and travel. The region's unique climate and diverse habitats have allowed many of these species to thrive.

The Western Cape is home to the Cape Floristic Region, one of the world's biodiversity hotspots. Alien invasive species in this area pose a serious threat to its native flora and fauna. They often outcompete indigenous species, leading to a reduction in biodiversity and disruption of local ecosystems. This is particularly concerning in areas like the fynbos biome, where many plant species are found nowhere else on Earth.

The spread of invasive species in the Western Cape affects not just the environment but also the economy and communities. These species can damage crops, affect water resources, and increase the risk of wildfires, which are already a significant hazard in the region. Managing these species incurs considerable costs, and their impact can be felt in sectors such as agriculture, tourism, and water management.

In South Africa, there are concerted efforts to control and manage invasive species, including legislative measures under the National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act (NEMBA)¹. In the Western Cape, specific initiatives focus on eradicating or controlling invasive plants and animals, restoring affected ecosystems, and raising public awareness about the issue.

The challenge of managing alien invasive species in the Western Cape is compounded by factors such as climate change, urban expansion, and limited resources for environmental management. There's a growing recognition of the need for more effective strategies, including better enforcement of existing laws, public education, and research into more sustainable management practices.

The issue of alien invasive species is a pressing

environmental concern, deeply intertwined with the region's unique biodiversity. Our legislation classifies alien invasives and there are some plant species² to be on the lookout for.

CATEGORY 1A (PROHIBITED)

These are species that must not be allowed to grow or spread. Immediate steps must be taken to combat or eradicate them.

- Australian Myrtle (*Leptospermum laevigatum*)
- Nieu Zeeland Christmas tree (*Metrosideros excelsa*)

CATEGORY 1B (PROHIBITED / EXEMPTED IF IN POSSESSION OR UNDER CONTROL)

These species are generally prohibited, but exemptions are allowed under certain conditions. They must be controlled and managed to prevent spreading.

- Red eye wattle; Rooikrans (*Acacia cyclops*)
- Port Jackson; Goudwilger (*Acacia saligna*)
- Gum trees (All *Eucalyptus* species)
- Queen of the Night (All *Cereus* species)
- Pampas grass (*Cortaderia jubata & C.selloana*)
- Morning glory; Moonflower (All *Ipomoea* species)
- Hakea (All *Hakea* species)
- Lantana (All *Lantana* species)
- Kikuyu grass (*Pennisetum clandestinum*)
- Fountain grass (*Pennisetum setaceum*)
- Feathertop (*Pennisetum villosum*)
- Oleander; Selonsroos (*Nerium oleander*)

CATEGORY 2 (PERMIT REQUIRED)

This category includes species that require a permit for certain activities. The spread of these species must be contained, and they must be managed according to specific regulations.

- Elephant grass, Napier grass (*Pennisetum purpureum*)
- Sisal hemp; Garingboom (*Agave sisalana*)
- Horsetail tree (*Casuarina equisetifolia*)

CATEGORY 3 (PROHIBITED)

Species in this category are prohibited, with certain exemptions, especially for plants in riparian areas, where they are managed according to Category 1b regulations.

- Manatoka (All *Myoporum* species)
- Brazilian Pepper Tree (*Schinus terebinthafolius*)
- Century Plant (*Agave americana*)

¹ Act No. 10 of 2004; National Environmental Management » Biodiversity Act (10/2004) » Alien and Invasive Species Lists, 2016

² National list of Invasive Terrestrial and Fresh-water Plant Species – Invasive Species South Africa (visited: 2 December 2023)

ROOIELS

OUR VISION

ROOIELS IS A CONSERVATION COMMUNITY CARING TOGETHER TODAY - FOR TOMORROW

OUR VALUES

WE STRIVE TO BE A CARING COMMUNITY UNITED BY OUR PASSION TO CONSERVE THE NATURAL SPLENDOUR OF ROOIELS AND IS KEEN TO SHARE OUR APPRECIATION OF THE ENVIRONMENT WITH OTHERS.

OUR PLEDGE

UNITED IN 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 AREA LIMITED
- OUR CUSTODIANSHIP OF THE ENVIRONMENT RESPECTED
- OUR COMMUNITY SPIRIT STRENGTHENED

SO THAT OUR LIVES, AND THOSE OF GENERATIONS TO COME, WILL BE ENRICHED BY OUR CARE!

ONS VISIE

ROOIELS IS 'N BEWARINGSGEMEENSAP WAT VANDAG SAAM SORG - VIR MÔRE.

ONS WAARDES

ONS STREEF DAARNA OM 'N SORGSAME GEMEENSAP TE WEES, VERENIG IN ONS PASSIE OM DIE NATUURLIKE PRAG VAN ROOIELS TE BEWAAR EN OM YWERIG TE WEES OM ONS WAARDERING VAN DIE OMGEWING MET ANDER TE DEEL.

ONS ONDERNEMING

VERENIG IN ONS PASSIE VIR DIE NATUURPRAG VAN ROOIELS, ONDERNEEM ONS DAT HIER ...

- DIE NATUUR GEKOESTER SAL WORD
- PLANTE, DIERE, EN SEELEWE BESKERM SAL WORD
- ELKE IMPAK VAN ONS OP HIERDIE GEBIED BEPERK SAL WEES
- ONS VOOGDYSKAP OOR ONS OMGEWING GERESPEKTEER SAL WORD
- ONS GEMEENSKAPSGEES VERSTERK SAL WORD

SODAT ON LEWENS EN DIÉ VAN DIE TOEKOMSTIGE GESLAGTE VERRYK SAL WORD DEUR ONS SORG!

UMBONO WETHU

IROOIELS LULUNTU LOLONDOLOZO OLUKHATHALELA KUNYE NAMHLANJE - KUBA NGOMSO

IMLINGANISELO YETHU

SIZAMA UKUBA LULUNTU OLUKHATHALAYO OLUDITYANISWE LUTHANDO LWETHU LOKULONDOLOZA UBUKHAZIKHAZI BENDALO BEROOIELS KWAYE SIZIMISELE UKWABELANA NABANYE NGOXABISO LWETHU NGENDALO ESINGQONGILEYO.

ISITHEMBISO SETHU

SIMANYENE KUTHANDO LWETHU LOBUKHAZIKHAZI BENDALO BEROOIELS, SIYATHEMBISA UKUBA APHA ...

- INDALO IYA KUKHULISWA
- IIFLORA, FAUNA, KUNYE NEMARINE LIFE ZIKHUSELWE
- YONKE IMPEMBELELO YETHU KWINDAWO ILINGANISELWE
- UGCINO LWETHU LOKUSINGQONGILEYO LUYAHLONITSHWA
- UMOYA WETHU EKHULALENI WOMELEZWA

UKUZE UBOMI BETHU, KUNYE NOBEZIZUKULWANA EZIZAYO, BUTYETISWE KUKUKHATHALELWA KWETHU!

HOW TO GIVE

Rooiels Ratepayers' Association

Nedbank Savings Account

Account name: RERA

Account number: 9019464920

Reference: ERF NUMBER, NAME AND SURNAME

Send proof of payment to rera@rooiels.org.za

Rooiels Conservancy

Nedbank Savings Account

Account name: REC

Account number: 9019647510

Reference: ERF NUMBER, NAME AND SURNAME

Send proof of payment to rec@rooiels.org.za

Rooiels Outreach - Donations

Nedbank Current Account

Account name: Community Projects and Outreach

Account number: 9019996808

Reference: NAME AND SURNAME

Send proof of payment to Ivan Becker 0832899385

Hack day (just another way to give)

1st Saturday of each month, except if specifically postponed or cancelled due to weather or conflicting calendar events.

Rooiels Security Association - Membership

Nedbank Savings Account

Account name: RESA

Account number: 9018382109

Reference: ERF NUMBER, NAME AND SURNAME

Send proof of payment to resa@rooiels.org.za

Rooiels Security Association - Donations

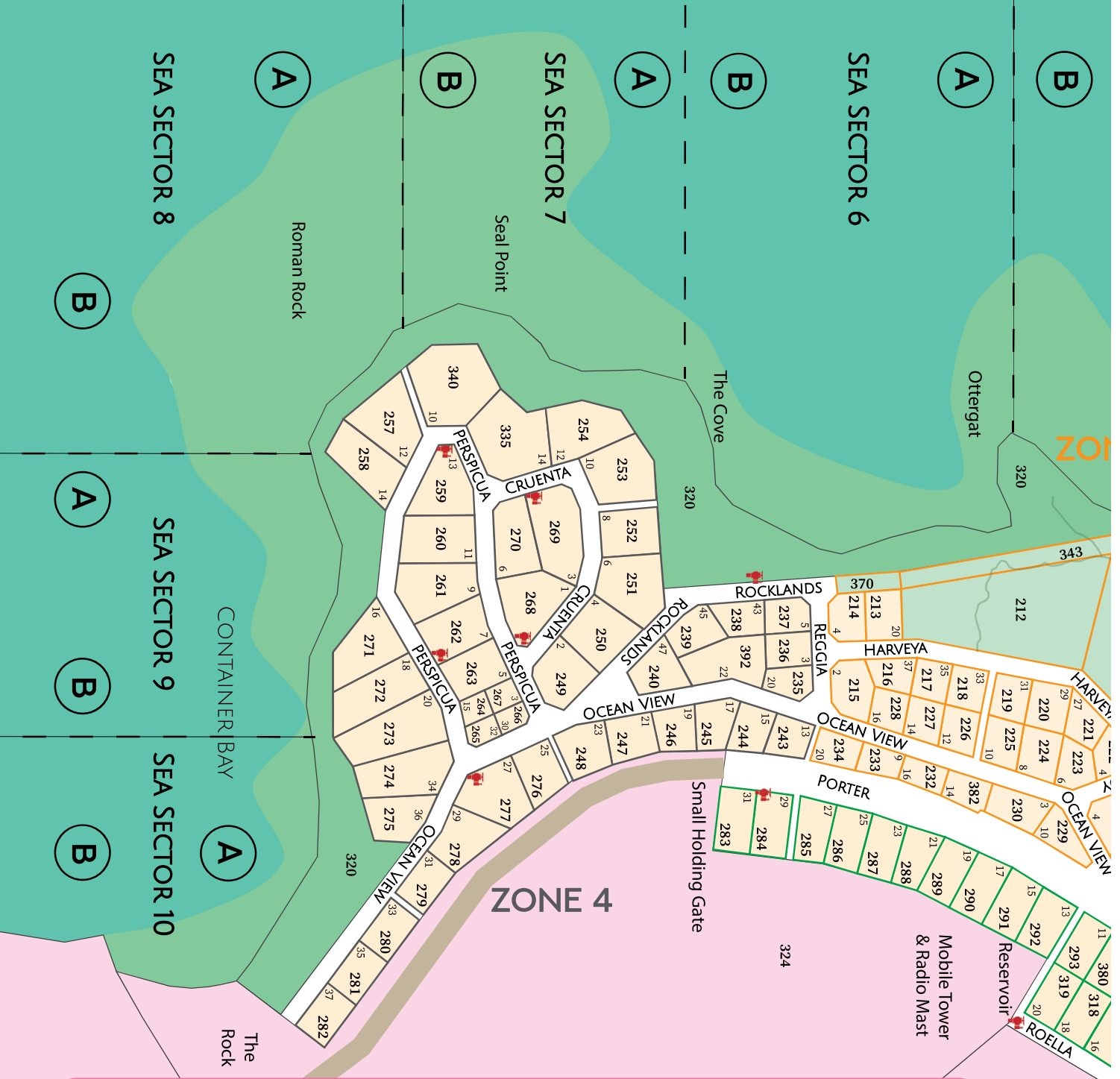
Nedbank Savings Account

Account name: RESA

Account number: 9019777820

Reference: ERF NUMBER, NAME AND SURNAME

Send proof of payment to resa@rooiels.org.za



ROOIELS

ERF AND STREET NUMBERS

Erf numbers are shown as at December 2023. According to an Overstrand Municipality by-law, all premises (residential or commercial) must at all times display their **street number** (now added to the map). Some map services works on erf numbers, so consider displaying both.

SEA SECTORS

Sea sectors and their A- or B-sides are used to direct emergency services, such as the NSRI or the police to specific zones.

FIRE HYDRANTS

Fire hydrants are available throughout the village. Identify one close to you and be so kind as to keep the hydrant clearly visible or contact the REDI team to clear vegetation.

SECURITY ZONES

Erf edges are colour-coded to zones. These zones are helpful to patrollers.

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

- Overstrand Municipality 028 313 8000
- Overstrand Control Room (24-hours) . . 028 313 8111
- Overstrand Fire & Rescue 028 312 2400
- Pringle Bay Medics* 082 232 8048
- All Emergencies (toll-free land line) 10177
- All Emergencies (toll-free cellphone) 112
- Mountain Rescue 021 948 9900
- NSRI National 082 380 3800
- NSRI Kleinmond 063 699 2765
- Poisons Information Helpline 0861 555 777

* For acute medical emergencies in Pringle Bay and Rooiels: weekdays 18:00 - 06:00 and 24-hours on weekend or public holidays.



ROOIELS IMPORTANT CONTACTS

STREET NUMBER	<input type="text"/>	ERF NUMBER	<input type="text"/>
STREET NAME	<input type="text"/>		

EMERGENCY

Overstrand 24-Hour Control Room	028 313 8111
All Emergencies (Toll-free land line)	10177
All Emergencies (from cellphone)	112
Poisons Information Helpline	0861 555 777
Lifeline (Emotional support)	021 461 1113
Mountain Rescue	021 948 9900
Pringle Bay Medics	082 232 8048

FIRE

Overstrand 24-Hour Fire & Rescue	028 312 2400
Rooiels Fire Coordinator (Hilgard)	082 898 8202

SEA RESCUE (NSRI)

Post on Block Watch WhatsApp group

Public Emergency number	087 094 9774
NSRI National	082 380 3800
NSRI Kleinmond	063 699 2765
NSRI Gordon's Bay	072 448 8482
NSRI Hermanus	082 990 5967

SAFETY & SECURITY

ASK Control Room or cellphone number	028 125 0050 073 781 8583
Police (Kleinmond) or, if normal line is out of order	028 271 8200 082 443 6069
ASK Rooiels night patroller	079 891 1624
ASK Pringle Bay patroller	072 345 3041
RESA Office (09:00-12:00)	028 273 8089

HOSPITALS & PHARMACIES

Vergelegen Medi-Clinic	021 850 9000
Hermanus Medi-Clinic	028 313 0168
Hermanus Provincial Hospital	028 313 5200
Kleinmond Pharmacy	028 271 3320
Albertyn Pharmacy (Kleinmond)	028 271 4666

OVERSTRAND - KLEINMOND

Email address: enquiries@overstrand.gov.za

Street address: 33 5th Avenue, Kleinmond

Overstrand Municipality (24-hours)	028 313 8000
Kleinmond Municipal Office	028 271 8400
ESKOM	0860 037 566
Tanker bookings	028 271 8435
Traffic Department (Kleinmond)	028 271 8450
Building Control (Kleinmond)	028 271 8427
Environmental Management	028 316 3724

ANIMALS & PETS

Hermanus Animal Welfare	028 312 1281
Kleinmond Animal Welfare (KAWS)	028 271 5004
Kleinmond Vet Emergency	028 271 4183 072 564 9903
Cottage Vet (Gordon's Bay 24-Hour)	021 856 2746
Seabirds/Penguins	082 783 8585

SNAKE CATCHERS

Ernst Thompson	082 333 1543
Gert Coetzee	083 658 2504
Ian Milne	082 457 3660
Willie du Plooy	082 773 9049

ANTI-POACHING

Post on Block Watch WhatsApp group

DAFF Anti-poaching (Johan Fouché)	084 408 6158
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ROOIELS BUSINESSES

Rooiels Village Shop	076 524 3688
Drummond Arms	072 381 2471
Gossip Corner	076 853 2955
Bella Italia	072 479 5815

ROOIELS.ORG.ZA

LIVING THE ROOIELS VISION

FLASHCARDS WITH KEY INFORMATION

LIGHT POLLUTION

Care for nocturnal animals and be kind to neighbours by closing curtains or blinds after dark, and by using downward tilted sensor lights for security.

CONSTRUCTION

Limit impact on the fynbos by removing special plants and preserving the topsoil. Stay within the restrictions of your title deed and don't fence off your whole plot.

GARDENING

Gardening in Rooiels requires patience and persistence. Try to retain the fynbos on your erf. They attract natural pollinators, such as butterflies and birds.

WILDLIFE

Some seldom-seen animals include otters, honey badgers, porcupines, leopards, etc. Be mindful that nocturnal animals rely on free movement and dark skies.

LITTER & WASTE

Domestic waste must be placed in plastic bags and your own baboon-proof bin; not a communal bin. Pick up litter when taking a walk or going for a stroll on the beach.

ALIEN VEGETATION

Eradicate alien invasive plants on your erf. Join the diligent Rooiels hack group who looks after our road verges and surrounding areas on the 1st Saturday of each month.

BABOONS

Baboons only care about food and will not harm people. They may come across as intimidating, so do not walk with food, and teach kids to drop food when a baboon approaches.

PETS

Dogs must be on a leash at all times and owners must pick up after their dog. Do not throw dog faeces into the fynbos. Ensure your cat does not hunt birds, lizards, shrews, etc.

NOISE

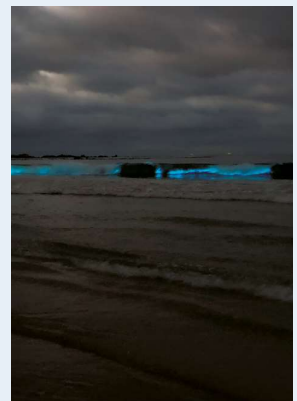
The sounds of waves crashing, frogs clicking, and otters whistling are what makes Rooiels such a special place. Please keep noise and dogs' barking to a minimum.

DRONES

It is illegal to fly drones nearer than 50 meters from people, buildings, or roads. Please alert weekend guests to be mindful about this by-law.

Breeze 2023 is dedicated to all who give so unselfishly to Rooiels, be it with their time, money, or by simply and quietly living out the Rooiels Vision each day.

BACK COVER:
PIERRE NEETHLING
BIOLUMINESCENCE

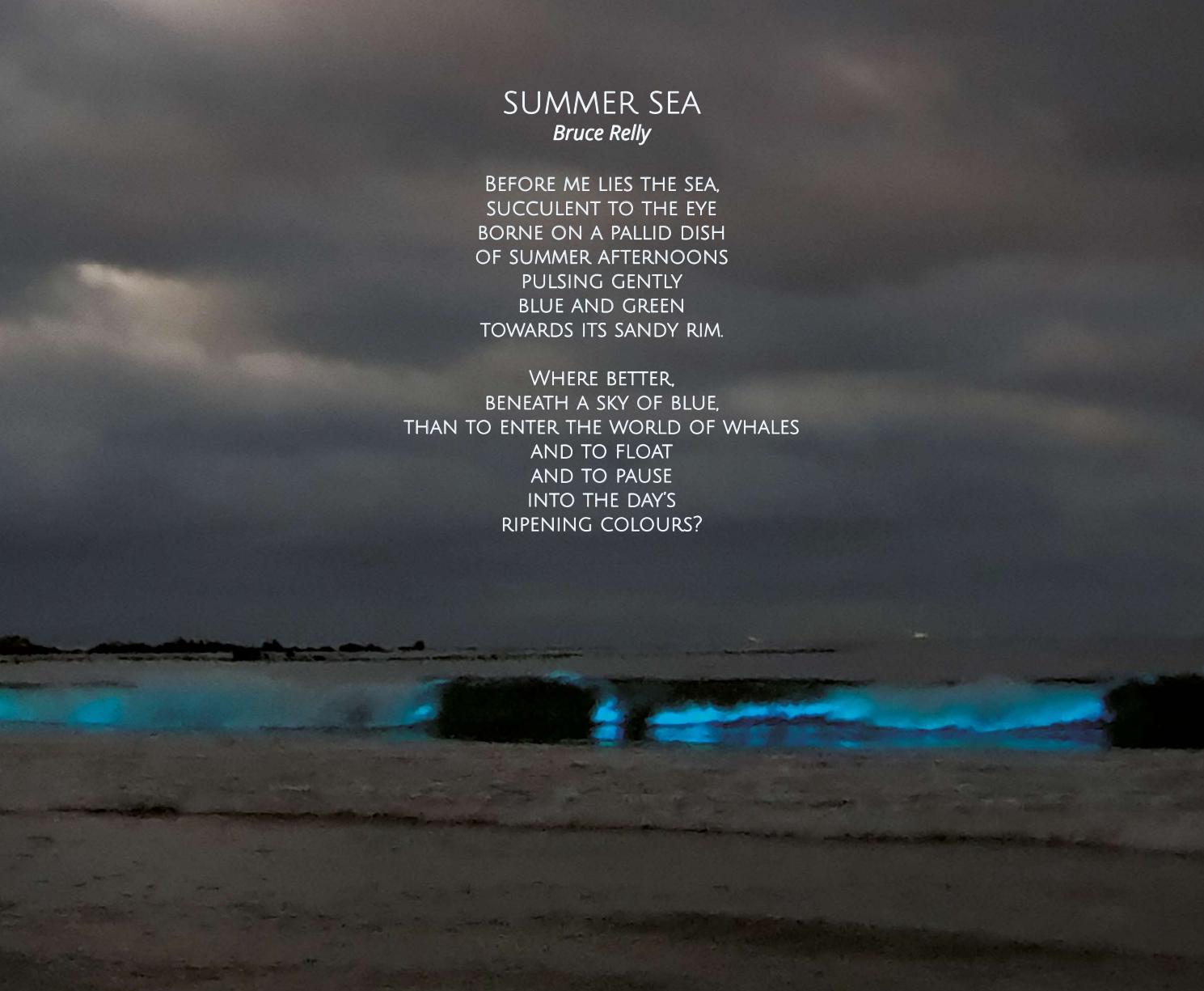


SUMMER SEA

Bruce Relly

BEFORE ME LIES THE SEA,
SUCCULENT TO THE EYE
BORNE ON A PALLID DISH
OF SUMMER AFTERNOONS
PULSING GENTLY
BLUE AND GREEN
TOWARDS ITS SANDY RIM.

WHERE BETTER,
BENEATH A SKY OF BLUE,
THAN TO ENTER THE WORLD OF WHALES
AND TO FLOAT
AND TO PAUSE
INTO THE DAY'S
RIPENING COLOURS?



In the realm of natural wonders, where a picture is worth a thousand words, it's equally true that a picture cannot capture the full experience, especially when it comes to the ethereal glow of bioluminescence — a phenomenon that truly needs to be seen to be believed.

Bioluminescence, a natural wonder that lights up our oceans, is truly a spectacle to behold. It is predominantly caused by algal blooms, specifically by a type of microorganism known as *Dinoflagellates*. These tiny creatures emit light when they are agitated, which can occur through movement in the water.

The science behind this glowing display lies in a chemical reaction. When *Dinoflagellates* are disturbed, they produce a light-emitting molecule called luciferin and an enzyme called luciferase. The interaction between these two under the right conditions results in the magical glow we see in the water.

On a dark summer night, with our dark skies overhead, you can witness this glowing phenomenon as gentle waves crash onto the Rooiels beach. An interesting way to interact with this natural wonder is by stomping your feet in the wet sand when the water recedes. This disturbance often triggers the bioluminescent algae, creating a sparkling display around your feet, as if the stars from the sky have descended to dance at your toes.

It's important to note that while bioluminescence is a stunning natural event, it's also an indicator of changes in our marine ecosystems. Algal blooms can signify a nutrient imbalance in the water, often due to runoff from land. During these times, it's best to avoid collecting and consuming shellfish such as mussels, as they can accumulate toxins harmful to humans.

How about the next time this mesmerising natural phenomenon occurs, we organize a community get-together at the beach to immerse ourselves in this breathtaking display, fostering connections with each other and nature? As we gather to witness one of nature's most extraordinary displays, we'll be collectively reminded of the immense beauty and intricate complexity of our oceanic world. Such an event promises not just a visual feast but also a chance to bond over our shared awe and appreciation for this natural wonder.