

# KORSMAN CONSERVANCY NEWSLETTER SEPTEMBER 2015

Dear Members,

Please diarise 4 October for a bird walk in conjunction with the East Rand Bird Club. We will walk inside the Sanctuary with their members, the experts. I will advise the details closer to the date. This is a members only event.

Winter has been the time for maintenance such as varnishing benches, and for persuading the council to attend to Korsman. They have promised to start clearing the blocked storm water inlets this week.

Once Ekuhuleni has cleared the inlets, we will install litter fences at the problem inlets which wash in lots of trash. We cleared the inlet at Sanctuary Lane ourselves and installed a 'proof of concept' fence which will be tested once the rains begin.



## Winter Co-ordinated Waterbird Count - CWAC



This was led by Werner van Goethem of the East Rand Bird Club. The count was much easier than in February, with the reeds now gone. We counted 840 birds across 22 species. A CWAC counts only water bird species on a specified list, so does not cover all bird species present.

The most exciting sighting was Black-winged Stilts, not seen at Korsman for a couple of years.



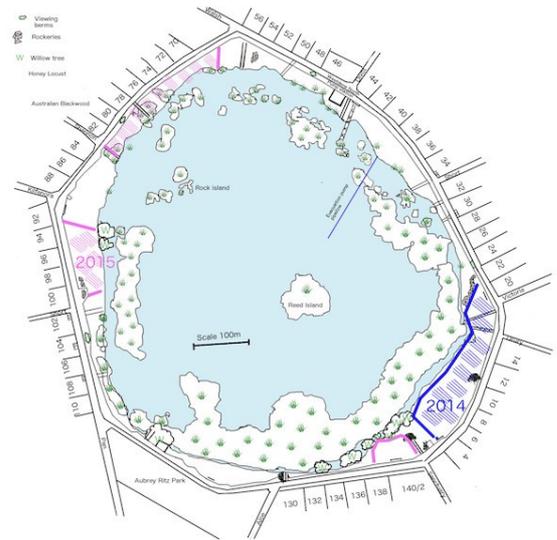
Black-winged Stilt photo by Werner van Goethem

## Ecological Burn

Burning is an essential part of grassland ecology. Without it, grassland becomes choked with dead material and loses the ability to regenerate. Korsman has not been burnt for decades, until the eastern section was burnt last year. We have been strongly encouraged to burn by GDARD and UP Botany professor, Braam van Wyk.

I monitored the weather forecast for weeks waiting for a day with light winds forecast. 11 volunteers and the Fire Department tackled the task, which is especially challenging at Korsman with the fence, the reeds, and being in an urban environment.

We burnt two 'blocks' (a third one may still be burnt, if there are suitable conditions before summer growth) and will plan it in rotation for the next few years.



The Fire Dept assisted with both large and small fire engines.

## A visit to Anne Mearns

Anne Mearns, who has been honoured by the United Nations for her conservation work, was involved at Korsman in the 80s and 90s. Alison Bainbridge, Cathi Marques and I visited her to hear her memories and copy material for our history of Korsman.



Anne Mearns (second from right) with Alison, Jane and Cathi



Zebras were among the animals once kept at Korsman, but were removed after they killed blesbok babies.