



CITY OF CAPE TOWN
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STAD KAAPSTAD



TRANSPORT AND DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT
BIODIVERSITY MANAGEMENT BRANCH

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

It's a boy! On 28 June 2017, the False Bay Nature Reserve team successfully captured a young male hippopotamus (*Hippopotamus amphibious*) nicknamed "Chomp". The animal was translocated to a private game reserve in Albertinia, known as the Garden Route Game Lodge, where it has joined two female hippopotami and is hoped to soon establish a breeding pod.

The preparation for the capture operation started in October 2016 when it was discovered that a young hippopotamus had moved from the Rondevlei Section into the unfenced area of the reserve in the Strandfontein Section. The capture operation took several months, as it involved several stages, including monitoring the animal's movements to identify its exact location, enclosing the hippopotamus within a smaller area using electric fencing, building a capture boma, baiting the area with lucerne and trialling various trap mechanisms before being successful. Thanks are extended to all those who assisted the False Bay Nature Reserve with the capture operation and to the Cape Bird Club and Birdlife South Africa for their financial support in sourcing funding to supply a magnetic lock and infrared beam for the trap door mechanism.

Another first for the False Bay Nature Reserve this quarter was the discovery of an African crane (*Crax elegia*) in the Strandfontein Section. The bird created quite a stir and attracted bird watchers from far and wide. Strandfontein Section remains a birders' hotspot with the site teeming with bird-life and recording no less than five rarities over the past year making the site a "must-see" for local and international birders.

In May 2017 the False Bay Nature Reserve benefited from a much-needed "injection" of staff capacity amounting to 1 500 person days. This was due to 100 people from the local community being employed each week (for five days) over three weeks through an Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) funding opportunity. The intervention proved successful in helping the reserve to tackle labour intensive projects that could not be attended to otherwise and provided direct economic benefit for members of the local communities who worked at the reserve during this period.

The Zeekoevlei annual draw down took place on 27 April 2017. Members from the local community came through to help with opening of the Zeekoevlei weir with much enthusiasm. People of all ages were eager to help with the removal of the weir chocks. Due to particularly low water levels this year, the impacts of opening the weir were not as evident as in previous years, but the desired flushing effect on the water body was still achieved.

A prescribed ecological burn was conducted at the Rondevlei Section of False Bay Nature Reserve on 24 May 2017. The burn was successful and took one day to complete. The purpose of the burn was to reduce nutrient loading in the vlei by burning old reedbeds. Burning the reedbeds helps to remove senescent material and stimulates new reed growth, which allows nutrients to be absorbed from the wetland thus removing excess nutrients from the vlei.

The False Bay Nature Reserve staff recently said farewell to their colleague Mr Clint Williams, who successfully obtained a position at Intaka Island, Century City, as an assistant conservation officer. Mr Williams was valued for his hard work and dedication and he will be missed, but the reserve staff would like to express their thanks for his contribution to the site and wish him all the best with his future endeavours.

The Reserve staff also said farewell this quarter to Ms Jocelyn Anderson, who assisted False Bay Nature Reserve for five months as a stand-in people and conservation officer. Ms Anderson has joined the Cape Town Environmental Education Trust (CTEET) head office and the staff of False Bay Nature Reserve wish her all the best in her new position.

A new reserve supervisor, Mr Rolivhuwa Murovhi, was welcomed by the staff of False Bay Nature Reserve to join the management team at the beginning June 2017.

The annual False Bay Nature Reserve Birdathon: Festival and Fun-walk event took place on 6 May 2017. Despite the weather being overcast and cool, approximately 500 people attended the event. The day programme started off with a walk, where participants could choose one of three distances to follow,

starting at the Zeekoevlei Section picnic area and leading into the Strandfontein Section, then returning to the picnic area to enjoy various stalls.

2. HIGHLIGHTS & CHALLENGES

Highlights

- Capture of a young male hippopotamus on 28 June 2017
- Employment of 300 EPWP staff for the month of May 2017
- Appointment of a new reserve supervisor for the False Bay Nature Reserve

Challenges

- Ever-changing staff structure (lack of permanent staff on a worker level)
- Inadequate budget allocation (operational and capital)

3. CONSERVATION PLANNING

The staff capacity of False Bay Nature Reserve has been greatly depleted following the termination of the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) last year on 14 July 2016. As of 30 June 2017, the situation remains the same. The EPWP staff members were responsible for assisting in the day-to-day operations of the Reserve and were largely responsible for maintaining infrastructure. For example, the Zeekoevlei Section eastern shore picnic / braai facilities and toilet facilities, the Rondevlei Section museum, toilets and picnic area, and carrying out fence maintenance across the Reserve.

Alternative solutions are currently being explored to bolster the current field ranger staff component of five persons. These alternatives include the temporary appointment of EPWP staff from an alternative source, for which the budget has been approved, to a more sustainable solution with the appointment of permanent staff.

Every opportunity to create temporary positions is taken with the appointment of EPWP staff, learners, interns and volunteers. These temporary positions are greatly valued as it provides capacity within the Reserve to complete needed job functions as well as provide training and work experience to these staff. The next step would be to create permanent positions. This action has a twofold benefit in that it creates a stable platform for the Reserve to continue in its functioning and achieve its targets, as well as it give a direct economic benefit to those who have gained valuable experience and training by giving them secure, permanent employment opportunities.

4. FLORA

Flora – Invasive Flora Management

Aquatic Invasive Flora: Water Hyacinth (*Eichornia crassipes*) Control at False Bay Nature Reserve

Zeekoevlei Section

Water hyacinth (*Eichornia crassipes*) monitoring and removal are ongoing at the Big Lotus River mouth area of the Zeekoevlei wetland. On 12 April 2017 approximately 550 pieces of water hyacinth were removed from the Big Lotus River mouth.

The Big Lotus River was cleared by Transport and Development Authority's (TDA) Asset Management and Maintenance Department during this quarter. While the clearing was taking place, more water hyacinth (*Eichornia crassipes*) plants washed down into the mouth of the river. This was removed by reserve staff as it entered the river mouth and amounted to approximately 700 pieces of water hyacinth.

Strandfontein Section

Ongoing monitoring and follow-up clearing operations continued this quarter at the Strandfontein Section of False Bay Nature Reserve to control invasive water hyacinth (*Eichornia crassipes*). Manual removal of water hyacinth was carried out at the pan referred to as P1, which was done by hand and using a canoe where necessary.

Aquatic Invasive Flora Management False Bay Nature Reserve: Wandering Jew (*Commelina* sp.) Control at Zeekoevlei Section

Wandering Jew (*Commelina* sp.) is an invasive aquatic creeper plant that occurs in the wetlands of False Bay Nature Reserve, which can grow into dense stands that overtake reedbeds. Such dense forms of encroachment have been observed along the shoreline of Zeekoevlei wetland and have reportedly become particularly extensive this year. Local Zeekoevlei residents have requested assistance with removing the creeper from reedbeds along their properties. Eight conservation students and interns based at False Bay Nature Reserve responded to requests from residents this quarter by assisting with creeper removal from the Zeekoevlei shoreline. The most effective method used was chemical treatment i.e. applying a foliar spray herbicide treatment. Unfortunately unsuitable weather conditions often limited the latter method. Herbicide cannot be applied during rainy and windy conditions, as there is a risk of herbicide transfer to non-target indigenous species, and existing moisture on the foliage of the creeper can also dilute the concentration of the herbicide being applied and reduce its effectivity. When conditions were unfavourable for herbicide application, then manual clearing was carried out to remove the wandering Jew creeper. However, manual clearing can sometimes pose a risk of spreading the invasive creeper. If the leaves and stems that break off during manual clearing operations are not all retrieved, then such plant pieces can drift away and produce their own roots, establishing new populations.



Students and interns removing *Commelina* sp. creeper along the Zeekoevlei shoreline near Peninsula Road (Photo: N. Nguza 2017)

Rondevlei Section: Common Bulrush (*Typha capensis*) Management

Ongoing clearing of common bulrush (*Typha capensis*) around the bird hides at Rondevlei Section commenced this quarter. The clearing started at the first bird hide and continued to the end of the public footpath at the sixth bird hide. Some of the cleared plant material was burned during the prescribed ecological burn that took place in May 2017 and the rest of the material was removed from the wetland and taken to a yard storage area, awaiting removal.

Terrestrial Invasive Alien Clearing at False Bay Nature Reserve

Woody Invasive Vegetation Clearing

Strandfontein Section

Clearing of rooikrans (*Acacia cyclops*) was conducted from the 29 May to 2 June 2017 in management block five of Strandfontein Section. This work was carried out by 14 Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) staff and two field rangers from the Cape Town Environmental Education Trust (CTEET). This area was prioritised for clearing this quarter by the Invasive Alien Species Unit of the City of Cape Town's Biodiversity Management Branch, who provided a contractor team to assist with initial clearing in management blocks four and five. The total area cleared was approximately 62.68 ha.

Follow up clearing work was also conducted near pan P3 of Strandfontein Section to target rooikrans (*Acacia cyclops*).



Views of rooikrans infestation (above left and middle) and post-clearing and stacking (above right) at the Strandfontein Section (Photos: R. Murovhi 2017)



Contractor team clearing rooikrans at Strandfontein Section (Photos: R. Murovhi 2017)

Zeekoevlei Section

During the past quarter, False Bay Nature Reserve staff conducted alien clearing on the eastern shore of Zeekoevlei Section. Port Jackson (*Acacia saligna*), and blue gum (*Eucalyptus globulus*) were removed and certain gum trees were trimmed for safety and aesthetic reasons.

Zandwolf Section

A contractor team was provided this quarter by the Invasive Alien Species Unit of the City of Cape Town Biodiversity Management Branch, to conduct alien invasive vegetation clearing in management blocks seven, eight and nine of Zandwolf Section. Species such as Pot Jackson (*Acacia saligna*) and rooikrans (*Acacia cyclops*) were removed. This was implemented with the assistance of Quemic law enforcement rangers as the area is known to be unsafe for staff.

In June 2017 a team of 10 Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) workers cleared canary creeper (*Senecio turmoides*) in management block eight of Zandwolf Section, in an affected area measuring just under 0.5 ha. Two hundred black bags of plant material was removed from site in this exercise and disposed of at the local landfill site. A follow-up clearing operation will take place in three months' time.



EPWP staff removing Canary creeper (left)
(Photo: M. Samsodien 2017)

Flora – Indigenous Flora Management

Plant Species Surveys at Pelican Park Section

On-going flora surveys are conducted at the Pelican Park Section in order to update the plant species list for the site. Two plant identification surveys were conducted this quarter, where staff and learners from the Pelican Park and Strandfontein Sections were assisted by Robin and Pat Burnett of the Zandvlei Trust (Friends group).

Shoreline Maintenance Plans and Reed Removal at Zeekoevlei Section

Despite a shortened draw down period this year for Zeekoevlei, the quantity of reeds removed from the vlei did not diminish. A contracted truck driver, Kidwell Voyiya, was obtained for a month through the City of Cape Town. Unfortunately there was initially a problem with obtaining a truck, but this was resolved on 19 June 2017, at which time the collection of reed piles from reed clearing operations could then begin. To date there have been 28 loads of reeds removed and disposed of at the local landfill site. Due to long queues at the landfill site, an average of three loads could be transported to the landfill per day.

The amount of reeds removed so far this quarter has amounted to 60.7 tonnes, which amounted to R40 232.40 in disposal costs. Reed collection is not yet complete. It is estimated that at least another month of work will be required to complete this year's reed removal collection. The truck driver's contract ended on 30 June 2017 therefore alternative assistance will need to be obtained.

New shoreline maintenance plans were issued to 13 Zeekoevlei properties bringing the total number of current valid shoreline plans to 41.

5. FAUNA

Fauna - Indigenous Fauna Management

Notable Faunal Sightings

Strandfontein Section

An African crane (*Crex egregia*) appeared at Strandfontein Section early in this quarter and roamed between pans S2 and S3 for quite some time. This report attracted birdwatchers from far and wide as this is the first sighting of a spotted crane in the Cape Town area and a first for Strandfontein Section and False Bay Nature Reserve.

Zeekoevlei Section

Regular sightings of a rock kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*) at Zeekoevlei Section have been observed over the past quarter. This bird of prey has been seen frequently on the entrance gate to the area known as Billy's block and around southern and eastern shores of Zeekoevlei.



A rock kestrel sighted frequently at Zeekoevlei Section (Photo: V. Day 2017)

While implementing wind erosion control methods at the Zeekoevlei eastern shore rehabilitation project, six Cape dwarf chameleons (*Bradypodion pumilum*) were found nestling amongst the gum tree branches that were being used in the erosion measures. The chameleons were moved out of harm's way to other parts of the Zeekoevlei eastern shore.



Cape dwarf chameleon found on the gum branches during the erosion control on the eastern shore of Zeekoevlei (Photo: V. Day 2017)

Injured Fauna

On 19 April 2017, Mr Ashley Barry (Visitor Control Officer at Rondevlei Section) received a call about an injured Cape grysbok (*Raphicerus melanotis*) lying on the corner of Spine Road and Strandfontein Road. He contacted the Quemic law enforcement control room and the Integrity Team was dispatched. When they arrived they found the animal lying injured on the pavement.

The law enforcement rangers took the injured grysbok to the SPCA wildlife unit located in Grassy Park where it received medical attention. Unfortunately the animal had sustained extensive injuries and did not survive through the night.



The injured grysbok found along Strandfontein Road (Photo: Quemic April monthly report 2017)

An injured caracal (*Caracal caracal*) was seen on 4 June 2017 by a birdwatcher near pan P4 in Strandfontein Section and reported to the Quemic law enforcement rangers. Despite efforts to locate and assist the animal, the rangers were unable to find the caracal.



An injured caracal seen at Strandfontein Section (Photo: Supplied by concerned birdwatcher 2017)

While working at the hippopotamus capture boma in Strandfontein Section during June 2017, a kelp gull (*Larus dominicanus vetula*) was observed by the conservation team of False Bay Nature Reserve. It appeared to be having difficulty flying, so the staff took the bird to the SPCA in Grassy Park, after which it was later transferred to SANCCOB in Tableview.

Stray Animals in False Bay Nature Reserve

On 26 April 2017, a stray domestic dog (*Canis domesticus*) was found along the eastern shore of Zeekoevlei Section in the picnic area, by the Quemic law enforcement rangers. The rangers managed to catch the dog and they took him through to the Grassy Park branch of the SPCA.



The stray dog found wondering round the Eastern shore of Zeekoevlei (Photo: Quemic April monthly report 2017)

Snake Call Out

The Quemic law enforcement control room received a call on 17 May 2017 from a local Pelican Park resident requesting a snake to be removed from their property. The Integrity Team responded to the call and captured a puff adder (*Bitis arietans*). The snake was released into the neighbouring section of False Bay Nature Reserve.

Fauna – Monitoring

Strandfontein Section

Monthly Coordinated Waterbird Counts (CWAC) were conducted at the Strandfontein Section on 14 May and 11 June 2017. The CWAC counts are conducted by members of the Cape Bird Club in conjunction with False Bay Nature Reserve staff.

Rondevlei Section

Monthly bird counts were conducted this quarter at Rondevlei Section by the False Bay Nature Reserve staff. This count is conducted on every Wednesday closest to the 15th of each month. The bird count starts at the first viewing tower and ends at the last bird hide (Scotto hide). On the way back to the first viewing tower, nothing is counted to avoid duplicate counting.

Assistance with Fish Trek at Zandvlei Estuary Nature Reserve

The learners, students and interns of False Bay Nature Reserve assisted with the quarterly fish trek (count) at the Zandvlei Estuary Nature Reserve. The trek was a great success, with interesting catches including Cape stumpnose, white Steenbras and leervis (Garrick). The staff had the opportunity to learn identification of various fish species while conducting the trek.



Students, interns and learners assisting at the Zandvlei Estuary Nature Reserve quarterly fish trek (left and above) (Photos: L. Slingers 2017)

Hippopotamus (*Hippopotamus amphibius*) Capture Operation

The preparation work for a hippopotamus game capture operation started in October 2016 when it was discovered that a young hippopotamus (nicknamed "Chomp") had moved from the Rondevlei Section into the unfenced area of the reserve in the Strandfontein Section.

Once the exact location of the animal had been identified, a two-strand electric fence was constructed to confine the hippo to a smaller area. Construction of a capture boma then commenced and was completed in the previous quarter.

During this quarter, a transport permit was obtained and a transport container was placed ready next to the capture boma. The False Bay Nature Reserve staff started baiting the boma area with lucerne, to lure the hippopotamus and get the animal familiar with the boma.

Active capture operations began on 1 June 2017. Small teams were stationed on site during the evenings to carry out night operations for the first two weeks. The first capture attempts failed as the animal was weary of nearby staff hiding in the bush ready to trip the door mechanism should the hippo enter the boma. A plan was then formulated to install a trip sensor mechanism to capture the animal. This entailed rather using technology to activate the closing of the boma door than requiring manual operation. With assistance from the Reserve's close partners, The Cape Bird Club and Birdlife South Africa, funds were raised to purchase a magnetic lock and dual infrared burglar beam. This equipment was purchased and installed on 23 June 2017. Mr David Allan assisted with wiring the beams to the lock and powered it using a 12 volt battery. The lucerne baiting of the boma was continued and all grass growing in the electrified containment area was treated with herbicide to reduce the amount of food available to the hippopotamus and encourage it to seek the lucerne. A stand-alone video camera was placed inside the boma. The camera activates once triggered by movement and then sends a 10 second video to the nearby law enforcement (Quemic) control room using GSM network. This is the first time this method has been used by the reserve staff in a

game capture operation and it proved to be very successful, with the animal being captured a few days after the new trap mechanism was set.

On 28 June 2017 at 19h45 the hippopotamus was caught in the boma. Video footage from the remote sensor camera that was installed on the boma indicated that a hippopotamus had entered the boma. However, from the footage, the boma door was not visible, so it was not confirmed at that stage whether the animal had actually tripped the mechanism to close the door. The Area Manager of False Bay Nature Reserve, Mr Asieff Khan, waited on more video footage to confirm the next step to be taken. After the fourth video was received and it was still not clear as to whether the animal was trapped, it was decided that the boma should be approached on foot to ascertain if the door was actually closed. Once arriving at the boma it was positively confirmed that the boma trap door was closed. "Chomp" was coaxed from the boma into the transport container using a flashlight. The container was then loaded onto a flatbed truck, which travelled through the night (leaving at approximately 23h30) to the animal's new home at the Garden Route Game Lodge in Albertinia. The young male was released at approximately 05h00 on 29 June 2017. "Chomp" has joined two female hippopotami and it is hoped that they will soon establish a breeding pod.



Camera trap images captured of the young male hippo "Chomp" (above left and right) and hippopotamus capture operations in progress (below left and right) (Photos: Supplied by S. Khan 2017)



6. SOIL

Nothing to report this quarter.

7. WATER

Water Level Management at False Bay Nature Reserve

Strandfontein Section

Strandfontein Section contains a series of 22 sewage retention pans which are part of the Cape Flats Waste Water Treatment Works (CFWWTW). The pans are interlinked by means of inflow and outflow weirs. The water level in all the pans (primary, secondary and tertiary) can be manipulated by means of placing wooden planks into the weir to prevent water from flowing in or out of the pan (FBNR IRMP, 2011). As previously reported in the last quarter, the water levels in P1 and P2 were closed off to create a habitat comprised of sandy islands, shallow water and large littoral edges, which is perfect for wader bird species.

Zeekoevlei Annual Drawdown 2017: Opening the Zeekoevlei Weir

The Zeekoevlei annual draw down took place on 27 April 2017. Members from the local community came through to help with opening of the Zeekoevlei weir with much enthusiasm. People of all ages were eager to help with the removal of the weir chocks. Due to particularly low water levels this year, the impacts of opening the weir were not as evident as in previous years, but the desired flushing effect on the water body was still achieved.



Views of the Zeekoevlei annual drawdown event in April 2017: Children assisting Reserve staff with removing the weir chocks (left), members of the local community observing the event (above) and view of the open weir (below) (Photos: V. Day 2017)



Litter Removal at Zeekoevlei Section

During the annual Zeekoevlei drawdown period, the False Bay Nature Reserve was provided with 300 Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) workers over three weeks – approximately 100 people per week. Part of this group was tasked with litter removal in the Zeekoevlei wetland. Approximately 800 black bags full of litter were removed during this exercise.



EPWP worker cleaning the shoreline of Zeekoevlei (Photo: V. Day 2017)

Mr Walter Williams of the City of Cape Town Transport Department provided a contractor during this quarter again to assist with the removal of litter from the Big and Little Lotus Rivers. Approximately 64 000 black bags were used for the entire drawdown period clean-up operation at Zeekoevlei Section this quarter.

Water Flow Challenge at Zeekoevlei

After the annual drawdown event took place this quarter, it was noticed that the Zeekoevlei water body was not draining properly. The weir was inspected and it was found that debris had deliberately been placed in the weir wall to prevent water flow. The blockages were removed to allow water to flow freely through the weir again, so as to ensure the proper flushing of nutrients and pollutants out of the vlei and prevent excessive algal blooms.



False Bay Nature Reserve staff removing blockages from the Zeekoevlei weir (top left); subsequent water flow restored (top right); and debris used to block up weir (bottom left and right) (Photos: V. Day 2017)

Closure of the Zeekoevlei Weir

Due to the recent severe drought conditions being experienced in Cape Town, the drawdown period for Zeekoevlei was shortened this year to assist with the winter replenishment of the ground water. The weir was closed on 23 June 2017.



False Bay Nature Reserve staff closing the Zeekoevlei weir (Photo: L. Slingers 2017)

Rondevlei Section Annual Drawdown

Following the opening of the Rondevlei weir earlier in 2017, the dry conditions surrounding the weir allowed reserve staff the opportunity to repair the weir which had been damaged and leaking over the past year. New slots were ground into the existing weir structure in order for the weir to be closed properly. The weir was then closed on 5 June 2017, two days before a storm arrived in Cape Town in order to try retain as much water from rainfall as possible. New weir boards were installed in the weir wall and these were sealed with mastic sealant to prevent leaks. Despite a lack of heavy rainfall, the wetland has been filling with water gradually.

8. FIRE

Prescribed Ecological Burns at False Bay Nature Reserve

Rondevlei Section Prescribed Ecological Burn

A prescribed ecological burn was planned for the northern and eastern shores of the Rondevlei wetland. The purpose of the burn was to reduce nutrient loading in the reedbeds and wetland, particularly by burning the dry material from reeds that had been cut. If cut reeds are left behind, the nutrients contained in the plant material are then liberated through decomposition, stimulating further reed growth. An added advantage in clearing and burning the reedbeds is that it reduces the number of seeds produced when the plants flower in autumn and in turn reduces the establishment of new plants germinating from seed.

Reedbeds are important filters that remove nutrients out of water, thus they are able to filter pollutants from the storm water that flows into wetlands from surrounding developed areas. If excess nutrients are not removed from the water body then it can lead to eutrophication and in turn excess algal blooms and other imbalances. However, excess nutrients filtered by reeds can cause their growth to be prolific, hence requiring control to maintain a balance in the system.

On 24 May 2017, the planned burn was executed under ideal weather conditions (north-easterly wind direction and less than 10km/h). The initial part of the ecological burn was very slow as the piles of cut reeds burned more slowly than the standing reeds, being more densely compacted. It was then decided that the fire should be allowed to run with the wind to help drive the flames and allow for more effective burning. This worked very well and sped up the operation. At one point (when the fire reached block six of the planned burn area) the wind direction changed to a southerly direction and the fire moved toward the

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Rondevlei museum facility. Staff were then mobilised to cut the fire off at the paved footpath, but the wind direction changed again within a couple of minutes back to north-westerly and the block was then completed.

Active ignition stopped at 14h14 and mop-up operations then commenced to extinguish the fire. All of the “hotspots” were extinguished and teams were allowed to leave at 15h30. A False Bay Nature Reserve team was on duty for the entire night to attend to any possible flare-ups and extinguish these before they could spread. For the night, the team attended to two areas which had some smouldering embers. Despite some rain following the burn, some embers continued to burn and required follow-up work to extinguish completely on 29 May 2017. The burn was considered very successful as all the intended areas that were planned for the fire were burned.



Views of the prescribed ecological burn conducted at Rondevlei Section (above and below) (Photos: Supplied by S. Khan 2017)



Fire – Preparation and Planning

Controlled Brush Pile Burning at Strandfontein Section

The Strandfontein Section of False Bay Nature Reserve is planning to conduct a controlled brush pile burn for fuel reduction purposes. The burn is planned to take place along the southern side in management block four and five of Strandfontein Section. The fuel consists of plant materials from invasive alien vegetation cleared on site, consisting of rooikrans (*Acacia cyclops*).

It is important to note that the brush pile burn will only be executed during suitable weather conditions, and upon obtaining a burning permit from the City of Cape Town's Air Quality Management department and Fire and Rescue Department. A burn permit application was submitted to the latter departments on the 21 June 2017. Site preparation for the burn has commenced, namely stacking the plant material (rooikrans branches) in suitable brush piles ready for burning in a controlled manner.



Stacked brush piles in preparation for the brush pile burn at Strandfontein Section (Photo: R. Murovhi 2017)

Uncontrolled Wildfires at False Bay Nature Reserve

Zeekoevlei Section

On 2 April 2017 at 19h07, the Quemic law enforcement control room received a call from the security company (Global Security) at the main entrance gate to Zeekoevlei Section, reporting a fire on the eastern shore of Zeekoevlei. The Quemic Integrity Team was dispatched and upon arrival at 19h25 they found a small area alight between the shoreline and the ablution blocks. The fire was contained until the Lakeside fire department arrived on scene and helped extinguish the fire by 19h45. The site was monitored by the Integrity Team for possible flare ups through the night.



Fire on the eastern shore of Zeekoevlei (left) and rangers extinguishing the fire (right) (Photos: Quemic April monthly report 2017)

9. PEOPLE, TOURISM & EDUCATION

Environmental Education at False Bay Nature Reserve

The False Bay Nature Reserve staff extends thanks to Ms Jocelyn Anderson for standing in for People and Conservation Officer Bronwen Amayo from January – May 2017.

During this quarter the Rondevlei Section was visited by Lourier Primary School and Muizenberg Junior School.

The Cape Town Environmental Education Trust (CTEET) ran various camps with nine schools reaching over 1 000 learners between their two environmental education centres.

Table: Environmental Education Statistics for April - June 2017

| Programmes | No. of schools | No. of learners | No. of Adults | No. of teachers | Hours of programmes |
|----------------------------------|----------------|-----------------|---------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| CCT on reserves | 2 | 352 | 46 | 18 | 30 |
| CCT off reserves | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Partner organisation on reserves | 1 | 56 | 0 | 2 | 4 |
| CTEET on reserves | 0 | 45 | 9 | 0 | 13 |
| CTEET camps – ZEEP | 7 | 636 | 6 | 63 | 161 |
| CTEET camps – FBEC | 2 | 402 | 103 | 24 | 99 |
| CTEET off reserves | 1 | 416 | 5 | 13 | 84 |



Lourier Primary School learners looking at scat from a Cape clawless otter with Jocelyn Anderson at the Rondevlei Section (Photo: Unknown 2017)

False Bay Nature Reserve Birdathon: Festival and Fun-walk Event

The annual False Bay Nature Reserve Birdathon: Festival and Fun-walk event took place on 6 May 2017. Despite the weather being overcast and cool, approximately 500 people attended the event. The event started off with a walk, participants could choose one of three distances to follow, starting at the Zeekoeflei picnic area going into the Strandfontein Section, then returning to the picnic area to enjoy the various stalls.

Participating children visited five different stands along the walk took part in a quiz, for which they could later win spot prizes. Perivale Primary school won a group overnight camp with CTEET, while Levana Primary School won a group educational outing to the Two Oceans Aquarium in Cape Town.

Food vendors sold snacks while the other presenters showcased their work. The Cape Bird Club, Eagle Encounters, the Cape Reptile Club and Melomed - the main sponsors, were amongst other stalls at the festival.



Participants in the fun walk (above left) (Photo: G. Lawson 2017) and children using a telescope (above right) (Photo: K. Newman 2017)



The Cape Reptile Club showing snakes (left) (Photo: G. Lawson 2017) and children meeting raptors brought by Eagle encounters (Photo: K. Newman 2017)

Indigenous Planting at Duneside Primary School

On 29 June 2017 an indigenous planting day was held at Duneside Primary School, facilitated by False Bay Nature Reserve. The areas planted are located at entry points and well-used areas around the school grounds. To prepare for planting, these areas were cleared of rubble and litter, and this had a noticeable visual impact improving their appearance. Learners from the school assisted in planting all of the plants and trees and seem to have loads of fun while doing it. On the day, 110 plants and 20 trees were planted at the school.



The indigenous plants being placed out ready for planting at Duneside Primary School (Photo: S. Speelman 2017)

10. STAFF MATTERS



After years of working at False Bay Nature Reserve, first as a student conservation officer then as a worker, then as a supervisor and finally as an assistant conservation manager, Mr Clint Williams has been successful in finding new employment at Intaka Island in Century City as a assistant conservation officer. Mr Williams is known for his hard work, his dedication and most of all willingness to help wherever he can. The Reserve staff will miss him, but wish him all the best in his new position.

Clint Williams determined to retrieve one piece of water hyacinth in a pan in Strandfontein Section (left) (Photo: Unknown)

Staff Appointments

Mr Rolivhuwa Murovhi was recently appointed as the new Reserve Supervisor for Strandfontein and Pelican Park Sections as of 1 June 2017. Mr Murovhi is not new to the City of Cape Town Biodiversity Management Branch, as he first started his journey with the "Groen Sebenza" Internship programme, after which he was appointed as a field ranger at Helderberg Nature Reserve, before coming to join the team at False Bay Nature Reserve.



New Reserve Supervisor Rolivhuwa Murovhi (left)
(Photo: K. Anthony 2017).

Cape Town Environmental Education Trust (CTEET) NQF Level 2 Learners

On 3 April 2017, two new NQF level 2 learners started at False Bay Nature Reserve under the supervision of Shihabuddeen Khan. The programme is for six months and they will be leaving in September 2017. The NQF learnerships are funded by CATHSETA and implemented by the Cape Town Environmental Education Trust (CTEET). The learners are placed on City of Cape Town nature reserves and various projects around the City. These programmes are structured to enable youth within Cape Town to have improved employment opportunities. If the learners are successful they receive an NQF level 2 certificate in Nature Conservation to hopefully further their career in this field.

Mercer University Volunteers

Two volunteers from Mercer University (Georgia, United States of America) started working at False Bay Nature Reserve on 29 May 2017 and will end their volunteer contracts in July 2017. They are enjoying their time at False Bay Nature Reserve and gaining valuable experience in the field of nature conservation.

Cape Town Environmental Education Trust (CTEET) Interns

Two interns from the Cape Town Environmental Education Trust (CTEET) who were based at the Zeekoevlei Environmental Education Centre during 2016, asked to be transferred to work from the False Bay Nature Reserve Headquarters from January 2017 in order to gain more nature conservation experience. They previously gained valuable experience in the environmental education sector, but very little nature conservation experience. Their contracts ended on 30 June 2017. The interns assisted with the Rondevlei annual drawdown, hippo capture, prescribed ecological burns, veld rehabilitation and many more aspects. They were very hard working and have a good work ethic which will allow them to progress in their careers.



Interns, students and volunteers at False Bay Nature Reserve (from left to right): Angela Lent (Mercer volunteer), Sangesakhe Speelman (intern), Ashley Ndulukane (NQF 2 learner), Chelsea Bailey (Mercer volunteer), Curtley Fortune (NQF 2 learner) with intern Nangamso Nguza (Photos: L. Slingers 2017)

Staff Training and Development

Zeekoevlei Eastern Shore Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP)

The Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) project continued at Zeekoevlei Section throughout the months of April, May and June 2017. The projects' original end date was scheduled for 9 April 2017, but due to extra funding received and a small cost-saving on the project, the programme was able to continue until 30 June 2017. Fourteen local community members were employed through this project.

The EPWP staff focused on general maintenance of the Zeekoevlei eastern shore – e.g. cleaning toilets and braai areas and cleaning up litter along the roads and pathways.

During the month of May 2017, False Bay was given 300 EPWP workers over a period of three weeks. Some of these staff were stationed at Zeekoevlei Section to complete outstanding work. These jobs included litter clean-ups for the Zeekoevlei annual draw down; weeding the paving; and clearing reeds to try and prevent the spread of morning glory (*Ipomoea* sp.) along the southern shore of Zeekoevlei. The paving team was very successful at cleaning up the paving on the eastern shore of Zeekoevlei Section. It took three weeks with a total of 40 people to clean up the paving.



EPWP staff weeding and cleaning paving on the eastern shore of Zeekoevlei (Photo: V. Day 2017)

11. LAW ENFORCEMENT

Law Enforcement Incidents

False Bay Nature Reserve had 20 law enforcement incidences reported over the past two months. The statistics for month of June 2017 have not yet been received from the Quemic law enforcement rangers.

Damage to Property

On 11 April 2017 the Quemic Integrity Team responded to a vehicle accident in front of ablution block number seven on the eastern shore of Zeekoevlei. They found that a vehicle had driven into a wall close to the ablution block. The driver of the vehicle did not have a driver's licence on him and the vehicle was unlicensed. The Quemic Control room contacted the Traffic department and Grassy Park police station (SAPS) to inform them about the incident. The police arrived at the scene and spoke to the men in the vehicle. No details were taken down, as they agreed to fix the wall themselves. Quemic Integrity Team remained in the area until the wall was fixed.



The vehicle that crashed into the wall of ablution block number seven (left) and close-up view of damage to the wall (right) (Photos: Quemic April monthly report 2017)

At 19h22 on 18 April 2017, the Quemic Control Room received a call from Global Force Security company at the Zeekoevlei Section gatehouse requesting the Integrity Team's assistance. They reported that a vehicle had driven through the entrance boom gate at high speed, causing damage to the infrastructure. They were unable to take down the registration number and make of the vehicle. The security guards had already contacted Grassy Park police station (SAPS). The Quemic Integrity Team responded and followed the speeding vehicle inside the Reserve. The vehicle eventually stopped at the entrance of the Cape Flats Waste Water Treatment Works. The Quemic Rangers approached the vehicle and apprehended the driver, who was under the influence of alcohol. The driver was then escorted to the Quemic Control Room, awaiting the police. At 20h45 the Law Enforcement department arrived. The suspect was handed over to Law Enforcement and from there the suspect was taken to Grassy Park police station. The Quemic Rangers followed up on the arrest and found that no official case was opened against the driver.

Theft

On 27 April 2017 the Quemic Integrity Team responded to a call from False Bay Nature Reserve staff member Mr Henry Pheiffer about two male persons inside the Rondevlei Section of the Reserve, cutting and removing fencing. Quemic Integrity Team immediately responded and upon arrival, found only one male cutting the fence. The suspect was apprehended and taken to Grassy Park police station (SAPS).



**Suspect that was caught stealing fencing material (left)
(Quemic April Monthly report 2017)**

On 2 May 2017 the Quemic law enforcement rangers conducted a patrol along the Strandfontein Road fenceline of Strandfontein Section. They found that three fence poles had been stolen and the fence itself was lying on the ground. The theft occurred about 20 m from Baden Powell Drive intersection. Rangers reported this to Mr S. Khan (Rondevlei Section Reserve Supervisor). The rangers along with Mr Dylan Mentor (False Bay Nature Reserve nature conservation student) repaired the fence line.



A Quemic ranger examining the loose fence (left) along Strandfontein Road and rangers and False Bay Nature Reserve student Dylan Mentor repairing the vandalised fenceline (Photo: Quemic May quarterly report 2017)

Public Indecency

Two incidences of public indecency were reported on 1, 15 and 27 April 2017. On the first two occasions the Quemic Integrity Team found two people on the eastern shore of Zeekoevlei Section engaged in acts of public indecency in ablution block number four and along the shoreline respectively. The people involved were issued with verbal warnings and escorted off the Reserve. On the third incident, a vehicle was parked in front of the gate to the area of Zeekoevlei Section known as Billy's block. The Quemic law enforcement rangers went to inspect the vehicle and found no occupants. The rangers managed to find the occupant in the bush. The two people were then instructed to get dressed, given a verbal warning and escorted off site.

Unsafe Activities

On 3 April 2017 the Quemic law enforcement rangers found a group of 14 children (ages ranging from 8 to 14) swimming in the retention pans on the eastern shore of Zeekoevlei. They were informed by the rangers that no swimming is allowed and the children left site.

On 25 May 2017, Mr Andrew Arries (Visitor Control Officer at Zeekoevlei Section) informed the Quemic Control Room that a complaint was lodged by a member of the public about four boys throwing empty glass bottles in the Zeekoevlei eastern shore picnic area. Quemic Rangers approached the boys, who then

ran towards Pelican Park suburb through a small gate and out of the Reserve. Rangers disposed of the broken glass bottles to prevent injury and clean-up the area.

The Quemic law enforcement rangers found two boys, both 5 years of age, unattended in ablution block number two on the eastern shore of Zeekoevlei Section on 13 May 2017. The Quemic Integrity Team was informed and they escorted the two minors back home.

Trespassing

On 16 April 2017, the Quemic law enforcement Integrity Team found a male person hiding in the bushes on the eastern shore of Zeekoevlei Section. The man was issued a verbal warning and escorted from the Reserve.

On 17 April 2017, the Quemic Integrity Team found a male person inside the Western Province Rowing Club premises. Upon questioning the man about how he gained access, he informed the rangers that the "gatehouse ranger" had given him access. The man had launched his boat, but did not make use of the slipway; instead he gained access illegally and drove over the vegetation to gain access. The Visitor Control Officer from Rondevlei Section, Mr Mark Petersen, was informed about the incident and he immediately asked the man to remove the vessel from the water at the False Bay Nature Reserve Headquarters. The gentleman was given information on the correct contact details for accessing the slipway legally and was informed of the procedure for obtaining a boating permit. The gentleman was asked to leave the premises and he complied.



The boat that was illegally launched from the rowing club premises (Photo: Quemic April monthly report 2017)

Illegal Narcotics Usage

On 24 April 2017 the Quemic Control Room was informed by Mr Asieff Khan (Area Manager of False Bay Nature Reserve) about a City of Cape Town staff member (City Parks Division) smoking marijuana (dagga) next to the office building at the False Bay Nature Reserve Headquarters. The Quemic Integrity Team responded to investigate and found the gentleman next to the office building. He was in possession of marijuana that had been smoked. Quemic Rangers confiscated the substance and destroyed it. It was decided that the matter would be dealt with internally.

Land Invasion

The Quemic Control Room received a call on 13 May 2017 from Mr Ashley Barry (Visitor Control Officer at Rondevlei Section), with a complaint from members of the public about people living in makeshift (informal) structures on open fields along Fisherman's Walk and Zeekoe Road in Zeekoevlei. The Quemic Integrity Team went to investigate and confirmed that there were illegal structures erected on land that is zoned for

housing development. Construction workers on the sites verified that the Anti-land Invasion department was aware of the situation.



Views of the land invasion in Zeekoevlei (left and right) (Photos: Quemic April quarterly report 2017)

Boundary Protection

On 26 May 2017, the Quemic rangers conducted a fence patrol at Rondevlei Section on the request of Mr Shihabuddeen Khan (Reserve Supervisor of Rondevlei Section). Some holes were found in the fenceline between the Reserve and Rooikraans sports field, which were repaired by the rangers.

Illegal Harvesting

On 26 May 2017, the Quemic rangers found six boys (no details taken) illegally picking sour figs (*Carpobrotus edulis*) along the eastern shore of Zeekoevlei Section. They were issued a verbal warning and escorted from the Reserve.

Noise complaint

On 28 May 2017 the Quemic Control Room received a complaint from Mr Asieff Khan (Area Manager of False Bay Nature Reserve) that was apparently coming from the False Bay Nature Reserve Headquarters. The Quemic rangers went to investigate the site and when they arrived, they found that a private function was being held at the building and the people attending the function were intoxicated. A fight had broken out. Quemic Integrity Team was dispatched. The people at the function were refusing to leave. The Grassy Park police station (SAPS) and City of Cape Town Law Enforcement department were contacted, but the rangers were able to get all the guests at the function to eventually leave the Reserve without assistance from SAPS or Law Enforcement.

12. INFRASTRUCTURE & EQUIPMENT

Operationally Funded Projects

Zeekoevlei Eastern Shore Repairs

In April 2017, False Bay Nature Reserve staff members Mr Henry Pheiffer and Mr Abdul Gamiet Revell repaired, reinstalled and reconnected the pipes on the eastern shore of Zeekoevlei, to establish the water supply to the ablution blocks provided for the visitors.

In the first week of May 2017, staff members Mr Henry Pheiffer, Mr Dylan Mentor and Ms Beryl Steers reinstalled the doors in the ablution blocks on the eastern shore of Zeekoevlei. The doors were missing due to damage, theft, and vandalism.

Rondevlei Section Visitor Facility Maintenance

Several minor repairs were carried out to visitor facilities at Rondevlei Section. These included the levelling of the bridge leading to the boat house, as the bridge was uneven and needed to be corrected to avoid possible injury. The area under the bridge was hardened and gum poles were placed where needed to level it out. Other work included securing the loose planks along the board walk leading to the bird hides and placing erosion control measures along the path to prevent further erosion to the bank from hippopotami walking along the pathway.



The bridge leading to the boat house at Rondevlei Section (Photo: S. Dreyer 2017)

All loose planks along the board walk leading to the fourth (Patrick Wheeler) and sixth (Scotto) bird hides were checked by the Health and Safety representative after a report received about a loose plank. Any planks that were loose were secured using nails to prevent injury.

The plumbing at the Rondevlei tearoom facility was fitted with a large holding tank for grey water, as the capacity of the existing tank was not sufficient for the usage of the facility. The pump was also replaced as the previous one was not fully operational. All repairs were done internally by Mr Tony van Ginkel of the Maitland workshop of the City of Cape Town Biodiversity Management Branch.



The pump and holding tank installed at the tea room facility at Rondevlei Section (Photos: S. Dreyer 2017)



A section of paving leading to the fifth (Winterbottom) bird hide at Rondevlei Section was being damaged due to the high amount of hippopotamus activity next to the path. This resulted in the banks becoming eroded due to run-off and trampling. Pine logs were placed along the bank to reduce the rate of erosion and to discourage the hippopotami from using the path. The pine logs will eventually decay but will hopefully secure the bank long enough for shore line vegetation to establish itself and secure the bank.



The path to the Winterbottom hide before and after intervention (Photos: M. Samsodien and S. Dreyer 2017)

Boardwalk/ Platform Maintenance: Strandfontein Section

The staff of False Bay Nature Reserve assisted in maintaining and repainting the boardwalk/platform at pan P3 at Strandfontein Section.



The boardwalk at Strandfontein Section before and after maintenance (Photo: S Dreyer 2017)

Zandwolf Section: Lukannan Drive Sewage Leak

In mid-May a sewage leak was discovered near Zandwolf Section along Lukannan Drive near the NSRI base. The leak was reported to Mr Ossie Lander from the waste-water department and was repaired within three days. The leak was located in an active dune field and required minor excavation to access. All contaminated sand was moved to the local landfill site and clean sand was returned to the dune field and used to close illegal 4x4 vehicle access points.

Zandwolf Section Clean-up

The recent injection of Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) staff at Zandwolf Section in the month of May 2017 allowed for the much needed clean-up of the area. One week was dedicated to cleaning litter on the beach between the Strandfontein Pavilion and Mnandi public facility, with a total of 3 black bags collected along with some materials too large to be placed in bags. The waste was disposed of at the local

Coastal Park landfill site by the staff of False Bay Nature Reserve and assistance from the City of Cape Town Solid Waste Department.

Another week and a half was dedicated to clearing areas affected by illegal dumping and areas previously occupied by illegal structures. This clean-up amounted to approximately 600 black bags filled. Piles of bags and materials were placed next to the road for collection by Reserve staff and were also collected by the City of Cape Town Solid Waste Department when they had the capacity to do so.



Waste materials retrieved from Zandwolf Section stacked ready for collection along the road edge (Photo: M. Samsodien 2017)

Pelican Park Section Fence Maintenance

Staff member Mr Clint Williams and his team of Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) workers carried out repairs to the Pelican Park fence line in May 2017. They replaced missing gum poles along Strandfontein Road as needed and tightened the fence wire at the top of Beak Road in Pelican Heights.

Road Maintenance at Strandfontein Section

The Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) staff undertook road maintenance activities at Strandfontein Section this quarter. Staff from the Cape Flats Waste Water Treatment Works (CFWWTW) assisted the Reserve with this work using a front-end loader.



EPWP staff carrying out road maintenance in Strandfontein Section (above left and right) and assistance provided by the Cape Flats Waste Water Treatment Works (below) (Photos: S. Dreyer 2017).



**False Bay Nature Reserve | False Bay -natuurreservaat | ULondolozo lweNdalo False Bay
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For more details with regards to items mentioned in the above Report Document, please refer to the relevant site calendars on www.biodiversity.co.za. For more information on the City's nature reserves, visit www.capetown.gov.za/naturereserves