



APRIL 2009 MONTHLY REPORT

COMPLIANCE MANAGEMENT

During April, with its Easter holidays and long weekends, 103 anglers and/or bait collectors along the shores of the Fransmanshoek Conservancy were checked for valid permits. Twenty three people (22%) were not obeying the law, thus having no fishing permits, having expired permits or leaving their permits at home. This is a quite a lot, luckily no one was catching anything! Most got friendly warnings, and were asked to pack up. Some were asked to fax us their licences if it was at home.

On the **8th** Lock joint up with Marine and Coastal Management (MCM) inspector Babalwa Buda on a vehicle patrol within the Fransmanshoek Conservancy. Mr L Pelser from Jankempdorp was issued a R300 fine, J534 no. 1065, for fishing without a licence at "Die Saal".

Whilst on patrol at Fransmanshoek on the **13th**, the rangers caught Mr AEO October from George with an undersize White Steenbras. The fish measured 41cm, 19 cm too short. MCM was informed of this, the fish was confiscated, and Mr October's details and the fish were sent though to the MCM offices.



White Steenbras must be 60 cm in length to legally be kept. It has a distinctive pig-like snout and is also called a Pignose Grunter. Only one of this species is allowed to be caught per day.

On Tuesday the **14th** the rangers drove to Boggomsbaai to inspect a path, made on the dune by a property owner of Erf 551 Boggomsbaai on Oyster Drive, going from his house down to the beach. Such activities are illegal and cases like this



can be followed up by the Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning (DEADP), with the possibility of a hefty fine.



Our sensitive frontal dune vegetation is under great stress. Pathways like this increase soil erosion, which leads to the formation of gullies.

On the **3rd** Wayne was informed about a Vleesbaai property owner, Mr G. Le Roux, who was suspected of cutting his few hundred year old White Milkwood illegally. On the **17th** Wayne inspected the remains of the milkwood tree, and saw that the tree had not been trimmed, but had been diminished to half its original size. White Milkwoods are a protected species of tree, and anyone cutting or pruning a milkwood without a permit can rightfully be fined by the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry (DWAF). The case is under investigation.

On the **29th** Lock spotted 3 motor driven gliders from Kanon landing on Visbaai Beach. This is totally unacceptable. No vehicles are allowed on beaches, even ones that fly. They were given friendly warnings and asked to leave the area immediately which they did.

Mrs Beyers called the rangers to remove a dead Sheep Dog from Blok-se-baai. Lock went to inspect on the **29th** and found the dead dog there lying on the rocks. The dog was removed from site.

During Easter weekend people in the 4x4 camping site heard gun-shots being fired from the tar road below. One of the campers ran out and saw a white Isuzu



Bakkie and I guessed the rifle was probably a small calibre like a 0.22 with a silencer. That night Wayne looked for any injured or dead animals but couldn't find anything. The next morning Lock and Wayne inspected the area where the shots were fired and found a Cape Grysbok still alive, but shot through the stomach. This is a disgrace. Actions like these make our pristine area vulnerable, and the rangers are asking everyone to help keep a lookout for any such activities, and report them immediately, not the following morning!

These were not the only shots fired that weekend. The night before more shots were fired with what seemed to be with a heavier gun. An article was published by Fred Orban in the Mossel Bay Advertiser shortly after to discourage such wrong-doers.

ALIEN VEGETATION CLEARING

On Wednesday the **1st** Lock re-felled 121 resprouting Manatokas at the end of the Geoff Cowley Footpath. It's very important to treat Manatoka with herbicide after felling, otherwise it will just resprout again. Free herbicide can be collected from the rangers to treat **your** Manatokas

On the **1st** of April Lock and Wayne inspected the Rooikrans clearing work being done by Steven Prins, a local wood cutting contractor. Steven finished Rooikrans clearing on two plots, that of Fritz Snyckers and Pierre Le Roux. Overall good work was done. Some sections were very dense.



A thick section of Rooikrans cleared on the erf of Fritz Snyckers by Steven and his team. Brush packing as seen in this picture is essential to limit soil erosion.



Steven Prins is currently busy clearing Rooikrans on the erf of Steve Kotze. If anyone is interested in buying braai wood at discount prices, contact Steven Prins at 079 706 7680.

Abie Steenberg, another wood-cutting contractor from Mossel Bay has started clearing Rooikrans on the erf of Dr Jannie Snyman, number 257/28.

We would like to thank Dr Jannie Snyman for coming on board, helping to conserve the natural veld. With all these individuals showing their dedication to conservation, the conservancy as a whole is making great head-way with its fight against alien vegetation.

FIXED POINT PHOTOGRAPHY

Every six months the Fransmanshoek Peninsula is monitored by fixed point photos. The increase/decrease in erosion and veld condition can be seen and correct management decisions can then be made. Here is one example of how the footpath leading down to Stilbaaitjie from "Die Saal" parking lot changed by good management actions.



Before: 2007



After: 2008

OSTRICH CAPTURE

As part of Lock's final year practical training in nature conservation he helped Andrie Janse van Rensburg on the 6th of April to capture ostrich on Misgunst farm. Ostriches are seen as game, but are still a very important animal for the agricultural sector.



ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

Environmental education is one of the best ways to get the message of conservation across to the people. Fred Orban (Oystercatcher Trails/Boggomsbaai Conservancy) asked Lock to educate his tourist groups about the African Black Oystercatcher. A good way is to prepare a PowerPoint presentation. The presentation covers numerous aspects of the African Black Oystercatcher, giving the tourists a good idea of its status and ecology. The talk is held at the Sandpiper Sports & Spa in Boggomsbaai, normally after the 2nd day's hike. Lock has done seven of these talks over the past two months.



Here Lock is explaining about the different oystercatchers you get on the South African coastline.

Dana Bay Conservancy asked Lock to man a stand during their annual conservancy day on the **22nd** of April. The stand was set up outside the community hall in Dana Bay. The theme of the day was growing and bringing fynbos back into your garden. Lock decided to display various indigenous and exotic plant samples in glass jars. Twenty indigenous and five exotic plants were on display for people to examine and ask questions. As Dana Bay Conservancy Day was held on National Voting Day, it enjoyed quite a few people making the day a success.



The importance of our coastal and thicket vegetation inspired the Dana Bay residents. They seemed to be keener now to plant more indigenous plants.

50-50 TV SHOOT ON THE PROPOSED PETROSA LNG FACILITY

The 50-50 television team came to the Fransmanshoek Conservancy on the **18th** of April to shoot a story about the proposed LNG facility that is proposed to be developed in Vleesbaai. The crew stayed in Boggomsbaai at the Sandpiper Cottages. The first shoot was done in Boggomsbaai where Johan Botha, the presenter, interviewed Johan De Preez of Dana Bay Homeowners Association. He gave background surrounding the project and explained the biggest risks involved. Wayne was interviewed second at Fransmanshoek where the dangers to the ecology of the bay were discussed. Fred Orban was interviewed last in Boggomsbaai where he explained the impacts such a facility could have on the tourism of the Garden Route.



Johan interviewing Wayne at Fransmanshoek.

KELP GULLS POISONED

In the area between Dana Bay and Vleesbaai, Kelp Gulls have been dying at an alarming rate. Lock followed-up on these findings and came into contact with Carol Walton, who runs the Seabird and Penguin Rehabilitation Centre in Mossdustry. The most obvious diagnosis is that the gulls are dying from botulism, a type of food-poisoning caused by eating rotting food that has been contaminated with Botulism organisms. Botulism affects the central nervous system and causes progressive muscular paralysis.

At this stage no real evidence can lead us to the causes of the sea gull's deaths, but as a matter of fact they are being poisoned somewhere and somehow. About 80 seagulls have been found dead on our beaches and many more may die if something is not done soon!

Carol treats the sick gulls with electrolytes, a method used for flushing out the toxins from inside the gull's body. So far Carol has saved about 15 gulls from certain death. Lock has also removed four of the dead seagulls' stomachs which were sent away for further analysis by Eden District Municipality. This will show what they are feeding on and we will hopefully be able to trace back to where they are being poisoned.



BOGGOMSBAAI CONSERVANCY MANAGEMENT MEETING

The meeting was held on the 9th at the Sandpiper Sport & Spa. Lock and Wayne went on behalf of the Fransmanshoek Conservancy. The main items discussed on the agenda was the election of the committee, illegal developments of erven 582, 550, 573, 527,521 & 587 in Boggomsbaai, the new entrance road, the drainage at the beach parking lot, cat problems in Boggomsbaai, the Boggomsbaai Conservancy constitution and the proposed PetroSA LNG Facility.

LEAHERBACK TURTLE FOUND AT KANON

On the **21st** of April a juvenile Leatherback Turtle was found by two Kanon holiday-makers. The baby turtle was still very fresh and must have died that day.

Baby turtles live in the Agulhas Current until they are old and strong enough to swim and go there own way. They will then break-away from the current and hunt along the shoreline. Only the females will return to the land to lay there eggs. Sometimes with bad weather and shifting currents baby turtles are forced out of the Agulhas Current and, unable to swim long distances on their own steam, end up stranded on our beaches.



Luke Kruger and Andrew Queenan with their finding, the Leatherback Turtle.



FRANSMANSHOEK PENINSULA MAINTENANCE

On the 6th the rangers fixed and erected the Fransmanshoek welcome sign that had fallen off during a strong windstorm the week before. The toilet seats at the Malbaai toilets were widened with a jigsaw, making your private business more pleasurable.

CAT MONITORING PROJECT

Collecting photographs of Caracal spoor is part of Lock's research project on cats. It can give you an indication of the size of the cat, whilst plotting the spoor with a GPS position can give you an indication of movement patterns and densities. This forms part of the bigger project that deals with the dietary preferences of Caracal.



A Caracal spoor found under Springerbaai Eco-estate on the dunes.



A whole bucket full of baby loggerheads washed up at Tarka, Vleesbaai. Luckily all were rescued and taken for further care to the Mossel Bay Dias Museum from where they will be taken out to sea by trawler and dropped off in the Agulhas Current.

**Lock Nel
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