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Biodiversity Area Manager: Milnerton

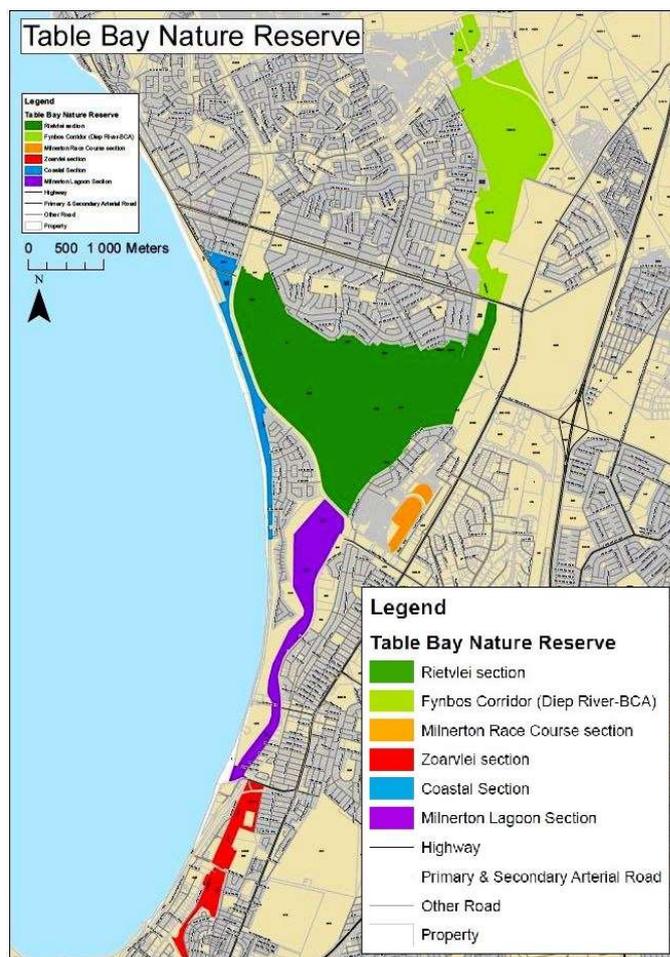
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# TABLE BAY NATURE RESERVE

## QUARTERLY REPORT JANUARY – MARCH 2017

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The City of Cape Town's Nature Reserves webpage can be accessed by clicking [this link](#).

## 1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

During this quarter the Table Bay Nature Reserve experienced several challenges, including the occurrence of a blue-green algal bloom which forced the closure of the in the Rietvlei Water Area. The presence of dogs that hunt birds and animals in the Nature Reserve was another challenge. Media releases were issued to address these concerns in the public domain.

The rainfall has been exceptionally low the last six months, and dust clouds have started to blow up from the seasonal pans, causing a nuisance in Table View. The dust is being suppressed by pumping water from the Rietvlei deep water lakes onto the pans.

Other challenges included having to fight several wildfires, and dealing with illegal constructions, illegal occupation and overnighting, as well as illegal dumping and littering.

Staff and contract teams have been working on clearing invasive vegetation, including removing water hyacinth occurring in the Diep River. Various vegetation restoration efforts have been ongoing, including at a new piece of land that will be included in the Milnerton Racecourse Section.

The Custodians of Rare and Endangered Wildflowers (CREW) have identified the presence of at least eight Red List plant species in the Coastal Section. A bird survey counted almost 3,000 birds in the Rietvlei wetlands on 20 January.

Over 800 people benefited from meeting and training facilities in the Nature Reserve and over 3,000 visitors came to the reserve in this quarter. Four new nature conservation students were appointed for the Nature Reserve. Two of the students were selected to represent the City of Cape Town at the upcoming Fynbos Forum.

The contract site manager post for the Milnerton Racecourse and Milnerton Lagoon became vacant but a new incumbent has already been appointed. The contract and permanent staff underwent at least 75 person days of training of various kinds.

The Protected Area Advisory Committee met on 19 January with 26 representatives from 19 organisations in attendance.



Figure 1. Rock kestrel at Rietvlei (photo by: Hester Pentz).

## 2 HIGHLIGHTS & CHALLENGES

**2.1 HIGHLIGHT: Two nature conservation work-integrated learning students** from the Nature Reserve, **Fabrice Turikumwe** and **Angelique van der Berg**, were selected by the Biodiversity Management Branch to present posters of their research proposals and preliminary results at the upcoming Fynbos Forum from 31 July to 3 August 2017 in Swellendam.

Fabrice (a CPUT student) will conduct his research on determining the forage quality and potential stocking rate of the vegetation in the Rietvlei Section in terms of the forage requirements of hippopotamuses.

Angelique (a Centurion Academy student) will conduct her research on determining the population density of Cape grysbok in the Milnerton Racecourse Section using various field survey methods.

Fabrice and Angelique will go to the Fynbos Forum with two other nature conservation work-integrated learning students who were also selected to present posters. All four of the selected students are based in the North region.

**2.2 CHALLENGE: The Rietvlei water area has been closed to the public since 17/03/2017 due to a blue-green algal bloom** that was observed by Nature Reserve staff on 16/03/2017.

The Milnerton Aquatic Club's 24-hour endurance sailing challenge, which was scheduled to take place at the Rietvlei water area from 18-19/03/2017, was cancelled as a result. The issuing of a media release led to an article being published in the press.

The City collected and analysed water samples on 16/03/2017 and found that microcystin toxins associated with blue-green algae (see Figure 2 right) exceeded the World Health Organisation's recreational guideline for freshwater water bodies. The sampling has continued on a weekly basis throughout this quarter into the new quarter.

The algal blooms can usually be seen as green, blue-green, white or brown scum or mats floating on the surface of the water. Exposure to these algae can cause eye irritation, skin rashes, mouth ulcers, vomiting, diarrhoea, and cold-or flu-like symptoms. Drinking or swallowing large amounts of water can be extremely dangerous. Members of the public were urged to avoid all contact with the water at Rietvlei until it has been declared safe.

Due to the ongoing drought and low water levels there are extensive areas of exposed dry shoreline around Rietvlei. It is suspected that 5 mm rainfall that was recorded on 15/03/2017 washed accumulated minerals and organic material from decomposing and dead plants along the shoreline into the water at Rietvlei. These minerals and organic materials, combined with high ambient temperatures, could have provided the nutrients for the rapid growth of algae in the water.

The City is monitoring the water quality and will inform members of the public once it is safe for recreational use.

The closure only applies to recreational activities in the Rietvlei water area, including fishing, but does not prevent anybody from accessing the Table Bay Nature Reserve's other visitor facilities such as the picnic areas, braai facilities and the bird watching trail.



**Figure 2. Example of blue-green algae flocculation in the water.**

**We want to reassure Rietvlei's water users that water quality tests were done on the same day that the blue-green algae flocculation was observed in the water. Once the tests confirmed the presence of blue-green algae toxins in the samples, the water area was closed immediately.**

### 3 CONSERVATION PLANNING

**3.1 The Protected Area Advisory Committee (PAAC)** for Table Bay Nature Reserve had its seventh meeting on 19/01/2017. The meeting was attended by 26 representatives from 18 organisations, including:

CapeNature	Milnerton Golf Club
Cape West Coast Biosphere Reserve	Milnerton Central Residents Association
CCT: Environment & Heritage Management	Milnerton Ridge Ratepayers Association
CCT: Biodiversity Management Branch	Paardeneiland City Improvement District
Friends of Blaauwberg Conservation Area	SANCCOB
Friends of Rietvlei	South African Kite Surfing Association
Iziko Museums	Sunset Beach Homeowners Association
Milnerton Aquatic Club	Sunset Links Home Owners Association
Milnerton Canoe Club	Woodbridge Island Body Corporate

Some of the items on the agenda included:

- **Protected area expansion within the City of Cape Town**, presentation by Mr Jacques van der Merwe of the CCT: Biodiversity Management Branch
- **Archaeological rescue of artefacts at Sunset Beach, Table Bay Nature Reserve**, presentation by Mr Ethan Cottee of Iziko Museums
- **Motion to extend the hours for power members of Milnerton Aquatic Club for members only** (proposal by Milnerton Aquatic Club), presented by Mr Johan van der Merwe
- **Milnerton Lagoon and the Restoration of the Wooden Bridge: Reallocation of funding to restore the lagoon** (proposal by Milnerton Canoe Club), presented by Mr Russell Ikin
- **Diep estuary action plan**, feedback by Ms Landi Louw and Mr Koos Retief
- **Quarterly report for the period October to December 2016**, presentation by Mr Koos Retief

**3.2 The Diep Estuary's water resources classes and resource quality objectives were determined as part of a larger study for various significant estuaries in the Berg water management area (WMA).** The study was commissioned by the National Department of Water & Sanitation and is being undertaken by Aurecon and Anchor Environmental Consultants (Pty) Ltd.

The Diep Estuary, which forms part of the Table Bay Nature Reserve, was also assessed in this study. The Diep Estuary Management Plan (EMP) listed the requirement for a determination of water resources classes and resource quality objectives in its five-year action plan.

Table Bay Nature Reserve staff, including the Area Manager, attended a three-day workshop from 16-18/01/2017 to review the consultants' draft reports and to conduct site inspections with various experts in the field.

The study compared the current state of the water resources in the estuaries to a prior reference state. The reference state for this study was the 1988 Estuaries of the Cape report series. The water resources that were assessed include water quality and hydrology, vegetation, fish, birds, and invertebrates. The quality of the various resources in the estuary was scored and the Estuaries also received an overall score. From this scoring a set of resource quality objectives with various recommendations were drafted.

The study also included a rapid ecological reserve determination for each estuary. This determination assesses how much of the historical mean annual runoff from a river still reaches its estuary. The ecological reserve determination is intended to prescribe how much water is required to be released from the catchment to allow the estuary to continue functioning. In the Diep River most of the runoff is already being diverted or impounded by agricultural land uses and it does not appear possible to get any more runoff from the catchment.

The Diep estuary, however, remains functioning in the summer months only due to the release of treated wastewater effluent from the Potsdam treatment plant, as well as some local storm-water runoff from developed areas. As such, the functioning of the estuary seems to be reliant on man-made sources of water runoff. The ecological reserve determination therefore focussed on prescribing how much water is required to be released from the Potsdam treatment plant to ensure that the estuary remains functioning.

It is expected that this study will also undergo a public consultation process and that the reports will be available for stakeholder engagement. The reports will also be made available to the Protected Area Advisory Committee once received.

**3.3 Human behaviour around shell middens and other archaeological sites** came up as a discussion point in the recent Protected Area Advisory Committee meeting held on 19/01/2017. Mr Ethan Cottee of Iziko Museums presented a talk on the archaeological rescue of artefacts at Sunset Beach.

Ms Harriet Cliff of the City's Environment & Heritage Resource Management Branch was asked to write a short piece to include in this report. See her comments below:

Archaeology is the study of people who lived in the past. It looks at the things that people left behind – their homes, their tools, lost items and discards – and sometimes even the remains of the people themselves. The types of archaeological site most commonly found along our very long coast line, are shell middens. Shell middens are basically rubbish dumps which consist mostly of shell, made by people 'harvesting' shellfish on a seasonal basis.

In our coastal nature reserves and protected areas, we are more than likely to find shell middens. The average person will not recognize them as anything special. However, these archaeological sites are very special and are protected by the National Heritage Resources Act (Act 25 of 1999): they are a source of information not only about the pattern of human history and movement through time, but also provide information regarding environmental conditions and how they have changed over time. They are a very important source of information which will help us understand how the environment will react during our current state of climate change!

Within the nature reserves, visitors are encouraged to stay on the designated pathways and to behave in such a manner as to not cause damage or harm to the environment. The same basic consideration applies when you discover a shell midden: first and foremost do no harm – in other words do nothing!

In the event that you do notice that someone or something is causing harm or damage – report this to the reserve manager (who needs to know that there is a problem in the reserve).

You can also report damage to archaeological sites to Heritage Western Cape. They will assess the damage and recommend to the reserve manager what types of mitigation or action would be required to minimize future damage.

**Heritage Western Cape contact details:** [hwc.hwc@westerncape.gov.za](mailto:hwc.hwc@westerncape.gov.za) | +27(0) 21 483 5959

**3.4 The boundary configuration of the Milnerton Racecourse Section** will be changed in terms of an amendment to the Record of Decision for the racecourse development approval. The land around the Milnerton Racecourse, excluding the stables and the racetrack itself, was sold for development by the racecourse owner. The development consisted mainly of residential complexes in the Royal Ascot precinct.

In terms of the development approval, the land on the inside of the racecourse was donated to the City of Cape Town on the condition that it will be conserved. The conserved land in the racecourse contains almost 20 hectares of critically endangered Cape Flats sand fynbos. This land was subsequently incorporated into the Table Bay Nature Reserve as a satellite management section, and a site manager was contracted to manage it.

The owner of the racecourse however applied for permission to re-align the racetrack at Milnerton to improve its utility value for training purposes. The proposed re-alignment would cut away a portion of the conserved land (see site 1 of Erf 32705 in Figure 3 overleaf). This was agreed to on the condition that the entire Erf 35526 (sites 1 and 2 in Figure 3 overleaf) would be donated to the City of Cape Town and incorporated into the Nature Reserve.

Erf 35526 was originally zoned for future residential development. The agreement to donate this Erf to the Nature Reserve was included in the amendment to the Record of Decision for the racecourse development approval that now allows the re-alignment of the racecourse.

This means that the new boundary configuration of the Milnerton Racecourse Section would then exclude site 1, but it would include sites 2 and 3 as indicated in Figure 3 overleaf.

It was also agreed that the biological material (plants, seeds, bulbs, and topsoil) from site 1 in Erf 32705 would be removed and relocated to sites 2 and 3 to rehabilitated and restore Erf 35526.

Some seeds were already collected from site 1 between October 2015 to February 2017 for the planned restoration project. These seeds have been stored at the Biodiversity Management Branch's nursery at Westlake from 03/03/2017.



 <p><b>CITY OF CAPE TOWN</b> ISIXEKO SASEKAPA STAD KAAPSTAD</p>	<p>THIS MAP WAS COMPILED BY <b>ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT</b></p> <p>Tel: +27 23 407 2186 Fax: +27 86 576 0304</p> <p><a href="mailto:envrsga@cape.gov.za">envrsga@cape.gov.za</a></p> <p>2016/08/16 Aerial Imagery: Dec 2013</p>	 Milnerton Race Course boundary	 <p>0 20 40 Meters</p> <p><b>1:4 000</b> Transverse Mercator Projection, Central Meridian 19° East, WGS84 Ellipsoid, Hartbeeshoek '94 Datum.</p>	<p><b>Milnerton Race Course</b></p> <p>Study Sites</p>
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Figure 3. The Milnerton Racecourse boundary re-alignment.

## 4 FLORA

**4.1 Erratum:** The previous report for the period October to December 2016 contained a photograph of a plant in the Coastal Section (in Figure 5 on page 5) with the caption "Possibly a *Hyobanche sanguinea* growing in the Coastal Section." This identification was unfortunately incorrect (see Figure 4 below).



Figure 4. The correct identification is *Harveya squamosa*.

Dr Callan Cohen (Director: Birding Africa and Research Associate at the Percy FitzPatrick Institute, University of Cape Town) as well as Mr Cliff Dorse (Biodiversity Coordinator for the City of Cape Town) notified the author shortly after the report was circulated that the identification of the plant in the figure is actually *Harveya squamosa*.

According to the National Herbarium Pretoria, *Harveya squamosa* is a root parasite, commonly seen with the whole plant coloured a glorious red to orange or, rarely, sulphur yellow, with no green.

It lacks chlorophyll and cannot photosynthesize and is therefore fully dependent on its host for all its nutrients. It attaches itself to the roots of a host by means of a prominent, tuberous, vascular organ called a haustorium, through which it absorbs all its needs from the host.

Hosts recorded for *Harveya squamosa* include *Arctotis decurrens* and *Othonna leptodactyla* (Asteraceae), as well as species of *Aspalathus* (Fabaceae), *Cliffortia* (Rosaceae), *Ehrharta* (Poaceae), *Scirpus* (Cyperaceae), and *Willdenowia* (Restionaceae), according to the National Herbarium Pretoria (2011).

**4.2 Invasive vegetation management focussed on the control of water hyacinth** in the waterways of the Diep River. The water hyacinth clearing programme is administered by a WESSA/Coke partnership project with the City of Cape Town's Expanded Public Works Programme (see Figures 5 – 6 below).



Figure 5. Water hyacinth removal from the Diep River.



Figure 6. Water hyacinth removal from the Diep River.

**4.3 Various other invasive and/or alien plants** that were removed from the Nature Reserve include:

- Port Jackson (*Acacia saligna*), Manatoka (*Myoporum tenuifolium*), Prickly pear (*Opuntia* species), Brazilian pepper tree (*Schinus terebinthifolia*), and Rooikrans (*Acacia cyclops*) from the Rietvlei Section;
- Port Jackson (*Acacia saligna*), Rooikrans (*Acacia cyclops*), Manatoka (*Myoporum tenuifolium*) and Lavatera (*Malva arborea*), Scottish thistle, palm trees, and Yuccas from the Coastal Section and the Milnerton Lagoon; and
- Various emergent weeds and Giant Reed (*Arundo donax*) in the Zoarvlei Section.

**4.4 Brunsvigia orientalis bulbs** that were rescued from a development site in the Blaauwberg area were donated to the Table Bay Nature Reserve.

These bulbs were planted in an area of the Rietvlei Section between the recreational water area and the bird hides. This area was a spoil dump in the 1960s and 1970s during the time when Transnet dredged the deep water lakes to provide fill material for the construction of docks in the Port of Cape Town.

The spoil dump area became overgrown with Rooikrans, and was only cleared in the early 2000s when nature conservation management of the Rietvlei Section started. The bulbs were planted in areas where the natural vegetation has not yet started to return (see Figures 7 – 8 below).



Figure 7. *Brunsvigia orientalis* bulbs.



Figure 8. *Brunsvigia orientalis* bulbs being planted.

**4.5 The Custodians of Rare and Endangered Wildflowers (CREW)** has been conducting vegetation surveys in the Coastal Section at Sunset Beach since 2011. CREW recently added the Diep River Fynbos Corridor Section of the Nature Reserve as a second site to monitor. CREW has already discovered in excess of 179 plant species in the Coastal Section, of which 8 are Red List species (see below Table):

Family	Genus	Species	Flowering period	IUCN Status
AIZOACEAE	<i>Ruschia</i>	<i>cf geminiflora</i>	Sept - Oct	Vulnerable
ASTERACEAE	<i>Steirodiscus</i>	<i>tagetes</i>	Sept - Oct	Vulnerable
FABACEAE	<i>Lessertia</i>	<i>tomentosa</i>	Aug - Sept	Near Threatened
FABACEAE	<i>Psoralea</i>	<i>repens</i>	Nov - Feb	Near Threatened
IRIDACEAE	<i>Babiana</i>	<i>nana</i>	Aug - Sept	Endangered
IRIDACEAE	<i>Babiana</i>	<i>tubiflora</i>	Aug - Sept	Near Threatened
IRIDACEAE	<i>Gladiolus</i>	<i>griseus</i>	May - July	Critically endangered
THYMELAEACEAE	<i>Passerina</i>	<i>ericoides</i>	Oct - Nov	Near Threatened



Figure 9. View of Table Mountain from the Coastal Section.

**5 FAUNA**

**5.1 An integrated water bird census** was conducted on 20/01/2017. The census was done by the Nature Reserve team, covering 11 surveys sections. The water birds numbered a total of 2,994 birds comprising of 47 species (see Figures 10 – 12 for details).

**Some additional bush birds** included Cape whiteeye, Yellowbilled kite, Karoo prinia, White-throated swallow, Rock kestrel, Levaiillant’s cisticola, European bee-eater, Rock pigeon, Cape spurfowl and Pintailed whydah.

**19 species with single-figure counts (totalling 71 birds) accounted for 2,4% of the water bird census**, including: one African fish eagle, Wood sandpiper, Pied avocet, and Giant kingfisher each, two African spoonbill, Hottentot teal, Malachite kingfisher, and Mallard hybrid each, three Great crested grebe, Blackheaded heron, Purple heron, and Purple swamphen each, four African black oystercatcher, five Hadeda ibis, six Redbilled teal and Sandwich tern each, eight Glossy ibis, and nine White-faced duck and Pied kingfisher each.

**18 species with double-figure counts (totalling 660 birds) accounted for 22,0% of the water bird census**, including: 10 African darter, 11 Yellowbilled egret, 12 Greenshank, 14 Little grebe, 14 Swift tern, 16 Cattle egret, 17 Three-banded plover, 21 Little egret, 23 Grey heron, 31 Sacred ibis, 34 Common tern, 37 Cape wagtail, 38 Common moorhen, 43 Cape teal, 79 Reed cormorant, 81 Blackwinged stilt, 86 Whitebreasted cormorant, and 93 Cape shoveller.

**10 species with triple-figure counts (totalling 2,263 birds) accounted for 75,6% of the water bird census**, including: 122 Egyptian goose, 130 Lesser flamingo, 134 Spurwinged goose, 150 Yellowbilled duck, 151 Kelp gull, 159 Blacksmith lapwing, 198 White pelican, 262 Redknobbed coot, 359 Greater flamingo, and 598 Hartlaub’s gull.

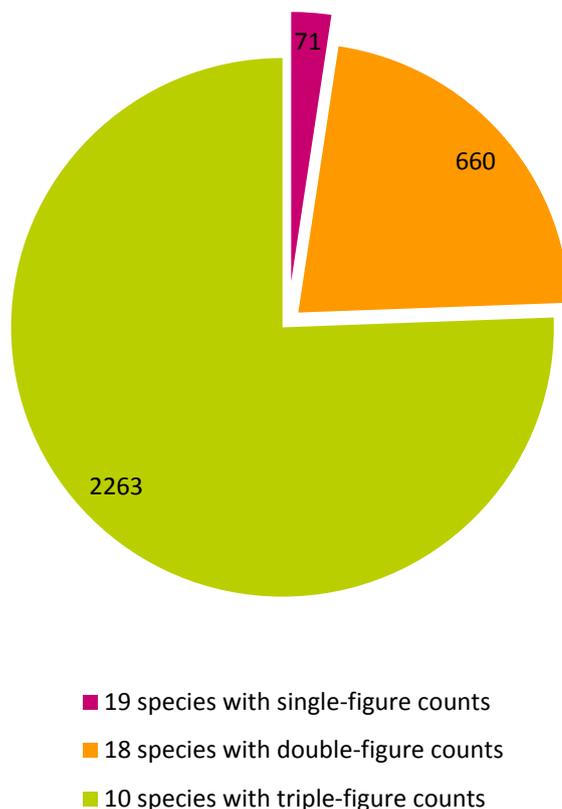


Figure 10. Relative contribution of low, medium and high counts.

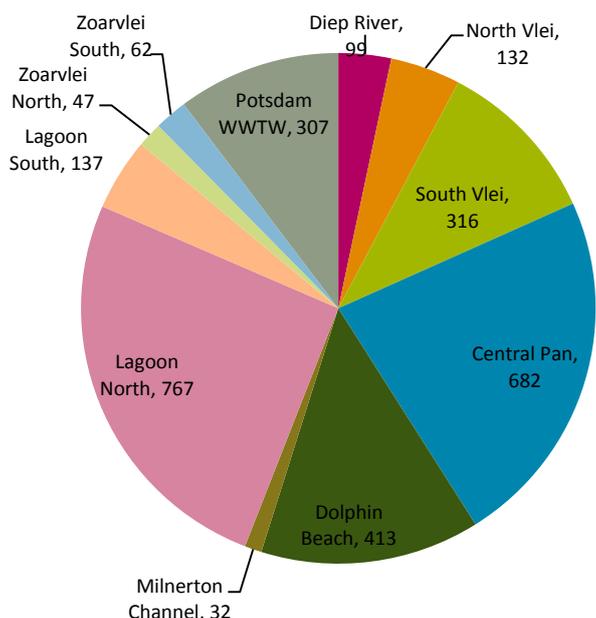


Figure 11. Relative contribution from each survey section.

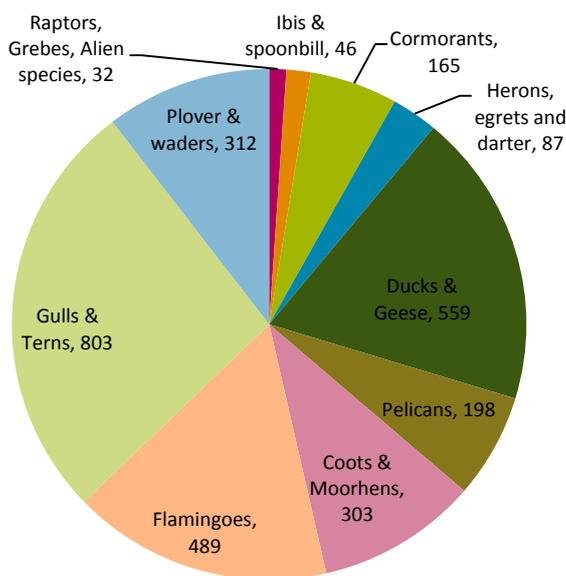


Figure 12. Relative contribution from the various bird groups.



Figure 13. Injured female Cape grysbok under veterinary care.

**5.2 An injured Cape Grysbok ewe** from the Milnerton Racecourse Section was euthanised by veterinarians at the SPCA. The Cape Grysbok was found stuck in a palisade fence inside the Sandown Crescent complex on the edge of the Nature Reserve on 27/03/2017.

The Site Manager and Area Manager freed the Cape Grysbok from the fence and transported it to the SPCA (see Figure 13 left).

The left hind limb of the animal was severely lacerated and it was suffering from stress. Due to the extent of the stress and the wounds, the ewe was humanely euthanised by the veterinarian doctor.

The Site Manager for the Milnerton Racecourse Section will be looking at closing any possible holes in the palisade fences where grysbokkies might be trying to get in and out of the Nature Reserve.

**Grysbokkies often roam around in the Milnerton and Table View suburbs and should generally be left unhindered, but residents are urged to report any stuck or trapped wild animals to the Nature Reserve.**

**5.3 Wildlife photography in the Nature Reserve** is becoming increasingly popular as a pastime. Some brilliant photographs that have been submitted by local photographers during this quarter (see Figures 14 – 17 below and overleaf):



Figure 14. A family of Water mongooses (photo by Jan and Frieda Prinsloo).



Figure 15. A Cape grysbok ram (photo by Jan and Frieda Prinsloo).



Figure 16. A Steppe buzzard (photo by Andy Birkinshaw).



Figure 17. Lesser flamingos (photo by Hester Pentz).

## 6 SOIL

No actions have been recorded for soil management.

## 7 WATER

**7.1 Level 3B water restrictions** were implemented by the City of Cape Town during this quarter. The public was notified by means of a media release on 01/02/2017. The following prohibitions are in place:

- Watering / irrigation (with municipal drinking water) of flower beds, lawns, vegetables and other plants, sports fields, parks and other open spaces is allowed only on Tuesdays and Saturdays before 09:00 or after 18:00 for a maximum of one hour per day per property and only if using a bucket or watering can. No use of hosepipes or any sprinkler systems allowed
- No watering / irrigation is allowed within 48 hours of rainfall that provides adequate saturation. Facilities/customers making use of boreholes, treated effluent water, spring water or well-points are not exempt.
- No washing of vehicles or boats using municipal drinking water is allowed. Vehicles and boats must be washed with non-potable water or washed at a commercial carwash.

### In addition:

- No washing of vehicles, including taxis, using municipal drinking water at transport interchanges will be allowed
- No more irrigation using potable water will be permitted at City facilities
- No increase of the indigent water allocation over and above the free 350 litres a day will be granted, unless through prior application and permission for specific events such as burial ceremonies

All exemptions granted under Level 3 are being reviewed with the possibility of being revoked with the option for reapplication. Current water users with exemptions under Level 3 must adhere to Level 3b irrigation days and times.

### Restrictions still applicable to all customers:

- Borehole/well-point water must be used efficiently to avoid wastage and evaporation. Borehole/well-point water users are strongly encouraged to follow the same watering times as applicable to drinking water use detailed above
- All boreholes and well-points must be registered with the City and the official City of Cape Town signage must be displayed and be clearly visible from a public thoroughfare (residents can visit the City's website for how to register)
- All properties where alternative, non-potable water resources are used (including rainwater harvesting, grey water reuse, treated effluent water and spring water) must display signage to this effect clearly visible from a public thoroughfare. Residents can visit the City's website for more information: [www.capetown.gov.za/thinkwater](http://www.capetown.gov.za/thinkwater)
- No washing or hosing down of hard-surfaced or paved areas with drinking water is allowed (except for health purposes). Users, such as abattoirs, food-processing industries, industries using water to prepare for painting or similar treatments, care facilities, animal shelters and other industries or facilities with special needs can apply to the Director: Water and Sanitation Management for exemption
- Using drinking water for ornamental water fountains or water features is strongly discouraged. If drinking water is used, the water fountains or water features must operate by recycling the water

### Restrictions still applicable to residential customers

- Customers are strongly encouraged to install water-efficient parts, fittings and technologies to minimise water use at all taps, showerheads and other plumbing components
- Manual topping up of swimming pools is allowed only if fitted with a pool cover. No automatic top-up systems are allowed
- The use of portable or any temporary play pools is prohibited
- No increase of the indigent water allocation over and above the free 350 litres a day will be granted, unless through prior application and permission for specific events such as burial ceremonies

**Customers should note that water pressure may be reduced to limit water leaks and that slight changes in water taste and clarity may occur due to low dam levels. For further information, residents can visit our water restrictions page on the website: [www.capetown.gov.za/thinkwater](http://www.capetown.gov.za/thinkwater). Customers can also contact the City via email to [water.restrictions@capetown.gov.za](mailto:water.restrictions@capetown.gov.za) for queries or to report contraventions.**

**7.2 Rainfall recorded in the Table Bay Nature Reserve** remained below-average. The rainfall during this quarter was 20mm at Rietvlei and 18.9mm at Milnerton Racecourse.

Figure 18 below indicates the monthly rainfall records of Rietvlei and Milnerton Racecourse in 2017 plotted over the average rainfall pattern for the area.

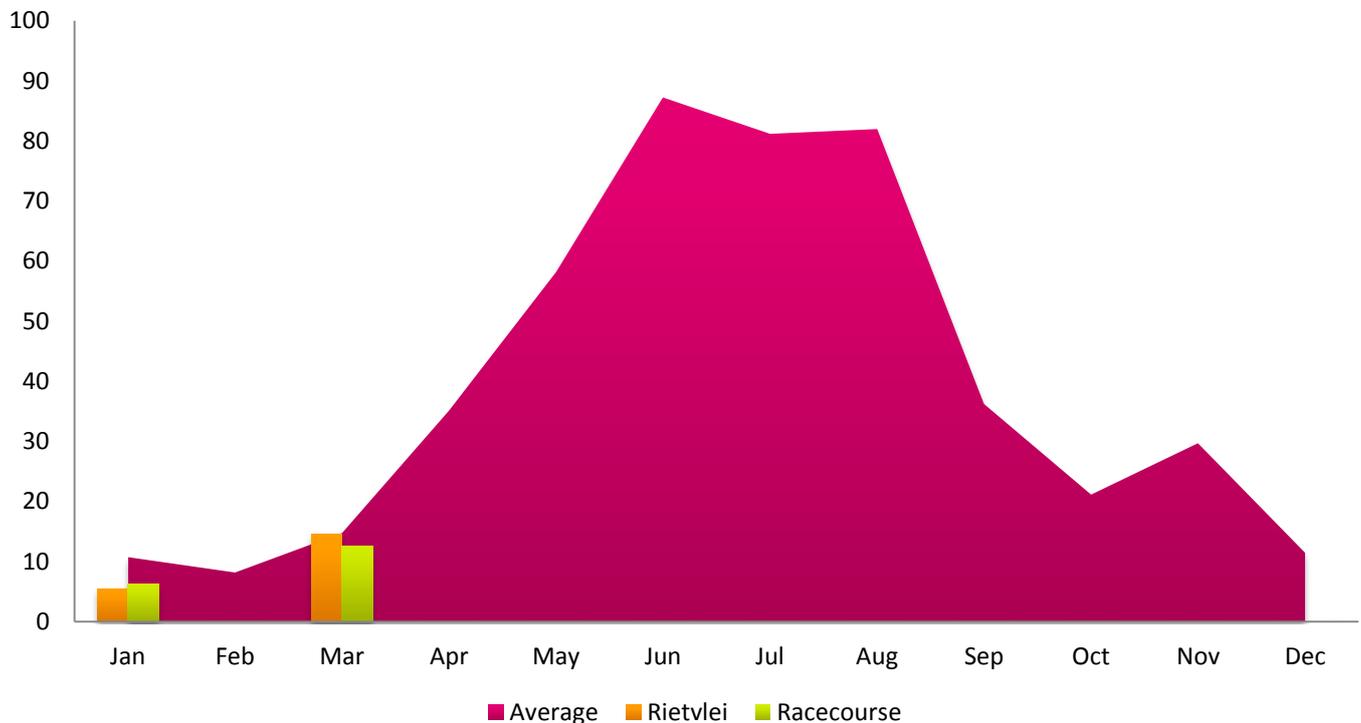


Figure 18. Monthly rainfall records of Rietvlei and Milnerton Racecourse in 2017 plotted over the average rainfall pattern.

Figure 19 below indicates the rainfall accumulation curves of Rietvlei and Milnerton Racecourse in 2017 plotted over the average accumulation curve for the area.

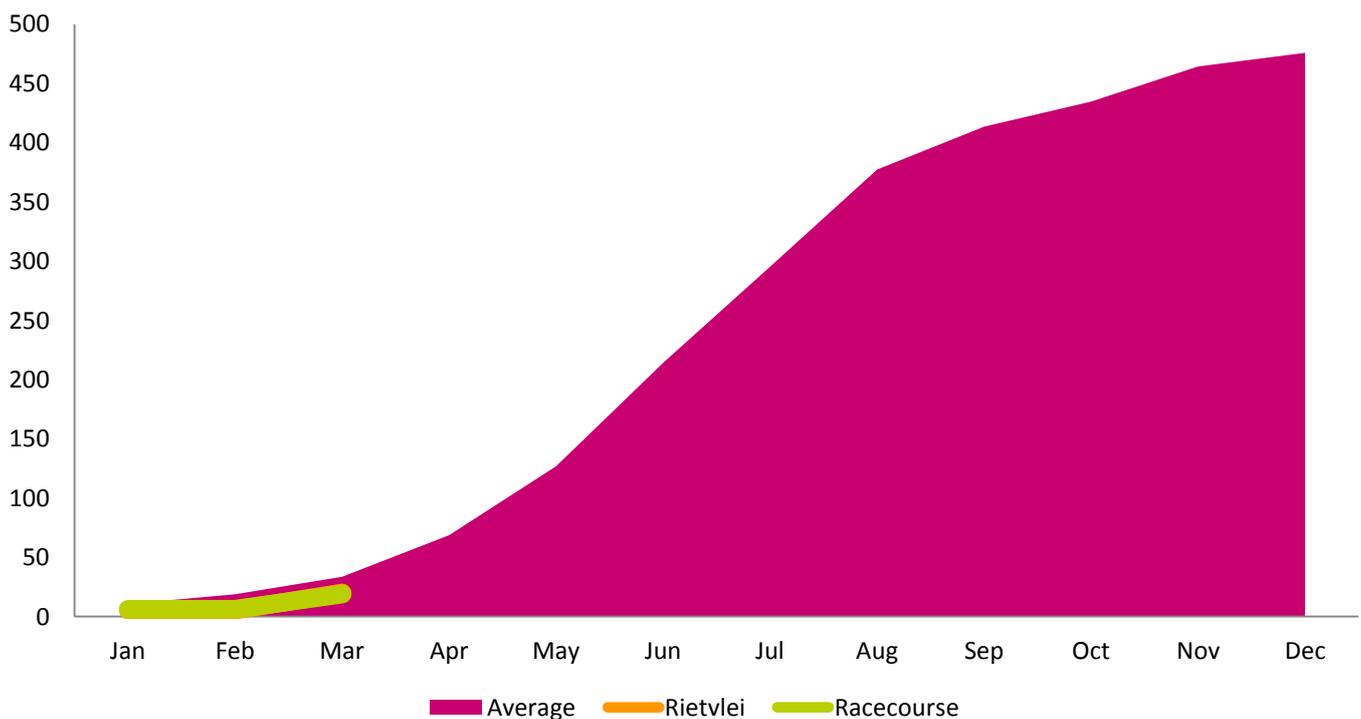


Figure 19. Rainfall accumulation curves of Rietvlei and Milnerton Racecourse in 2017 plotted over the average accumulation curve.



Figure 20. The dry seasonal pans at Rietvlei.

**7.3 Dust emanating from the seasonal pans in Rietvlei** started to have social impacts in Table View towards the end of 2016. During the last six months Rietvlei received only 40mm of rain, while the average rainfall for the period October to March is more than 95mm. This led to a rapid drying of the seasonal pans.

During summer, when strong south-easterly winds blow over the pans, they can start to pick up very fine dust particles. The Nature Reserve's estuary management plan (EMP) prescribes that the dust must be suppressed by pumping water from Rietvlei's deep water lakes onto the dry pans to keep the pans wet.

The Nature Reserve obtained pipes and a pump from the Roads & Stormwater depot in Killarney to implement the pumping operation, which started on 22/02/2017 and continued through the quarter. At the time of preparing this report the pumping was to continue until the pans fill up naturally with rainwater.

From an ecological point of view it would be harmful to stop the pumping once it started. The reason is that there are small invertebrate organisms that live in the water on the pans that normally enter a period of dormancy (diapause) during drought. Once these invertebrates are covered in water again, they become active again. But in order to ensure that the invertebrate organisms continue to complete their life cycles, the water needs to remain on the pan long enough. These invertebrate organisms are an important food source for wading birds such as flamingos and migrating water birds.



Figure 21. The first water to be delivered onto the pan during 2017.



Figure 22. Pumping of water out of Rietvlei.

**7.4 Pollution entering the Milnerton Lagoon** was assessed during a site meeting at the Erica Road stormwater outfall, which drains the Joe Slovo and Phoenix settlements, as well as the Theo Marais Park stormwater outfall, which drains the Montague Gardens industrial area.

The site meeting was attended by representatives from the Milnerton Canoe Club as well as various departments in the City, including Biodiversity Management, Environmental Health, Roads and Stormwater, and Water & Sanitation.

An interim action plan is being drawn up to address the pollution concerns by looking at what can be done at the source of the pollution. The biggest concern is that waste water is entering the stormwater system. Waste water and stormwater are supposed to flow in two separate systems: the sewers and stormwater canals respectively. When waste water enters the stormwater system the downstream natural environment becomes polluted.

**The Milnerton Lagoon Water Quality Improvement project is currently being managed at a transversal level as part of the City's Coastal Working Group.**

8 FIRE

**8.1 Wildfires burnt almost 100 hectares of the Diep River Section** on 18/01 and 27/02/2017 (see Figure 24 below). A wildfire also occurred in the Zoarvlei Section on 25/02/2017.

**8.2 A prescribed ecological fuel reduction burn** was conducted at Tygerberg Nature Reserve on 09/02/17. Staff from Table Bay Nature Reserve assisted on the day of the burn (see Figure 23 right).

**8.3 A vehicle caught alight in the Rietvlei Section** on 08/03/2017. The driver entered the Nature Reserve after hours and drove beyond a sign that prohibits vehicle access. The vehicle got stuck in vegetation off the road and caused the vegetation to ignite. The fire spread into the veld next to the Water Area. Staff from the Nature Reserve assisted the Fire Department to control the blaze, but the vehicle was consumed. Local newspapers published the story (see Figures 25 – 27 below).



Figure 23. A prescribed ecological burn at Tygerberg Nature Reserve.



Figure 24. A wildfire in the Diep River on 18/01/2017.



Figure 25. Prescribed ecological fuel reduction burn at Tygerberg.

## Car destroyed and section of reserve damaged in blaze

SUMMER JACOBS

A woman's car was destroyed and a section of the Rietvlei Nature Reserve burnt after the vehicle got stuck in sand. It's believed the car's hot exhaust ignited dry grass in the reserve, but Fire and Rescue say the exact cause of the blaze is still undetermined. Milnerton firefighters were called out to the fire on Tuesday March 7, at about 6.30pm, after the Hyundai got caught in sand close to Marine Drive, in Table View. The car and vegetation near the nature reserve had already been burning when the firefighters arrived, said Tracey Whittaker, from Fire and Rescue. "The entire vehicle and contents was damaged by the fire. No injuries were reported," she said. Area north mini mayor Suzette Little said that according to nature reserve staff the car had been completely burnt out after getting stuck in sand a few metres from a gravel road. "The spot where the vehicle caught alight is within an area where the public may not drive with vehicles. There is a sign indicating that private vehicles are prohibited from driving beyond a certain point," said Ms Little. The fire had caused damage to less than a hectare of the reserve, she said. Frieda Prinsloo, a friend of the Rietvlei Nature Reserve, described the fire as an "unfortunate event". "I know the woman drove where she wasn't supposed to. She said she wanted to make a U-turn but there was plenty of space to do that," said Ms Prinsloo. Richard Adcock, who lives near Rietvlei, said that after being "smothered by smoke" he had decided to investigate.

PICTURE: RICHARD ADCOCK

■ The burnt Hyundai

Figure 26. Article in the local press about the burnt out vehicle at Rietvlei.

## Vehicle catches fire in vlei

RICHARD ROBERTS  
@richardjohn\_rj

Fire and Rescue Services personnel rushed to the Rietvlei Nature Reserve recently to douse a car engulfed in flames. On the Table View Neighbourhood Watch Facebook page last week, a resident stated that a female driver had attempted to make a U-turn near long grass inside the vlei area near the Aquatic Club when her vehicle apparently got stuck. "The grass was ignited and her vehicle was soon engulfed in flames. Fortunately she was not injured, but her vehicle was completely gutted," the resident wrote last week. Liezl Moodie, spokesperson for the City of Cape Town's Fire and Rescue services, confirmed the incident and told *TygerBurger* that they had responded to a motor vehicle on fire just after 18:30 on Tuesday 8 March on Marine Drive, Table View. "On arrival it was reported that a motor vehicle and vegetation were burning near the Rietvlei Nature Reserve. "The entire vehicle and its contents were damaged by the fire," Moodie said. Their response team consisted of one fire engine and one skid unit. Resources were dispatched from the Milnerton Fire Station. "No injuries were reported, and the cause of the fire is undetermined at this stage," Moodie said. Another resident wrote on the social media page that the driver had been way past the boom gate in the reserve, which no civilian cars are supposed to pass. "Lots of questions to be answered," he wrote. Another concerned resident remarked: "Oh how awful for the person... pleased that she was not injured. Pleased that the fire was contained, as it is extremely dry there and the entire vehicle could have gone up in flames." "What is your opinion on this article? Let us know at [briewe@tygerburger.co.za](mailto:briewe@tygerburger.co.za).

A vehicle was gutted by fire last week when it apparently got stuck among some dry grass in the Rietvlei Nature Reserve. No injuries were reported. PHOTO: FACEBOOK

Figure 27. Article in the local press about the burnt out vehicle at Rietvlei.

## 9 PEOPLE, TOURISM & EDUCATION

### 9.1 Stakeholder Engagement

Table Bay Nature Reserve staff engage with various stakeholders, both internal and external, by means of meetings and other platforms. Below is a summary of the meetings that were attended by staff this quarter.

#### 9.1.1 Internal Meetings

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

- 27/01/2017: North Region management and health & safety meetings;
- 31/01/2017: Integrated performance management (IPM) review meeting;
- 31/01/2017: Atlantis dunes recreational area by-law discussion;
- 03/02/2017: Integrated performance management (IPM) review meeting;
- 23/02/2017: Biodiversity Management Branch meeting;
- 06/01/2017: Atlantis dunes office construction site meeting;
- 10/03/2017: Work-integrated learning students' research proposal presentations; and
- 31/03/2017: North Region management and health & safety meetings.

#### 9.1.2 External Meetings

Table Bay Nature Reserve staff attended no less than 16 official external meetings during this quarter:

- 13/01/2017: Site meeting at the Coastal Section to assess a historical fishing rights holder's application for an off-road vehicle access permit;
- 16-18/01/2017: Determination of Water Resources Classes and Resource Quality Objectives in the Berg Water Management Area;
- 19/01/2017: Protected Area Advisory Committee;
- 26/01/2017: Wooden Bridge Restoration Project Management Team;
- 28/01/2017: Cape Town Environmental Education Trust (CTEET) learner graduation ceremony;
- 02/02/2017: Cape West Coast Biosphere Reserve;
- 10/02/2017: CPUT work-integrated learning student's progress assessment with Dr Radloff;
- 15/02/2017: Milnerton Lagoon water quality site meeting;
- 15/02/2017: PAAC chairmen and manager's forum;
- 17/02/2017: Rietvlei dust suppression site meeting;
- 27/02/2017: CPUT work-integrated learning student's progress assessment with Dr Radloff;
- 14/03/2017: Site meeting with Tony Heath at Stable Yard complex adjacent to Milnerton Racecourse Section;
- 30/03/2017: Meeting with UNISA student, Sonia Cook, about potential research project; and
- 31/03/2017: Milnerton Racecourse Environmental Management Committee.

### 9.2 Benefit to People

#### 9.2.1 Rietvlei Education Centre Usage

The usage of the Rietvlei Education Centre, excluding formal environmental education programmes, generated 49 person days of benefit to people over three event days.

DATE	GROUP	ACTIVITY	PERSON DAYS
16/02/2017	Blaauwberg ELC	Meeting	15
23/02/2017	Friends of Rietvlei	Evening talk	20
24/02/2017	Nature @ heart	Home school group	14
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>49</b>

### 9.2.2 Rietvlei Boma Usage

The usage of the Rietvlei Boma generated at least 456 person days of benefit to people over 26 event days.

DATE	GROUP	ACTIVITY	PERSON DAYS
19/01/2017	Protected Area Advisory Committee	Quarterly meeting	26
26/01/2017	WESSA/COKE	Alien clearing project workshop	20
30/01/2017	Work-integrated learning students	Induction	23
13-17/02/2017	NCC Environmental Services	Environmental Management Training	45
15/02/2017	PAAC Chairmen	Chairman's meeting	17
20-24/02/2017	Social development & early childhood development	EAP Short Course and Advance Training	150
27/02-01/03/2017	Rietvlei hydrology and geo-hydrology study team	Hydrodynamic model training	20
03/03/2017	NCC Environmental Services	Learner support	9
06/03/2017	Work-integrated learning students	Presentations trial run	13
08/03/2017	Biodiversity Management Branch	OHS toolkit session	16
10/03/2017	Biodiversity Management Branch & Work-integrated learning students	Research presentations	40
14/03/2017	Biodiversity Management Branch	BioNet Alliance / DCCP meeting	12
16/03/2017	Green Jobs / Invasive Species Unit	Awareness workshop	40
28/03/2017	JAYMAT Enviro solutions	DEA&DP community of practice for Alien Clearing and Alien Biomass Economies	25
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>456</b>

### 9.2.3 Environmental Education and Outreach

Environmental Education and Outreach generated 340 person days of benefit over three event days.

DATE	GROUP(S)	LEARNERS	TEACHER +ADULTS	PERSON-DAYS	PROGRAMME
02/02/2017	Sophakama Primary (outreach)	285	3	288	Celebrating wetlands day
03/03/2017	Table Bay Nature Reserve staff	0	5	5	Smart living training - Water
10/03/2017	Seamount primary	45	2	47	Wetlands programme
	<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>330</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>TOTALS</b>



Figure 28. An outreach programme at Sophakama Primary School in Dunoon in celebration of Wetlands Day on 2 February 2017.



Figure 29. A photo-frame collage by Seamount Primary visitors to the wetlands programme on 10 March 2017.

9.3 Visitors and Income

**9.3.1 Income from visitors** at the Rietvlei Water Area was R56,397 from 3,082 recorded visitors. The number of visitors started to decline after a fish die-off that occurred in Rietvlei in November 2016. Fishing makes up a significant portion of the visitor numbers and cash income at Rietvlei.

During this quarter a blue-green algal bloom started on 16/03/2017. As a result, the water area was closed-off to public access from 17/03/2017 onwards. At the time of publishing this report, the water area had not been reopened to the public yet. During the closure, the only income into the Rietvlei Water Area is from bird watchers and picnic goers. See Figures 30 – 31 below.

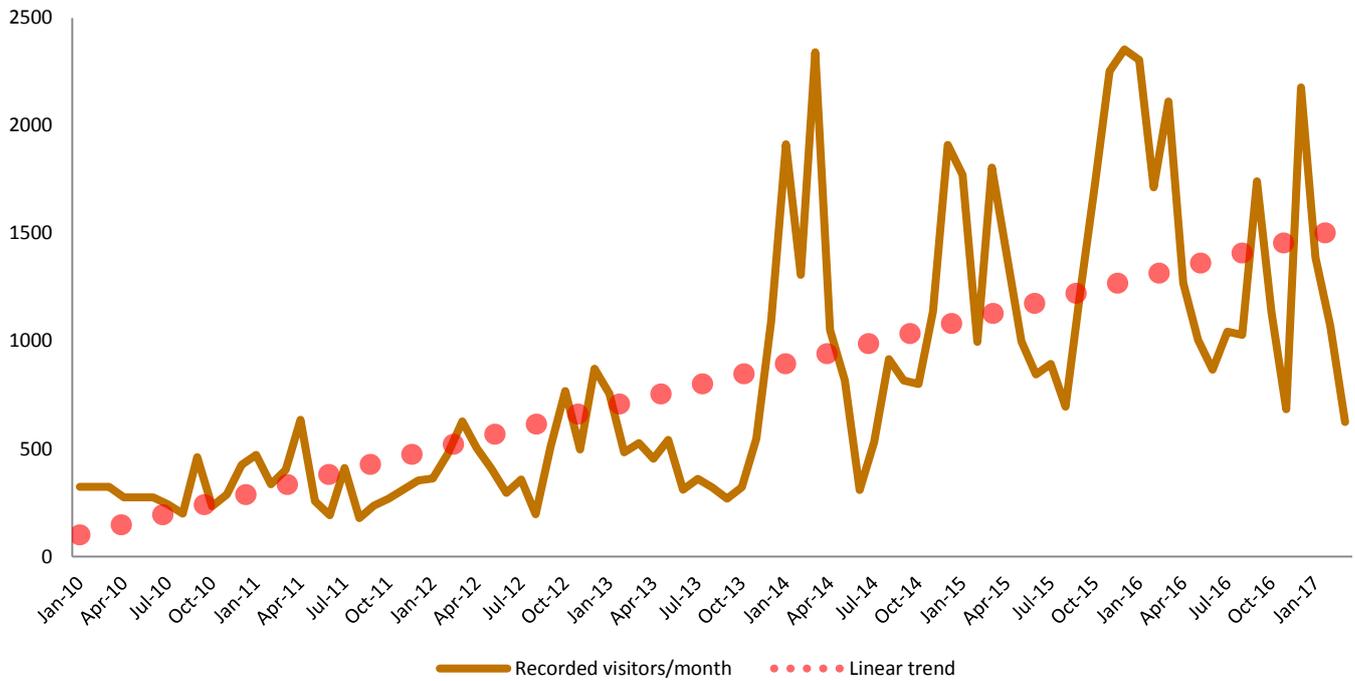


Figure 30. Trend in monthly visitor numbers at the Rietvlei Water Area since January 2010.

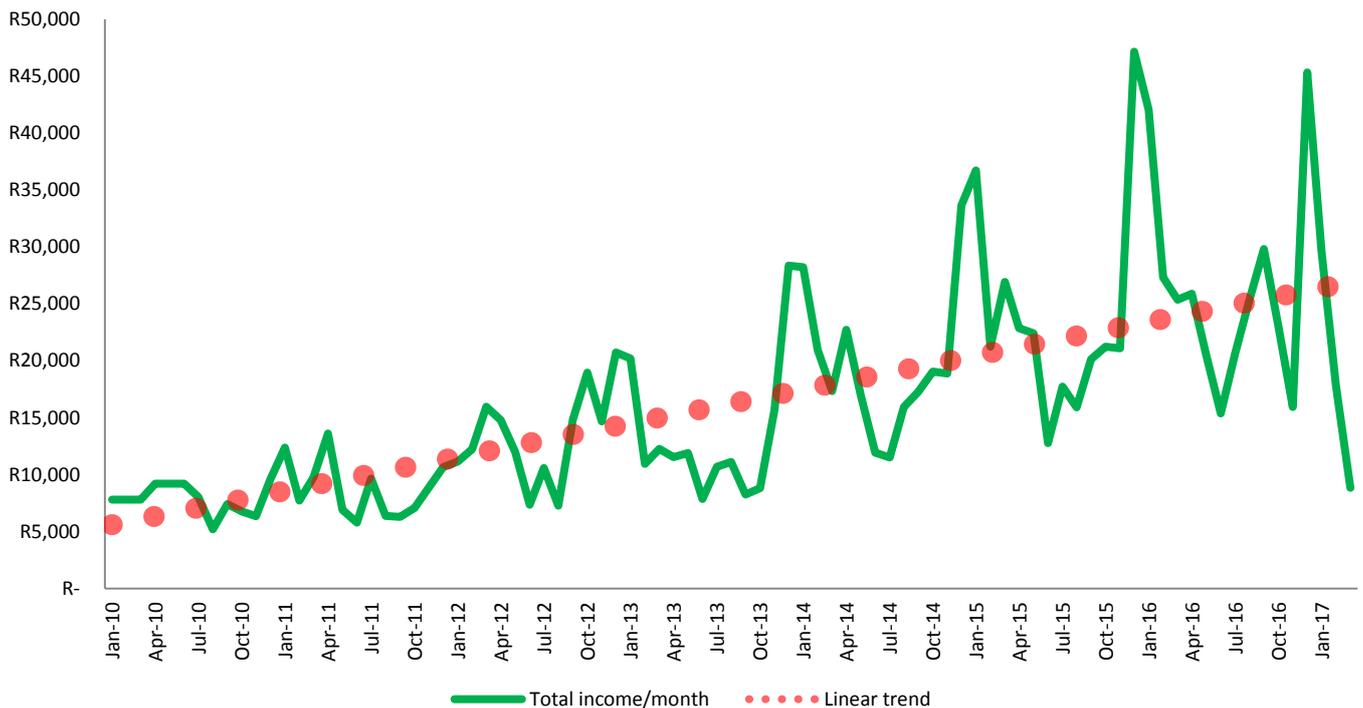


Figure 31. Trend in monthly cash income at the Rietvlei Water area since 2010.

10 STAFF

10.1 Staff establishment

**10.1.1 Four new work-integrated learning students,** Matthew Gatinho, Fabrice Turikumwe, Waseem Parker (CPUT), and Angelique van der Berg (Centurion Academy) were appointed for the Nature Reserve. These students are all studying towards nature conservation qualifications and are required to complete various practical modules.

All the nature conservation students in the City had an opportunity to present their research proposals to the Biodiversity Management Branch. Fabrice and Angelique's presentation were selected as two of the top four presentations and they have been nominated to attend the Fynbos Forum 2017 to present posters.

Angelique will be assessing the population numbers of grysbok in the Milnerton Racecourse using various censusing methods. Fabrice will be determining the potential stocking rate of the Rietvlei vegetation with reference to the forage requirements of hippos.



Figure 32. Work-integrated learning students, Matthew Gatinho, Fabrice Turikumwe, Waseem Parker and Angelique van der Berg.

**10.1.2 The contracted Site Manager for the Milnerton Racecourse and the Milnerton Lagoon, Landi Louw,** resigned to take up a permanent lecturing position in the nature management course at Centurion Academy. Landi's last work day was on 22/03/2017. Landi was thanked for her contribution to the conservation of the Table Bay Nature Reserve (see Figure 34 below).

In her new role at Centurion Academy Landi will be preparing students to enter the nature management industry. She will also continue field research at the Milnerton Racecourse Section for her Master's degree.

**A new site manager, Kyran Wright,** has been contracted to replace the outgoing site manager for the next three years (see Figure 33 below). Kyran assumed duties on 27/03/2017. Kyran has a B.Sc (Hons) degree in Ecology and is studying towards a Master's degree in Environmental Law.

Kyran's position is funded by the Milnerton Racecourse Environmental Management Committee. The post is administered by the Cape Town Environmental Education Trust (CTEET). He reports to the Area Manager and is based at the Table Bay Nature Reserve offices at Rietvlei.



Figure 33. The new Site Manager for the Milnerton Racecourse and Milnerton Lagoon sections, Kyran Wright.



Figure 34. Landi Louw receiving a gift at her farewell party. With her are Louise Matschke and Dr Anthony Roberts from CTEET.

**10.1.3 Various staff administration outcomes** were achieved in this quarter, including:

- **Trainings needs analysis** forms were submitted for all staff in terms of the work-place skills development programme.
- **Intern site manager, Hester Pentz**, underwent a driver's medical on 01/02/2017 and a driver's authorisation assessment on 06/02/2017. Hester was authorised to drive Council vehicles.
- **The CPUT conducted on site progress assessments** of their nature conservatoin work-integrated learning students at the Table Bay Nature Reserve on 10/02/2017 and 27/02/2017.
- **Field ranger, Sakhile Luhani**, underwent a driver's medical on 01/03/2017. Sakhile is scheduled to undergo a driver's authorisation assessment in the next quarter.
- **Nature conservation work-integrated learning students**, Waseem Parker, Matthew Gatinho and Angelique van der Berg, underwent driver medicals on 08/03/2017. The students are all scheduled to undergo driver authorisation assessments in the next quarter.
- **Landi Louw** resigned from her post as contract site manager for the Milnerton Racecourse and Milnerton Lagoon sections. A farewell party was held for Landi on 22/03/2017.
- **A re-placement contract site manager for the Milnerton Racecourse and Milnerton Lagoon sections** was made after practical assessments were conducted on 16/03/2007 and verbal interviews were conducted on 22/03/2017.
- **Competence assessments** of the three CPUT nature conservation work-integrated learning students were conducted from 29-30/03/2017.

**10.2 Training and development**

**10.2.1 Training of permanent and temporary staff** at the Table Bay Nature Reserve amounted to no less than 74 person days over 24 training event days, including the following interventions:

Date(s)	Course	Number of days x	Number of learners =	Person days
19/01/2017	CTEET intern development day at the Green Point Biodiversity Showcase Garden education centre	1	4	4
30/01/2017	Nature conservation work-integrated learning students' induction	1	4	4
10/02/2017	CTEET intern field excursion to Table Mountain	1	4	4
13-17/02/2017	Environmental Management learnership: Regulatory framework for environmental management	5	2	10
21-24/02/2017	Nature conservation work-integrated learning students' induction	4	4	16
27/02-1/03/2017	Rietvlei hydrodynamic model training	3	1	3
02/03/2017	Nature conservation work-integrated learning students' induction	1	4	4
03/03/2017	Environmental Management learnership support day	1	2	2
13-18/03/2017	CTEET interns bioblitz training at Bokbaai	6	4	24
17/03/2017	Microsoft Outlook training	1	3	3
	<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>24</b>		<b>74</b>

**11 LAW ENFORCEMENT**

**11.1 Illegally constructed walkways leading into the Coastal Section** were removed during this quarter. See Figures 35 - 36 below of examples of footpaths that were removed. The materials were dumped at a local landfill site.

**We urge property owners to refrain from undertaking any construction work or garden extension in the Nature Reserve as this is illegal and will be removed.**



Figure 35. Illegal constructed walkways leading into the Coastal Section are being removed.



Figure 36. Illegal constructed walkways leading into the Coastal Section are being removed.

**11.2 Illegal occupations and displaced people** were removed from the Nature Reserve at various locations during seven different joint operations with Law Enforcement and the Anti-Land Invasion Unit (see Figures 37 – 38 below).

**We urge residents to report illegal structures and overnight locations in the Nature Reserve to the office of the Manager so that appropriate action can be taken to prevent the establishment of informal settlements.**



Figure 37. Illegal structure in the Zoarvlei Section being broken down and removed. All materials are disposed of at a landfill site.



Figure 38. An illegal overnight location in the Coastal Section.

**11.3 Illegal dog walking in the Nature Reserve** is being addressed by Nature Reserve staff and law enforcers. A media release was issued to educate the public about this problem (see [APPENDIX B](#)).

Certain dog owners allow their dogs to run off-leash onto the seasonal pans of Rietvlei where birds are roosting in summer, or wading in winter. Numerous dogs have been photographed while chasing and killing birds in the Nature Reserve.

A sign was erected at the Table View boundary of the Rietvlei wetlands to advise people not to enter the seasonal pans. Visitors must access the Nature Reserve through the main entrance at 10 Sandpiper Crescent. No dogs are however allowed to enter the reserve at the main entrance.



Figure 39. Sign advising residents to access the Rietvlei Section from the main entrance.

**11.4 An outdoor religious gathering** in the Diep River Section allegedly caused a fire that spread through the area and burnt about a 100 hectares of vegetation on 27/02/2017. The religious gatherings occur in the form of small groups of people that sometimes overnight in the veld. During night time they will light fires. It is suspected that the ignition point of this particular fire occurred at a gathering point (see Figure 41 below).

**It is important to note that it is illegal to make open fires in public spaces without a permit or in areas that are not designated for this use. A case of trespassing was opened at Table View police station.**



Figure 40. Extent of the fire in the Diep River Section.



Figure 41. Suspected ignition point of a recent wildfire next to a known religious gathering site in the foreground.

**11.5 Illegal dumping and littering** was cleared from various management sections of the Nature Reserve, including in Zoarvlei, Diep River, and Coastal Section (see Figures 42 – 43 below).

The amount of time spent on clearing rubble and litter has a negative impact on the rest of the conservation management work that needs to be done in the reserve.



Figure 42. Removal of dumped rubble from Zoarvlei.



Figure 43. Removal of bagged litter from Zoarvlei.

## 12 INFRASTRUCTURE & EQUIPMENT

**12.1 Repair of Rietvlei's boat launch slipway** near the public ablution block started this quarter. Engineers advised that a cracked portion of the slipway had to be removed as the damaged slipway could in turn damage boats and trailers.

A digger-loader and a tipper truck was hired to remove the broken section of the slipway (see Figure 44 right). In order to repair the slipway, a new concrete slab has to be laid with about 30 cubic meters of concrete.

Currently there is no funding to pay for the laying of this concrete slab. As such, only the main boat launch slipway at Rietvlei's access control kiosk can be used to launch power boats onto Rietvlei.



**Figure 44. Digger-loader removing the broken slipway near the public ablution block.**

**12.2 An off-road vehicle access permit application** was assessed during a site meeting at the Coastal Section's beach access gate on the R27 between Sunset Beach and Dolphin Beach Hotel. The site meeting was joined by officials from the Department of Environmental Affairs' Branch for Oceans and Coasts, as well as the applicants (see Figure 45 below).

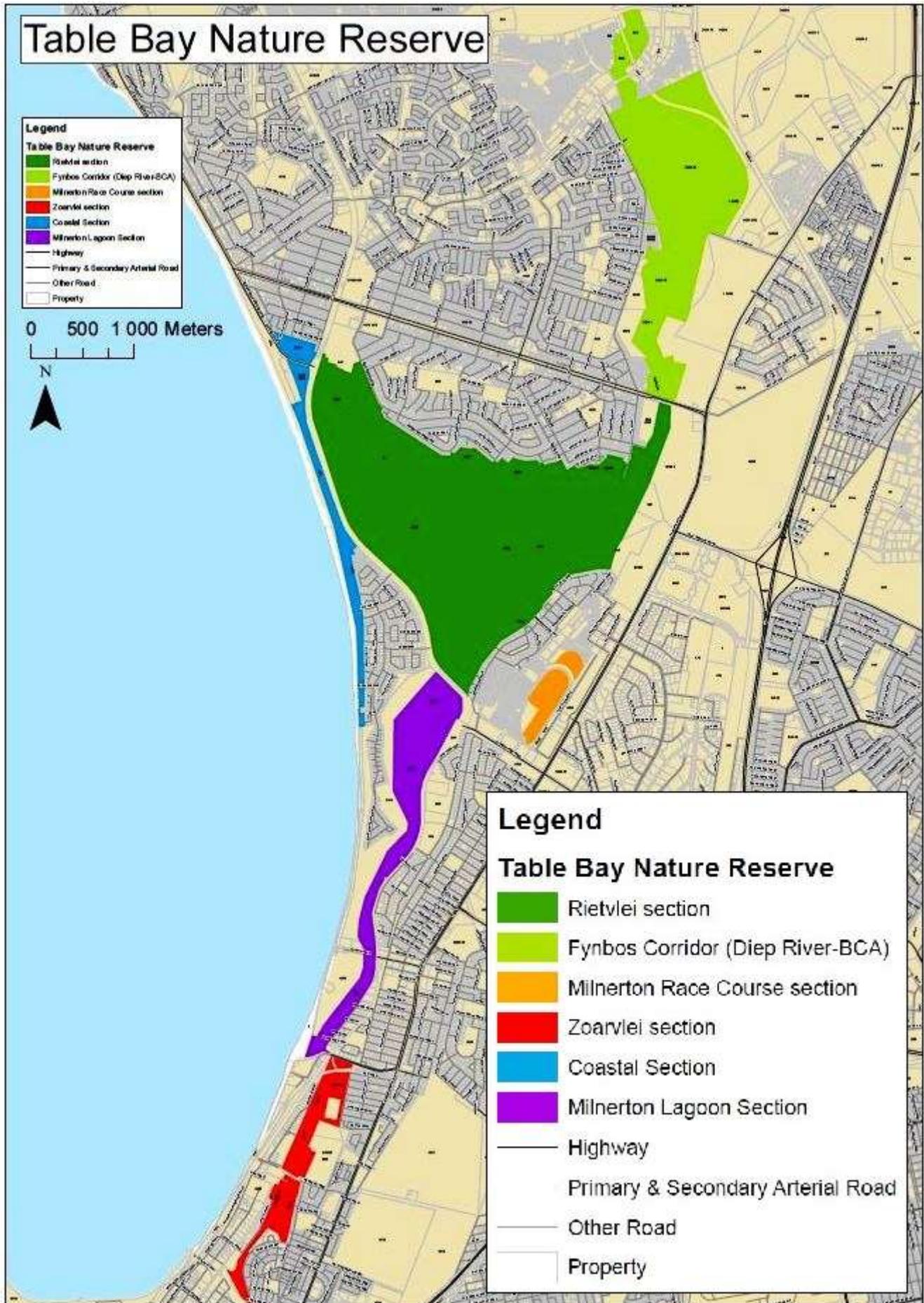
The applicants are fishing rights holders that are permitted to drive on the beach to conduct trek netting. They are only permitted to access the beach from slipways at the Milnerton Light House and near Doodles. They applied also to access the beach through the Nature Reserve's Coastal Section.

**The application was however not supported due to the sensitive nature of the dunes in the Coastal Section.**



**Figure 45. Site inspection at the Milnerton Beach near the Nature Reserve's Coastal Section access gate. The Area Manager (left) is joined by officials from the DEA (centre) as well as the applicants (right).**

APPENDIX A: MAP OF THE MANAGEMENT SECTIONS OF THE NATURE RESERVE



APPENDIX B: ADDITIONAL PRESS ARTICLES THAT ARE RELEVANT TO THE NATURE RESERVE

## Leashless dogs attack seal

Lizelle Victor, Peerless Park, Kraaifontein

Today I write this letter to share a incident which happened on Sunday January 15 on the beach across from Rietvlei between Sunset Beach and Dolphin Beach, that I found to be very disturbing and heartbreaking.

I am from the northern suburbs, and I truly hope and pray this is not

what happens out in Table View regularly.

My husband and I were with a friend taking some photos. It was very early at about 6am.

There were a few people walking with dogs early as they normally do. Two dogs came running past off leashes with the owners so far behind I could not tell if it was one or two persons.

Suddenly the one dog was going crazy, and the moment we looked back, the one dog was attacking a baby seal that was chilling on the beach. My husband and I tried to

stop the dog, but we could not really do so as we would have been bitten by the vicious dog. I was shouting and we just could not get this dog to stop.

The owner rocked up there not really caring about what had just happened, and the moment I told her that she should have her dog on a leash, she just blatantly showed me the middle finger. Eventually her husband arrived with four more dogs on leashes. They owned six very large husky-like dogs.

I felt the incident was extremely disturbing that people have dogs

out on the beach without leashes and more so that they let them run easily a kilometre or more out in front of them having no control over them.

People should be taken to task for such irresponsible behaviour, and a baby seal had to pay the price. These people were also definitely locals living in the area as the one gentleman mentioned that he walks on the beach every morning and he sees these dogs daily, so how many times has this not happened?

I feel the community should be aware of such incidents.



The erection of dwellings in an area dubbed as "tent city" in Table View has sparked renewed concerns about the need for a homeless centre in Table View and Milnerton. PHOTO: MONIQUE DUVAL

HOMELESS: SHELTERS SPARK RENEWED CALLS FOR CENTRE

# 'Tent city' concern

MONIQUE DUVAL  
@monique\_duval

The proliferation in the amount of dwellings being erected on vacant land in Table View has sparked renewed concerns about the need for a homeless centre.

For several weeks now, residents have noted an increase in the amount of people using the land behind the Potsdam taxi rank to set up shelters.

The area, which has been dubbed as "tent city", is home to many homeless people who have erected tents and other structures for shelter.

Following ongoing complaints, executive members of the Table View Ratepayers' Association (TVRA) visited the area last week.

TVRA chairperson, Mandy Da Matta, says they wanted to gain an understanding of why people opted to move there.

During the visit, a man who identified himself only as Jerome, explained many of the occupants had moved there from areas like Theo Marais Park and Montague Gardens. The occupants say after being removed from these areas by Law Enforcement, they were told to "find another place to sleep" and "hide in the bush".

According to the City's Mayco member for

safety and security, JP Smith, they received two complaints regarding tents being erected in the forest area behind the Potsdam taxi rank.

He says the occupants were not told by Law Enforcement officers to move there and the building materials found in the forest have been removed with the assistance of the Anti-Land Invasion Unit together with their contractor.

Asked what processes are to be followed when a complaint of this nature is received, Smith says: "Subject to the nature of the structure and whether it is inhabited, an assessment of the Prevention of Illegal Evic-

tion Act applies, which would require an eviction application to court. In terms of counter-spoliation operations, an assessment is first carried out to ascertain the number of illegal dwellings, and a request is then referred to the Anti-Land Invasion Unit and Social Development Department asking for their assistance in removal of building materials. The social development department offers assistance to those who would like to return to their families or be placed in a place of safety. These occupants have refused assistance offered to them by social development."

▶ To page 2.



One of the many tents erected on the land behind the Potsdam taxi rank.

PHOTOS: MONIQUE DUVAL

## FROM PAGE 1

Da Matta says the erection of the tents highlights the need for a homeless centre in the greater Milnerton and Table View communities. The need for a centre was highlighted in 2016 following the City's announcement of plans to establish a centre at the Global School of Theology near Potsdam Road.

In June the school told *TygerBurger* that they had called off all negotiations with the municipality as a result of public statements. They said they considered the statements to be premature as the lease had not been finalised.

In July, the City's Mayco member for social development and early childhood development, Suzette Little, revealed that the City was now investigating the possible use of state-owned buildings in Atlantis to accommodate the centre.

Da Matta says residents have questioned what progress has been made on the plans for the centre and what the municipality is actually doing to address the homeless issue.

"What we have seen at Potsdam is that Law Enforcement is not the solution to addressing homelessness. If what they are saying is true, then all we are achieving is reshuffling people from one place to another in a seemingly inhumane manner. What we need to establish is what progress the City has actually made and why the centre is being established in Atlantis," she says.

Da Matta also highlighted the amount of litter seen in the area and says this is a direct result of residents not disposing of their waste responsibly.

"As a community we should not only complain but take a stance on these matters. If we do not want to aid the lifestyle of bin scratchers, then we need to do our part and not dispose of these items in wheelie bins.



One of the occupants of "tent city", only known as Jerome, shows off some of his puppies.

We all know these items end up in the greenbelts and other areas and yet residents continue to do so," she says.

Little says in joint operations with Law Enforcement on 21 December, officials from the social development department found 18 men and two women at this location.

"One woman with a seven-month-old baby was identified at Potsdam, but she said she does not reside there."

She says the people found at the location refused to provide information or accept any social services offered by the social development department.

For the homeless centre, Little says the City has identified two facilities. One is located in Atlantis and the other in Strandfontein in Mitchell's Plain.

"A public participation process would need to take place in respect of both facilities. Should we find a suitable facility in Table View or Milnerton, we will consider it. Table View and Milnerton are considered to be hotspot areas, but in comparison with the city centre, the number of street people is minimal."

▶ What is your opinion on this article? Let us know at [briewe@tygerburger.co.za](mailto:briewe@tygerburger.co.za).

## Besteding aan brug onverantwoordelik

Dit is uiters onverantwoordelik om R30 miljoen te wil spandeer aan 'n brug wat toeka se tyd al herstel moes gewees het. Dit is geldmors in die hoogste graad ("Bridge project hanging, 30/11).

Dit is nou op 'n punt wat dit net 'n replika sal wees wat teen R30 miljoen gebou sal word – geen nasionale gedenkwaardigheid nie. Daar is 20% van die hout oor wat nog bruikbaar is.

My voorstel is om die hout te hersirkuleer om aan albei kante van die meer 'n konstruksie op te rig met die patroon wat onder die brug gebruik is. Bou dit oor die paadjie en dit sal 'n mens dieselfde gevoel gee wanneer 'n mens daarlangs ry oor hoe dit gelyk het. Verwyder die res. Moet dit nie in die meer stort nie.

Indien daar nog hout oor is ná die konstruksie, maak bankies aan albei kante sodat mense daar kan sit en die uitsig kan geniet.

**LOUISE MCDULING**  
Parklands

## Water wasters warned

The City may implement Level 3b restrictions from Wednesday February 1 and warns it will take action against those whose water usage is "consistently above target".

"We are committed to bringing this group to book. They are scuppering all of our efforts to bring down water usage," said the Mayco member for informal settlements, utilities and energy, Xanthea Limberg.

"Within the next week, we plan to conduct increased door-to-door visits, issue more fines where applicable, and focus strongly on education and awareness.

Ms Limberg said formal residential consumers are the biggest users of potable water, "by far", using about 70 percent of total water supplied.

New restrictions, if adopted by council, will include the following:

- Watering of flower beds, lawns, vegetables and other plants, sports fields, parks and other open spaces, with drinking water, will only be allowed on Tuesdays and Saturdays before 9am or after 6pm for a maximum of one hour a day per property and only if using a bucket or watering can.

- No watering will be allowed within two days of rainfall that provides adequate saturation. Those making use of boreholes, treated effluent, spring water or wells are not exempt.

- No washing of vehicles or boats using municipal drinking water will be allowed. Vehicles and boats must be washed with non-potable water or washed at a commercial carwash.

- No washing of vehicles, including taxis, using municipal drinking water at transport interchanges will be allowed.

- No irrigation using potable water will be allowed at City facilities.

- There will be no increase of the indigent water allocation of free 350 litres a day, unless through prior application and permission for specific events such as burial ceremonies.

- All exemptions granted under level 3 are being reviewed with the possibility of being revoked.

Current water users with exemptions under Level 3 must adhere to Level 3b irrigation days and times.

The City also advises that the restrictions are also applicable to borehole and well-point users, who are advised to also:

- Avoid wastage and evaporation.

- Register all boreholes or well-points with the City and signage must be displayed and be clearly visible.

Visit [www.capetown.gov.za/thinkwater](http://www.capetown.gov.za/thinkwater) for more information or email [restrictions@capetown.gov.za](mailto:restrictions@capetown.gov.za) to report contraventions.

## Besteding aan brug onverantwoordelik

Dit is uiters onverantwoordelik om R30 miljoen te wil spandeer aan 'n brug wat toeka se tyd al herstel moes gewees het. Dit is geldmors in die hoogste graad ("Bridge project hanging, 30/11).

Dit is nou op 'n punt wat dit net 'n replika sal wees wat teen R30 miljoen gebou sal word – geen nasionale gedenkwaardigheid nie. Daar is 20% van die hout oor wat nog bruikbaar is.

My voorstel is om die hout te hersirkuleer om aan albei kante van die meer 'n konstruksie op te rig met die patroon wat onder die brug gebruik is. Bou dit oor die paadjie en dit sal 'n mens dieselfde gevoel gee wanneer 'n mens daarlangs ry oor hoe dit gelyk het. Verwyder die res. Moet dit nie in die meer stort nie.

Indien daar nog hout oor is ná die konstruksie, maak bankies aan albei kante sodat mense daar kan sit en die uitsig kan geniet.

**LOUISE MCDULING**  
Parklands



■ Cape dwarf chameleon (*Bradypodion pumilum*).

## Garden dwarfs

Stephen Davis and Girish Luchoooman, Tableview

The waterwise restio, (*elegia tectorum*) provides the perfect host for the Cape dwarf chameleon, one of the few which gives birth to live young.

The reed stem is just the right size for their little digits to hang on to, especially when the gruelling south-easter takes them on a dizzying ride.

It is also the ideal place to lie in wait for the vlei gnats at dusk and provides cover from the prying eyes of both the neighbour's feline and the ever watchful fiscal shrike.

We have counted as many as 19 babies in one evening:

In the garden, a small bradypodion  
Can change colour  
in case she is preyed upon.

With her tongue mighty long,  
And a tail just as strong,  
She can hang upside down at her luncheon.

Her eyes move in different direction  
And no bug can avoid her detection.

For hours she just sits  
'Til her meal past  
her flits,  
Then its zap...  
and a crunch... what perfection!

# Raising awareness about 'Earth's kidneys'

KAREN WATKINS

**W**etlands for disaster risk reduction is the theme for this year's World Wetlands Day, which is celebrated every year on February 2.

Senior environmentalist Philippa Huntly of the Kirstenbosch-based Wildlife and Environment Society of South Africa (WESSA), says natural wetland systems are the 'Earth's kidneys'.

Wetlands filter pollutants from water that flows through them on the way to lakes, streams, aquifers and oceans.

Wetlands also slow down flooding and ensure steady water flow.

On a walk through Clovelly Wetland on Saturday, author Tim Lundy says before writing his book, *Family Walks in Cape Town*, he never realised there were so many wetlands in Cape Town.

The book was launched last year at the 16-hectare wetland and bird sanctuary of Intaka Island at Century City.

On Saturday, Tim was leading a walk for winners of a Struik Nature Club competition.

Walking along Silvermine river into Clovelly wetland, he told the group that the low water level is a sign of the times as it is usually flowing.

Tim, who lives in Kenilworth, grew up in Hout Bay and inherited his love of nature and hiking from his dad, Mike Lundy, author of five hiking books.

Clovelly Wetland is managed by the City of Cape Town and River Rovers, volunteers from the Friends of Silvermine Nature Area.

The friends groups is a Wessa initiative started in the Western Cape in 1985.

Its objective is to involve the public in safeguarding natural resources and working with the owners or managing authorities towards this end. Information on one of the boards illustrates this year's wetland theme of flood control measures.

The upgrading of the lower Silvermine River began in 1999 when a series of flood detention ponds were created to protect the low lying parts of Fish Hoek from flooding. Dry calcareous dune systems, which are rapidly disappearing due to housing schemes and invasive exotic plants, have been established along the river. They now provide a habitat for tadpoles, toads and birds as well as residents and visitors.

Previous attempts at taming the river include dykes constructed by the railway authorities in 1990 and 1925. Remnants of these can be seen abutting the wetlands.

Tim says parts of the Kakapo wrecked on Noordhoek Beach were used to channel the river as it flowed into the sea. "I'm not sure exactly what parts of the ship were used but they were unsuccessful at the time in trying to control flow and flooding," he says.

Other wetlands include Glenca-



■ Tim Lundy leads a group on a search for tadpoles, toads and damselflies in Clovelly wetland.

irn, Soetslei in Tokai Park, Bergvliet Farm, the Liesbeek and Zeekoewel.

At Rondevlei and Princessvlei, hippo herds were numerous in the 1960s and these have been re-introduced to Rondevlei, although some have escaped over the years.

Ms Huntly says other important aspects of wetlands is that of storing fresh water, improving water quality, controlling erosion, providing habitat for plants and animals and making floods less severe.

Wetlands also have many direct

uses for humans, including harvesting opportunities, recreational space and as a tourism attraction, and they provide a habitat for medicinal plants.

Major threats to wetlands include:

- Being drained for agriculture or the development of buildings or infrastructure, such as roads;
- Invasive alien plants and animals such as water hyacinth, parrot feather and water lettuce; and
- Mining if it disturbs the wetlands to reach deeper lying coal or

minerals.

Mayoral committee member for transport and urban development, Brett Heron, says the City's environmental management department has invited schools to attend a wetlands programme at the various nature reserves during February and March.

These include nature reserves of Wolfgat, Table Bay, False Bay, Zandvlei, Durbanville and Kenilworth Racecourse Conservation Area.

Programmes will vary and will be activity-based but most will include what World Wetlands Day is and the importance of wetlands and water.

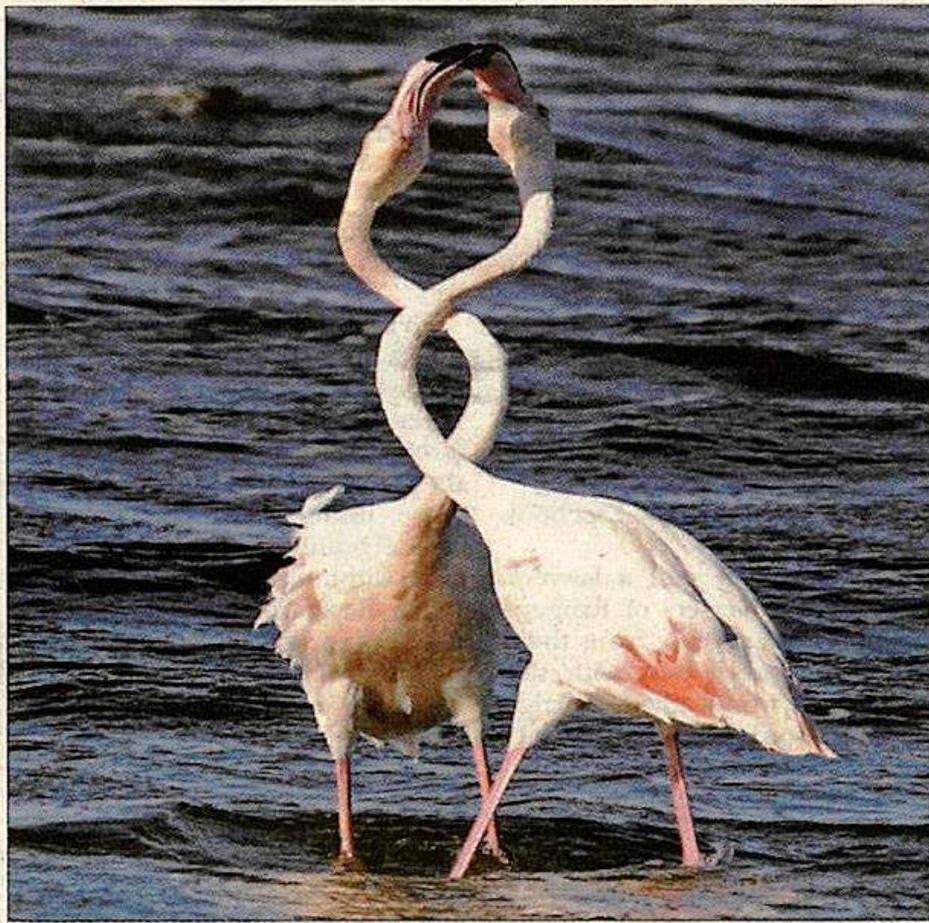
"Aquifers are recharged by deep draining of surface water which occurs mainly through rainfall. As most wetlands have impermeable bases, some recharge occurs from the edges of wetlands. Recharge is impeded by catchment hardening (roads, paving, roofs etc.) and removal of vegetation. These activities increase surface runoff and decrease infiltration and the recharging of our aquifers," said Mr Herron.

● For more information about WESSA contact Philippa Huntly at philippa@wessa.co.za or FOSNA at 021 782 6144.

● World Wetlands Day marks the date of the adoption of the Convention on Wetlands on 2 February 1971, in the Iranian city of Ramsar on the shores of the Caspian Sea.



■ Parklands resident Frieda Prinsloo photographed these flamingos from the Sunset Hide at the Rietvlei Nature Reserve on Sunday January 22.



## Flame

■ Frieda Prinsloo of Parklands couldn't have taken a more appropriate Valentine's Day picture at Rietvlei than this one of a flamingo couple entwined in love.



■ A little boy and his mother on the bridge in 1949.

## Milnerton bridge

Steph Loy, Milnerton

It was a happy coincidence as I saw Tabletalk's front-page cover ("Big bucks needed for historic bridge," Tabletalk November 30, 2017).

Recently, while going through a friend's old

photos, we discovered an old Cape Argus article from June 1949. It shows how the engineers of the time built it (the wooden bridge) so well – it was still standing even though it was condemned back then.

Sixty-seven years on, and this jarrah wood bridge is still a topic of conversation, making it a front-page story for Tabletalk.

I think this is one

landmark we'll miss, but considering the 'cost of restoration, it may be worth putting up a large plaque with pictures showing what it looked like then and now; then use the money to better serve the community for current needs.

This bridge, along with the ship's hull lying at Lagoon Beach, can have a place in the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA) museum, so we can remember where we came from or the great minds who came before us; but move forward to rekindle new beginnings.

Some things just need to rest in peace, while we marry ideas of improvement.

Terry Crawford-Browne,  
Royal Ascot

Cape Town is blighted by the FIFA 'white elephant' because the city council buckled to pressure from the ANC and construction companies.

Although obviously not on the same scale as the stadium debacle, the proposal to spend R30 million to replace (not restore) the bridge to

Woodbridge Island with a replica is testimony to the council's appalling misdirection of priorities ("Big bucks needed for historic bridge," Tabletalk November 30, 2017).

Militarists have dredged up a purported link to the 1899 – 1902 Anglo-Boer War in an attempt to justify the expenditure.

It is past time the council refocused its priorities. Tens of thousands of Milnerton-area residents are living in appalling circumstances in Dunoon.

There is also the vast redundant military base at Wingfield that is perfectly located to provide for social housing for workers in the factories of Montague Gardens.

Our much-lauded constitution includes the provision in section 25 (2) that land can be expropriated in the public interest.

The DA and ANC have both made a political football of Cape Town's housing crisis, each blaming the other. There is no shortage of land, and there is no shortage of money,

but there is a massive shortage of political will.

Reallocation of R30m for potential legal costs to expropriate Wingfield from the dysfunctional Department of Public Works would substantiate the city council's otherwise hollow claim that it "cares for all."

Hermann Heymann,  
Sunningdale

In the Tabletalk of November 30 2016 it has been reported that the City plans to rebuild the wooden bridge at the entrance to Woodbridge Island at a cost of R30m.

In a presentation to the public on November 24, it was argued that rebuilding the bridge was the only option.

Three other options were mentioned and dismissed for various reasons.

Well, there is a further option, and that is to simply dismantle the bridge. If the bridge's provincial heritage-site status precludes it being dismantled, then the provincial heritage-site status should be

reconsidered.

The South African Heritage Resources Act makes provision for a notice that declared a site to have provincial heritage-site status to be withdrawn.

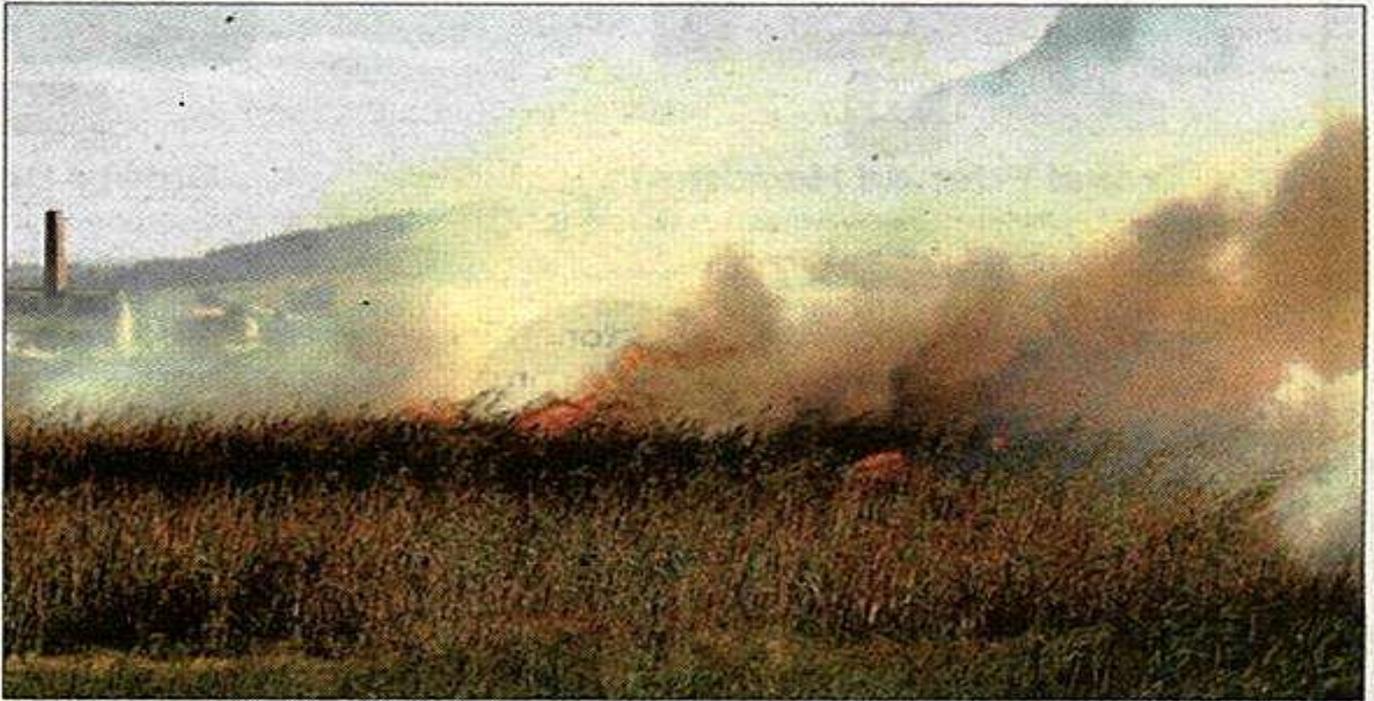
The current status of the bridge is simply a label that has been attached and which can be removed through a prescribed legal process. It does not mean that the City is compelled to spend R30m on rebuilding a bridge that will not serve any useful function.

If the bridge is rebuilt, it will, obviously, not carry any vehicular traffic. The sidewalks of the Woodbridge Drive Bridge are more than adequate for the pedestrians using it now and in the future.

The wooden bridge has little or no aesthetic significance, and if it is rebuilt with largely new timber, it will have no historical significance.

There is no justification for spending R30m on rebuilding this bridge.

## Fighting flames



PICTURES: COLIN BROWN

■ As the south-easter howled, flames raged in the Zoarvlei wetlands next to Boundary Road on Saturday February 25.



■ A firefighter looks on, engulfed by smoke during an operation to put out a fire on the corner of Boundary Road and Marine Drive.

# Dogs to be kept on a leash at nature reserve

STAFF REPORTER

The City of Cape Town has urged residents who make use of the Table Bay Nature Reserve to keep their dogs on a leash after receiving increasing reports from bird watchers, visitors at Rietvlei wetlands and the Milnerton coastal dunes of dogs running off-leash in these protected areas.

The dogs have been known to chase and sometimes kill rare and endangered birds and antelope such as steenbok and grysbok and they're found running loose despite the presence of signage which prohibits owners from letting their dogs off the leash.

"Portions of the Table Bay Nature Reserve are designated for dog walking, there are no designated free-running dog parks in the nature reserve. We would like to stress that, besides for these designated dog walking areas, no dogs are allowed in the Rietvlei wetlands and recreational water area.

"The negative effects of free-running dogs in the nature reserve, apart from the killing of birds and animals, also includes the danger and disturbance to people.

"If a dog bites a visitor of the nature reserve, potential criminal

charges and civil claims for damages could cause more trouble for dog owners," said the City's mayoral committee member for energy, environmental and spatial planning, Johan van der Merwe.

Mr Van der Merwe explained that in terms of the City's Animal By-law of 2010, dogs may not enter into public spaces where they are prohibited by notice.

In designated dog-walking areas, dogs must remain under control and on a leash at all times.

The City's Law Enforcement officers, have issued numerous fines, ranging from R500 to R2 000, to dog owners who do not adhere to the by-laws in the nature reserve.

Mr Van der Merwe said that Rietvlei is a controlled access area where visitor controllers monitor that no dogs enter into Rietvlei.

However, dogs still manage to find their way into Rietvlei from adjacent residential areas such as Table View and Milnerton Ridge.

As a protected area under the Protected Areas Act, all domestic animals found in this area are deemed to be stray and may be removed.

"It is also important to note that natural predators in the nature reserve, such as caracal, Cape fox and Cape clawless otter, could attack

and kill pets or spread diseases such as rabies to domestic animals.

"We urge visitors to the nature reserves to handle their pets and domestic animals responsibly while in public open areas and to report any unaccompanied domestic animals in the Table Bay Nature Reserve to 021 444 0315," says Mr Van der Merwe.

Contraventions of the Animal By-Law of 2010 can also be reported to Big Bay Law Enforcement on 021 554 8003.



■ Dogs wandering off their leashes in the Rietvlei Nature Reserve has caused concern among bird watchers and visitors at the Nature Reserve.

## Editorial

### A bridge to the future

It is jaw-dropping that the so-called restoration of the wooden bridge in Milnerton can entertain serious consideration, never mind actual approval.

Yes, it's an interesting piece of history. Yes, it's a Milnerton landmark.

But a proposal to spend R30 million on what effectively amounts to rebuilding the bridge out of mostly new timber must be met with a resounding "No!" from anyone who is even remotely tuned in to the poverty and despair that tear ever more ferociously at the fabric of our nascent democracy.

Spending that kind of money on a rotting bridge that serves no purpose is an insult of Marie Antoin-

ette-proportion to those in this city who are battling eviction, fighting to put food on the table or having to use a bucket as a toilet.

Those advocating this project should go and experience such conditions for a week before signing off on it.

No-one expects the City to wave a magic wand and solve all its socio-economic ills overnight, but entertaining an act of folly like this suggests it isn't even interested in trying.

Instead of frittering away R30 million on a bridge to nowhere that will be rotten again in another hundred years, the City should build a bridge to the future, one braced with bur-saries instead of wooden beams.



■ Fariel Swartz, from Milnerton took this picture of Milnerton from Table Mountain on his birthday, Tuesday February 28. "It was my birthday so I took advantage of the birthday deal and went up with the cable car. I had a fantastic time. The weather was just amazing, and then I took this picture of Milnerton with my little camera."



■ Heritage Western Cape has supported the City's R30 million upgrade plan for the Milnerton wooden bridge.

# Bridge passes another hurdle

Restoration plan gets heritage nod

SUMMER JACOBS

Heritage Western Cape (HWC) has approved the City's plan to restore Woodbridge Island's historic bridge, after one of its own committee members presented a report in favour of a project expected to cost about R30 million.

On Wednesday February 22, an application for a permit to restore the bridge was tabled at an HWC meeting.

HWC committee member Mike Scurr said the bridge needed to

"adapt and find a contemporary meaning".

Mr Scurr, an architect from Rennie Scurr Adendorff Architects, a firm specialising in the conservation and restoration of historic buildings and precincts, is working in partnership with Bergstan South Africa Consulting and Development Engineers, which is representing the City, as the applicant.

The bridge was built in 1901 by

Continued on page 3

# Restoration project could unlock area's potential

From page 1

the Fortress Company of Royal Engineers to provide military access to the island and up the coast.

It was built from Australian jarra wood, which is known for its strength, weight and durability. The bridge was the only access to Woodbridge Island and was in frequent use until the new and more modern bridge was built to the south of it in 1984.

Declared a national monument in 1987, pedestrians continued to use the bridge until its deterioration led to its closure in 2007.

Mr Scurr gave a presentation at the HWC meeting that was similar to the one he gave at a Milnerton Central Community meeting last year ("Big bucks needed for historic bridge," *Tabletalk*, November 30, 2016).

He said that from a heritage standpoint the "significance and rarity value of the bridge indicate that the bridge should be conserved and repaired".

However, to do that, the City will have to cough up about R30 million, according to the report presented at the Milnerton Central Community meeting.

As only between 15 to 20 percent of the bridge's timber is salvageable, Mr Scurr's report notes it would have to be largely rebuilt using new timber other than jarra, which would be too hard to obtain in the lengths and sizes needed for restoration.

A light-weight transparent galvanised steel mesh fencing would added along the inner part of the railings for safety.

As Mr Scurr is also a member of the HWC committee, he was asked to leave the meeting while the committee discussed the application.

The committee then supported Mr Scurr's report unanimously, saying it "adequately addressed the heritage significance" of the wooden bridge. They also agreed it should become the centre piece of a "vibrant new pedestrian environment".

Committee member Peter Buttgens said the presentation articulated

the "authenticity of the historic landmark". Because the bridge had been part of the founding of Milnerton it was important to preserve it, he said.

"In a sense, retaining something of that bridge becomes important and ensuring that it doesn't become a relic," said Mr Buttgens.

Brett Herron, mayoral committee member for transport and urban development, said the City was waiting on province's Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning to confirm the environmental process needed for the restoration, after which a design would be finalised and a tender awarded, possibly by October.

"If all goes as planned. The estimated construction period is 12 months," said Mr Herron.

*Tabletalk's* previous article about the bridge's upgrades received a lot of backlash from people who felt it was a waste of time and money. In a letter to *Tabletalk*, Edgemoor resident Pieter Coetzee questioned the historical value of the bridge.

"The two-year project will no doubt stretch to three, and the cost will ultimately escalate to R45 million. For whose benefit? Only the

architects and those making money out of it in my opinion," said Mr Coetzee.

In another letter, Table View resident Claudine Rahl said continuing with upgrade plans would be "proof of lack of judgement".

"The new bridge won't provide any practical function when there is a road with sidewalks already. Neither will it draw tourists; Cape Town already draws tourists automatically," said Ms Rahl.

Jakie Thom from Milnerton Ridge also sent a letter saying someone needed to explain why the City has to pay for restoring the bridge when it is, or should be, funded by Heritage Western Cape.

When Ms Thom heard that the HWC had approved the upgrade plans she said: "We don't want HWC's consent -- we want their money. They claim that it is Cape Town's possession and responsibility.

Let us graciously donate it to them".

Bouwe van der Eems vice chairman of the Milnerton Central Residents' Association said he agrees with critics that frown on spending large amount on heritage sites when there is so much poverty around us but he thinks the restoration of the wooden bridge can be the start of something that can do much more than the traditional political attempts to alleviate poverty.

"There is controversy around the restoration of the wooden bridge. Some residents are of the opinion that the funds allocated for this bridge can be used for better purposes, such as shelters. On the other hand the city justifies its decision on the grounds that heritage legislation does not allow the bridge to be demolished and therefore it must be restored to its original state.

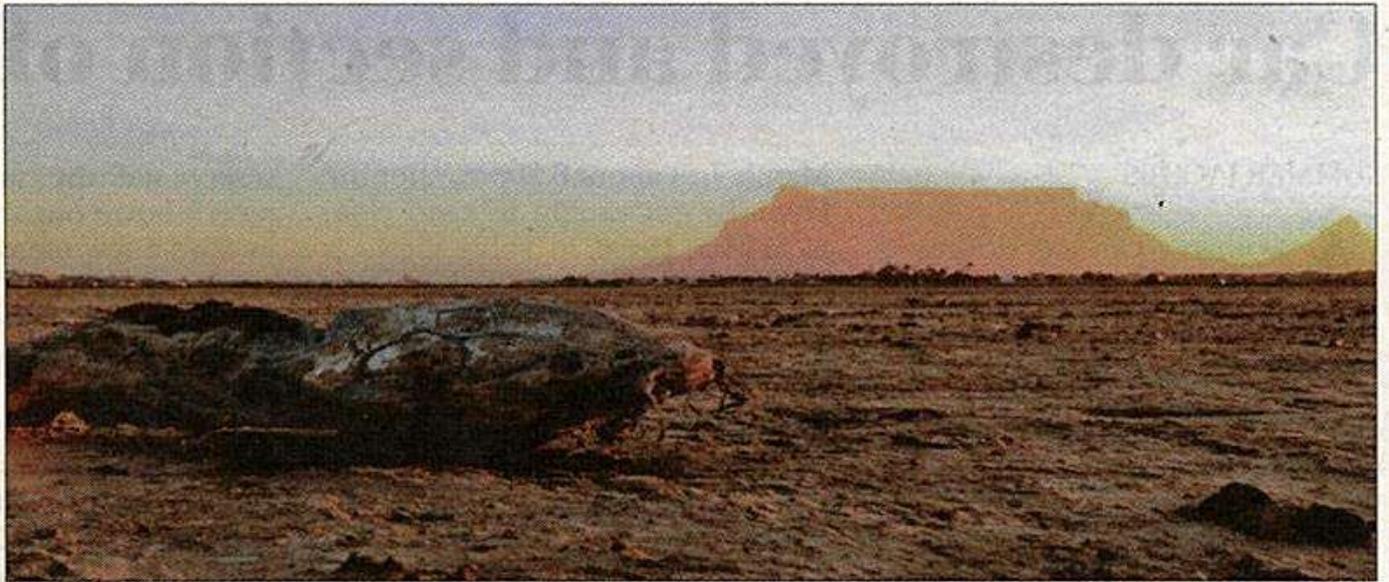
"Unfortunately, both parties

tend to view the bridge merely as a structure to be utilized by local pedestrians to cross a river.

"When this is the case, it is indeed valid to ask whether the cost of the bridge can justify the utility of the bridge.

"If this bridge is viewed in a broader context, it has got much more utility than a mere pedestrian passageway. Milnerton has a number of public spaces with potential that is not unlocked, due to a lack of development. The Woodbridge area is a prime example of this.

"It can be argued, that the Woodbridge area has potential to become a magnificent public space similar to Mouille Point. If this potential is unlocked, the area can become a popular destination for tourists, holiday-makers and residents, creating business opportunities and jobs that will exceed the costs of restoring the wooden bridge."



■ Table View resident Jared Boyle spotted this dead freshwater barbel in the Rietvlei, near Sandpiper Crescent, in Flamingo Vlei. "The cause of death is presumed to be from becoming stranded as the water dried up in that area of the vlei. The fish was completely dried up which indicates that it had been dead and in the sun for many days prior to me finding it," said Mr Boyle.

## 24-Hour Sailing Challenge in the Cape this weekend

This weekend sailing enthusiasts will be able to take part in the annual MAC 24-Hour Sailing Challenge once again hosted in Cape Town.

The event is scheduled from Saturday 18 to Sunday 19 March and takes place at the Milnerton Aquatic Club.

Organisers say this year's event, the only 24-hour dinghy sailing event, is the 20th annual sailing challenge and it is drawing a lot of interest and curiosity, especially having The Little Optimist, Greg Bertish, sail the challenge this year to raise funds and awareness about the Red Cross Memorial Children's Hospital and the National Sea Rescue Institute (NSRI).

"Also having Gerry Aab, hailed as a hero sailor of the 2000 24-Hour Challenge who set the South African record of 10 kilometres short of the world record, sail the challenge this year has been the talk of the challenge, in and round the sailing world," Pat Downing, organiser, says.

He says the challenge does not separate winners from losers, but rather brings sailors together from all walks of life. The tenacity of each sailor to better the world record and break the SA record is what keeps the teams sailing for 24 hours, Downing adds.

▶ Entry forms for the competition can be sent to [mac@milnertonaquaticclub.co.za](mailto:mac@milnertonaquaticclub.co.za)

# Bridge a hide-out for criminals

RICHARD ROBERTS

@richardjohn\_rj

The railway bridge on Marine Drive, Milnerton, is not just a thoroughfare for large goods trains or the ever-popular steam train travelling to the Spier Wine Estate in Stellenbosch, but also the perfect hide-out spot for criminal elements.

One resident *TygerBurger* spoke to last week during a visit to the area told the newspaper that vagrants congregate underneath the bridge on a daily basis. The open field in front of the bridge was once clear, with proper walking paths for pet owners and their four-legged friends. This picture has, however, changed over recent years, the resident says.

Just recently the body of an unknown person, who had apparently lived as a vagrant, was found underneath the bridge.

Captain Adriana Chandler, police spokesperson, confirmed that shortly before 01:00 on the morning of 12 February, Milnerton police responded to a complaint about a man's body lying next to the railway line. "On their arrival they discovered the unknown man who appeared to be deceased," she explains.

Asked about the safety issues in the vicinity of the bridge, Lianne Lippert, chairperson of the Milnerton Community Policing Forum (CPF), told the paper that the entire stretch of the railway line – from Lagoon Beach all the way through to Century City – has been a nightmare to deal with during the past three years she has been involved with the neighbourhood watch and CPF.

"We have tried on numerous occasions to engage with Prasa who are full of promises, but have yet to fulfil even one of these. Drug dealers, murderers and thieves live in the tunnels along there and no one seems to care. We have reported these issues at numerous meetings at all levels, so residents are well aware of the dangers," Lippert



A railway bridge on Marine Drive, Milnerton, has become an area of concern following the spate of criminal activities happening in the area, spilling over to the nearby suburbs. The body of an unknown person was recently discovered underneath the bridge. PHOTO: RICHARD ROBERTS

says.

This bridge is just one of many places where homeless people seek shelter, the City of Cape Town says. Speaking on behalf of the local government, Mayco member for Area North, Suzette Little, told *TygerBurger* last week that Cape Town unfortunately has a number of hotspot areas where street people gather. "Bridges and other areas that offer a semblance of shelter are particularly popular."

She emphasised that street people are entitled to freedom of movement as outlined in the Bill of Rights, and it is not illegal to be homeless.

"However, like everyone else, street people are expected to abide by the laws of the country and the City bylaws, particularly relating to streets, public places and prevention of noise nuisances.

"The Law Enforcement Department conducts regular patrols in identified hotspot areas. Staff will attend to any illegally erected structures, fires in public places, anti-social behaviour, et cetera.

"The City's Social Development Department engages street people with various offers of assistance, but the City cannot force anyone to accept help; however, action will be taken against anyone who transgresses bylaws or other legislation."

Due to shortcomings in national legislation, law enforcement as it relates to street people is ineffective in that law enforcement cannot issue fines or arrest those without a physical address to appear in court in relation to charges, she adds.

"While the City is taking steps to address these shortcomings, we cannot forge ahead until the national government addresses these legal weaknesses," Little says.

The police says the identity of the victim found in February is still unknown and that no arrest has yet been made. The investigation is ongoing and the community is asked to call Milnerton police on 021 521 3017 or Crime Stop on 08600 10111 with information that could assist the investigation. Contact the City's toll-free number on 0800 872 201 for info on how to assist street people.

# Rietvlei closure puts a stop to sailing challenge

STAFF REPORTER

**T**oxic algae in Rietvlei sank a popular endurance sailing challenge.

The City of Cape Town closed the vlei to recreational activities after the blue-green algal bloom was spotted on Thursday March 16.

As a result, the Milnerton Aquatic Club's 24-hour endurance sailing challenge, scheduled to take place at the weekend was cancelled.

Julia Wood, from the City's environmental resource management department, said water samples last week revealed toxins associated with blue-green algae exceeded the World Health Organisation's guidelines.

The algal blooms are typically seen as green, blue-green, white or brown foam, scum or mats floating on the surface of the water.

Exposure to these algae can cause eye irritation, skin rashes, mouth ulcers, vomiting, diarrhoea, and cold or flu-like symptoms. Drinking or swallowing large amounts of water can be extremely dangerous.

The City has advised the public to stay out of the water at Rietvlei until it has been declared safe.

Due to the ongoing drought and low water levels there are extensive areas of exposed dry shoreline around Rietvlei and it



■ Frieda Prinsloo photographed this water mongoose family at the Sunset Hide at Rietvlei in the Table View nature reserve last week. "The Afrikaans name for them is *Kommetjiegatmuishonde*," said Ms Prinsloo.

is suspected that the 5mm rainfall recorded last Wednesday, March 15, washed accumulated minerals and organic material from decomposing and dead plants along the shoreline into the water.

Together with high ambient temperatures, it could have provided the nutrients for the rapid growth of algae in the water.

The City is monitoring the water quality and will inform the public once it is safe for recreational use, including fishing.

The closure does not prevent anybody from accessing the Table Bay Nature Reserve's other visitor facilities such as the picnic areas, braai facilities and the bird watching trail.