



KORSMAN CONSERVANCY NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2018

Annual burn

Controlled burning is an essential in grassland management. Ten volunteers and workers successfully and safely burnt three sections on 18 and 21 August with the backup of the Fire Department. Our burning programme has now covered the entire Sanctuary and sections will be burnt in three-year rotation.

Apart from the regeneration of wildflowers and indigenous grasses that we expected, we have seen how the grassland regeneration provides food for birds and insects. In years past, up to two dozen Spur-winged Geese per season, used to starve to death when they flew in here for the moulting season. Now, only a couple have died in the still moribund areas since 2015.

Photographs on left of page by
Antoinette Swanepoel



GOLIATH HERON NEWS: OF, AND IN



News OF the Goli is that they are breeding for the third year at Korsman, in the same sedge patch opposite number 34 The Drive. As a now-established couple they started earlier this year and three chicks were hatched around 9 August.

Just over three weeks since the chicks' estimated hatching, you can see their different stages of development. Eggs are laid and hatch at intervals. Only 65% of Goliath chicks survive to adulthood, so hold thumbs for them all.

Our Goli were IN the news when 50|50 (SABC2) broadcast my submissions of Goli fishing and feeding last year's chicks in Veldfokus.

Watch 4 min 20 seconds into the video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n4oy8RMsIug>



Winter CWAC

Werner van Goethem led the winter Co-ordinated Waterbird count on 4 August. We counted 647 birds over 29 waterbird species, such as this little Three-banded Plover, seen in the mud flats and photographed here by Jan de Beer.



Another sighting during the bird count may explain a long-standing litter mystery. This Pied Crow (a non-CWAC species) was trying to swallow a bird's egg it had robbed. Later, Awie Coetzee of the East Rand Bird Club picked up a golf ball in the grassland and suggested it may have been brought in by a crow who thought it was an egg. This could explain the enigma of the golf balls we frequently pick up inside the Sanctuary.

Awie 'earned' himself a nearly new Titleist ball (the expensive kind) for his contribution to the bird count. Golfers, why not putter along to our litter pickups in future?



The large mixed-species heronry in the sedges near the Walsh St corner has five nests of both Black-headed herons and Grey Herons, so we had good totals of ten and three birds of each species respectively. The Grey Heron's two chicks are almost ready to venture out near the nest.

This juvenile Black-headed Heron recently helped us record more biodiversity: a shrew, which it stalked, caught and swallowed in a flash.



Enviropedia Ecologic Awards

Earlier this year, the Committee submitted an entry into the Eco-Community category of this competition. Cathi Marques, Tracy Boggis and Gina Fraundorfer attended the awards evening on 5 June. They were thrilled that we achieved a top 5 finalist place in our category, amongst all the organisations involved in environmental projects around South Africa.



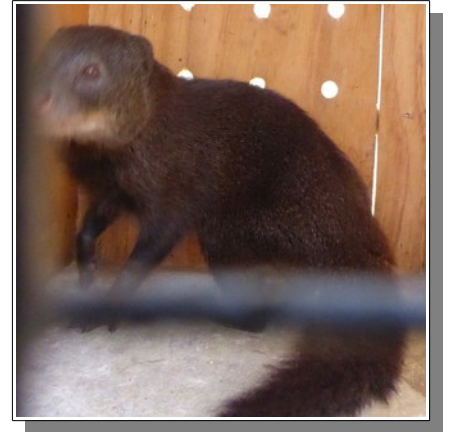
Marsh Mongoose capture and relocation

A day after a Lakefield resident told me that a Marsh Mongoose had left the Sanctuary and taken chickens from his property, two residents of Willow Terrace saw it in their gardens. As I was concerned that the mongoose may come to harm from a dog or resident, I called for help from the [SA Wildlife Rehabilitation Centre](#) (formerly Wildlife in Crisis).



Philip Vivier rushed to the scene and with the help of the resident's Jack Russells (which did not trouble the mongoose but simply pointed) we located it hiding in ivy in her garden.

We safely caught the mongoose and Philip removed it to release it at Serengeti eco-estate, with its extensive wild marshy areas and more food sources.



See the heartwarming video of the release

<https://youtu.be/WYgNaRx6Vs4>



And so our mongoose goes into the sunset to a new life.

Last word is this stunning sunset photo....

By Eugene Liebenberg

