



KORSMAN CONSERVANCY NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2021

During our Summer volunteer work parties inside the Sanctuary, we collected litter and pulled Acalypha weed.



SANBI's Biological Invasions Unit, left, has worked with us to develop a management plan for the highly invasive Acalypha weed and are visiting through the season to help remove it.

The invasion seems less dense than last year so fingers crossed that we are winning after three years of intense work.



Hailstorm of the century: Effect on Korsman

The worst hailstorm here in (at least) 21 years hit on Friday 26 February. Plants and grasses have been shattered and we have found a few dead birds.

The water level rose 15cm and is now at the fence in some areas. This makes it difficult to manage invasive vegetation and drowns wildflowers. It also reduces habitat for wading birds that need mud flats.

However, other species are enjoying feeding in the newly drowned areas, such as this Glossy Ibis and juvenile unusually close to the fence.



CWAC (Co-ordinated Waterbird count)

Twice a year, we assist the East Rand Bird Club to count waterbird numbers. Normally, we can't accurately count the birds in the centre reed patch which hosts a large heronry because it is just too far away. To get a more accurate count this summer we launched the canoes to get closer.

Linda Stracker and Hendro Swanepoel conducting the watery waterbird count.



During the canoe count, we observed one Great Crested Grebe. A few weeks later, we realised where the other bird of the pair had been during the count: on the nest. A few weeks later, the zebra-striped juvenile was out with its parents.

One in, one out

We often get advised of birds or animals in distress. In this case, it was one member of the public, Holly Mitchell, who alerted us of both animals in need.

IN: This Greater Cane rat outside the fence probably came out through a culvert at night and got trapped when it filled with sewerage during an overflow. We returned the animal to safety, away from chasing dogs.

Cane rats are large but shy creatures that are almost never seen, although from the many droppings we know there is a healthy population inside the Sanctuary.



OUT: SPCA responder Thomas came to look a second time for a cat which was reported. He spotted a white and ginger cat inside the Sanctuary.

I knew about a white and ginger cat and we went in together to capture it. Except, when we found the cat in a wood pile near the southern pump station, it wasn't the same one I'd seen: it was a little kitten. The kitten went to the vet for a health check.



More accessibility

Keith Price sponsored the second wheelchair ramp on the Shannon berm and a comfortable bench for companions.

Keith is also the donor of the level bypass path being laid behind the berm at no 48.

The Council path in front of the berm is too steeply cambered for wheelchairs.



Birdwatcher Peter Webb, equipped with binoculars and smartphone bird app, gave it the thumbs up.

From Red to Green Water



The bigger Lemna are about 2-3mm and the smaller Wolffia about 1mm.

The Winter newsletter carried an article about the invasive red water weed, which largely disappeared after the weather warmed up and the biocontrol weevil got to work.

Now, the same areas are covered by other green floating plants. It is the tiny Lemna and Wolffia indigenous species of water plants. It is referred to as duckweed because waterfowl grazed on it. The plants are nutritious with a high protein content.



Red-knobbed coots have relocated to the southern side of the pan to feast on the duckweed.

Trash into Treasure

A work party with a community purpose. Volunteers beautified old concrete fence posts which the contractor never removed after being dug up while laying the pathway. We deliberately placed them under the trees opposite Aubrey Ritz Park to prevent cars from driving over the pathway.

