

February 2015



# SAWMA MATTERS

Electronic newsletter of the Southern African Wildlife Management Association

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*Welcome to our first newsletter for 2015! Thanks for all your support to SAWMA, and we're looking forward to another great year with many more members joining the SAWMA community. By sending your news to this regular e-publication, submitting articles for publication in South African Journal of Wildlife Research, and supporting our annual symposium your important work and research will be shared with others in the same field. Thank you for your contributions to this publication. - Editor*

## SAWMA Symposium 2015

### Responsible wildlife management: A key to biodiversity conservation

6-10 September 2015

Horseshoe Inn, Kimberley

Host: Northern Cape Department of Environment and Nature Conservation (DENC)

#### PROGRAMME OUTLINE:

Arrival and welcome on Sunday, 6 September 2015, Presentations starting Monday, 7 September and finishing late Wednesday, 9 September 2015.

The Gala Dinner will be on the last evening with an optional field trip on Thursday, 10 September 2015.

#### SUBTHEMES:

- Understanding and managing threats to wildlife and biodiversity
- Growing impacts of renewable energy on wildlife
- Biodiversity mitigations and offsets: The future for conservation and wildlife management
- Emerging information to aid wildlife management decisions
- Economic contribution of biodiversity
- Population resilience to pressures
- Legislative impacts on wildlife and biodiversity

Enquiries: Elma Marais  
(elma@mweb.co.za)

Call for abstracts and registration information will soon be available!

#### ORGANISING COMMITTEE:

Christine Kraft & Marnus Smit (DENC); John Henschel (SAEON); Charlene Bissett, Hugo Bezuidenhout, Lourens de Lange (SANParks), Beryl Wilson (McGregor Museum), Paul Grobler (UFS)

## Welcome new SAWMA members!

Welcome to new members who joined SAWMA recently:

**Beanélrí Janecke:** Working at University of the Free State, Bloemfontein

**Julia Baum:** Currently busy with a PhD in Conservation Biology at University of Cape Town

**Tendai Nekatambe:** Currently busy with an Mphil in Ecology at the National University of Science and Technology, Zimbabwe

**Cornelia Voigt:** Working at Department of Zoology & Entomology University of Pretoria

A number of students from various universities recently joined the free student member group: Wentzel Coetzer, Andrew Halvey, Birth Linden, Karin Ralph, Cyrintha and Chris Joubert, Njabulo Sithole, Yvette Ehlers Smith, Samuel Tullis, Carina Coetzer, Rebecca Welch, Kirsty Venter, Timothy Gebers.

### FREE MEMBERSHIP OFFER TO FULL-TIME STUDENTS IN 2015:

Full-time Students (excluding post-docs) are welcome to register as free student members of SAWMA again this year. Note that this option is only for those who prefer electronic access to the African Journal of Wildlife Research and not the hard copy. Students preferring printed copies of the journal will pay the full student fee. Please contact Elma Marais ([elma@mweb.co.za](mailto:elma@mweb.co.za)) if you are interested in this offer.

Note that proof of registration at a university is required.

### SAWMA Membership fees 2015:

Membership fees for 2015 remains the same as in 2014. The 2015 Invoices will be emailed early in March. **Remember that your membership automatically continues until you officially cancel it by sending us a cancellation note.**

|                                     |                                       |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Local individual members:           | R390-00/year                          |
| Fulltime Student members (Local):   | R200-00/year (see announcement below) |
| Fulltime Student members (Foreign): | R390-00/year (see announcement below) |
| Pensioners:                         | R200-00/year                          |
| Foreign individual members:         | USD 108-00/year                       |
| Local Institutional Subscribers:    | R720-00/year                          |
| Foreign Institutional Subscribers:  | USD 205-00/year                       |

Our bank details: Standard Bank, Tyger Manor Branch 050410, Cheque account number: 270805575. **Please use your surname as reference and email proof of payment to [elma@mweb.co.za](mailto:elma@mweb.co.za).** Feel free to contact Elma Marais ([elma@mweb.co.za](mailto:elma@mweb.co.za)) for any membership enquiries.

Tel: +27-21-5541297; Fax: 0866729882 <http://www.sawma.co.za/>

### African Journal of Wildlife Research



From this year our journal will officially be called the African Journal of Wildlife Research. Therefore volume 44/2 of 2014 was the last issue published as South African Journal of Wildlife Research since the first issue published more than 40 years ago.

We trust that this will ensure more submissions of research done all over the African continent, also including work done on Arabian and Malagasy species. After long debate the SAWMA council has decided to keep the front page of the journal unchanged, except for the new name.

### Online submission of manuscripts:

We are very excited to announce that the online platform for online submissions of manuscripts will be live very soon. We have already done a test run and only some last changes need to be made. This will be a great improvement and will benefit authors, editors and reviewers.

**Applied Conservation Genetics: Short Course**

The University of the Free State and the National Zoological Gardens will present a 4 day short course on Applied Conservation genetics.

**DATES:**  
7-10 July 2015

**VENUE:**  
National Zoological Gardens

**CONTACT:**  
Prof Paul Grobler:  
groblerjp@ufs.ac.za

**1st International Ecological Engineering in Africa Conference**

**DATES:**  
4-7 August 2015

**VENUE:**  
Pretoria, South Africa

**THEME:**  
"The Status Quo of Ecological Engineering in Africa"

**CONTACT:**  
Yolandi Schoeman,  
+27 (0) 82 562 3621,  
admin@eeiafrica.com/  
yolandi@eeiafrica.com

**IPUF Annual conference Clanwilliam 2015**



IPUF is having a joint conference meeting with SEB (Society for Economic Botany) in Clanwilliam, Western Cape.

**DATES:** from Sunday 28th June till Thursday 2nd July 2015.  
**THEME:** "Global Vision on Indigenous Plants and Economic Botany".  
**VENUE:** Clanwilliam, Western Cape  
**CONTACT:** ipuf@uj.ac.za

**Joint XI X ESSA and 37<sup>th</sup> ZSSA Congress:**



The ENTOMOLOGICAL SOCIETY and ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTHERN AFRICA are having a joint congress in 2015.

**DATES:** 12 to 17 July 2015  
**VENUE:** Rhodes University, Grahamstown, South Africa.  
**ENQUIRIES/INFORMATION:** Please visit the conference website (<http://www.essa-zssa2015.co.za/>) for more information

**50th Annual GSSA Congress: Advancing Rangeland Ecology and Pasture Management in Africa**



**DATES:** 19 to 23 July 2015  
**VENUE:** Royal Agricultural Showgrounds, Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa  
**ENQUIRIES:** [info@grassland.org.za](mailto:info@grassland.org.za)

**Giraffe Indaba III: Sticking our Necks out for Giraffe Conservation in Africa**



**DATES:** 23-28 August 2015  
**VENUE:** Southern African Wildlife College in Hoedspruit, South Africa (bordering Kruger National Park).  
**CONTACT:** visit the GCF website: [www.giraffeconservation.org](http://www.giraffeconservation.org) or contact [indaba@giraffeconservation.org](mailto:indaba@giraffeconservation.org)

**Competition!**

Design a logo and a slogan for the Ecological Engineering Institute of Africa

and

Win 1 full delegate ticket\* to the 1<sup>st</sup> International Ecological Engineering in Africa Conference to be held in Pretoria, South Africa, during August 2015 and be the first to participate in a special **mentoring program** of the Institute of Ecological Engineering in Africa in Ecological Engineering

[www.eeiafrica.com](http://www.eeiafrica.com)



Submit Logo and Slogan to [yolandi@eeiafrica.com](mailto:yolandi@eeiafrica.com) before or on 30 June 2015. The Winner will be notified by 10 July 2015. The new logo and slogan will be revealed at the Gafa Dinner of the Conference in August 2015. For more information contact Yolandi at [yolandi@eeiafrica.com](mailto:yolandi@eeiafrica.com).

\*excludes flights, boarding and lodging during conference

## Hunting body calls for regulation of intensive commercial game breeding practices

*Issued by the SA Hunters and Game Conservation Association (SAHGCA) – 18 February 2015*

The South African Hunters and Game Conservation Association (SAHGCA) wants government to implement mechanisms to regulate selective and intensive game breeding practices in the interest of protecting the country's biodiversity and its international reputation as a leader in conservation.

Selective and intensive game breeding practices in the private game breeding sector are aimed at enhancing or altering genetic characteristics of game species for commercial purposes and include artificial and unnatural manipulation of wildlife to achieve unusual coat colours and excessive horn lengths. Although SAHGCA fully supports an extensive game farming sector and appreciates its contribution to the economy, the Association believes that certain uncontrolled practices might have detrimental effects on biodiversity and holds unwanted consequences for the wildlife industry as a whole.

Dr Gerhard Verdoorn, President of SAHGCA, says the Association is very concerned about trends in the private game ranching sector where game breeders produce a growing assortment of unnatural colour variations among indigenous game. "These practices of deliberately selecting and breeding animals for specific traits, similar to stock farming, to produce unusual coat colours or very large horn-lengths are not compatible with conservation principles."

SAHGCA says this ongoing exploitation of indigenous wild animals will affect the integrity of South Africa's wildlife and harm the country's reputation as a leader in conservation. "We understand that the stakes in the game industry are high, but we have to be responsible in utilising our wildlife heritage," Verdoorn said.

Variations in coat colours in game occur in low frequencies in the wild and are caused by recessive genes that result in e.g. black impala, golden wildebeest or white springbok. The reason for the low numbers in the wild is that these animals are usually not well adapted to their environment and are eliminated through natural selection processes. However, commercial game breeders selectively breed these animals to enhance and manipulate the desired traits for commercial gain.

Prices of these purposely-bred animals are exceptionally high turning wildlife into a financial commodity. To protect their expensive investments, breeders put in these animals in small camps with very tight security. Some of the undesired consequences of intensive breeding include:

- fragmentation of habitats and wildlife systems
- decrease in the genetic integrity of indigenous wildlife populations
- reduce animals' natural ability to adapt to environmental changes associated with climate change
- animal welfare concerns
- increase persecution of predators because of the threat to breeding stock
- disinvestment in extensive wildlife areas which impact on the contribution that game farmers make to national conservation targets.

The demand for ordinary breeding stock for intensive breeding purposes leads to outrageous prices of huntable animals which in turn has a negative impact on the consumptive hunting sector. Animals bred under these conditions cannot be hunted because it would be tantamount to canned hunting - a reputational risk the hunting industry can ill afford.

At a game auction on 13 February, ordinary impala ewes sold for R30 000 each. For hunting purposes an impala ewe would cost between R800 and R1000. "This drives the cost of consumptive hunting to unaffordable levels to the detriment of the hunting sector," said Fred Camphor, CEO of SAHGCA.

There are approximately 300 000 consumptive hunters in South Africa who contribute more than 74% of the total annual income derived from the hunting and wildlife sector. According to a recent study by the Northwest University consumptive hunting was responsible for R6,3 billion of the R8,5 billion that the wildlife and hunting sector contributed to the country's economy in 2013.

Verdoorn said responsible wildlife utilisation is the cornerstone for economic growth and sustainable development. In November 2014, SAHGCA adopted a policy position on intensive and selective breeding to enhance or alter genetic characteristics of indigenous game species for commercial purposes. The Association invited other hunting organisations and associations to adopt similar guidelines.

### **Sustainable land use model:**

As part of its commitment to conservation and sustainable development, SAHGCA launched the Umfolozi Biodiversity Economy Initiative. It involves the establishment of a Biodiversity Economy node that will include Hluhluwe-iMfolozi Park, eMakhosini-Ophathe Heritage Park, various stewardship sites and private and communal areas around Ulundi. Linking all these areas can create a protected area of approximately 150 000ha. This initiative forms part of an integrated land-use model that enables transformation and promotes economic growth in rural communities.

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The Umfolozi Biodiversity Economy Initiative is in line with the objectives highlighted in the National Development Plan and will provide opportunities for partnerships among government, communities and the private sector to achieve national and provincial conservation targets. It will create business and development opportunities that will generate sustainable job opportunities, build capabilities and enhance the capacity of all sectors to address complex challenges of growing rural economies.

Lizanne Nel, conservation manager at SAHGCA, says economic activities cannot be separated from its impact on the environment and people. "The Umfolozi Biodiversity Economy Initiative provides a sustainable economic development model for harnessing KwaZulu-Natal's rich biodiversity and heritage capital to reduce poverty and inequality. At the same time it will provide an inclusive economy, protect landscapes, productive ecosystems and their associated products and services to society."

Contact: Gerhard Verdoorn on nesh@tiscali.co.za or 27-82-446-8946  
Fred Camphor on fredc@sahunt.co.za or 012 808-9300  
Lizanne Nel on lizanne@sahunt.co.za or 076 797 2539

## **Pro- and Anti-rhino Trade Lobbyists Join Forces**

*Issued by by Jennifer Vitanzo (Inspire to Action) on behalf of IFAISA - 25 January*

In light of the rapidly escalating rhino-poaching crisis, a recent meeting between several South African anti- and pro-rhino trade lobbyists was held at Cape Town's Fire and Ice Hotel. After a heated debate, the lobbyists agreed that rather than argue, they should set aside the specific agendas of their respective camps and instead focus on working together as a united front to come up with a seven-point plan in order to conserve the rhinos.

The discussions were facilitated by Adv. Jacques Joubert of Mediation in Motion, whose "Woza Mediation" blog is well known. In the debate, those in favour of the legalisation of the trade in rhino horn were well-known economist Dawie Roodt, and rhino activist and Institute for Accountability in Southern Africa (IFAISA) director Braam Malherbe. Those against trade were veteran conservationist and eco-activist Colin Bell, and Ian Michler, eco-tourism operator, writer and former stockbroker.

All participants agreed that, in the light of likely voting patterns when CITES members next meet in Cape Town (in March 2016), it is unrealistic to expect any changes to the legislation for the trade in rhino products. Indeed, it appears that legalisation in the trade of rhino products will not happen inside of the next decade, at which point, based on current poaching statistics, rhino will likely be extinct. In fact, without a collaborative and united approach requiring a demand for a change in the status quo, all parties present agreed that the fate of the rhino is dismal.

All participants also acknowledged that a significant portion of South Africans work in the tourism industry. If rhino becomes extinct, the country's tourism industry will suffer and, by default, so will the country's economy and its people. Finding a viable way forward would therefore be necessary for the preservation of the country's biodiversity as well as its financial well-being. It was also noted that the incentives to prevent rhino poaching are not specific to South Africa, and that efforts to address the situation on a global scale are a necessary part of the solution.

With that consensus reached, the lobbyists turned their attention towards exploring the various measures available to conserve rhino, with all agreeing that it would be necessary to create a multi-pronged approach that allowed for different areas to be addressed and acted upon concurrently.

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The following seven areas were found to be the ones in which effective steps to conserve rhino could be implemented immediately:

- Enacting an immediate cessation of hostilities between pro- and anti-trade camps, with a focus instead on rallying both camps around a common vision.
- Providing public education worldwide to reduce demand for rhino horn. (However, this process takes a long time; therefore, if used as a sole method for the prevention of poaching, it is unlikely that adequate change will take place before the rhino is extinct.)
- Increasing the amount and efficiency of security and monitoring measures, including centralising the application and issuing of permits to hunt rhino, the establishment of a whistle-blowers fund and increased anti-poaching law enforcement.
- Securing community buy-in and co-operation in conservation of rhino, especially among those living in close proximity to rhino (it is vital to ensure communities benefit from conservation if we are to save the species).

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- Taking a more proactive stance towards poaching, by increasing procurement and use of available sophisticated technology that can detect poachers before the animal can be shot.
- Securing increased governmental compliance with constitutional and legal precepts in the struggle to conserve the rhino species.
- More efficient, effective, focused and sustainable fund-raising campaigns for rhino security and conservation.

In addition to attending this meeting, Malherbe, as a director of IFAISA (Institute For Accountability In Southern Africa) has also written to the Minister of Environmental Affairs, pleading for a change in the “rules of engagement” that anti-poaching units are currently obliged to use when apprehending rhino poachers. As was pointed out during the debate, under the current rules, the rangers, the personnel who are involved in anti-poaching measures are in a situation where they are hugely frustrated because they are fighting poaching with both hands tied behind their back.

The participants agreed to revisit the debate and the current strategy on an on-going basis, and to amend the current approach if and when necessary. Bell and Michler agreed to present an action plan to those present at the meeting.

The outcome of this debate is, in many respects, ground-breaking. It is possibly the first time where pro- and anti-trade lobbyists have reached consensus and agreed on a positive way forward. Roodt, Michler and Bell were in agreement with Malherbe when he said, “As long as we are fighting each other, we are aiding and abetting the poachers.”

## **Bird of the Year 2015**

*Issued by Birdlife Africa – 23 January 2015:*

The Bird of the Year for 2015 is the famous five cent bird, South Africa’s national bird, the Blue Crane.

“Selecting this Crane will help everyone realise the need to conserve the country’s wetlands and grasslands,” BirdLife South Africa’s Chief Executive Officer Mark Anderson said.

This decade has seen Tristan Albatross, White-winged Flufftail, Barn Swallow, African Fish Eagle and Lesser Flamingo all getting the honour, but this year it is the iconic Blue Crane.

‘Bird of the Year’ is BirdLife South Africa’s annual initiative for awareness about birds and bird habitat conservation. The Bird of the Year 2015 initiative is proudly sponsored by Waltons. “Each year choosing the bird is highly contested, with nominations and furious voting and support for various species, but this year the Blue Crane won,” said Nikki McCartney, events manager of BirdLife South Africa.

Educating people is a key component of BirdLife South Africa’s conservation work. The bird conservation NGO is developing learning materials using the Blue Crane as a flagship species. This will be an incentive to conserve wetlands and grasslands. The Blue Crane, other crane species and many other less charismatic, but equally important species, depend on these habitats.

The Blue Crane is endemic (only found in a certain region) to southern Africa, with more than 99% of the population occurring within South Africa. A small breeding population occurs in northern Namibia, in and around Etosha Pan.

“As the five cent bird, the Blue Crane is generally well-known to South Africans,” said Anderson. “This, and its attractive and charismatic life style, account for its popularity. It is a good choice for Bird of the Year 2015,” he added.

Poisoning, habitat alteration, and power line collisions are all significant threats to Blue Cranes. Poisoning occurs intentionally and inadvertently. Loss of South Africa’s natural grasslands threatens Blue Crane habitat.

Mainly found on privately owned farms, a key to their conservation is good relationships between landowners and conservation agencies to ensure appropriate management of these environments.

The African Crane Conservation Programme of the Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT) works on awareness and environmental education for landowners, local communities and other stakeholders; reducing crane/farmer conflicts, community involvement in sustainable use and conservation of wetlands and grasslands, monitoring of crane populations, the trade in captive cranes, and works with Eskom to reduce power-line collisions.

For further information, please contact:  
Nikki McCartney at [events@birdlife.org.za](mailto:events@birdlife.org.za) or 083 636 1060

## New Study Examines How Environmental Factors Impact Use of Swing Gates

Issued by Lauri Marker, Cheetah Conservation Fund (CCF) – 6 January 2015

Officials in Namibia and southern Africa report game ranchers as removing and killing higher numbers of cheetahs and other predators than livestock farmers. Cheetah Conservation Fund (CCF) has been researching ways to reduce conflict between game farmers and predators through the use of what are called "swing gates". In a recently published paper entitled "Environmental factors affect swing gates as a barrier to large carnivores entering game farms" published 23 Dec. 2014, in *African Journal of Ecology*, researchers from CCF, the Durrell Institute of Conservation and Ecology, University of Kent, Canterbury, UK, and Van Hall Larenstein, University of Applied Science, Leeuwarden, The Netherlands, show how game farmers can reduce losses and thus reduce conflict and stop killing predators.

Swing gates have been developed and tested by CCF researchers to reduce wildlife losses in fenced game farms due to predation by cheetahs and other predators. Swing gates are similar in concept to a residential pet door. They enable burrowing animals such as warthog, cape porcupine and aardvark to enter farms through a hinged flap in the fence line. Swing gates eliminate the burrowing species' need to dig passageways under the fence that can potentially allow valuable animals to escape and large carnivores such as cheetahs and leopards to enter. CCF has advocated to game farmers over the past few years that swing gates are a less expensive alternative to electrified fencing.

"We believe that many game ranchers do not want to resort to killing carnivores, and our findings demonstrate that swing gates, when properly located, are another effective tool to help reduce human-wildlife conflict", said Nikki Rust, the study's lead author, a PhD candidate at the University of Kent.

Swing gates in fence lines have been shown by CCF to be a reliable and cost-effective, non-lethal predator control technique for game farmers, and the newly published research suggests where the gates are located are critical to the success of the gates. The placement of the gates needs to take into account grass height, vegetation density, soil type and distance to watering holes, which helps determine successful applicability with game farms. Other environmental variables, such as climatic season and moon phase, were also considered in the study.

"Game ranchers are responsible for more cheetah removals than livestock farmers in Namibia", said Dr. Laurie Marker, Founder and Executive Director of CCF and the study's co-author and director of the research. "When predators enter a game farm, they can create a large financial loss. That's why it was important for us to look at how the concept of swing gates can be optimised for maximum benefit with commercial game farm operations".

The study determined that the number of holes dug by burrowing animals under game fences decreases over time when swing gates are easily accessible and ideally placed. Ironically, the study's authors also concluded that while burrowing animals have learnt to use these gates, large carnivores are fooled into thinking that the fence lines are completely intact. To discourage digging and to reduce costs associated with fence repair, the authors recommend extra swing gates be installed in high disturbance areas, such as where the fence line is positioned near water points.

"While fencing off large tracts of land and excluding cheetahs from their natural habitat is not a viable long-term solution to the conflict, swing gates can help reduce game ranchers' losses due to predation. This will enable us time to work on a permanent solution that will enable all species to peacefully coexist on the same land, such as the development of Conservancies", added Dr. Marker. "Conservancies allow for free-range of wildlife, without high game fences. Neighbouring farmers and land occupiers then manage the resources collectively, allowing for predators to be managed within the larger landscape system."



The design of the swing gates in a game fence. Swing gates are similar in concept to a residential pet door. They enable burrowing animals such as warthog, cape porcupine and aardvark to enter farms through a hinged flap in the fence line.



Warthogs use swing gates through a hinged flap in the fence line. Research shows that the number of holes dug by burrowing animals under game fences decreases over time when swing gates are easily accessible and ideally placed.

## Proceedings of Botswana Wildlife Research symposium

Proceedings now available from the Botswana Wildlife Research Symposium, held February 4-6, 2014, Maun, Botswana - Organized by Botswana's Department of Wildlife and National Parks, the symposium aimed to bridge the gap between conservation science and management by bringing to the forefront research being done around Botswana by independent researchers, institutions and government departments. Thematic areas covered over the 3-day meeting included: wildlife monitoring, CBNRM, human-wildlife conflict, health and disease at the human-livestock-wildlife interface, transboundary conservation, and other critical conservation issues. The Government of Botswana, World Bank, WCS-AHEAD, USAID, UNDP, Okavango Research Institute, Wilderness Safaris, Tihare Segolo Foundation, and others provided support for the symposium. The final combined Proceedings were emailed to those in attendance, and are also downloadable at [http://www.wcs-ahead.org/kaza/kaza\\_additional\\_resources.html](http://www.wcs-ahead.org/kaza/kaza_additional_resources.html).

For more information, please contact Dr. Michael Flyman at [mflyman@gov.bw](mailto:mflyman@gov.bw).

## Giraffe Conservation Foundation: Teamwork in action – DNA sampling in Zambia

"GCF has been spearheading a long-term project to investigate the genetic mystery of giraffe for over ten years now. To date samples have been collected and analysed of most major giraffe populations across Africa and we are close to solving this puzzle. There are just a few key populations remaining that still need to be sampled for DNA before we can hopefully figure out giraffe taxonomy once and for all. In December 2014 a GCF team travelled to Zambia in order to collect samples in Mosi-oa-Tunya and Sioma Ngwezi National Parks."

Read more [http://www.giraffeconservation.org/our\\_news.php?pgid=97](http://www.giraffeconservation.org/our_news.php?pgid=97)

## Zebras' stripe riddle continueing: The amount and intensity of striping can be best predicted by the temperature of the environment in which zebras live.

In the January cover story of the Royal Society's online journal, Open Science, the researchers make the case that the association between striping and temperature likely points to multiple benefits -- including controlling zebras' body temperature and protecting them from diseases carried by biting flies. "While past studies have typically focused their search for single mechanisms, we illustrate in this study how the cause of this extraordinary phenomenon is actually likely much more complex than previously appreciated, with temperature playing an important role," said Thomas B. Smith, professor of ecology and evolutionary biology in the UCLA College and senior author of the research.

Journal Reference: B. Larison, R. J. Harrigan, H. A. Thomassen, D. I. Rubenstein, A. M. Chan-Golston, E. Li, T. B. Smith. How the zebra got its stripes: a problem with too many solutions. Royal Society Open Science, 2015; 2 (1): 140452 DOI: 10.1098/rsos.140452

## World Parks Congress talks the talk, but future depends on action

Read this article by Jeremy Hance at mongabay.com, February 05, 2015 at the following link:

[http://news.mongabay.com/2015/0205-hance-interview-lieberman.html?utm\\_source=feedburner&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=Feed%3A+mongabay%2FWildlifeNews+%28Mongabay+wildlife+news%29](http://news.mongabay.com/2015/0205-hance-interview-lieberman.html?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+mongabay%2FWildlifeNews+%28Mongabay+wildlife+news%29)

### First known documentation of the occurrence of White Blesbok.



According to a search by a Louw Hoffman (University of Stellenbosch), the earliest record of a white blesbok in South Africa was documented in the December 1961, vol 15, no 4 copy of African Wildlife, the Official magazine of the Wildlife protection Society of South Africa. According to the article a few white blesbuck were spotted on certain farms in the Free State and Northern Cape Province.

According to the article the largest occurrence of these 'albinos' were on a farm, belonging to Mr AJ Griesel, in the Brandfort district. He purchased three blesbuck cows and a ram from the Sommerville Reserve in 1936 with the idea to establish a small blesbuck herd on his farm. After a few years the first white blesbuck was born and from there on they were regularly produced amongst every year's arrivals. Unfortunately the albino blesbuck due to their white colour are less resistant to weather and easy prey.



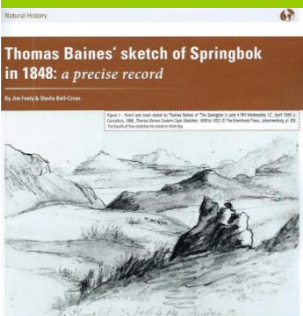


Interesting read in Africa Geographic:

WHY THE HUNTING CONVERSATION HURTS CONSERVATION  
Simon Espley  
30 January 2015

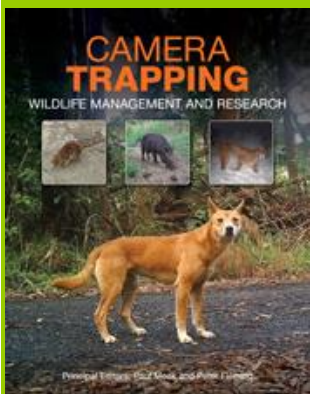
Visit:

<http://magazine.africageo.com/weekly/hunting-canned-hunting-trophy-hunting-debate/>



Read this interesting article by Jim Feely & Sheila Bell-Cross in Environment magazine based on Thomas Baines's records.

<http://www.environmentmag.co.za/ebook/Env-21/>



## Translocations in South Africa: lion reintroductions in perspective

Short note by | Matt W Hayward and Michael J Somers in Issue 8.4 of *Current Conservation*  
<http://www.currentconservation.org/?q=issue/8.4>

"Biodiversity conservation seems to progress along a trajectory over time and economic development from gazetting isolated protected areas (often paper parks), to intensively managing those areas, to linking them via corridors, and finally to restoring those areas to some preconceived benchmark. Here, we describe this transition in South Africa and show how it now leads the world in large-scale, biodiversity restoration, with lions (*Panthera leo*) at the forefront." Read more: <http://www.sciencemag.org/content/344/6179/22.short>

## Gene flow and population structure of a solitary top carnivore in a human-dominated landscape

Article by Jeannine S. McManus, Desire L. Dalton, Antoinette Kotze, Bool Smuts, Amy Dickman, Jason P. Marshal & Mark Keith on genetic work done on the leopard population in the Eastern and Western Cape:

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/ece3.1322/pdf>

## Environmental 'tipping points' key to predicting extinctions

Researchers from North Carolina State University have created a model that mimics how differently adapted populations may respond to rapid climate change. Their findings demonstrate that depending on a population's adaptive strategy, even tiny changes in climate variability can create a 'tipping point' that sends the population into extinction.

Journal Reference: Carlos A. Botero, Franz J. Weissing, Jonathan Wright, Dustin R. Rubenstein. Evolutionary tipping points in the capacity to adapt to environmental change. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 2014; 201408589 DOI: 10.1073/pnas.1408589111

## Wildlife at risk around the globe: Scientists say vaccinating endangered carnivores of increasing importance

"Experts from around the world focused on the threat that canine distemper virus poses to the conservation of increasingly fragmented populations of threatened carnivores. While canine distemper has been known for many years as a problem affecting domestic dogs, the virus has been appearing in new areas and causing disease and mortality in a wide range of wildlife species, including tigers and lions. In fact, many experts agree that the virus should not be called "canine distemper" virus at all, given the diversity of species it infects."

Wildlife Conservation Society. "Wildlife at risk around the globe: Scientists say vaccinating endangered carnivores of increasing importance." *ScienceDaily*. ScienceDaily, 12 February 2015.  
[www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2015/02/150212153953.htm](http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2015/02/150212153953.htm)

## CAMERA TRAPPING

CSIRO recently published the book 'Camera Trapping'. In order for fellow camera trap researchers and managers to share their knowledge and experience, the First International Camera Trapping Colloquium in Wildlife Management and Research was held in Sydney, Australia. Camera Trapping brings together papers from a selection of the presentations at the colloquium and provides a benchmark of the international developments and uses of camera traps for monitoring wildlife for research and management. Four major themes are presented: case studies demonstrating camera trapping for monitoring; the constraints and pitfalls of camera technologies; design standards and protocols for camera trapping surveys; and the identification, management and analyses of the myriad images that derive from camera trapping studies. The final chapter provides future directions for research using camera traps. Remarkable photographs are included, showing interesting, enlightening and entertaining images of animals 'doing their thing'.

If you are interested in finding out more about this book you can visit our webpage at:  
<http://www.publish.csiro.au/pid/7150.htm>



### ORIGINAL artwork by renowned wildlife artist on AUCTION!

Award-winning wildlife artist, Vincent Reid, has teamed up with the MIMMP to capture the beauty of our study animals on canvas. His unique Marion Island original artwork is on exclusive auction here! The sale of these and subsequent limited, signed prints is the artist's generous way of supporting our research and conservation efforts. TO PLACE YOUR BID Go to:

<http://www.marionseals.com/blog/2015/2/12/original-artwork-by-renowned-wildlife-artist-on-auction>

## Strategic Approach to Wildlife Conservation in Africa

ON 9 & 10 February a technical expert meeting was hosted by the European Commission's C2 unit (Environment, Climate Change, Natural Resources) of the Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development. The meeting aimed to validate a comprehensive technical report of 460 pages providing orientations toward a wildlife conservation strategy in Sub-Saharan Africa for the next 10 years. As a political follow-up of the technical document, the European Commission intends to release a new Communication that will lead to an EU Action Plan on Wildlife Conservation in Africa. This Action Plan will focus on tackling the wildlife trafficking crisis, but will also encompass a more holistic approach to biodiversity conservation and sustainable development in Sub-Saharan Africa, in accordance with the EU Biodiversity for Life flagship initiative.

Read more: <http://capacity4dev.ec.europa.eu/b4life/blog/larger-elephants-european-commission-hosted-successful-technical-expert-meeting-strategic-appro#sthash>

Also read more about the the DA welcoming the move by The European Commission and writing a letter to the Minister of Environmental Affairs, Edna Molewa:

<http://www.news24.com/Green/News/DA-welcomes-EUs-move-to-combat-poaching-20150208>

## Plagiarism detection software exposes plagiarism in South African management journals

*Research Letter in South African Journal of Science's January and February issue of 2015.*

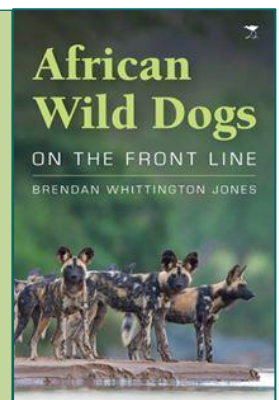
"Plagiarism by academics has been relatively unexplored thus far. However, there has been a growing awareness of this problem in recent years. The authors submitted 371 **published** academic articles appearing in 19 South African management journals in 2011 through the plagiarism detection software program Turnitin™. The result: High and excessive levels of plagiarism were detected. The cost to government of subsidising unoriginal work in these journals was calculated to approximate ZAR7 million for the period under review. As academics are expected to role model ethical behaviour to students, such a finding is disturbing and has implications for the reputations of the institutions to which the authors are affiliated as well as that of the journals that publish articles that contain plagiarised material."

Vol. 111 ½ SAJS DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.17159/sajs.2015/2014001>

## AFRICAN WILD DOGS – ON THE FRONT LINE

Brendon Whittington Jones has worked for the Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT) for many years coordinating the Wild Dog Project in KZN. He has written a book on his experiences whilst working with the EWT and with the Wild Dogs. Brendan's book is entitled "African Wild Dogs – On the front line" and is being published by Jacana Media. EWT has a special offer for their members and supporters to buy Brendan's book at a cost of R225. This offer is valid until 28th February 2015. Stock will be available at the end of March 2015 – place your order now to receive this special offer. For each book sold R45 will be donated to the EWT.

Contact [debbiet@ewt.org.za](mailto:debbiet@ewt.org.za) to order a copy



### Southern African Wildlife Management Association

PO Box 217  
Bloubergstrand 7436

PHONE:  
+27 -21-5541297

FAX:  
0866729882

E-MAIL:  
[elma@mweb.co.za](mailto:elma@mweb.co.za)  
[www.sawma.co.za](http://www.sawma.co.za)

*Please note that any view or opinion expressed in this newsletter may not necessarily be that of SAWMA or the SAWMA management.*

If you would like to share your news with other SAWMA members, please forward it to the following email address: [elma@mweb.co.za](mailto:elma@mweb.co.za)

Warm regards until next time,

Elma Marais  
(Newsletter Editor - SAWMA)

Thank you to the Dept. of Animal Sciences for officially sponsoring the SAWMA laptop