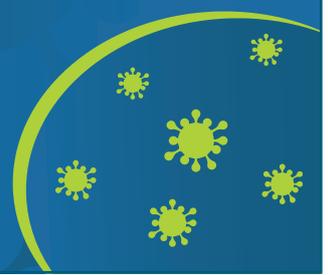




CapeNature

14 August 2020

COVID-19 WEEKLY UPDATE



SIGHTS UNSEEN:

Finding the hidden secrets of the Grootvadersbosch rivers



Thanks to an ongoing project funded by the Table Mountain Fund, CapeNature's aquatic biologists Dr Martine Jordaan and Ms Jeanne Gouws are collaborating with the Grootvadersbosch Conservancy. The aim of the project: to unearth the fishy secrets from the rivers of the Tradouw and Duiwenhoks catchments.

Joint field surveys are ongoing and to date a number of new dis-

tribution localities for native fish have been recorded. The indigenous fish compliment of the area comprise the Breede river redbfin, the Cape kurper and the Cape galaxias, all three of which are endemic to the Cape Fold Ecoregion.

Scientific outcomes of the project include the collection of DNA samples and voucher specimens for researchers working at the South African Institute for Aquatic

Biodiversity and collecting data for use in Red List Assessments. The project also has a strong focus on human capital development and in-field training in fish survey techniques is provided for the conservancy staff. The vision is to set up a collaborative long term monitoring program between staff from CapeNature and the Conservancy.

[READ THE FULL STORY HERE](#)

Accused faces hefty fine for illegal hunting

In July, a member of the public reported to CapeNature an incident observed on a district road north of Anysberg Nature Reserve, during which a gemsbok was allegedly illegally hunted within the road reserve. During the incident, the gemsbok was wounded, but not killed and subsequently escaped onto private land. The information was followed-up by CapeNature, and witness statements were obtained. From the crime scene, a spoor and blood splatter trail was tracked into mountainous terrain for two km, which culminated in the discovery of a gemsbok carcass.

A case docket was registered at Laingsburg SAPS, with provisionally four charges listed including hunting without license, hunting on or from a public road, hunting with aid of motor vehicle and hunting without landowner permission. On conviction of the above charges, a court may impose a fine of up to R80 000 or imprisonment of two years of both, and a fine up to three times the commercial value of the animal hunted.



Unlawful occupation of land at Driftsands Nature Reserve

The Driftsands Nature Reserve has been subjected to the unlawful occupation of land for the past six weeks. Portions of the reserve has unfortunately been taken over by hundreds of illegal structures.

When CapeNature first noticed attempts at unlawful occupation of Driftsands Nature Reserve, of which it is the custodian, it followed due process up to the point where a provisional court order was granted, effectively prohibiting the erection of any illegal structures and permitting the removal of illegally erected structures within the boundaries of the reserve.

Copies of the order were affixed within the boundaries of the reserve and served on community leaders, informing them of the issue and the implications of the court order.

A number of partially erected and unoccupied illegal structures have already been removed. Reserve Management continue to monitor the site and are in collaboration with the City of Cape Town's Anti-land Invasion Unit and Law Enforcement, and

the South African Police Service to stabilise the invasion and to maintain the integrity of areas not yet overrun by structures.

CapeNature continues to work with the South African Human Rights Commission who has played a key role in engaging with the community and overseeing the execution of the court order as independent monitors.

Dr Razeena Omar, CEO of CapeNature says that "CapeNature is fully aware of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on people's livelihoods and we do not stand unsympathetic towards the plight of the homeless during this strenuous times. On the other hand we also have a responsibility to protect valuable ecological land for now and for future generations."



Ecological and cultural value of Driftsands — Nature Reserve —

Driftsands Nature Reserve contributes to the protection of Cape Flats Dune Strandveld, an Endangered vegetation type, endemic to Cape Town.

Of the 6,146 ha of Cape Flats Dune Strandveld remaining, only 2,092 hectares is protected. Driftsands Nature Reserve accounts for approximately 24% of the protection afforded to this vegetation type. The wetlands on Driftsands Nature Reserve are highly sensitive and these systems and their associated ecosystems are critical in the urban landscape, providing refuge for freshwater and terrestrial species and serving an important ecosystem service of flood attenuation in an urban environment where most surfaces have been hardened.

Furthermore, Driftsands Nature Reserve provides access for cultural and/or religious practices and provides opportunities for environmental education. A number of people from the local community have also been employed by CapeNature to work at the reserve.

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