



Our Zandvlei

Quarterly Newsletter of the Zandvlei Trust

Autumn 2015

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A NEW SPECIES FOR THE ZANDVLEI NATURE RESERVE

Report based on an announcement by Dalton Gibbs in the Environment magazine

Photo by Tony Rebelo; Source: ispotnature.org

If you consider that Zandvlei has been a protected area for almost 30 years and for the first time a Brant's Climbing Mouse (*Dendromus mesomelas*) has been recorded in the Reserve.

This species is meant to be relatively common, but they are not often recorded as they seldom come out of the trees and on to the ground where they could be caught in small mammal traps. They are known to use abandoned bird nests but very little is known about their biology. This particular specimen was found in an old weaver's nest at the Zandvlei Nature Reserve.

The Brant's climbing mouse is one of several species of climbing mouse found in southern Africa. As their name suggests, they live in trees, shrubs and restios and are seldomly seen.

There are historical records for the species at Rondevlei, but they have not been found for many years.

While there are no major threats to this species, grassland fires may represent a potential threat to a number of populations.

This mouse is widely distributed. Occurring in Botswana, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Tanzania, and Zambia. Its natural habitats are subtropical or tropical moist montane forests, dry savanna, Mediterranean-type shrubby vegetation, and subtropical or tropical high-altitude grassland.

Brant's climbing mouse is a small mouse that is active through the day as well as the night. It climbs around in vegetated areas, where it can construct ball-shaped nests using shredded grass. Its natural predators include snakes, barn owls and grass owls.

Their diet includes seed and insects and they have brown to blackish-brown upperparts with a mid-dorsal stripe running from the neck to the root of the tail. Its paler flanks merge into a white belly. Average body length is 76mm with a tail length of 100mm and total weight is about 12g.



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www.zandvleitrust.org.za

**Caring for
Zandvlei
since 1988**

The Zandvlei Trust aims to conserve the indigenous fauna and flora of the Zandvlei and to enhance the natural resources for the benefit of all.

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A Declared Local Nature Reserve Within
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The views and opinions expressed in some of the articles in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect those of the Zandvlei Trust.

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Katerina Sonntagova | sonntagova.com

CURRENT REPORT



Areas of concern are:

1. The explosive growth of water lily (Nymphaea) in the Keyser’s River;
2. The similarly explosive growth of Kariba weed (Salvinia molesta) in the channel leading down south to the Westlake Pond;
3. Reed encroachment in both rivers and across the outflow area at the railway bridge;
4. The solid weed growth in the Westlake River; and
5. The encroachment of Commelina riding on the weed growth and, in the Westlake River, reaching from bank to bank.

I think that we are going to need to look at mechanical clearing of the Westlake.

The positive: Clear signs of bio-control activity on Parrot’s Feather (Myriophyllum aquaticum) and Water Lettuce (Pistia stratiotes).

During a recent visit by Prof. Martin Hill from Rhodes University he suggested that the bio-control agents will have cleared the target species within five years. Which leaves the problem of the water lilies and what moves in to replace the other plants because of the high nutrient load.

SCHEDULE OF PROVISIONAL DATES FOR MOUTH MANAGEMENT

Compliance with conditions of the Zandvlei Estuary Mouth Maintenance Management Plan.

Note that these provisional dates have been compiled using the tide tables. However they are subject to weather conditions which may necessitate adjustments or the introduction of additional dates.

* M.S.L = mean sea level.

Date Open	Date Close	M.S.L in metres
20/11/2015	03/12/2015	0.517
23/10/2015	03/11/2015	0.477
23/09/2015	02/10/2015	0.797
-	07/09/2015	0.437
01/07/2015	-	Will remain open for winter period
15/05/2015	21/05/2015	0.757

Important changes involving the management of the Zandvlei Estuary are taking place. This report is dedicated to explaining these changes to our members and readers. - Sharon McCallum, Chairperson

Exactly three years ago a new forum was set up to advise and collaborate with the City on the management of the Zandvlei Estuary, the Zandvlei Estuary Management Forum (ZEMF). Three years later this body will cease to exist and will be replaced by the Zandvlei Protected Area Advisory Committee (ZPAAC). What is behind the change?

The new body comes into existence because 14 City nature reserves are in the process of getting significantly increased protection under a national Act - the Protected Areas Act - rather than only under Provincial legislation or a City By-law. There is a provision in the Act for Protected Area Advisory Committees (PAACs) to be established. The geographical area that was the concern of the ZEMF is virtually the same as the area of the Zandvlei Estuary Nature Reserve so in theory there would be two bodies doing virtually the same thing. That would make no sense at all so that is why ZEMF has had its last meeting and will become a key part of ZPAAC.

Since the beginning of the year, the City has conducted a widely publicised process calling for organisations with an interest in Zandvlei to apply to be represented on the new ZPAAC body. The new ZPAAC will meet for the first time in May. It will take over the task of providing advice to the City and provide a forum for constructive collaboration on Zandvlei Estuary Nature Reserve issues.

As we say goodbye to ZEMF it is appropriate to look back over the three years of its existence and summarise what has, and what has not, been achieved.

WHAT HAS BEEN ACHIEVED?

In the course of the 16 meetings of the full Forum and many more of the various Technical Working Groups and public participation, a range of guiding documents have been produced. These documents are invaluable in setting out both the work to be done and in guiding how it should be done. These documents certainly don't just sit on shelves and gather dust.

Over the three years, one of the most important changes has been the way in which the various Zandvlei user groups have worked closely with the Nature Reserve manager and the team that controls the opening and closing of the mouth. In contrast to the frequent last minute panic phone calls in advance of events on the vlei, there is now very constructive, collaborative planning in advance. One measure of the improvement was that "the yachting community expresses considerable appreciation to the



Sandra Fowkes
with Martin
Thompson at
one of the last
meetings of ZEMF

manager for the way he and his team have managed the vlei." The "yachties" described it as "absolutely amazing and remarkable".

After the Forum had focussed on issues around managing pondweed, attention was turned to the sediments building up near the mouth. A test was done to see if lowering the rubble weir during winter might remove some sediment. The results of surveys done before and after the weir-lowering indicated that there are encouraging changes. ZEMF therefore recommended that this approach be repeated next winter. Additionally, in early winter 2015 there will be some dredging of sediments at the mouth to remove a lot more of the sandbar. (There will be more details in the press about this shortly).

ZEMF has also assisted the various sections in the City to improve communication when there is a sewage spill. This has resulted in faster responses to spills and less impact on the Zandvlei and those who live around it and use it.

What ZEMF did not manage to do during the three years was to persuade the City to replace the decades-old weed harvester with a machine that is more reliable and suited to the nature of the work required. What has been purchased is a grab-truck that will assist in removing the pondweed that has too often waited for weeks before it was cleared. There are however, rumours that a new weed harvester is to go onto the City's Capex budget for the coming year!

City staff commented that there are a lot of places where advisory forums are not working. "If we look at why this one worked it is because there have been willing parties even if they have had disparate views. A lot was done that a single party would not have achieved. Everybody here has been able to look at the broader picture and work to single goal". City staff also thanked civil society members of ZEMF saying that their collaboration had taken a lot of work off reserve managements' shoulders.

The final word is that a sound foundation has been laid for the new ZPAAC Zandvlei Protected Area Advisory Committee to tackle the on-going issues and challenges of keeping Zandvlei healthy.

The Zandvlei Trust nominated Mrs Sandra Fowkes to represent the Trust on the ZPAAC with Mr Rob Woodward as her alternate.

BY SANDRA FOWKES

GAVIN LAWSON HONOURED FOR HIS DEDICATION

Gavin Lawson was honoured by the City of Cape Town for his dedication to conservation and the work that he has done for and on behalf of the Zandvlei Trust.

Gavin, a previous Chairman and one of the founder members of the Trust was honoured by the City on 14 November 2014. He received a 'Certificate of recognition' from Alderman Felicity Purchase for his dedication and service to Subcouncil 19 of the South Peninsula.

The citation on the certificate says – This certificate honours his commitment to improving the lives of others and his selfless dedication to make our City a better place –

Gavin says; 'our hacking group was started in 1978 and that makes it 37 years of hacking!'

Well done Gavin – you deserve this recognition.



Wetlands programme at the Zandvlei Nature Reserve with one of the local schools in attendance.

For this financial year (ends June) almost 6000 pupils would have attended these programmes at the Reserve. The Trust has been able to fund most of the transport for these pupils.

WHAT'S ON



JULY 2015

WALKS IN THE RESERVE

The Zandvlei Trust has started arranging quarterly walks in the Zandvlei Estuary Nature Reserve. These are proving to be popular and well attended.

The next walk is planned for the end of July and this promises to be a great one. We are busy organising four local botanists/environmentalists to lead this walk. So keep an eye on the press.



7th JUNE 2015

PENINSULA PADDLE

The next Peninsula Paddle takes place on **Sunday 7th June 2015**. This will be the sixth paddle which starts in Muizenberg and follows the City's Waterways through to Milnerton.

From the East to the West.

Go to - <http://peninsulapaddle.wordpress.com>



24th JUNE 2015

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of the Zandvlei Trust is scheduled for **Wednesday 24th June 2015 at the Imperial Yacht Club**. The focus of this AGM is going to be on the Zandvlei Trust and the Zandvlei Nature Reserve. Please make an effort to attend this meeting its going to be worthwhile.

Alien and Invasive Species (AIS) Regulations

The AIS regulations which became law on 1 October 2014, state that.... The seller of any immovable property must, prior to the relevant sale agreement, notify the purchaser of the property in writing of the presence of listed invasive species on that property.

A copy of the declaration of Invasive Species form needs to be lodged with the Compliancy Officer, Biosecurity Services, Department of Environmental Affairs – prior to a sale taking place.

Invasive Species Consultants will be able to assist local landowners wishing to sell their properties by signing off on their Declaration of Invasive Species forms. For this service there is a consultancy charge.

One may ask why does every landowner selling their property need a Declaration of Invasive Species form? It is because properties that contain invasive species are now regarded, in law, as a liability to the buyer.

So, for example, from the Conservation of Agriculture Resources Act 1983 (Act 43 of 1983) 198 Invasive Alien Plants (IAPs) are legislated in THREE categories.

For further enquiries please contact the Invasive Aliens division at EDRR@capetown.gov.za

CATEGORY 1A:

Invasive species requiring compulsory control. Remove and destroy. Any specimens of Category 1a listed species need, by law, to be eradicated from the environment. No permits will be issued. An example in this category is *Lythrum salicaria* or Purple loosestrife.

CATEGORY 1B:

Invasive species requiring compulsory control as part of an invasive species control programme. Remove and destroy. These plants are deemed to have such a high invasive potential that infestations can qualify to be placed under a government sponsored invasive species management programme. No permits will be issued. An example in this category is *Cortaderia selloana* the Pampas Grass.

CATEGORY 2:

Invasive species regulated by area. A demarcation permit is required to import, possess, grow, breed, move, sell, buy or accept as a gift any plants listed as Category 2 plants. No permits will be issued for Cat 2 plants to exist in riparian zones. An example in this category is *Casuarina cunninghamiana* the Beefwood.

CATEGORY 3:

Invasive species regulated by activity. An individual plant permit is required to undertake any of the following restricted activities (import, possess, grow, breed, move, sell, buy or accept as a gift) involving a Category 3 species. No permits will be issued for Cat 3 plants to exist in riparian zones. Existing plants do not need to be removed. An example in this category is *Melia azadarach* the Seringa in urban areas.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

THE ZANDVLEI TRUST

Non-Profit Organisation No. 004-011-NPO

PBO number 930034582

Enquiries : soitgoes@iafrica.com / 021 788 8592

www.zandvleitrust.org.za

Annual subscriptions :

single member R100; couple (each may vote) R120

Bank account details :

Account name : Zandvlei Trust

Bank & account no. : Nedbank – 1030 882 339

Branch & code : Constantia – 198 765

PLEASE SEND COMPLETED FORM & PROOF OF PAYMENT TO EMAIL ADDRESS ABOVE.

FULL NAMES :

ADDRESS :

EMAIL :

TELEPHONE :

What /where is your interest in being a ZVT member?

.....

I/we will uphold the aim of the Zandvlei Trust to conserve the indigenous fauna and flora of Zandvlei and to enhance this natural resource for all.

CANNED LION HUNTING

BY PETER KRUGER

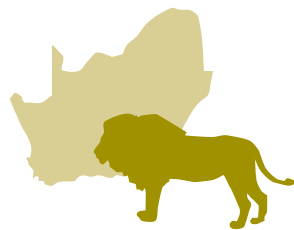
Would you believe that there are about 160 farms/operations in South Africa where lions are bred in captivity to be hunted or shot as trophies to be taken home after they have been stuffed and preserved?

Writing in Safari and Oceania Peter Borchert, says that there are about 6 000 of these lions in captivity at present. The farms where this is done are mainly in the Free State and North West Province but do not think that this does not happen in the Western Cape or any other parts of the country – just Google ‘trophy hunting in south africa’ and you will see that it takes place throughout the country.

Lions have vanished from over 80% of their historic range and are now extinct in 28 countries. Only seven countries have populations greater than 1 000 wild lions and in South Africa there are fewer than 3 000 wild lions, so when you consider that more than 1 000 lions are shot every year by trophy hunters, it begs the question: Where do they come from?

Because the South African Government and the Professional Hunters Association of South Africa have failed to take decisive action on this practise, conservationists have started campaigning in the countries where the hunters come from. The first country to take action is Australia. In a sitting of the country’s parliament in Canberra on Thursday, March 12, the Hon. Greg Hunt, Australia’s Minister for the Environment said the following: “I have signed an order to prevent the importation into Australia of African lion parts and remains. This order will take effect immediately. It is part of the global movement and I hope part of a significant movement to end canned hunting forever. It is a practice that never had a time, but it is a practice whose time has surely come to pass.”

Australia’s decision is also likely to impact on all those facilities breeding lions for other commercial purposes such as petting, ‘walking with lions’ and the lion bone trade. Inevitably when



there are fewer than
3000 wild lions
in South Africa

more than
1000 are shot
in captivity every year



captive young lions pass the age of being ‘safe’ to interact with humans, the writing is on the wall for them – either to feed the market for their body parts or as targets for hunters.

One of the South African conservationists at the forefront of this campaign is Ian Michler, an outspoken critic of trophy hunting says “...The word ‘captive’ is as it reads – lions are being bred in captivity to be killed in captivity.”

He visited Australia late last year to lobby for the banning of the importation of lion parts and hunting trophies and said: “I can only laud the action taken by Minister Hunt and his parliamentary colleagues,” he said. “I fervently hope that Australia’s brave stance will encourage other major hunting nations to follow suit. This news is as much a victory for all those people and organisations that have been fighting against the twin horrors of predator breeding and canned hunting over the last 20 years as it is for the animals themselves.”

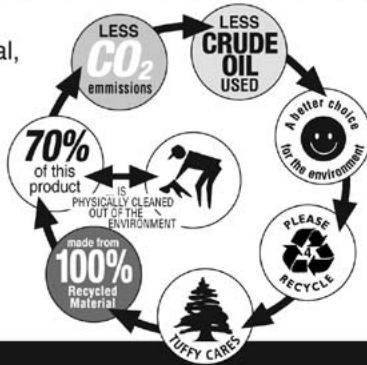
Ian Michler has recently been to the European Parliament where he lobbied for similar action from Europe. “In time, we will also target the United States, as this is where the majority of hunters come from.”

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Seasonal notes

Long Clinic hours
- see below

Flu immunizations
- beat the bugs

Real Thing
Green Powder
- for the winter blues

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09:00 to 13:00 Sundays & public holidays

Clinic Hours:
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Friday 08:30 to 18:00
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Colour the picture in and see how many of the Brant's climbing mouse can you spot! Email your answer to soitgoes@iafrica.com

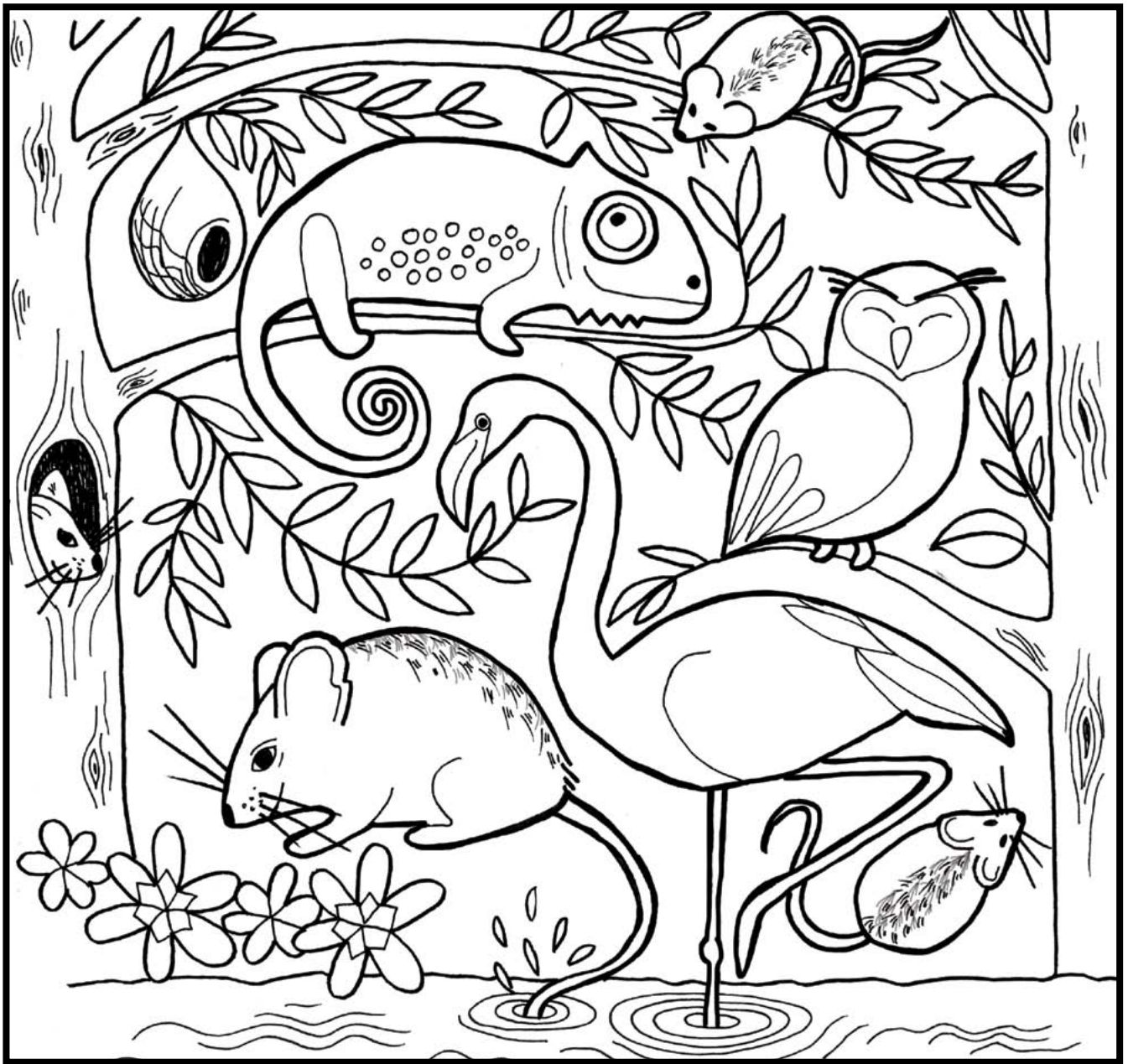


Illustration by Katerina Sonntagova

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