

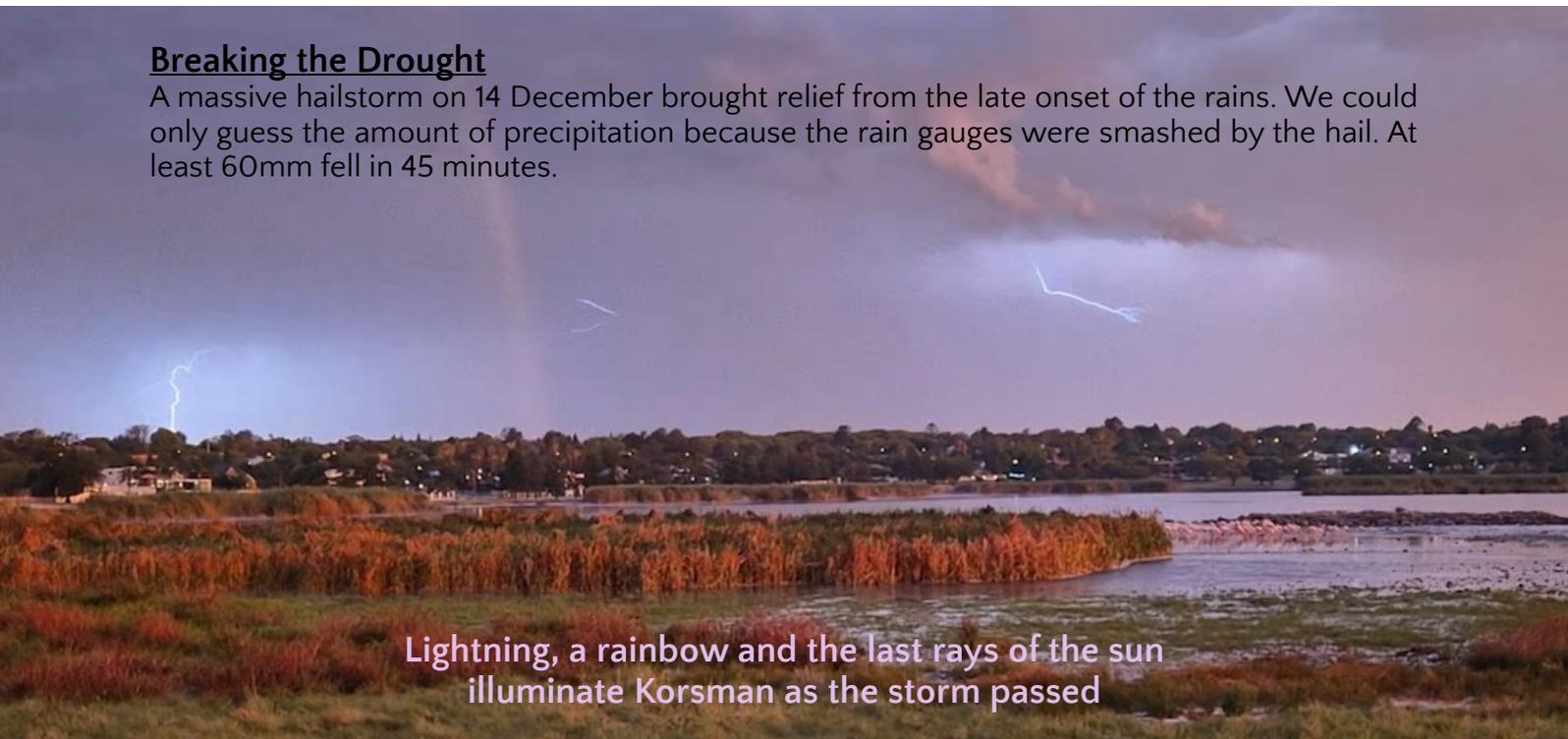


KORSMAN CONSERVANCY NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2025

Breaking the Drought

A massive hailstorm on 14 December brought relief from the late onset of the rains. We could only guess the amount of precipitation because the rain gauges were smashed by the hail. At least 60mm fell in 45 minutes.



Lightning, a rainbow and the last rays of the sun illuminate Korsman as the storm passed



Flamingos huddled together between hail drifts



The Bucket Brigades

We held litter pickups on 17 and 20 December to collect the trash washed down by the torrents of the hailstorm.



Meeting Pixie the tortoise along the way

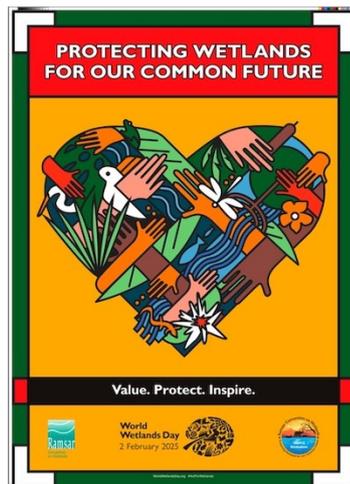


And a Weed pull on 20 January to clear Acalypha from the grassland.

Celebrating World Wetlands Day

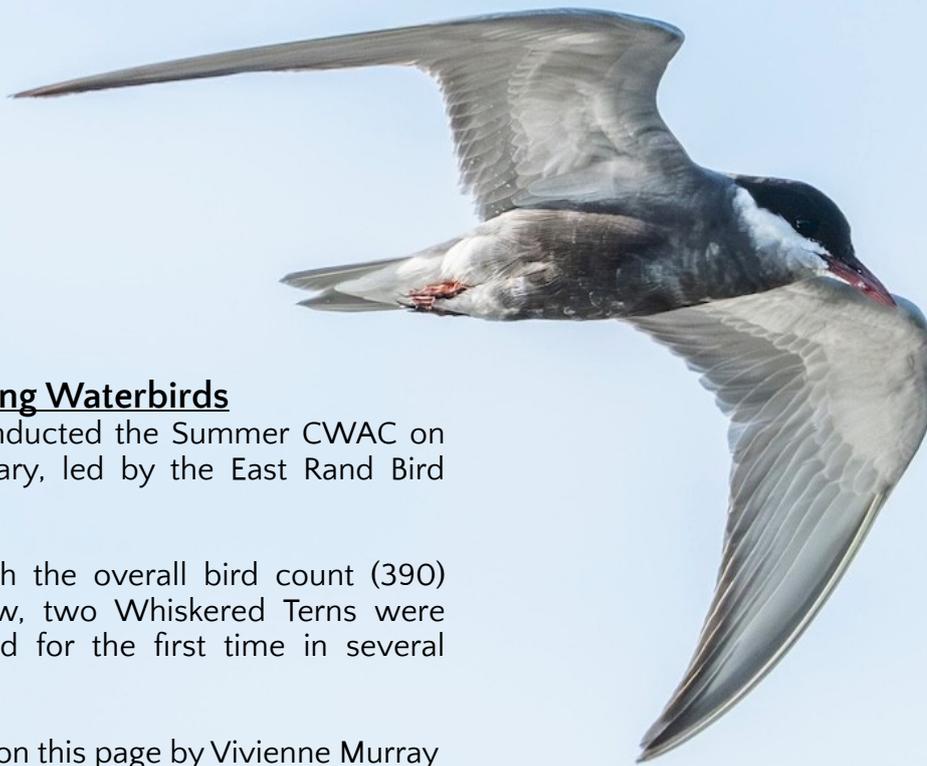
World Wetlands Day is held on 2 February every year. To create awareness of our work and share the beauty of Korsman, we held an open morning on 1 February and invited the local community.

The Committee and volunteers welcomed our visitors to the bird hide.



Coincidentally, two separate visitors were from Seattle, including Jon Anderson (right) who loved the hide.





Counting Waterbirds

We conducted the Summer CWAC on 18 January, led by the East Rand Bird Club.

Although the overall bird count (390) was low, two Whiskered Terns were recorded for the first time in several years.

Photos on this page by Vivienne Murray



The most numerous species was Grey-headed Gull (175 counted), many on the rock island.

Carp netting

Almost 400 fish were netted out in two visits by Optimum Fisheries from Hartebeespoort Dam. Since September, we have removed 1578 carp.



Measuring and weighing a 3.1kg monster. Photo by Claudia Wegger



Many more indigenous tilapia are now being caught in the net (and released), meaning that the carp removal is restoring the balance.



Dominance behaviour by Pixie towards Beau. Photo by Jonathan Featherston.

Tortoise Behaving Badly

All our tortoises are female, so I was alarmed when people reported tortoises 'mating'. Research showed that female tortoises can get aggressive with other females at breeding time. I asked member Sonja Shear if I could bring Pixie, the big bully, to matchmake with Benjy, her male tortoise. The idea was that if Pixie could lay eggs, she might leave the other females alone.

Please report any sightings of tortoise bullying.



Within a couple of hours of Pixie's arrival, Benjy did his duty. He trailed lovestruck after her for the rest of the day.

The Great Insect Hunt

When most people see the long grass in Aubrey Ritz Park, they just wonder when it is going to be cut. But the swallows swooping low over the grass hunting for insects indicate that long grass, and the wildflowers growing in between, are a thriving ecosystem. On two Sundays in February, members of all ages came to sweep the grass and see what we could discover.

Aubrey Ritz Park with its wetland is part of our declared Conservancy area, and going forward we will be managing it to create a balance between the ecology and the community.



This 3mm ladybird, *Exochomus nigrifrons*, was a rare find. It has only been recorded a few times in South Africa.

