



# SOUTHERN OVERBERG

Branch of the Botanical Society Of S.A./

Tak van die Botaniese Vereniging Van S.A.



## NEWSLETTER/NUUSBRIEF

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### BRANCH NEWS

It's time again to review the events of the past year at our AGM and vote for the committee of your choice. Two committee members have completed their 3 year term of office but have made themselves available for re-election. The balance of the committee are happy to complete their terms. We will also have at least one guest speaker and will be sending out a confirmation/ reminder of the AGM.

One has to admire anybody who agrees to serve on a committee. Yes there is satisfaction from the camaraderie of planning and executing an event or outing that you hope members will enjoy. Outside of planning events, there remains however the business of running the branch and exercising the BotSoc's social responsibility. Because we cannot please all members all of the time, the committee who are all volunteers have felt from time to time that although they try hard, more is sometimes expected. If you are one who feels you can add value or help, please make yourself available for election. You will be most welcome to come aboard to share the load.

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**DENEL OVERBERG TEST RANGE**

**ISO 14001**

**OTR OUR PARTNER IN CONSERVATION**

*Newsletter/Nuusbrief 1*



# Snippets

Sometimes if you are lucky or fortunate enough, you inherit some interesting collectables from your parents. For some reason, I dug out an old atlas from my bookcase which I've known was there but not really looked at. In fact I have two old atlases; the first I looked at was 'The Times Atlas' printed in 1898. Seems to be printed with the name of every town and village known on the planet at that time to a point that one has difficulty in seeing the detail of the map – even Napier features. I then opened the second atlas to be even more amazed. This was printed in 1822. Although the shape of the continents have not changed one bit, that is about all we can say that has remained the same. Countries, Kingdoms and Empires have come and gone, since these wonderful atlases were printed. We have had Boer Wars and World Wars and cars and computers and how many generations of granddads and grandmas and grandchildren have enjoyed atlases since they were printed. And did you know our invasive Port Jackson came from that cricket playing nation – New Holland. At least that was what that very big island was called back in 1822. One thing is for sure, our Aussie alien invasives were not such a problem back then.



Taken from the 1898 Times Atlas



# Poaching dilemma

I read a most interesting article recently which argued that all of us who support organisations that have been set up to combat poaching of rhino, elephants, lions etc. are completely wasting our money. Our efforts are doomed to failure. Before you despair as you note the slaughter taking place of some of our most loved wildlife, the writer made some really interesting observations that we should take to heart. To rural black Africans living in a village in East Africa, they hate elephants which come into their villages to eat their carefully tendered mealie crop and smash down their fences designed to keep the little community safe. They hate lions which roam about picking off their cattle and sheep. As far as rhino are concerned, they are of no value to anybody unless they are dead. In fact a dead elephant, dead lion and dead rhino is a bonus. Although the risk to a poacher of being caught or killed are high, the rewards too are high. In most of the rural villages, the poachers are the village heroes as they not only reduce the wildlife threats, they also bring in desperately needed money.

What is the solution? Whether we have a problem with it or not, wildlife must pay its way and the highest return is through commercial hunting. The commercial hunter pays to hunt, requires quality accommodation, will want his trophy skin treated, etc. all which brings good money into the local economy. The added benefit is that the local village gets a good supply of meat whereas poachers are leaving tons of dead elephants and rhino to rot in the veld. The locals therefore have a vested interest in protecting their wildlife asset.

The writer's argument for sustainable hunting is made when he points out that, in Africa, only in South Africa and Namibia, where there is a well established hunting industry, that wildlife numbers are strongly on the increase. In the rest of Africa, wildlife is in desperate trouble particularly where hunting is banned.

There is also perhaps a valuable lesson for our local landowners who have areas which they wish to conserve. Allow sustainable flower picking by the local community so local communities have a vested interest in not starting irresponsible fires or over harvesting.



# *Events Report Back*

On Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> February we enjoyed a rather belated pipe opener outing for the year, delayed due to earlier heavy rains. The committee arranged an excellent function at Bergplaas in the Agulhas National Park. It was a terrific turnout of members and potential new members and friends. Many of the members tested their 4x4s with a drive to a spectacular lookout point a few kilometres drive from the venue where one can see a long stretch of the reserve's beautiful coastline laid out far below. Back at Bergplaas, we all enjoyed our picnic fare before reluctantly leaving for home. Our thanks go to the park, Emmerentia de Kock, Honorary Rangers Eddie and Angela Casani and the BotSoc committee for facilitating a most successful outing. We certainly hope that many of our guests will have so enjoyed the day and now seen what the branch is all about, that they will join.

Alongside in Forthcoming Events you will see that we have another event planned in the Agulhas National Park. It is a real privilege for our branch to receive this invitation from them to explore areas of the park seldom seen by visitors. If the Cape Town members have Kirstenbosch on their doorstep, it seems that our branch has a National Park. That's special!



Outing to Bergplaas



# *Forthcoming Events*

Please diarise the following activities that we are planning:

## **Outing to Waterford – Agulhas National Park**

**Date:** Wednesday, 19 March 2014

Meet at Engen Garage, Napier at 08h30 or 09h00 at BP Bredasdorp from where we will convoy. Bring a picnic lunch, binoculars, appropriate attire and perhaps a flower guide. We will be accompanied by Emmerentia de Kock and a park section ranger so will get lots of interesting insights into the special fauna and flora of a remote area of the park. (See below)

## **AGM:**

Date: Monday, 14 April 2014

Time: 19h30

Venue: Bredasdorp Library

Come and hear a report back on the activities of the past year, listen to an interesting talk and participate in the proceedings. Please attend to ensure a quorum.

**Please remember that attendance at any of our functions/outings are at your own risk and neither the Botanical Society nor this Branch can be held responsible for any injury or loss that may occur.**



# Waterford - Agulhas National Park

Waterford is part of the Agulhas National Park but separate, across to the West. It is managed by Section Ranger Masindi Raselabe and Field Ranger Harold Karelse who are stationed at Waterford. The western section stretches from the Hangnes area to the west and includes half of the Soetenys Mountain, Rietfontein, Rietfontein se Baai, Ratelrivier and Waterford. It borders on De Dam and the Buffeljags area. This western section has two important cultural heritage sites namely Rietfontein and Ratelrivier, two historic farms.

This western section comprises various vegetation types: Overberg Sandstone Fynbos, Agulhas Limestone Fynbos and Cape Lowland Freshwater Wetlands.

Waterford itself is of historical interest. It was originally owned by the van der Bijl family of Fairfield. Back in the 1860s it was used by them as a winter farm for the grazing of their cattle. Tennant farmers who lived in the small houses on the farm planted the blue gums seen on the farm for timber and firewood. The Koks River which gave its name to the adjoining farm, flows through the farm and joins the Ratel River. The farm also has a spring of clear water. The lands on Waterford were last ploughed 30 years ago. At one point the farm was run as a nature reserve where Bontebok were kept.

All in all, the visit to Waterford in the company of Emmerentia and the Section Ranger should make a most enjoyable day. Thanks Eddie and Angela and our committee for helping to arrange this outing. Thanks too to Emmerentia de Kock for this background to Waterford.

## CONTRIBUTIONS

We would like to make this newsletter interesting as well as informative and would appreciate hearing from you. Possibly you have an interesting story to share with the other members? Remember that it does not have to be very long or strictly botanical. We also require articles in Afrikaans.

Please send your contributions to:

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or email them to: [southernoverberg.botsoc@gmail.com](mailto:southernoverberg.botsoc@gmail.com)

