



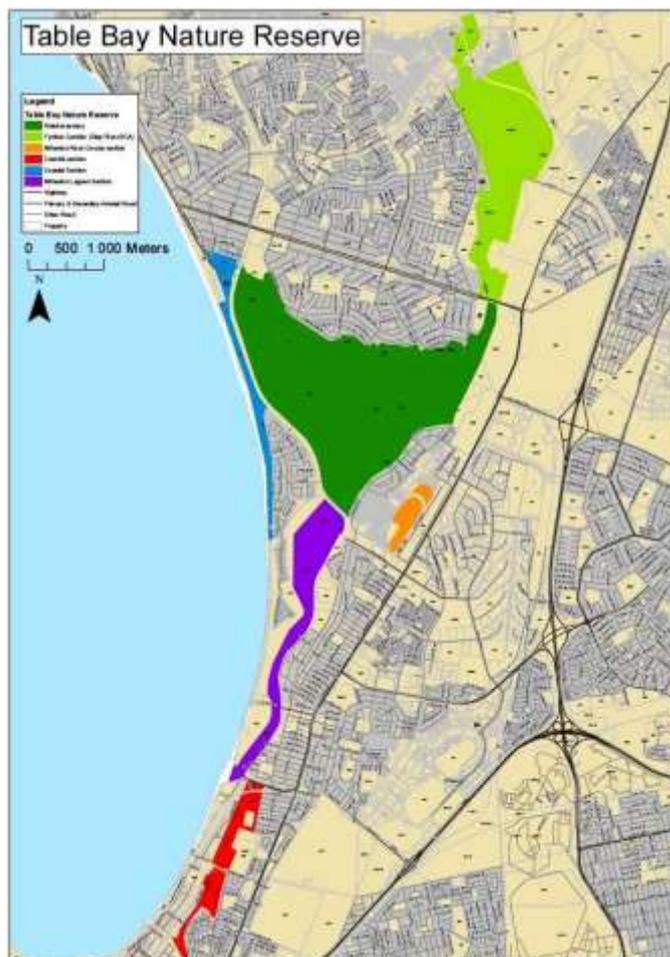
TABLE BAY NATURE RESERVE

QUARTERLY REPORT JANUARY – MARCH 2016

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For the Nature Reserve webpage, click the link or type www.capetown.gov.za/tablebaynr in your browser.

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Table Bay Nature Reserve's Rietvlei Water Area is growing in popularity, which is evidenced by the **increasing trend in visitor numbers and income** being recorded. This quarter recorded the highest income ever at the Rietvlei gate in a three-month period. To this end, much is being invested to upgrade and maintain the **water-sports infrastructure**, including repairs and maintenance to the old Council jetty.

Unfortunately many visitors are still **littering** the Nature Reserve with alcohol bottles, cigarette butts, discarded food wrapping and fishing line. The reserve is a **bin-free area** and we ask all visitors to remove ALL items that they bring in with them.

The fame of Rietvlei goes beyond water sports into the area of bird watching. At least **four rare birds have been seen at Rietvlei** this quarter, causing a stir in bird watching circles and the local media. Much to the birders' dismay however, is the fact that **dog walkers** have now started to bring their dogs into the birding areas and letting them run after the birds. Steps are being taken to apprehend and fine dog walkers that let their dogs run free in the Nature Reserve.

The Nature Reserve's **Advisory Committee** had its third meeting this quarter. There are some communities that are not yet represented in this committee, including Du Noon, as well as the Table View and Parklands homeowners' associations.

The Nature Reserve team, contractors and various City departments conducted important **alien and invasive vegetation management**, including chemical treatments of bulrush reed beds, removing water hyacinth, and follow-up clearing of various woody alien species in large area of the Nature Reserve.

The **rainfall** over the last year has been extraordinarily low, and much of the seasonal wetlands have completely dried up, causing some dust problems. Nature Reserve staff also spent about 40 person days on **wildfires** in the Northern region of City, as well as assisting with a prescribed ecological burn at Tygerberg hill.

The **nature reserve facilities** were used by over 555 people for various training and meeting purposes, and environmental education programmes reached another 372 persons during this quarter, including the now-famous fishing holiday programme. Two new nature conservation students have joined the Nature Reserve for their work-integrated learning. The staff, including learners and interns, enjoyed over 150 person days of formal training programmes.



Figure 1. European (Common) cuckoo (photo: Frieda Prinsloo).

2 HIGHLIGHTS & CHALLENGES

2.1 HIGHLIGHT: Several rare birds have been recorded at Rietvlei, including Common (European) cuckoo (*Cuculus canorus*), Giant Kingfisher (*Megaceryle maximus*), Great spotted cuckoo (*Clamator glandarius*), and Great egret (*Ardea alba*) (see Figures 2-5 below).

Birdwatching and wildlife photography is encouraged in the Nature Reserve. Some photographers have however noticed that dog walkers are starting to bring dogs into areas where dogs are not allowed, and disturbing the bird life. Nature Reserve staff are apprehending these dog walkers and sending them to areas where dog walking is allowed. Fines will be issued in future (see [11. Law Enforcement](#)).



Figure 2. European (Common) cuckoo (photo: Frieda Prinsloo).



Figure 3. Giant kingfisher (photo: Frieda Prinsloo).



Figure 4. Great spotted cuckoo (photo: Frieda Prinsloo).



Figure 5. Great egret (left) next to a heron (photo: Frieda Prinsloo).

2.2 CHALLENGE: Littering and pollution in the natural environment seems to be one of those “excusable crimes” because it does not hurt anybody.

Figure 6 below is from the Rietvlei fishing shore where smokers throw their cigarette butts into the water or stomp them out in the sand. A few meters away there was a pile of alcohol bottles (Figure 7). Almost all pollution is composed of materials that generally trace back to items that we use on a daily basis, including cigarette butts, bottle caps and lids, beverage containers, plastic bags, food wrappers and containers, disposable cutlery, glassware, straws, metal cans and paper.

The Bill of Rights in the Constitution of South Africa sets out everyone’s right in terms of the environment:

Everyone has the right to an environment that is not harmful to their health or well-being, and to have the environment protected, for the benefit of present and future generations, through reasonable legislative and other measures that (a.) prevent pollution and ecological degradation, (b.) promote conservation, and (c.) secure ecologically sustainable development and use of natural resources while promoting justifiable economic and social development.

This also implies that everyone has an obligation to maintain this right by doing everything reasonable in their power to prevent pollution and ecological degradation. It is reasonable to expect that we should all dispose of our refuse in a legal disposal area, and not in the open environment.

We want to remind all visitors of the following:

- We do not provide litter bins in the natural areas of the Nature Reserve. It is everyone's own responsibility to remove whatever refuse they generate with them when they leave.
- Littering, in all its forms (including dropping of cigarette butts) is illegal and can be prosecuted.
- Consuming alcohol in any public areas, including the Nature Reserve's natural areas, is illegal. When offenders are apprehended, they will be prosecuted and their alcohol confiscated.



Figure 6. Cigarette butts collected at Rietvlei shore in one morning.



Figure 7. Alcohol bottles littering the Rietvlei area.

3 CONSERVATION PLANNING

3.1 The Protected Area Advisory Committee (PAAC) for Table Bay Nature Reserve had its third meeting on 21/01/2016. The meeting was attended by 26 representatives from 21 organisations and units, however there is no representation from Du Noon, Table View and Parklands yet (see below attendance list):

Brooklyn & Ysterplaat Residents Association
 CapeNature
 CCT: Biodiversity Management Branch
 CCT: City Parks Operations: Northern District
 CCT: Environmental and Heritage Management Branch
 CCT: Subcouncil 1
 CCT: Wastewater Treatment: Operations (North)
 Dolphin Beach Body Corporate
 Friends of Blaauwberg Conservation Area
 Friends of Rietvlei

Guest: University of Stellenbosch
 Heron Waters and Villa du Cap
 Milnerton Aquatic Club
 Milnerton Canoe Club
 Milnerton Central Residents Association
 Milnerton Golf Club
 Milnerton Ridge Ratepayers Association
 Paardeneiland City Improvement District
 SANCCOB
 Sunset Beach Homeowners Association
 Woodbridge Island Body Corporate

Some of the items on the agenda included:

- Feedback on matters arising from the previous meeting by Mr Koos Retief;
- Quarterly report feedback by Mr Koos Retief;
- Feedback on the Hydrology and geohydrology study and hydrodynamic modelling by Mr Ross Campbell;
- Presentation on the Friends of Blaauwberg Conservation Area by Mr Roy Fuller-Gee;
- Feedback on the Diep Estuary Action Plan by Ms Landi Louw;
- Feedback on the Milnerton Ridge security patrols by Mr Rolf Spaeth;
- Feedback from the Diep River invasive plants sub-working group by Mr Koos Retief;
- Feedback from the Diep River water quality sub-working group by Mr Koos Retief;
- Feedback on the Rietvlei Open Day on 14 November 2015 by Mr Nelis Visagie, Ms Romy Klusener, and Ms Pat Downing; and
- Resignation of Mr Doug Harebottle as representative of the Cape Bird Club

Some future items of interest include **proposals and costs relating to the restoration of the Wooden Bridge** at the Milnerton Lagoon, as well as **feedback on the hydrology and geohydrology study**.

4 FLORA

4.1 Alien and invasive plant management during this quarter was focussed on the following:

- **Water hyacinth (*Eichhornia crassipes*)** was removed in the Diep River from the Blaauwberg Road bridge to the Otto du Plessis bridge, using a combination of methods including manual removal as well as machine excavation. The manual clearing teams are Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) funded teams. The teams are coordinated by the Westlake Green Jobs Unit and Reserve Supervisor: Christopher Singo.
- **Bulrush (*Typha capensis*) reeds** were suppressed by means of follow-up spraying with glyphosate herbicide. A contractor (HENCHEM) did this work in water bodies at Waves' Edge and Dolphin Beach. This was planned by Regional Manager: Bongani Mnisi and Area Manager: Koos Retief.
- **Kikuyu (*Pennisetum clandestinum*) grass** was chemically controlled in selected areas in the Milnerton Racecourse Section, where this grass is invading into the Nature Reserve from the horse running tracks and surrounding developments. This work is done by the Site Manager: Landi Louw and volunteers.



Figure 8. Red areas indicating portions of the Nature Reserve where alien and invasive vegetation management took place during this quarter.

- **Port Jackson (*Acacia saligna*) willow** and various other woody species, as well as litter was removed from the Milnerton Lagoon Section. This work was done by the Site Manager: Landi Louw and the Field Rangers and volunteers.
- **Brazilian Pepper (*Schinus terebinthifolius*) trees**, Port Jacksons, and various palm species were removed from the SANCCOB block between Pentz Drive and the R27, where a fire occurred last year. This was done by the Field Rangers.
- **Port Jackson** follow-up clearing was done in the Milnerton Ridge block between Theo Marais Park, the Otto du Plessis bridge and the canal. This work was done by the Field Rangers.
- **Port Jackson** follow-up clearing was done in portions of the Diep River Section by a contractor, Japie Samuels, who was coordinated by the Westlake Green Jobs Unit and Reserve Supervisor: Christopher Singo.



Figure 9. Chemical follow-up treatment of bulrush at Waves' Edge.



Figure 10. One of two teams removing water hyacinth.

5 FAUNA

5.1 An integrated bird census was conducted on 19/02/2016. The census was done by the Nature Reserve team and a volunteer, covering 11 surveys sections. The water birds numbered a total of 2,557 birds comprising of 39 species (see Figures 11-13 for details).

16 species with single-figure counts accounted for 1,9% of the water birds, including: 1 Yellowbilled egret, 1 Cattle egret, 1 African black duck, 1 African marsh harrier, 1 Common sandpiper, 2 Great crested grebe, 2 Hadeda ibis, 2 Three-banded plover, 3 Purple heron, 3 Glossy ibis, 3 Redbilled teal, 4 Purple swamphen, 4 Mallard hybrid, 6 Greenshank, 7 Blackheaded heron, and 7 Swift tern.

14 species with double-figure counts accounted for 11,2% of the water birds, including: 10 Blackwinged stilt, 10 Pied kingfisher, 12 Reed cormorant, 15 Little grebe, 15 Cape wagtail, 17 Little egret, 20 African darter, 22 Cape shoveller, 23 White pelican, 23 Grey heron, 23 African black oystercatcher, 26 Common moorhen, 29 Whitebreasted cormorant, and 41 Sacred ibis.

9 species with triple-figure counts accounted for 86,9% of the water birds, including 143 Common tern, 168 Greater flamingo, 174 Blacksmith lapwing, 221 Spurwinged goose, 239 Yellowbilled duck, 262 Egyptian goose, 263 Kelp gull, 376 Hartlaub's gull, and 377 Redknobbed coot.

Additional species included Common fiscal, Domestic goose, White-throated swallow, Black-shouldered kite, Cape spurfowl, Helmeted guineafowl, Pied crow, Pintailed whydah, and Cape Robin.

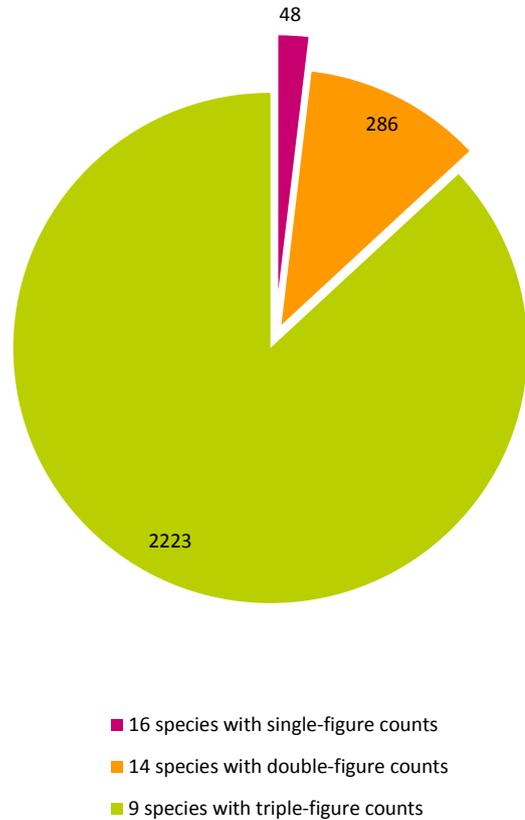


Figure 11. Relative contribution of low, medium and high counts.

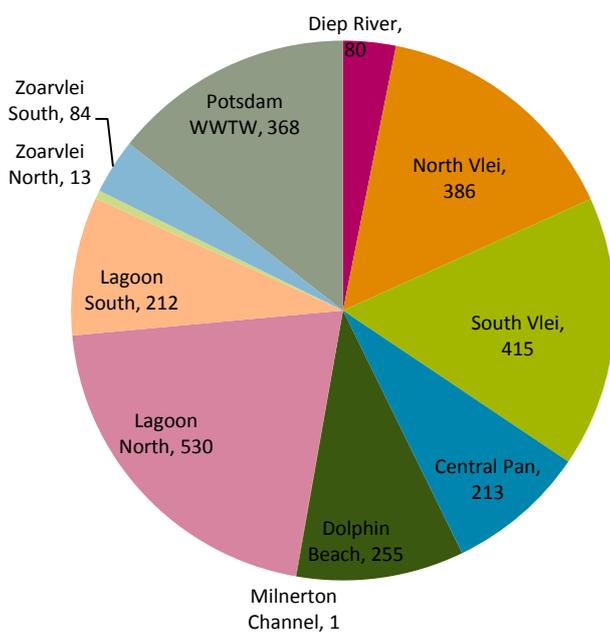


Figure 12. Relative contribution from each survey section.

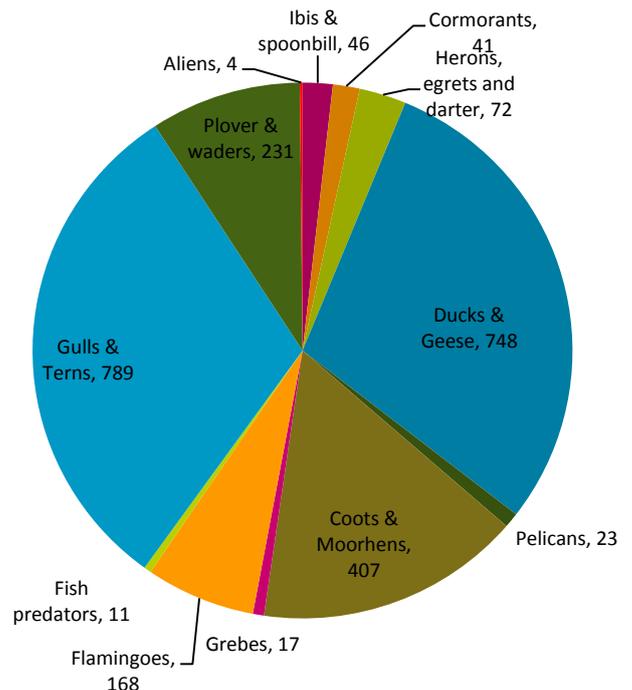


Figure 13. Relative contribution from the various bird groups.

5.2 Other indigenous fauna sightings included a Steenbok (*Raphicerus campestris*) lamb that was recently born and an African fish eagle (*Haliaeetus vocifer*) in flight:



Figure 14. Steenbok lamb (photo: Cliff Dorse).



Figure 15. African fish eagle in flight (photo: Frieda Prinsloo).

6 SOIL

6.1 A complaint of dust blowing from the dry seasonal pan was received on 11/03/2016. Strong winds picked up dust and this could be seen from Table View. A decision was however made to not do anything since rain was expected the next day. The rain dampened the pan and suppressed the dust.

7 WATER

7.1 Rainfall recorded in the Table Bay Nature Reserve (at Rietvlei Water Area and the Milnerton Racecourse) during the last year varied greatly. The rainfall was between 80mm and 100mm less than the annual rainfall. Only June, July, November, and December 2015 recorded average rainfall, with all the other months recording far below average. In the latter half of March 2016 the rainfall increased again to about triple the normal rainfall for March. This recent rainfall however did nothing to lift the water levels in Rietvlei or to even fill the seasonal pans.

The variable rainfall was indicative of the national drought currently experienced in the country. The water levels in the Rietvlei water area have been exceptionally low and the seasonal pans have also dried out, causing some dust problems in early March. The rainfall in March have however dampened down the dust and no further dust complaints were received.

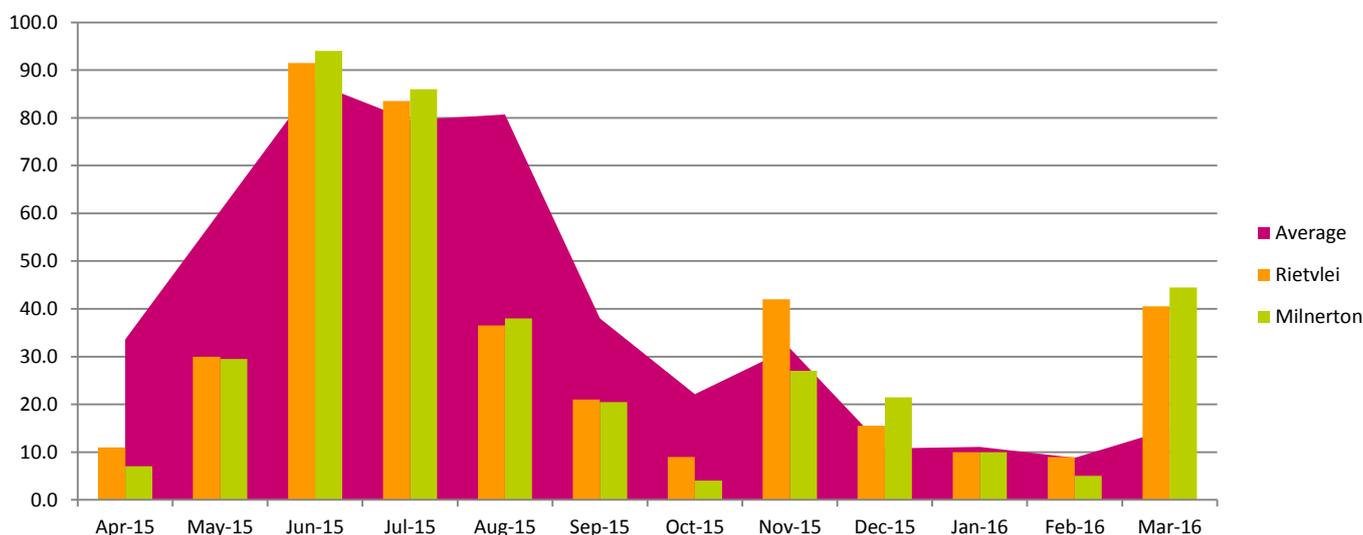


Figure 16. Monthly rainfall during the last 12 months plotted over the average rainfall trend.

7.2 Pre-winter stormwater preparations were undertaken by the Stormwater Department as part of the annual maintenance plan. The Nature Reserve also used manual teams to supplement this work, which consisted of clearing reeds and water hyacinth from canals and portions of the Diep River.

This work was done in terms of the City's environmental authorisation to conduct routine maintenance, and was aimed at reducing flooding and clearing blockages that could back-flood.

Some of the work was conducted by hand with two Nature Reserve teams that removed water hyacinth from sections of the Diep River (see 4. Flora).

A swan-neck excavator was deployed by the Stormwater Department downstream of the Blaauwberg Road Bridge to remove larger areas of vegetation that are expanding rapidly in the river.



Figure 17. Excavator removing water hyacinth and reeds from sections of the Diep River.

8 FIRE

8.1 Several wildfires were attended to this quarter by Nature Reserve staff, including at:

- Blaauwberg Nature Reserve through the night from 4-5/01/2016, costing 4 person days;
- Diep River Section of the Nature Reserve on 5/01/2016, costing 2 person days;
- Witzands Nature Reserve over several nights from 8-13/01/2016, costing about 15 person days;
- Vissershok area over two nights from 14-16/01/2016, costing 7 person days;
- Diep River Section of the Nature Reserve on 22/01/2016, costing one person day;
- Koeberg Nature Reserve spreading to Witzands Nature Reserve over two nights from 16-18/01/2016, costing 10 person days; and
- Zoarvlei Section of the Nature Reserve on 18/02/2016, when the Nature Reserve was unable to send any staff to assist the fire fighting effort.

Unwanted wildfires are a serious concern in Cape Town. Many runaway wildfires are started as a result of careless actions by people, which could have been prevented. We want to urge residents in Cape Town to take the utmost care in the warm, dry and windy summer season, and never light fires, fireworks, and flares near dry vegetation. Special care must also be taken when working with welding or grinding equipment in open areas, as sparks can also light dry grass. Fires can claim lives and cause millions of Rands of damage.

8.2 Firebreak preparations and fuel reduction work was done at Tygerberg Nature Reserve by Table Bay Nature Reserve staff. This work was to assist in preparing an area for a prescribed ecological burn.

8.3 Prescribed ecological burns are a way for managers to reduce the natural fuel load and also promote indigenous vegetation regeneration at the same time. This is often applied in vegetation types such as Fynbos and Renosterveld, that require fire to activate seed germination. This work is always planned months in advance and must be carried out under strict permit conditions. Prescribed burns are always carried out with the assistance of the Fire Department and under the supervision air quality controllers.

Table Bay Nature Reserve staff assisted with conducting a prescribed ecological burn in a portion of Renosterveld at the Tygerberg Nature Reserve on 11/02/2016 (see Figure 18 below).



Figure 18. Conducting a prescribed ecological burn at Tygerberg Nature Reserve.

9 PEOPLE, TOURISM & EDUCATION

9.1 Stakeholder Engagement

9.1.1 Internal Meetings

Table Bay Nature Reserve staff attended no less than 12 official internal meetings during this quarter:

- 22/01/2016: North Region Health & Safety Committee and Management Meetings;
- 17/02/2016: Integrated Performance Management Annual Review;
- 17/02/2016: An employee grievance resolution at Maitland Head Office;
- 18/02/2016: Business Improvement / Realignment feedback held at Maitland;
- 25/02/2016: Branch Meeting held at Rietvlei Boma;
- 26/02/2016: John Lockett's farewell gathering at Kristo Pienaar Centre;
- 29/02/2016: Rietvlei gate house upgrade site inspection;
- 01/03/2016: Business Improvement / Realignment feedback held at Westlake;
- 04/03/2016: North Region Management meeting held at Nirvana Private Nature Reserve;
- 09/03/2016: Diep River maintenance management plan site meeting; and
- 11/03/2016: Students research proposal presentation at Kristo Pienaar Centre.

9.1.2 External Meetings

Table Bay Nature Reserve staff attended no less than 13 official external meetings during this quarter:

- 21/01/2016: Table Bay Nature Reserve Advisory Committee meeting;
- 29/01/2016: Milnerton Racecourse Environmental Management Committee;
- 12/02/2016: Dr Frans Radloff and two students from CPUT about progress;
- 15/02/2016: Department of Public Works about the Tsebo Bohlale internship programme's future;
- 16/02/2016: Cape Peninsula Fire Protection Association's Fire Risk Assessment;
- 18/02/2016: Project Management Team for the Historic Wooden Bridge Restoration;
- 26/02/2016: Milnerton Racecourse Environmental Management Committee;
- 02/03/2016: Paardeneiland City Improvement District about conservation and security;
- 08/03/2016: Site meeting at La' Afrique about maintenance work;
- 14-15/03/2016: Estuary Management Forum Workshop at Noordhoek;
- 31/03/2016: Growing Together Workshop at Rietvlei boma; and
- 31/03/2016: Milnerton Aquatic Club regarding 24 Hour Challenge de-brief.



Figure 19.A volunteer presenting a stand in the Talbe View shopping mall.

9.2 Benefit to People

9.2.1 Rietvlei Education Centre Usage

The usage of the Rietvlei Education Centre, excluding visiting school groups, generated 10 person days of benefit to people over one event day.

DATE	GROUP	ACTIVITY	PERSON DAYS
16/03/2016	Blaauwberg Development Area Environmental Liaison Committee	Meeting	10
TOTAL			10

9.2.2 Rietvlei Boma Usage

The usage of the Rietvlei Boma generated 545 person days of benefit to people over 32 event days.

DATE	GROUP	ACTIVITY	PERSON DAYS
20/01/2016	NQF level 2 learners	CV and interview training	12
21/01/2016	TBNR Advisory Committee	Quarterly meeting	26
22/01/2016	Western Cape Wetland forum steering committee	Planning meeting	7
1-5/02/2016	BMB students	Induction training	100
16-17/02/2016	CCT / Steadfast Greening	Smart driver training	46
18-19/02/2016	CCT / Steadfast Greening	Smart driver training	32
25/02/2016	Biodiversity Management Branch	Branch meeting	32
26/02/2016	Planning & Building Development Management	Meeting	20
29/02/2016 – 04/03/2016	Siljeur Training Academy (Pty) Ltd & BMB staff	Field Ranger Training	140
09/03/2016	ERMD: Green Jobs Unit	Fire awareness training	30
10-11/03/2016	Department of Economic Development	LAED/BAM Team Meeting	70
31/03/2016	Biodiversity Management Branch	Growing together workshop	30
TOTAL			545

9.2.3 Environmental Education and Outreach

Environmental Education and Outreach generated 372 person days of benefit to people over 12 event days (see Figures 20-25 overleaf).

DATE	GROUP(S)	LEARNERS	TEACHER +ADULTS	PERSON-DAYS	PROGRAMME
05/02/2016	Sinai Academy (gr 4,5,6)	12	2	14	Wetlands
12/02/2016	Hebron Christen Skool (gr 6,7)	28	2+9	39	
19/02/2016	Riverside College (gr 6)	8	1	9	
24/02/2016	Parklands College (gr 7)	72	4	76	
03/03/2016	Seamount Primary (gr 7)	49	2	51	
15/03/2016	Pinelands Primary (gr 7)	60	2	62	
22-24/03/2016	Holiday programme	45	15+9	69	Something fishy holiday programme
29-31/03/2016	Holiday programme	37	15+0	52	
TOTALS		311	61	372	TOTALS



Figure 20. Hebron Christian School (grades 6 and 7).



Figure 21. Seamount Primary School (grade 7).



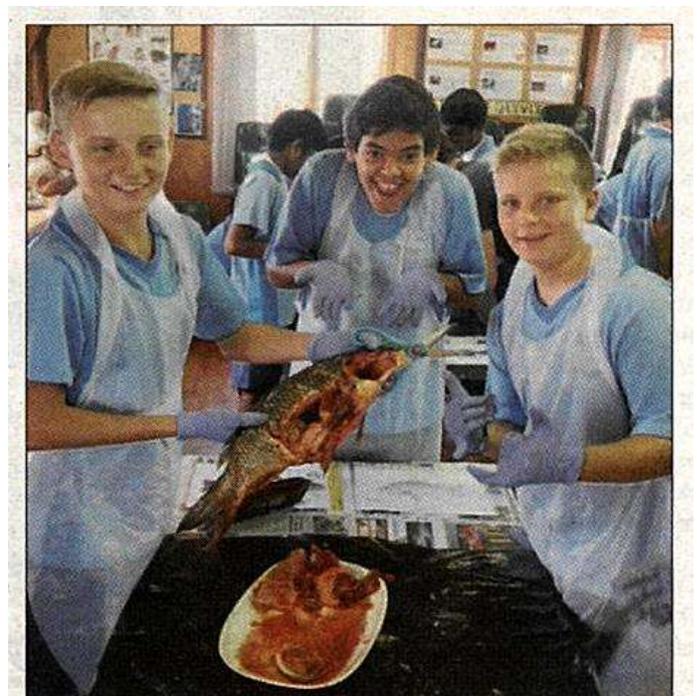
Figure 22. Holiday fishing programme.



Figure 23. Tom McArdle with the biggest catch (5,5kg) ever in the fishing programme (since 2012).



Figure 24. Kira proves that fishing is not just for the boys.



■ The Parklands College Grade 7 pupils went on their annual excursion to SANCCOB and Rietvlei. They spent the day dissecting fish and learning about rescuing penguins and sea birds from oil spills and other dangers. Pictured, from left, are Zander Venter, Liam Lakay and Luan van Heerden.

Figure 25. Recent photo caption in the local press.

9.3 Visitors and Income

9.3.2 Income from visitors at the Rietvlei Water Area during this quarter was again the highest ever recorded. This quarter saw a total of 6,054 visitors generating R94,281 of income. This is almost as much as was recorded in the whole of 2010.

There is a strong growing trend in both recorded visitors and income at the main entrance gate, which is attributable to better access control facilities, more staff, structured work rosters, and better recording.

Figure 26 below indicates the growing trend in visitors since 2010. Figure 27 compares the first quarters' income (January to March) since 2010.

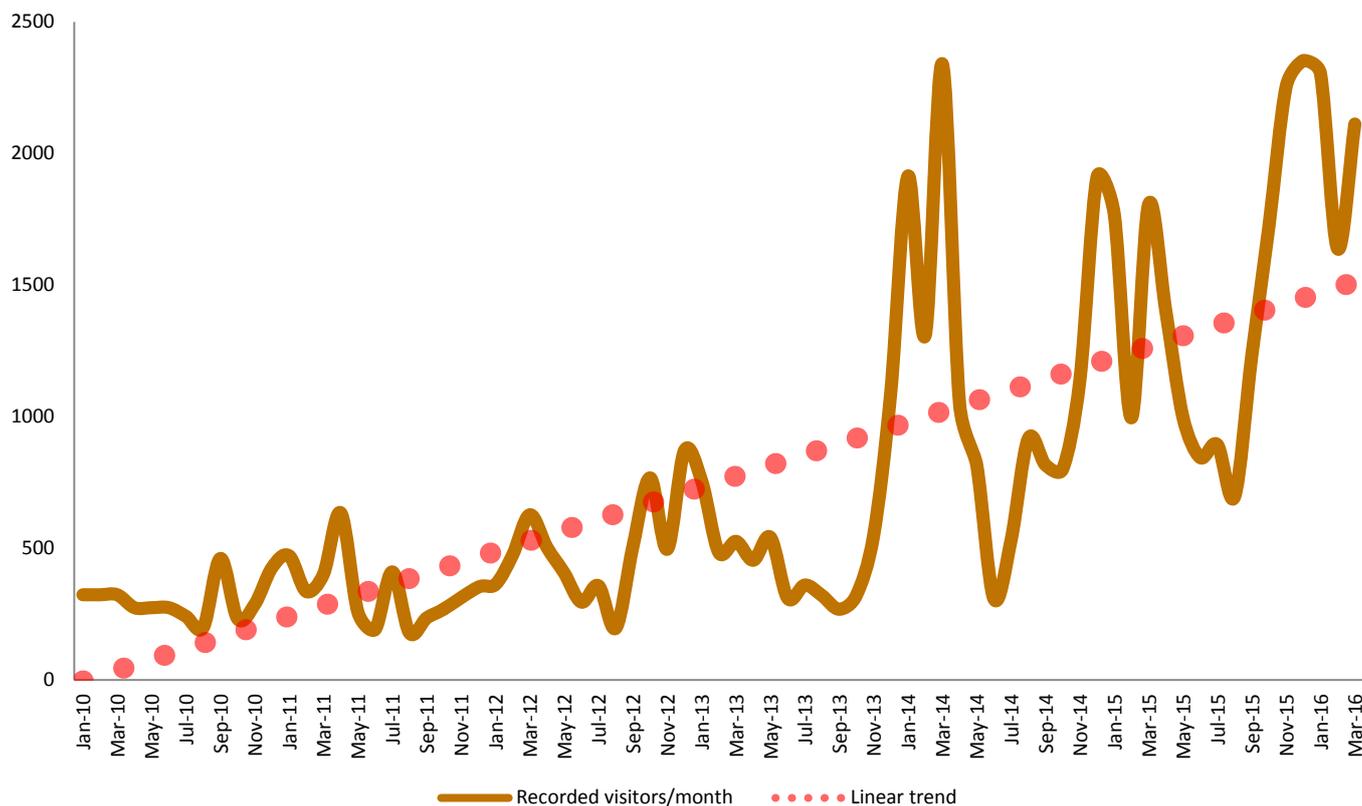


Figure 26. Growing trend in visitors to the Rietvlei Water Area since 2010.

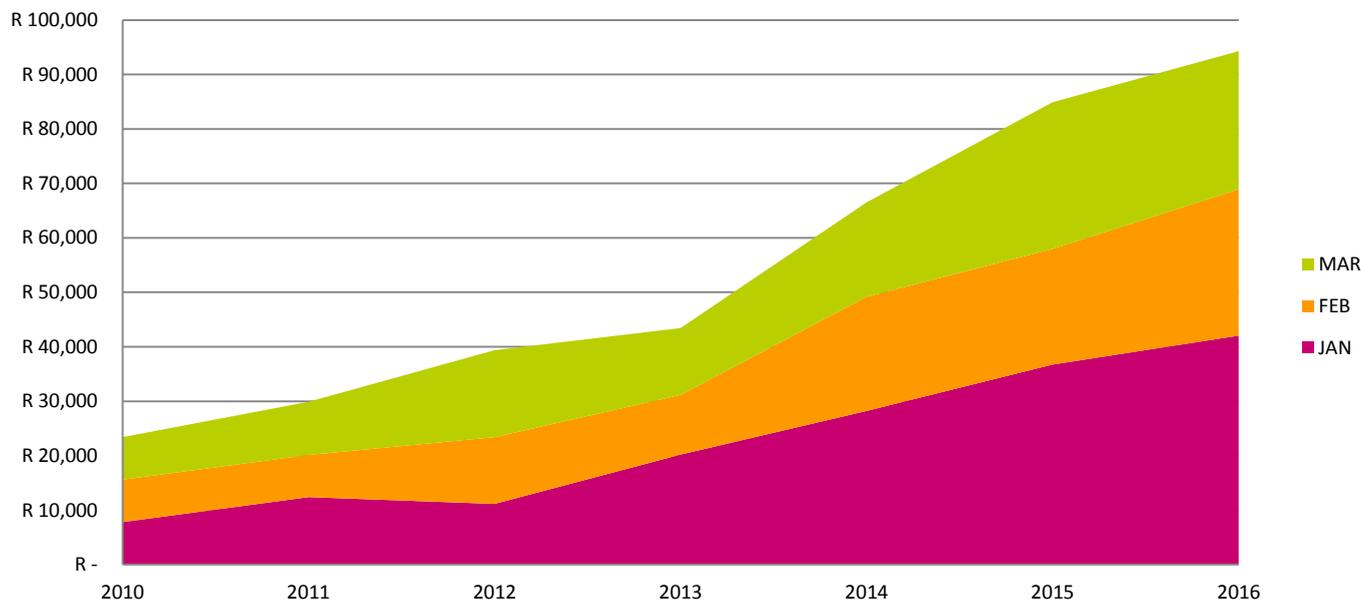


Figure 27. A comparison of first quarter incomes since 2010.

10 STAFF



Figure 28. Students Julia Hollander and Jack Nortjé.

10.1 New staff placements were limited to two Work-integrated Learning (WIL) students from the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT). The two students are Julia Hollander and Jack Nortjé. They will use this year to to complete the practical requirements of the National Diploma in Nature Conservation.

The students passed their driver's medical assessments on 16/03/2016, but the driver's authorisation test will only take place in the next quarter.

Their first scheduled competence assessments were done on 31/03/3016.

The students obtained approval to proceed with research proposals that will be submitted to the CPUT for final approval in the next quarter.

10.2 Staff administration included:

- All staff submitting declarations of interest on-line;
- All staff submitting training needs analysis (TNAs) on 19/02/2016; and
- Various pieces of uniform items being issued to staff.

10.3 Training of permanent and temporary staff at the Table Bay Nature Reserve amounted to no less than 151 person days over 80 training event days, including the following interventions:

Date(s)	Course	Number of days x	Number of learners =	Person days
11-14/01/2016	NQF5 Learnership: Integrated Waste Management	4	2	8
18-19/01/2016	NQF5 Learnership: Learner Support	2	2	4
25-29/01/2016	Environmental Management Inspectorate (week 3/3)	5	1	5
01-05/02/2016	Student Induction	5	2	10
01-05/02/2016	NQF5 Learnership: Pollution Management & Remediation (1)	5	2	10
08-12/02/2016	NQF5 Learnership: Pollution Management & Remediation (2)	5	2	10
10-12/02/2016	Environmental Management: Specialist Investigation Techn	3	3	9
17-18/02/2016	NQF5 Learnership: Learner Support	2	2	4
22-26/02/2016	NQF5 Learnership: Integrated Water Resource Management	5	2	10
22-26/02/2016	Peace Officers' Training (week 1/3)	5	2	10
29/02-04/03/2015	NQF5 Learnership: Learner Support	5	2	10
29/02-04/03/2015	Peace Officers' Training (week 2/3)	5	2	10
29/02-1/03/2016	First Aid Level 1 (2 of 3 people)	2	2	4
29/02-4/03/2016	Field Ranger Basic Training	5	2	10
07-08/03/2016	First Aid Level 1 (1 of 3 people)	2	1	2
07-11/03/2016	Peace Officers' Training (week 3/3)	5	2	10
14-18/03/2016	NQF5 Learnership: FISA (week 1/2)	5	2	10
21-25/03/2016	NQF5 Learnership: FISA (week 2/2)	5	2	10
29/03-01/04/2016	Field Ranger Skills Development Programme (week 1/3)	5	1	5
	TOTALS	80		151

11 LAW ENFORCEMENT

11.1 Illegal structures of displaced people were removed during two separate joint operations. On 02/02/2016 the Diep River Section was cleared of four illegal structures, five mattresses, and a stolen shopping trolley. On 17 March the Zoarvlei Section was cleared of 11 illegal structures, five stolen shopping trolleys, and three stolen wheelie bins. On this day 23 displaced people were warned that illegal occupations will not be tolerated.

A displaced person was also sleeping on the Wooden Bridge over the Milnerton Lagoon. This person was removed twice. Extensive litter cleanups accompanied these operations in the Zoarvlei, Milnerton Lagoon and Diep River Sections.



Figure 29. An illegal structure in Zoarvlei Section.



Figure 30. Removal of a person sleeping on the Wooden Bridge.

11.2 Several dog walkers have been apprehended after accessing the seasonal pans at Rietvlei from Sandpiper Crescent or Stilt Avenue. The pans are crucial habitats for birds, and even through the dry period, many birds are still gathering there to roost. These dog walkers are breaking the law by taking their dogs into a dog-free area and letting them run off their leads. The walkers themselves also do not access through the Rietvlei main gate and therefore they don't pay the required entrance fees. Often these dogs chase birds and other animals, while bird watchers are looking on in horror. Bird watchers are now reporting these offenders to the Nature Reserve office, from where Field Rangers are dispatched to apprehend them.

Such abuses by irresponsible dog walkers will not be tolerated and Law Enforcement officers will from now on start issuing fines to people that bring their dogs into the bird habitats.



Figure 31. Dog walkers using the bird watching facilities for their dogs.



Figure 32. Dogs running free on the seasonal pans, with birds in the background.

11.3 Admission of guilt fines that were issued this quarter included a R500 fine to a neighbouring resident who took two tortoises from the Nature Reserve. When an admission of guilt fine is payed, it results in the offender receiving a criminal record.

CapeNature CN- 0004

SKRIFTELIKE KENNISGEWING OM IN DIE HOF TE VERSKYN (Artikel 56 van Wet 51 van 1977)
WRITTEN NOTICE TO APPEAR IN COURT (Section 56 of Act 51 of 1977) J 534 (82/13131)

Polisiekantoor Police station Table View	M.A.S. / M.R. No. C.A.S. / C.R. No. 83/01/2016	Ondersoekbeampte Investigation officer [REDACTED]
Distrik / Afdeling District / Division Cape Town	Plek van verhoor Place of trial Cape Town	Hof No. Court No. 18
		Verhoordatum Date of trial 02 03 2016

AAN / TO:

Naam:
Name: [REDACTED]

Woonadres:
Residential Address: [REDACTED]

Werkadres:
Work Address: [REDACTED]

Beroep of status:
Occupation or status: [REDACTED]

Geslag:
Gender: **M** **V/F** Nationaliteit:
Nationality: **Zim** Ouderdom:
Age: **38** ID No.: [REDACTED]

Kragtens die bepalings van Artikel 56 van die Strafproseswet, 1977 (Wet 51 van 1977), word u hierby aangesê om voor
 You are hereby called upon in terms of section 56 of the Criminal Act, 1977 (Act 51 of 1977), to appear
 bogenoemde Hof te verskyn om 09h00 op die datum wat hierbo gemeld word om te antwoord op 'n aanklag van:
 before the above-mentioned Court on the date stated above at 09h00 to answer a charge of:

of 'n ander aanklag wat die Staatsaanklaer teen u mag inbring op grond daarvan dat u, op of omtrent die
 or such other charge as the Public Prosecutor may bring against you on the grounds that upon or about the
 dag van **05 Januarie 2016** en te (of naby) **Table View**
 day of **05 January 2016** and at (or near) **Table View**
 in voormelde distrik wedërregtelik **took possession of two**
 in the said district you did wrongfully and unlawfully **Angulate tortoises (Chersina angulata) without the**
necessary permits according to the Nature Conservation
Ordinance 19 of 1974, Section 44 (1)(e)

'n Skulderkenningsboete ten bedrae van **R 500.00** mag aangeneem word.
 An admission of guilt fine of R. **500.00** may be accepted.

Let Wel: (i) 'n Skulderkenningsboete kan slegs af aan die Klerk van die Landdroshof wat regsbevoegdheid t.o.v. die betrokke misdryf het of by 'n polisiekantoor binne die regsbevoegdheid van daardie hof, betaal word.
 Note: (i) An admission of guilt fine can only be paid at either the Clerk of the Magistrate's Court which has jurisdiction in respect of the offence in question or at any police station within the area of jurisdiction of that court.

(ii) Indien u voornemens is om 'n Skulderkenningsboete te betaal moet betaling daarvan geskied voor of op: **02 February 2016**
 (ii) If you intend paying an admission of guilt fine, payment should be effected before or on: **02 February 2016**

(iii) U kan u skuld t.o.v. die misdryf erken deur die bepaalde boete ten opsigte daarvan te betaal sonder om in die hof te verskyn.
 (iii) You may admit your guilt in respect of the offence in question by paying the stipulated fine in respect thereof without appearing in court.

Waarskuwing: Indien u versuim om aan hierdie kennisgewing te voldoen of om by die betrokke voertuig te bly, kan u in hegtenis geneem en 'n boete van R300 of drie maande gevangenisstraf opgelê word.
 Warning: If you fail to comply with this notice or to remain in attendance at the proceedings you may be arrested and sentenced to a fine of R300 or three months imprisonment.

Die oorspronklike hiervan is vandag aan voormelde beskuldige persoonlik oorhandig en die betekening daarvan aan hom verduidelik.
 The original hereof was today handed to the aforementioned accused personally and the import thereof explained to him.

Plek / Place **Table View**
 Datum / Date **05.01.2016**

Anna
 Vredesbeampte / Peace Officer

Figure 33. Example of a fine issued to a neighbouring resident for taking two tortoises from the Nature Reserve.

12 INFRASTRUCTURE & EQUIPMENT

12.1 The repair and maintenance of the roller-shutter doors of the Rietvlei storage buildings was awarded to a contractor. The work will commence in the next quarter.

12.2 An insurance claim for damage to the Rietvlei gate house was resolved. The gate house was damaged by a delivery truck that exceeded the clearance height of the gate house's overhanging roof. The roof was fixed by a contractor authorised by the insurance claim.

12.3 The Nature Reserve's double jetty was previously removed from the water and is currently being repaired by in-house staff. New timber decking and sides are being fitted to the jetty. It is planned to float the repaired jetty onto the water again in the next quarter, by means of a crane truck.



Figure 34. Gate house roof repairs.

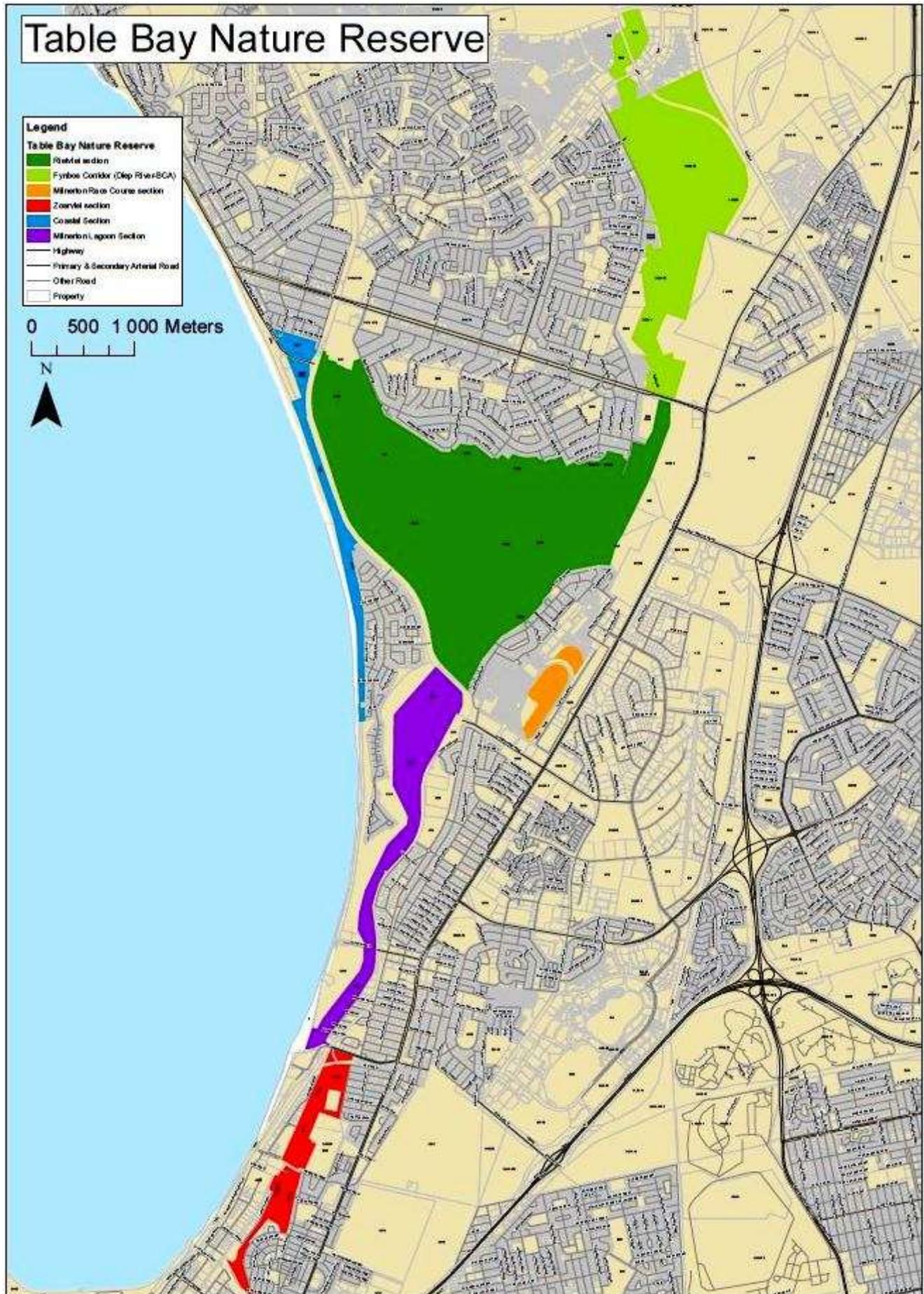


Figure 35. New timber on the old jetty.



Figure 36. Giant kingfisher in flight.

APPENDIX A: MAP OF RESERVE



APPENDIX B: PRESS ARTICLES

Birds of a feather



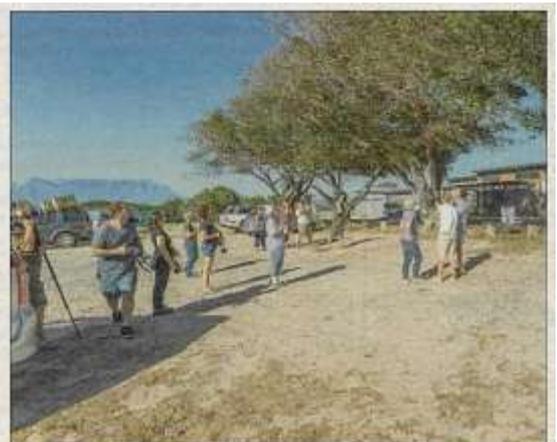
■ Parkland's photographers Frieda and Jan Prinsloo spent their Easter weekend capturing natural beauties at Rietvlei. Ms Prinsloo managed to capture this magnificent Malachite Kingfisher in its colorful splendor perched on a branch that Jan put in the water near Sunset Hide.



■ Left: The Table Bay Nature Reserve, specifically Rietvlei, was a hive of activity this weekend with lots of birders and photographers there to view the rare European common cuckoo in the wild fig trees in front of the offices. "Our Parklands international wildlife expert, Trevor Hardaker, says it's very rare to see one in Cape Town" says keen photographer Frieda Prinsloo.

■ Right: Twitchers gather at Rietvlei to catch a glimpse of the cuckoo, which migrates to Africa during summer, but never as far as Cape Town, according to those in the know.

PICTURE: JOHAN MOSTERT



Twitchers at Rietvlei for rare bird sighting

ATHINA MAY

The news of a rare spotted cuckoo being sighted at the Rietvlei Wetlands sent scores of birders across the province in a tail-spin as they flocked to Table Bay Nature Reserve to try their luck at getting a glimpse of it.

The bird was first spotted by wildlife photographer Frieda Prinsloo on Thursday February 18.

The great spotted cuckoo is identified by its grey slender body and a yellowish face and upper breast. It has a long tail and is slightly larger than the common cuckoo, being 35cm to 39cm in length.

The cuckoo usually migrates to south-east, south-west Europe and western Asia in summer and spends winters in Africa, so the rarity of spotting the bird out of its usual habitat made it somewhat of a celebrity.

Selwyn Schneider, who was spotted among the thickets in the reserve, looking into the distance with camera in hand, had come out from Constantia, on news of the bird's appearance.

"I have been here since 11am looking around for the bird. I would like him to sit right in front of me so that I could get a great picture. We're all looking for it. It's a rare bird and I've never seen it before," said Mr Schneider.

Wessel de Wet from Century City followed close behind and said he had been looking for approximately an hour.

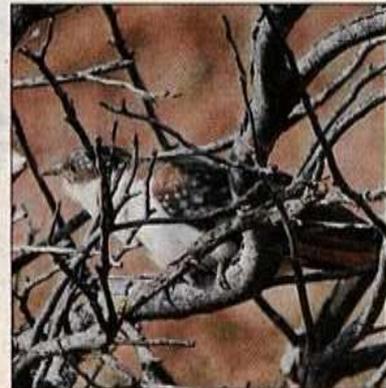
"I am a birder and I was following the talk about it. I've never seen it before. The great spotted cuckoo is bigger than a pigeon. I'll be coming back again early tomorrow morning to try again," said Mr De Wet.

Table Bay Nature Reserve biodiversity area manager, Koos Retief, said the bird is the second rare variety which has been spotted on the reserve in the past two months as the common cuckoo was also spotted on the reserve in January.

"We've had a few interesting birds being spotted on the reserve. It's exhilarating, and we keep a list of species observed so it will be



■ Above and right: The great spotted cuckoo seen at the Table Bay Nature Reserve sent scores of twitchers to the Rietvlei Wetlands to see the rare bird.



added as additional information to our database," said Mr Retief.

Mr Retief mentioned that birders spend a lot of money chasing their hobby and at the drop of a hat they will fly out to see a bird.

"There has been a spike of visitors to the reserve which raises the profile of the reserve and increases income because they pay to come inside."

Mr Retief said the bird possibly landed here due to urbanisation as many bird species have expanded their range and occupied larger areas than they're historically used to occupying because of urbanisation.

"You would think development negatively impacts their habitat, but certain species benefit from development."

City of Cape Town biodiversity co-ordinator, Cliff Dorse, said that the birds are African migrants and possibly landed here due to the droughts being experienced in many parts of the land, or because the bird was off-course.

"It's a young bird, he might simply be lost. The last spotted

cuckoo we saw in the Western Cape was five years ago in Klipheuwel. We delivered two rare cuckoos in two months. The common cuckoo which is also rare and was spotted in the fig trees on Rietvlei in January," said Mr Dorse.

Ian Farr and Johan Slabbert from Somerset West joined the search and acknowledged that they may have been a bit late to spot the cuckoo.

"We've had no luck. It's a rare bird and I wanted to take a photograph. I've seen it before in Kruger Park.

"We watch the news and if a reporter says they've spotted this, we go. Johan was here two weeks ago to spot the common cuckoo," said Mr Farr pointing to his partner in the distance.

Fire sweeps through reserve

ATHINA MAY

Melkbosstrand residents came to the aid of firefighters who battled for four days to extinguish a blaze that turned a swathe of nature reserve into a charred wasteland and forced the evacuation of parts of the Koeberg nuclear power plant.

The cause of the fire is still a mystery, but it started on Tuesday February 16 and devastated about 600 hectares of land in the Koeberg Private Nature Reserve: home to grysbok, zebra, springbok, caracal and the angulated tortoise among other wildlife.

Working under a smoke-laden sky, 55 firefighters, both from the City of Cape Town, and the Koeberg plant, fought to turn back the wall of flame advancing with the wind through the fynbos and thick bush. Seven fire trucks, six water tankers and three helicopters joined the fight.

"More than 200 residents assisted when the fire was at its worst, and there was a lot of concern about the nuclear station being affected," said Koeberg power station manager, Riedwaan Bakardien. "The fire affected the peripheral buildings and unfortunately a large portion of the reserve was not saved."

Smoke engulfed three of the plant's buildings and 200 people were evacuated from them.

"Smaller reptiles, such as snakes



■ Left: Parts of the Koeberg reserve were left dry and desolate after the fire ravaged a quarter of the land on the reserve.

■ Right: A firefighter gets dangerously close to the fire in efforts to extinguish the blaze at the Koeberg nature reserve.



and tortoises were caught in the fire, but none of the bigger animals were affected," said Mr Bakardien.

The Fallen Angels animal shelter was also on standby for evacuation. The shelter posted on its Facebook page, saying: "The bush on the farm next to Fallen Angels is on fire. The wind has blown it past us for now, and we pray that the wind will not change direction. Can you please stay on standby just in case we need to evacuate our dogs and cats."

The Melkbosstrand Ratepayers' Association and the Melkbosstrand

Neighbourhood Watch (MNW) helped both firefighters and fleeing wildlife.

MNW spokeswoman Christa Kleynhans said watch members had worked long hours to keep refreshments coming for the firefighters. They also helped to close the R27.

"We asked the community for donations of water, food and there were constantly people delivering food to the base. Many members worked from 2pm till midnight on the ground. Our concern was the nuclear building and animals on the reserve and at the animal wel-

fare," said Ms Kleynhans.

Mr Barkardien thanked the Melkbosstrand Ratepayers' Association whose members also appealed to local businesses for food and supplies to keep the firefighters going.

"It touched our hearts as people helped. They were feeding the tortoises," said Mr Barkardien.

Eskom chief fire officer Rhine Barnes said this was the worst fire he had seen in the reserve in his 26 years at Koeberg.

"The City-owned emergency plan was activated and the reserve has been closed off to hikers and

cyclists. The cause of the fire is still unknown."

Eskom nuclear service manager, Tobie van Schalkwyk said apart from the loss of wildlife, the fire had destroyed 3km of fences and poles on the base as well as water pumps in the field. "Fortunately, the power plant was not affected," he said.

"It's heartsore to come to work and see the damage, but, in a couple of months, it should be back. We're in recovery mode, but lots of work still needs to be done," said Mr Barkardien.



PICTURE: COLIN BROWN

■ The Zoarvlei Wetland in Rugby glistens in the sun, with Table Mountain in the background.

Polluted lagoon chases away paddlers

SUMMER JACOBS

A canoe club, is trying to plug pollution that has long plagued the Milnerton Lagoon, but these paddlers are facing an almost insurmountable challenge.

Fifteen years ago, the Milnerton Canoe Club (MCC) had about 300 members, but today there are only 150. Although the opening of other clubs in the area, such as in Century City, has contributed to the dwindling number, MCC chairman Richard Allen said new members or potential members always ask about the smell at certain points of the lagoon and are generally put off and don't return.

The lagoon, which together with the Rietvlei Wetlands, forms part of the Diep River Estuary, faces growing environmental threats from urbanisation, informal settlements, intensive farming, and pressures on the water drainage and treatment systems. According to a Table Bay Nature Reserve (TBNR) report, water pollution has one of the biggest impacts on the reserve and little can be done to alleviate it once it enters the wetlands.

Mr Allen said the water quality in the Milnerton Lagoon had been an issue as long as he had been a member of the club.

"MCC, TBNR, the Protected Area Advisory Committee and its working groups have been working closely to tackle both water quality and invasive species issues. We are

currently investigating the stormwater outlets with the relevant department to try to solve the contaminated water issues that drain directly into the lagoon," he said.

Litter, he said, entered the lagoon from many sources, and it ended up on the banks of the lagoon or was washed out to sea and then ended up on the beaches.

He has tried many times to clear the litter from the front of the clubhouse only to find more there the following day.

"Following the first rainfalls of the season, the pollution is at its worst as the stormwater drains get 'flushed' out after the summer stagnation," said Mr Allen.

However, he said judging by the fish, wildlife, bird life and said prawn activity in the lagoon, the water quality had improved a lot since the Potsdam Wastewater Treatment Works had been upgraded.

"There is still, however, the occasional reported maintenance issue resulting in raw sewage entering the lagoon. We would also like to think that the water from the stormwater drains is clean, but judging from the stench at the point where these drains enter the lagoon, this is definitely not the case. There are often blockages of sewerage systems that are reported in Milnerton and surrounds. The overflowing manholes drain into the stormwater systems and enter the lagoon. I have also heard of 'night buckets' from informal set-



■ One of the stormwater drain outlets at the Table Bay Nature Reserve.

tlements that are emptied into these drains. Thankfully, due to the natural lagoon tidal system and water flow from the Diep River, this water is diluted from time to time, but in the mid-summer months, the smell is sometimes unbearable. We have also lost many members to neighbouring canoe clubs in the past due to the fear of getting sick," said Mr Allen.

Another concern is the invasive species of plant and coral worm in the lagoon. The TBNR and MCC had done a lot to remove hyacinth from the lagoon, Mr Allen said, but

the plant was hard to manage in summer when it blocked waterways quickly.

"We have to rely on a few big downpours to flush these plants out to sea. Last year, however, there was not much rain which has left a large part of our canoeing course unnavigable. The land based invasive species, however, have all been successfully removed," he said.

Mr Allen said there had only been a few reported "Jippo Gutt" cases that were lagoon related.

"But, then again, no one really gets tested every time you have stomach trouble. I think most of us 'die hard' paddlers are immune to the bugs. We are also very careful when paddling and don't let our drinking systems make contact with the water. We have nasty habits of spitting if we get splashed in the face," he said.

Stanley Bolnik, chairman of the Milnerton Central Residents' Association (MCRA) said the pollution seemed to have left wildlife relatively unscathed.

"It does not appear to be affecting bird life on the lagoon, which has been thriving lately. And in the last few years, there has been the return of small animal life, such as water mongoose, and herons, storks, flamingos and even pelicans and hundreds of migrant birds to our area," said Mr Bolnik.

Tabletalk sent the City of Cape Town a photograph taken by a Milnerton resident of a stormwater outlet with litter collecting in it.

Siyabulela Mankeli, mayoral committee member for health, said the water quality in the lagoon was "very variable".

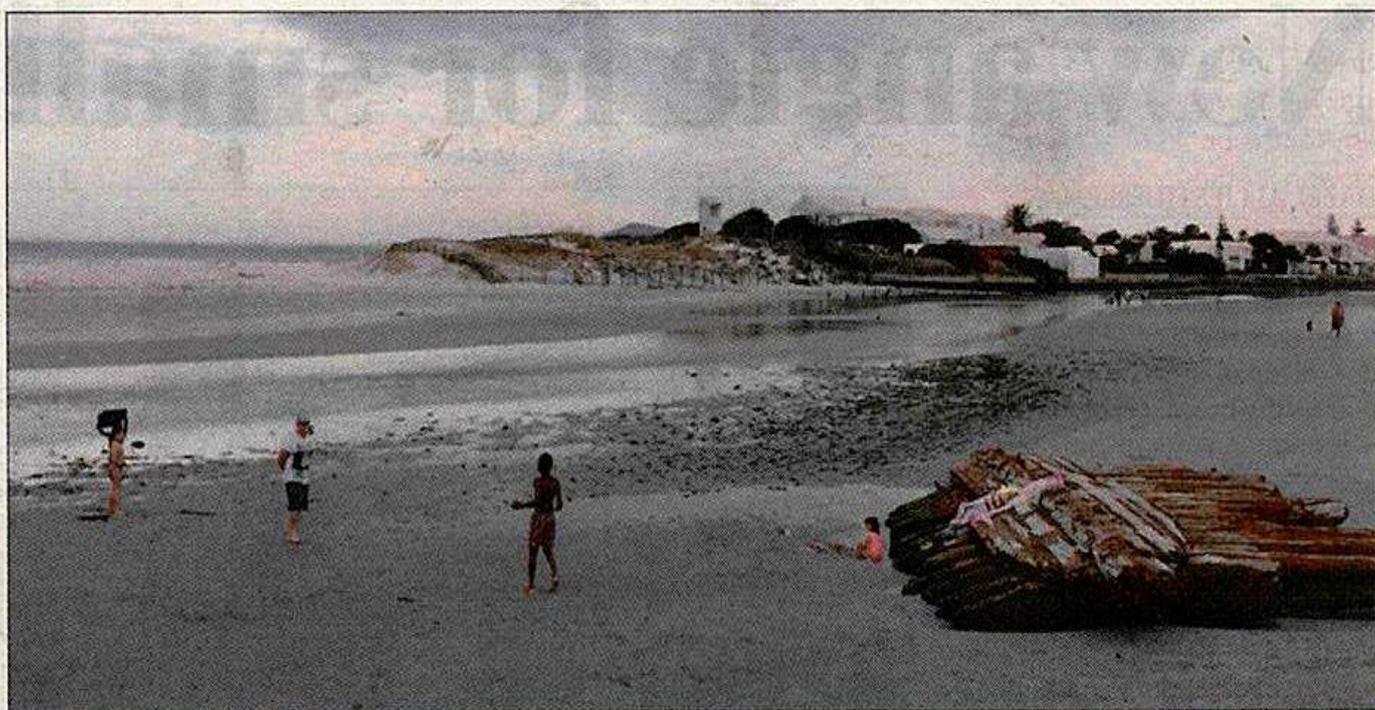
"The photograph supplied appears to be the Erica Road stormwater outlet that comes from Phoenix/Joe Slovo and Montague Gardens. Although the outlet is polluted with sewage, the greater water volumes in the Diep River/Milnerton lagoon section dilute the pollution to an extent," said Mr Mankeli.

He said the City had located a new sampling point to specifically pick up the influence of the Erica Road outlet.

"We have also identified locations for litter traps, and plans are afoot for the installation of treatment facilities at the end of the Bay-side canal, before entering Rietvlei. In addition, we are working with communities to set up food gardens on stormwater property which should help to further reduce pollution," he said.

Mr Mankeli said poor stormwater quality was often the result of residents dumping waste into the drains.

"Some of our stormwater ponds in Joe Slovo have been invaded by illegal occupants. In addition, it is very hard to police light industrial areas, as one finds that waste is intermittently dumped into the stormwater system and polluters are not caught in the act. This can add to the variability in readings," he said.



PICTURE: KAREN WATKINS

■ It was a dark and gloomy day on Friday March 25 as rain clouds were building up for a welcome storm that evening. It was a good time for a cycle ride along the coast and at Woodbridge Island the remnants of a shipwreck came in useful for drying towels.

Recording flora

KAREN WATKINS

Academics, field botanists and fundis celebrated the 150th anniversary of the oldest functioning herbarium in South Africa, last month.

The Bolus Herbarium was established in 1865 and has a collection of over 400 000 specimens, from flowers and ferns to seaweeds and a few lichens, making it the third largest in South Africa and the third largest university herbarium in the southern hemisphere.

After celebrations on Tuesday December 8, and lectures by renowned botanists Professor Ben-Erik van Wyk and Professor Peter Linder, curator Terry Trinder-Smith invited everyone present to use the herbarium, which is located in the HW Pearson Building on the University of Cape Town's (UCT) upper campus.

Mr Trinder-Smith said the primary function of the herbarium is to aid the teaching and research of the diversity of the southern African flora, particularly that of the Cape Floristic Region.

Botanical artist, businessman and philanthropist Harry Bolus was born in Britain in 1834 and advanced botany in South Africa by establishing bursaries and founding the Bolus Herbarium and bequeathing his library and much of his fortune to the South African College, now UCT.

When the Bulletin visited the herbarium, student Brian du Preez arrived with a plant press of about 28 specimens.

Mr Trinder-Smith could not accept them, saying they had to be frozen for 48 hours to make sure any insects, particularly book lice feeding on the paper in which they were dried, are killed off.

The temperature and humidity at the herbarium must also be kept at optimum conditions so that should any bugs creep into the facility, they will be prevented from breeding.

The herbarium, library and offices are also fumigated once a year as a preventative measure.

Early botanical explorers in the Cape, including Carl Thunberg, William Burchell, Johann Drège, Christian Ecklon and Karl Zeyher,

collected hundreds of thousands of species.

Not an easy task considering that they travelled by ox-wagon and would have had to press the plants at night unlike nowadays where the shelf life of plants can be longer thanks to preserving the samples in cooler boxes.

The previous evening Professor Linder of the Institute for Systematic Botany at the University of Zurich, said Drège, Ecklon and Zeyher financed their collections by listing the species for people to buy.

Until the 1850s, all collections were exported but it was colonial botanist Karl Pappé who changed this by starting the South African Museum collection. This has since been moth-balled. Initially plant specimens in the Bolus herbarium were kept in wooden cupboards but nowadays they are filed in metal, magnetically sealed cabinets.

Preserved specimens are mounted onto sheets and include a record of the taxonomic (name) history, from its initial name to any that may follow subsequent to changes that may have been required to reflect its scientific accuracy.

Mr Trinder-Smith said Swedish botanist, physician and zoologist, Carl Linnaeus, known as the father of modern taxonomy, initiated the current biological naming system called binomial naming, which means that each has a genus and a species name, for example *Homo sapiens* equals modern man.

The oldest specimen in the collection predates the herbarium and was collected by William Burchell in 1814. "Burchell" left his dried plant collection to his sisters, who then later donated these to various institutions, Kew Gardens in London being one of them. Harry Bolus then exchanged some of his collections for some of Burchell's. One such specimen is of *Agathosma ovata*, commonly known as false buchu, and collected in Knysna," said Mr Trinder-Smith holding the type sheet.

This specimen forms part of the multiple representatives of this species, and despite the age of many of these collections, when opening the cupboard in which they are housed, the fragrance asso-



■ A specimen of *Crassula pubescens* collected by Harry Bolus in 1908, written in Latin and originally named by Carl Peter Thunberg.

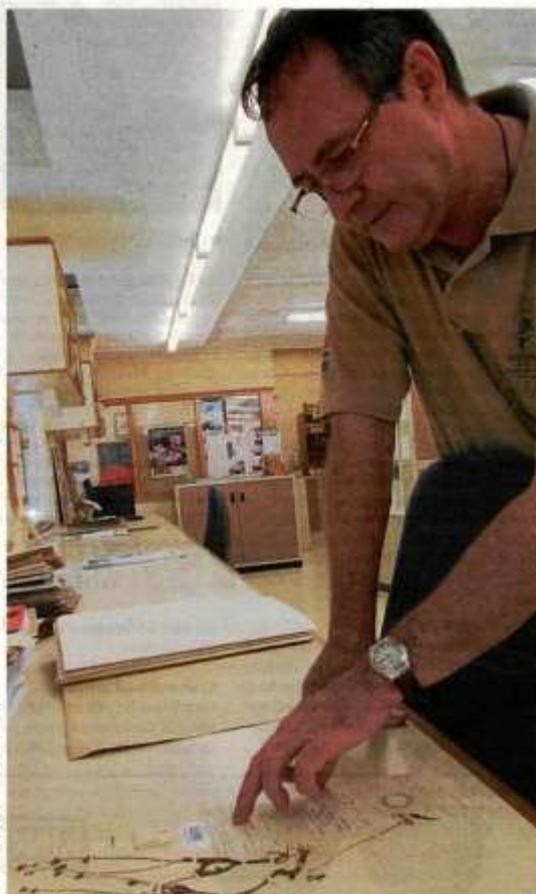
ciated with this group of plants is still very evident. The false buchu is part of the Rutaceae family of which citrus is another member.

Now brown and fragile, stuck to aged paper, the sheet is marked with various hand-written notes providing a glimpse into the history of the plant and including the original species name of *Diosma ovata*, given to it by Thunberg in 1794, then later moved to the genus *Baraosma* and then much later, in his revision of *Agathosma*, by Neville Pillans, to the latter genus.

Another fascinating part of the herbarium is Bolus' plant collection register, volume one from 1865 to 1873. Filled with hand-written notes, diagrams and lists, it provides a glimpse into the man's vast knowledge and collection.

A note in the front states that the next diary, 1873 to 1874, was lost at sea when the first Windsor Castle was wrecked in Table Bay, in October 1873. Bolus was returning from Kew and many valuable books and plants were also lost.

Some sheets have more than one specimen mounted onto them, a paper saving device during both wars.



■ Terry Trinder-Smith with a specimen collected by Harry Bolus in 1908.

Among modern day collectors was Elsie Esterhuizen who lived in Rondebosch and collected around 36 000 specimens. Others include Jan Vlok, Nick Helme, Peter Goldblatt and John Manning.

Professor Linder spoke of how the digital age has changed the method of recording plants what with online herbaria and virtual flora.

Thanks to a French parliamentarian, five million species were scanned while the Paris Herbarium was undergoing renovation.

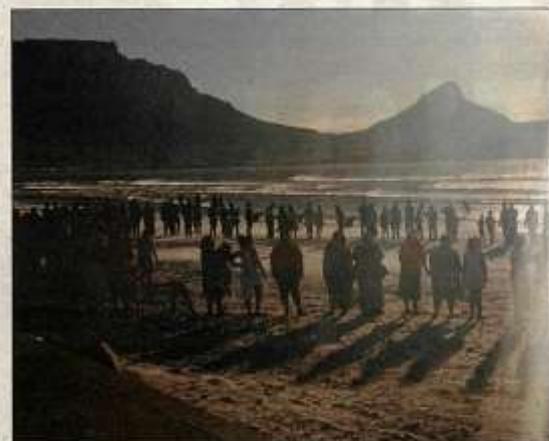
And while the number of computer geeks are growing, the number of field botanists are reducing.

"Making the taxonomic data accessible online is important who will collect and name species in the future," asked Professor Linder.

He added that when botany students were asked why and how they chose to study this subject the answer was unanimous, from their parents taking them out and showing them in the field.

Professor Anusuya Chinsamy-Turan, Head of UCT's Department of Biological Sciences, said that it is wonderful that after 150 years the herbarium is still actively being used for teaching and research – precisely as Harry Bolus wanted it to be used.

Beach fatalities on New Year's Day



■ Beach goers at Lagoon Beach, in shock after three people were reported to have been swept away by the waves.

ATHINA MAY

New Year's Day saw many flocking to the beachfront, but celebrations were cut short for those who witnessed three people being dragged into the waves by the ocean currents at Melkbosstrand and Lagoon Beach and the body of another drowned man recovered.

At Lagoon Beach members of the National Sea Rescue Institute (NSRI) Table Bay; Fire and Rescue Services; the police diving unit and Milnerton Surf Lifesaving responded to the reports of three people in difficulty in the water.

Two men were rescued by lifeguards and were uninjured, but an 18-year-old man remains missing.

The NSRI said in a statement that a Skymed helicopter joined

an extensive search, and a body was located by the helicopter, recovered from the water by police divers and taken into the care of the Forensic Pathology Services.

"It was then revealed that the body was that of a 26-year-old man from Delft, who had not been reported missing and only once the body had been recovered did friends of the deceased man realise that he had been among those who had gotten into difficulty.

"They were not aware that he had been missing until he was recovered," read the NSRI media release.

Milnerton SAPS media spokesperson, Warrant Officer Daphne O'Reilly, confirmed the incident and said that the missing 18-year-old has not been found yet, but a police diving unit is continuing the search.

At Melkbosstrand beach, lifeguards rescued a 21-year-old pregnant woman from the surf and she was attended to at the NSRI Melkbosstrand sea rescue base for drowning symptoms.

Despite being six months pregnant, the woman refused to be transported to hospital and she was released, requiring no further assistance.

Later that day, NSRI Melkbosstrand responded to call-outs at Hakgat, following reports of two men being swept out to sea. On arrival the NSRI members found that two men had rescued a 17-year-old and 34-year-old man from the surf.

"The two men are commended for their rescue effort. The casualties were treated for exhaustion and the 17-year-old was taken to hospital by family members for further treatment," the NSRI said.

City's online wasp app takes off

The City's new online wasp reporting application is gaining popularity as more than 600 wasp reports have been logged via this tool – mostly in January this year.

Since the launch of the City of Cape Town's Invasive Wasp Control (IWC) project over 9 000 European paper wasp nests have been removed from the core areas of infestation such as Durbanville, Kuils River, Brackenfell, Kraaifontein and Bellville.

The IWC project controls the invasive European paper and German wasps within City boundaries.

European paper wasp nests have also been removed from homes in Somerset West, Gordon's Bay, Bothasig, Ottery, Plumstead, Constantia, Woodstock, Athlone, Wetton, Parklands, Sunningdale, Pinelands, Newlands and Rondebosch.

According to a media release issued by the City of Cape Town last week, this indicates that the invasion is spreading to more areas.

More than 2 000 people have accessed the City of Cape Town's new online wasp reporting application since the launch of the application in November last year, according to the media release.

This user-friendly development tool has made the logging of wasp reports more accessible to members of the public, which allows for a quicker response time to have wasps removed.

Interestingly, the data indicates that people across the world, including from the United States of America, Canada, Brazil, the Netherlands, Australia, New Zealand, Namibia and Kenya have visited the site at www.edrr.co.za/wasps.

According to international cases of invasion involving the European paper and German wasps, these insects have the potential to create problems ranging from being a nuisance to having catastrophic economic impacts in the wine, deciduous fruit and beekeeping industries.

The German wasp in particular is quite aggressive and there are several reported cases of them stinging workers harvesting grapes and other fruits.

They can present a hazard to people and home owners enjoying the outdoors and unintentionally disturb a colony.

These wasps also feed on mature grapes in the late summer months and cause extensive damage to vineyards.

They are also known to attack and kill honeybees and infiltrate bee hives; which are detrimental to the honey industry. Wasp season usually occurs during warmer periods, from September to May.

"We can see that the wasps



Members of the City's Invasive Wasp Control Project team on their way to clear out nests in Durbanville.

are spreading across the city. However, since the start of the wasp season, we have removed over 1 300 nests. This is far less than the previous corresponding season when 2 500 were removed. Wasps seem to be lower in numbers than usual, likely due to the weather patterns," said Johan van der Merwe, mayoral committee member for energy, environmental and spatial planning.

"The City is therefore taking this opportunity to remove as many wasp nests as possible to try and decrease their presence ahead of the warmer days. Residents are encouraged to use the online tool to report wasp sightings so that the nests can be removed as soon as possible.

"By using a simple online tool, the wasp project is now able to find the location of new sightings and confirm the status of these sightings instantly," Van der Merwe said.

Removal happens on a first-reported, first-response basis and calls are queued according to the order of time reported.

Residents are advised that the sting from these wasps is particularly painful.

Property owners are primarily responsible for pest control on their premises, and the City will assist according to available capacity.

If nests are removed privately, property owners are urged to send a report containing their street address and the number of nests removed to Invasive.Species@capetown.gov.za as this helps with the City's future planning and research, as well as determining the movement of the wasps.

The City's IWC project does not respond to reports outside the city boundaries, or to indigenous wasp reports, or reports of indigenous bees.

For more information, residents should visit www.capetowninvasives.org.za or visit www.facebook.com/ctinvasives. For queries or problems uploading wasp reports, residents can send an email to invasive.species@capetown.gov.za with "WASPS" in the subject line.



European paper wasps sitting on their nest.



■ **Left and right:** The City's Fire and Rescue Service responded to a call about reeds and vegetation burning in Donegal Street, Rugby, near the Italian Club on Thursday February 18, at 3pm. Three fire engines, two water tankers, one skid unit and seasonal firefighters responded to the blaze. Resources were dispatched from Milnerton, Brooklyn, Goodwood, Epping, Lakeside and Roeland Street fire stations. "The suspected cause of the fire, was a passer-by dropping a light. No injuries were reported. It took firefighters nearly five hours to extinguish the fire. No property was destroyed," said Fire and Rescue spokesperson, Liezl Moodie.



PICTURES: COLIN BROWN



Fun excursion: Parklands College Grade 7 learners went on their annual excursion to Saccob and Rietvlei recently. They spent the day dissecting fish and learning all about rescuing penguins and sea birds from oil spills and other dangers. From left are Zander Venter, Liam Lakay and Luan van Heerdenish.