



KORSMAN CONSERVANCY NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2018

Reed removal

Our 'behind-the-scenes' invasive vegetation removal inside the Sanctuary isn't obvious from the fence, although it forms the biggest part of our work. Recently you would have seen the reed removal, cutting stands in deep water using our home-made pontoons. This is part of a strategy to drive back the reed expansion which threatens the Pan.

The plan is to cut stands at low water in December / January when the plant is exhausted after its growth spurt. When the water level rises, it floods the cut stumps and drowns the plant. We successfully removed smaller patches last season with cutting and flooding – the most eco-friendly way of managing reeds.



The evil *Iris pseudacorus*

SA National Biodiversity Institute visit

The SANBI Early Detection and Rapid Response Team dropped in to look for the highly invasive Yellow Flag Iris, which I reported some time back. If they had called first, I would have told them they wouldn't find it, because we remove it immediately we see a plant.

Plant scientist Thulisile Jaca remarked that we are doing a great job clearing invasives. We are excited to work with them in future helping their research.



Thuli (L) and SANBI team

SANParks KUDU Award – Category Non Profit Making Institutions

This prestigious award that we won on 16 November is a real feather in our cap and validates all the work we have done in the last few years.

The award specifically recognised the invasive vegetation removal and ecological burning programmes, and stopping sewerage spills into the water.



Litter pickup 18 November

Our Spring litter pickup was the biggest ever, attended by 29 people who cleaned up the Sanctuary. A few days later, when Benoni City Times editor Lana O'Neill visited Korsman she described it as "remarkably pristine". That's thanks to the work of the volunteers!

Photo by Rivelle Govindsamy, Benoni City Times



Brothers Shyur and Bradley Ganespersad came from Bokburg to take part



Adolf Hüster took the black bags away – an entire bakkie-load. With Carole Elliot.

Weird Insect Sighting of the Month

Only 5mm, this Treehopper or Thorn bug is part of the family Membracidae. A relative of Yoda in Star Wars?

Scientists think the horn-like extensions are probably for camouflage.

Indeed, it looked like a miniature mobile bird dropping until I reviewed my photos.



Member's Bird Walk 25 November

On a perfect Sunday morning, members enjoyed special sightings such as Fulvous Whistling Ducks, which are infrequent visitors.

And not in the Sanctuary but above, a large flock of White Storks (summer migrants from Europe) circled overhead.



Fulvous Whistling Ducks



Environmental Alert: Polyphagous Shothole Borer

Please be alert for signs of infestation in your garden and street trees, of the tiny Asian beetle that is devastating trees in South Africa. London Plane, English oak and Chinese Maple are hardest hit but indigenous trees are also attacked. Early reporting is essential.

Affected trees develop wilted brown leaves on infested branches. The most obvious sign of infestation is brown stains around each hole where the borer has penetrated the tree.

The beetles cause a fungus growth which kills the tree by blocking the vascular system, starving the tree of water and nutrients.

Affected trees must be treated with a combination of pesticide and fungicide or cut down, even if dead, to prevent further breeding.

<https://polyphagous-shot-hole-borer.co.za/> for more information and how to report via an app.



MARGIE'S GALLERY

Member Margie Cary has a gifted eye for a pretty scene on her evening walks around the Pan, even prettier when the flamingos visit.

