



KORSMAN CONSERVANCY NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2018

Dear Members,

This summer has been our busiest ever working in the Sanctuary to remove weeds and reeds/bulrushes, and we have made excellent progress. Here are our activities and sightings.

Veld Work Party 21 January

19 people gave up their Sunday morning at our annual 'weed pull'. We accomplished a huge amount and prevented a large section of the weeds in the Kilfenora grassland from going to seed. Thanks to all of you for your time – your help made a massive difference and the area is now weed-free.



Fish eagle

In January, we had reports of a Fish Eagle call heard in Lakewest. Then on my bicycle ride around the Pan one midday I nearly fell off in amazement when the eagle flew out directly in front of me.

It circled a few times before thermalling up and setting course and I managed to snap these shots.

This is the 142nd species on our bird list.



Lawnmower Ranch brush cutter donation

The heavy-duty work carried out by the Conservancy gardeners – especially removing reeds – is hard on equipment. When our two-year old brush cutter broke and was uneconomical to repair, it would have severely dented our finances to replace it with a high quality machine.

To our joy, [Lawnmower Ranch](#) in Boksburg (with whom we have had a long association) and [Stihl](#) donated a brush cutter to the Conservancy which will last us much longer.

We are deeply grateful to Alvin and Jenny Steenkamp, right, for their generosity.



Genesis Plastic: Eco-friendly bin donation

[Genesis Plastic](#), a local Lakefield company, donated a wood-look recycled plastic litter bin. Installed near the berm at Short St, it looks infinitely better than the permanently overflowing blue plastic bin formerly on the pole. Many thanks to Graham and Carol of Genesis Plastic, left.

We invite sponsorship for similar, bigger bins to add to and replace (damaged) metal ones around the verge.

CWAC

The twice annual country-wide Co-ordinated Waterbird Count is an important way of tracking waterbird populations at wetlands around the country. Werner van Goethem and members of the East Rand Bird Club scheduled Korsman at exactly the right time – when hundreds of Sacred Ibis and Grey-headed gulls arrived to roost.

Excluding the centre reed patch (which can't be counted unless we have a drone available) we totalled over 1000 birds of 31 of the CWAC species – a higher count than we have recorded for years.



St Dunstons community service

Pupils from St Dunstons contributed to Korsman on 24 February when they had fun collecting litter, sliding in the mud, removing invasive vegetation and inadvertently 'collecting' burrs. The new word to smile for the camera is "Weeds" instead of Cheese.

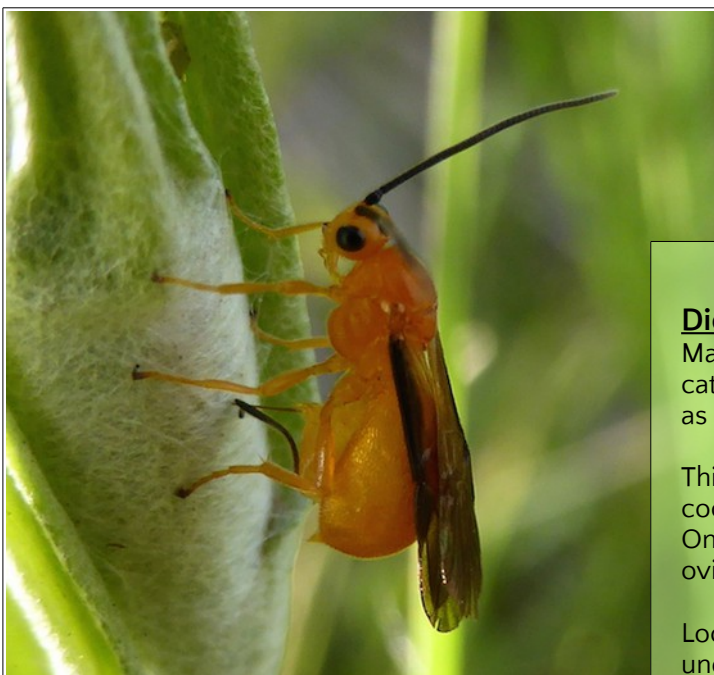
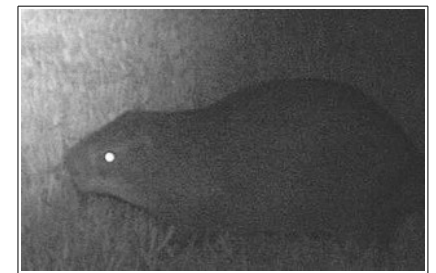


Trail camera captures

We find droppings and have occasional fleeting glimpses of our small mammals but they are too elusive to photograph. Dieter Holle attached his trail cam to a tree and within a few days it captured photos of the Water mongoose and Greater Cane rat.



Things went awry when we set it to record video; one night a cane rat investigated the camera (filmed snuffling it in the bottom of the frame) and managed to flip it up 90°. For the next several days the camera just recorded motion-activated videos of the waving branches of the tree.



Did you know? Parasite wasps

Many wasps parasitise other insects, usually caterpillars or spiders, by laying their eggs in them as a 'larder' for their juveniles when they hatch.

This tiny Braconid wasp drilled various spots into a cocoon woven around a plant, feeling for the larva. Once she found it, she laid her eggs through her ovipositor.

Look at the photo closely – you can see her eggs underneath her abdomen.

This wasp is only 7mm long and gives a fascinating perspective on the world, from a tiny insect's point of view!

Turning Night into Day

The Black Heron's unique fishing technique removes reflections from the water so that it can spot prey easily, as captured in Eugene Liebenberg's excellent photographs.

Now chuckle over this old-but-still-good BBC video of Walk on the Wild side

<https://youtu.be/EQ1HKCYJM5U>



Nighttime.....



Daytime!!!

Korsman From the Air

This atmospheric drone photo (courtesy of Warren Lamont) reminds us what a jewel it is our privilege to look after as the Conservancy.

