



SEDIBA NEWSLETTER

Friends of the Pilansberg , PO Box 70723, Bryanston, 2021
www.fops.org.za, Phone: 079 5174475, Fax No: 086 644 2477

Welcome & General

Dear FOPS members

Having just spent the last weekend in Pilanesberg, I am delighted to report that it is still green and lush and may well remain so for at least another month, with all the rain that has fallen since the end of last week. Unfortunately this will mean that fighting alien plant species will remain a priority for the foreseeable future, until the lack of rain makes its presence felt. In this issue there is a brief article on the biological agents which, for a while now, have been used to eradicate Queen of the Night cacti in Borakalalo. The article makes for interesting reading and it would appear that we may be winning the war against these unwanted species by utilizing the methods described. To those determined folk in the Work Parties – keep up the good work in disposing of these plants – you are doing a fantastic job!

I wish the same could be said of the war on Rhino Poaching, I have included an update on the situation on the North West Parks as well as some rather graphic visuals. From a rather controversial point of view, there is a link to the Endangered Wildlife Trust's website where they answer FAQ's about rhino dehorning as a conservation tool.

On behalf of FoPs, I would like to say an enormous Thank You for donations made as follows :-

1. TMM Pretoria (Mr Mario Ferreira & Mr Tom Dubek) for their donation of R5,000.
2. Bosch Siemens Household Appliances, Midrand for their donation of a washing machine for which the highest bid received was R3,500.
3. Bosch Midrand for their donation of R1,599.
4. Mr Klaus Döring of Bryanston for his donation of R1,000.
5. Thank you to Game Trackers for donation of R3500.00

Inside This Issue

Welcome & General	1
Membership Renewal	1
Our Committee	2
New Members	2
FOPS Code of Conduct	3
Workparties	4-10
Borakalalo Cactus project	11
North West Parks Rhino Update	12-13

Congratulations goes to the person with the successful bid for the Bosch washing machine, a Model Maxx6 VarioPerfect which normally retails at R5,299 and was got for a steal at R3,500. Keep a look out for future updates on appliances and equipment donated to FoPs, as these items will be offered to members at discounted costs to raise funds.

Well that's it from me, I am off to explore the Eastern Highlands of Zimbabwe for a couple of weeks.

I wish you all an enjoyable Easter and have a safe journey wherever you may be going.

Take care and enjoy this issue of Sediba

Regards,

Jillian Burgess-Buchan

For membership to FOP's please apply online under the Member Zone tab; submit your application, then send proof of payment to secretary@fops.org.za or fax 086 644 2477.

If you need to contact Fiona Chapman (FOP's secretary) secretary@fops.org.za or SMS 079 517 4475, with your name and telephone number and she will return your call at her earliest convenience. Or fax: 086 644 2477. Please do not contact other Committee members instead, as this causes much confusion and doubling up of work.

North West Parks Rhino Update as at end February 2011

(R. Hustler)

During December two Vietnamese were arrested in Beaufort West and found to be in possession of 15 horns, 4 of which were identified as being the horns that were poached from Mafikeng Game Reserve in August 2010.

Various arrests were made during January 2011 as follows :-

7 suspects were arrested and linked to the four poached rhinos on Shingalana Game Farm in the Haartebeeste area, various 'tools of the trade' were recovered;

1 suspect was arrested in the Brits area and linked to the poaching of two rhino in Borakalalo;

5 suspects were arrested in Lichtenberg for the possession of three rhino horns;

2 suspects were arrested after entering Mafikeng Game Reserve in possession of an unlicensed firearm. A rifle and ammunition were recovered from one suspect and various other items were also recovered in addition to a vehicle being confiscated.

1 suspect was arrested by a member of the NWP&TB Honorary Officers Counter Poaching Unit, the suspect was found in possession of one black rhino horn.

In addition to the arrests which were made, further incidents which took place in North West Parks are as follows :-

During January 2011 the fence near Ruighoek Gate, Pilanesberg Game Reserve was found to have been breached, a follow up by the APU and helicopter took place but nothing untoward was found.

On the same day in Mafikeng Game Reserve the fence along the Lichtenberg road was also found to have been breached. Follow up by staff and SAPS was carried out and nothing untoward was found.

Later that month in the Lekutung Area, Pilanesberg Game Reserve the fence was found to have been breached, follow up was conducted by APU and SAPS Units from Rustenberg, with nothing being found.

A few days later a helicopter was dispatched from Mafikeng to Pilanesberg to attend to an injured black rhino, this having been done, a further request was made to fly a technician to the repeater station on Pilanesberg Mountain as it was thought that the repeater had been struck by lightning. However on investigation it was found that the solar panels had been stolen. It would appear that this was directly linked to the fence cutting on the earlier in the month. Once again SAPS attended.

APU members stationed at Jonathon base camp Borakalalo after having been deployed on Patrol, on returning discovered that the solar panel from the base camp had been removed. The matter reported to SAPS who conducted a follow up.

During February further irregular activities occurred in the form of fence cutting at Pilanesberg suspected as being muti collection, a rhino was poached in Botsalano and in Mafikeng Game Reserve the carcass of rhino 34 was located.

In the light of the escalating rhino poaching, The North West Parks and Tourism Board have definitely stepped up operations and taken the following steps :-

Representation at National Rhino Management Level

Networking with other related structures

Reserve Alertness

Staff Development

Formation of a full time Anti-Poaching Unit

Ad Hoc security augmentation (Support from non rhino Parks)

Purchase of Specialist Equipment

Tagging, micro chipping and ear notching of rhino populations

DNA sampling

According to a recent feature on Carte Blanche, the fight against poaching has escalated although it would appear that the poachers are relocating to areas which they believe to be easier targets, an example of which is the Eastern Cape.

About 4,800 black, or hook-lipped, rhinos survive across Africa, along with about 20,000 white, or square-lipped, rhinos.

Left unthreatened, female rhinos calve every two years, their infant mortality rate is good, and they do not require large amounts of water in arid areas.

FAQ – Facts about Rhino Dehorning (Courtesy EWT)

<https://www.ewt.org.za/portals/0/EWT%20Fact%20Sheets/Q&A%20Rhino%20dehorning.pdf>

