



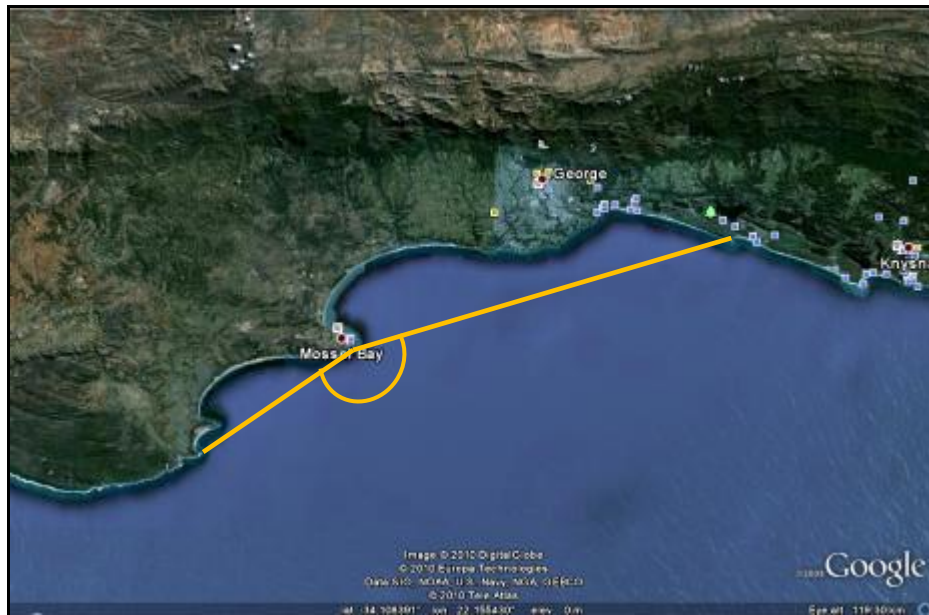
## MARCH 2010 MONTHLY REPORT

### Compliance Management

During the month of March, 7 foot patrols were carried out by Roland, covering both Visbaai and Vleesbaai. A total of 55 fishing permits were checked during March. Of the 55 permits checked 4 did not have valid fishing permits. Friendly warnings were issued to each of the offenders.

On the 9<sup>th</sup> Roland and Damien met with Captain Lucas of the Mossel Bay Border Police. Captain Lucas has agreed to respond to any calls from the rangers regarding illegal commercial fishing within Vleesbaai and Visbaai. As it stands, current legislation prohibits any **bottom trawling** by commercial trawlers within the area to the north (landward) of a straight line drawn from Cape Vacca to Cape St. Blaize (Mossel Bay) and from Cape St Blaize to Gerickes Point (Sedgefield). There is also a closed area, drawn as a circle, 1.5 nautical miles around Cape St Blaize.

One must remember that this does not prevent commercial line fishing or commercial long line fishing within the defined area. However, if any commercial fishing vessel suspected of being a bottom trawling vessel, is spotted within the either Vleesbaai or Visbaai, please report it to the rangers immediately.



The area landward (north) of the yellow lines indicate a closed area to bottom trawling. (Note: Circle not drawn to exact scale)

### Roving Creel

As mentioned in the December monthly report, plans to expand the area being covered in the roving creel surveys are materializing. On the 17<sup>th</sup> Roland met with Wendy West



from Anchor Environmental Consultants to discuss the implementation of surveying the conservancy and surrounding area.

WWFSA (**World Wide Fund for Nature South Africa**) have received funding from The National Lottery to carry out Fisheries Monitoring programs along South Africa's coastline. One of these projects is the monitoring of recreational line fishing from the shore, otherwise known as roving creel. Anchor has been contracted by WWFSA to roll out the roving creel program at various sites along South Africa's coastline. The Fransmanshoek Conservancy and surrounding area has been identified as a key area to which funding is being allocated.

Two survey agents will be employed by Anchor, to survey the section of coast from the Gouritz River mouth to the Groot Brak River mouth. This huge stretch of coastline will be broken up into walk-able sections, and surveyed in a scientific manner in order to make the data analyzable.

An advert will be placed in the Mossel Bay advertiser for three weeks in April, seeking two fit applicants for the job. Wendy will be returning to the area on the 20<sup>th</sup> of April, and together with Roland will conduct interviews with the applicants. The two successful applicants will be trained on the 21<sup>st</sup>, and surveying will begin before the end of April.

Roving creel studies give us valuable information of where fishing effort is highest along the coast, what fish are being targeted in different areas and most importantly the data gives us catch rates for different areas. Over a period of time we hope to pick up trends in the catch rate, either improving or getting worse. The catch rate data ultimately tells us whether current legislation and current Marine Protected Areas are working to recover our fish stocks.

### **Alien Clearing**

The 5<sup>th</sup> marked the last day of the Visbaai dune Alien clearing project. The two contractors Steven Prins and Abie Steenberg have felled and poisoned every alien Manatoka tree on the dunes. Both contractors and their teams worked well, successfully completing the project within the three week deadline. Monitoring and follow up clearing will be carried out later in the year. Once again our thanks is extended to WESSA for making the funding available.

### **Game Count at Springerbaai**

On the 15<sup>th</sup> Damien assisted Fred Orbans Students in conducting a preliminary game count of the Springbok at the Springerbaai Eco-Estate. The rough game count was done to get an estimate of the amount of Springbok within the estate, as well as to work out where it would be best to do the line transects when carrying out the actual count. The actual game count will take place in winter some time.

### **Maintenance**

The usual maintenance was again carried out on the Fransmanshoek peninsula. The toilets were cleaned, regular litter runs were done on every patrol and survey, and the water gulleys to the speed-bumps were dug out.



**Damien getting ready to blast clean the public toilets on the Fransmanshoek Peninsula.**

### **Camera Traps**

In 2009 Lock Nel (previous ranger for Fransmanshoek Conservancy) obtained five Game Camera Traps through funding from the Garden Route Casino. The five cameras have been in operation ever since, however a number of problems were encountered with them. The main problem was the batteries lasting a maximum of two to five days, as opposed to two to four weeks. After much research and one being sent back to the supplier, it seems the 12 volt batteries that are being used to run the cameras are not suitable and that D-Cell batteries are more effective.

With such a short battery life, the rangers are not able to tend to the cameras on such a short rotation. However, Fred Orban has recently taken on three students to work as guides on the Oystercatcher trail. The guides have enough free time to manage the cameras on a three to five day rotation. Currently the students are getting some good results from cameras placed within the Kleinbos and Springerbaai Development. The students will manage the cameras until such time that the correct equipment can be purchased for a longer battery life.



**A pair of porcupines, looking for a midnight snack.**



**On the left a Common Duiker visits the waterhole, while the ever present Caracal makes a rare midday appearance a couple of hours later.**

### **Mossel Bay South Coast Fire Protection Association (MBSCFPA)**

The Mossel Bay South Coast Fire Protection Association (MBSCFPA) has been registered as of the 4<sup>th</sup> of December 2009. The MBSCFPA seeks to improve the management of veldfires in the area by having; action plans in place, the possibility of firebreak agreements between landowners and the sharing of fire fighting resources. On top of this, many insurance companies are recognizing FPA's, and offering substantially reduced rates for members of FPA's.

It must be noted, that current legislation (NATIONAL VELD AND FOREST FIRE ACT 101 OF 1998) states that each landowner needs to make a fire break around his or her property, have basic firefighting equipment on his or her property and trained firefighting staff. FPA's are divided up into different task group areas, each task group works out an action plan for their area. The action plan lays out where possible fire break exemptions could be laid out, identifies where fire fighting resources are based and identifies firefighting skilled personal in the area.

For firebreak exemptions, a formal proposal needs to be made to the Minister, giving good reason for the exemption of firebreaks in that area. There seems however to be some confusion amongst the different departments as to whether fire break exemptions are possible and legal. While it was first thought that firebreak exemptions are possible, it seems that nothing is official, so as it stands each property owner, whether a member of an FPA or not, must comply with the above mentioned legislation. This is rather unreasonable, as firebreaks are expensive to create and hectares of indigenous vegetation would have to be cleared. Currently we are waiting for a reply to a letter that the MBSCFPA has sent to the SCFPA to clarify this issue for us.

The Fransmanshoek Conservancy falls under Task Group 3 of the MBSCFPA. Information, membership forms and the costs for each Erf are currently being worked out for landowners within Task Group 3's area, and will be sent out as soon as possible.

### **Digital Herbarium + Digital Shell Catalogue**

The digital herbarium has finally started to be loaded onto the Fransmanshoek Webpage. Due to a limited amount of webhosting space, only a few can be loaded on at a time.



Check out the Fransmanshoek Webpage to flick through some of the plants in our area.

Damien has started identifying and cataloguing shells that wash up along the Conservancy's coastline. One often collects and picks up many shells along the coast, but we very seldom take the time to actually find out what species it is, or where it naturally occurs.

The same format as the digital herbarium is being used to lay out the information. The sheets will hopefully be able to be loaded onto the Fransmanshoek webpage as well, making it really easy to identify any shell you pick up around the Fransmanshoek Conservancy.

**EDEN**  
NATURAL MONUMENTS  
1. SAARBURG 2. PLEIN 3. TERSIG  
KONINKRIJK DER OORDE

**Fransmanshoek Conservancy Shell Collection**

**Fransmanshoek**

**Common name:**  
Paper nautilus

**Class:**  
Cephalopoda

**Scientific name:**  
*Argonauta argo*

**Range:**  
Cape point - Kosi Bay

**Paper nautilus**

**Characteristics:**  
The shell is produced by the female only, and is much thinner than other shells. This shell serves primarily as a brood chamber; the male is planktonic in nature. The nautilus has eight arms, two of which are modified. These two arms main functions are the formation and holding of the shell.

**CapeNature**  
D.A. Cozart

An example of the digital shell catalogue, busy being compiled by Damien.

## **Executive Management Meeting**

The Fransmanshoek Conservancy's first Executive Management Meeting for 2010, was held on the 26<sup>th</sup>. Johan and Dora Boshoff attended the meeting specifically to address the issue of Section 4. Section 4 is a strip of land, starting below Karmosyn and running around the peninsula and ending at Fonteintjies. Conflict over ownership, rights and how to deal with the issue in future were discussed.



The usual issues of finance, membership fees, alien clearing and ecological monitoring were also discussed.

### **Visit From Ex-Ranger**

John Perreira, one of the Fransmanshoek Conservancy's first rangers paid an unexpected visit to the Conservancy from the 25<sup>th</sup> to the 28<sup>th</sup>. John Perreira and Werner Kriel were the first two rangers for the Fransmanshoek Conservancy, they both started in the beginning of 2005. John stayed on an extra year before moving on to work in professional field guiding. John joined us for the first management meeting of 2010, as well as taking a tour around his old kingdom. John was impressed to see how much growth had taken place since he had been a ranger for the Conservancy.



**John Perreira next to his prize catch. In 2005 John and fellow student Werner Kriel saw the dead Marlin floating in Vlees Bay, they got their wetsuits on and swam out to the fish guiding it into the beach.**

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