

KORSMAN CONSERVANCY MEMBER'S NEWSLETTER MAY 2015

Dear Members,

The last few months have gained us some new structures, and improvements in the view.

Ekurhuleni: Reed spraying, tree and grass cutting

Ekurhuleni's wetlands environmental department returned in March to spray reeds according to a map I drew up. Some of the target areas were well treated, but others were bypassed when their long hose was found to be inoperational. Unfortunately some native grass was killed in the spraying process.

Ekurhuleni were also persuaded to trim trees on the verge, especially the fragile (and alien) cottonwoods, and we hope that they will keep up the momentum and send contractors to cut bigger branches. After about nine months of persistence, they have cut the grass inside the fence.

Work: Reed cutting and brush clearing

We have cut patches of killed reeds and bulrushes to reveal long-last-seen views of the water. Many birds can now use the shoreline, previously blocked by reeds.

In the photograph below, the green plant that was cut along with the reeds is *Persicaria hydropiper*, an alien species becoming invasive.



Other work undertaken by the Conservancy in the last three months includes brush-cutting hundreds of square metres of blackjacks before they went to seed, and clearing coppiced invasive trees, especially under the oaks opposite Aubrey Ritz Park.



Pam Golding berms

Donated by Pam Golding Properties East Rand, two new viewing berms with associated bird ID signs (one to be installed in July) have been built around the north side of the Sanctuary.

Pictured: One of our members pauses on her daily walk to enjoy the view over the fence.



Events

Photographer's Day March 28: All who attended enjoyed the day, led by Werner van Goethem. Werner's picture of the Long-crested Eagle at Korsman taken a few days before made the front page of the Benoni City Times.

Captured in flight: Grey-headed Gull by Conservancy member Jose Barbosa

Litter pickup March 29: Attended by members and volunteers who picked up about 14 bags of litter. We were well outfitted in gloves kindly donated by Rhona Wilson.

Rhona Wilson and Jose Barbosa (R) hauled out barbed wire abandoned when the new fence was built.

I subsequently 'redeployed' it as an experimental litter trap in the Sanctuary Lane storm water inlet, pending more suitable litter fences when Ekurhuleni have cleared all the inlets.



LepiBASH April 25: An informal photographer's day, this time looking for littler flying creatures and hoping to capture more species of butterflies and moths for the Animal Demography Unit.

An interesting sighting was an Exquisite Plusia moth (*Thysanoplusia exquisita*) photographed here by Janet Fabian.

So far this year, 26 species of butterfly have been identified in Korsman, including the rare Marsh Sylph.

AGM

A good AGM where we met new members who volunteered positive ideas, and new projects initiated. Full minutes will be circulated by Cathi Marques.

New committee member Alison Bainbridge takes over Membership Officer duties from Max Herold, who did sterling service for many years.