



Lentswe la Madikwe

A newsletter for the
Madikwe Game Reserve
stakeholders

PLEASE FEEL FREE TO CONTRIBUTE AND HELP TO MAKE THIS A NEWSLETTER YOU WANT TO READ BY GIVING SUGGESTIONS AND FEEDBACK

All contributions to be directed to Sibusiso by the last week of each month
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1. Editorial

On Sunday, 19th August 2007, the Rustenberg Diocese will gather in Madikwe at Vleeschfontein for the annual pilgrimage. About 4000 visitors across the country and from some neighbouring countries are expected to attend this important Roman Catholic event. The proceedings will begin on Friday, the 17th with a walk from Sesobe village involving about 50 youths from Sesobe and other villages. The walkers will overnight at Bopitikelo camp (thatched house on the bridge to Molatedi village). On Saturday, 18th August, they will walk from Bopitikelo to Vleeschfontein where they are expected to arrive at 12pm. This event has grown since it started two years ago and has attracted interest all over the country. It has even reached the office of the Honorable Ambassador of Ireland in Pretoria. Currently, we are working with the Church, Arts & Culture department, Kgosis from the villages and Heritage Agency to develop a Heritage product in Madikwe. A concept will be developed and be available to you guys for comments.

Finally, the land restitution of Barokologadi has been completed with the handing over of their title deed by the Land Affairs Minister during a ceremony held at Molatedi Dam on Friday, 6th July 2007. Read more on this subject from the Park Manager's Desk.

Till next time!

Sibusiso

2. Parks Board Updates

Morning, afternoon or evening as the case may be... and without further ado...

Wild dogs

The Dwarsberg pack did move the den but not as far as I thought they would. The new den site ended up being only a few hundred meters and slightly down hill from the old one. It's been difficult to monitor the dogs this month but according to the GSM collar they've been spending most of the time fairly close to the den. The dog with the broken leg is still keeping up with the pack but has lost a little bit of condition. A bit worryingly I picked them all up together on Tshepe road on the 18th with no pups and the alpha females teat-line seems to be gone. Not that unusual in itself two months after denning, but the fact that none of the pups were with them may be cause for concern. As soon as I know you'll know. The GSM collars movements are shown in the image below with the dark line being the southern fence line.



Buffalo

Thanks to a very generous donation from one of Nkurru Lodge's shareholders, we have managed to implement a buffalo-monitoring program in Madikwe. Two bulls and two cows have been fitted with VHF collars and one cow has been fitted with a GSM/ GPS collar. The purpose of this project originated from concerns among Madikwe management as well as other stakeholders that Madikwe's buffalo were being used in a potentially unsustainable way as... well... a cash-cow (or more appropriately a cash-buffalo) to fund the needs of the board. In principle there is nothing wrong with this as it is our asset but I, and others, had a great concern that this was being over utilized. With these collars we will be able to get up to four years of data on range, growth, predator competition, grazer competition and a host of other info that we can use to better manage this population. From a tourist product point of view having the large herds collared means that their movements can, to a greater or lesser degree, be predicted and this will hopefully improve sightings. Of the two herds collared the Tlou herd also carries the GSM collar and their movements between the 14th and 19th of July are shown in the image below. The Tshukudu herd was collared on Tshwene south. They then moved north through Tshwene valley back to Tshukudu dam where they remain. The bachelor bull that was collared seems to be associating with the Tlou herd

but retains a distance of up to a kilometre or so... and therein already seems to be a result because if you pick him up by himself there's a good chance the rest of the herd are nearby.



Fires

We've completed 80.3 kilometers of firebreaks and with those under the belt I've started the planned burns. So far I've only put in two burns; one on Bushwillow road and one on Vlei road. The plan is to burn about 4000 or so hectares this year.

Remember guys and girls that fire readiness is your responsibility but the following members of the Fire Preparedness Committee have offered to give opinions on your state of readiness if you wish:

- Wonderboom node – Roddy and Shorty
- Tau node – Andrew and Matt
- Tshukudu node (including Jaci's node)– Craig, Greg, Carmen and Brian
- And of course little ol' me.

Rhino

More for interest's sake than anything else... I'm sure many of you have heard of the white rhino cow that showed progressive paralysis on Vlei road. Well, she ultimately (after death) tested positive for African Horse Sickness. This is interesting because its never been recorded in rhinos before. The disease is endemic in zebra and is transferred by *Culicoides* sp. midges. It has been present in South Africa since before the first Europeans arrived and R Gordon Cummings writes of horses dieing when he travelled through what is now Madikwe in... I think... the mid 1800's . Other than horses, mules, donkeys and zebra it has also been detected in dogs (that

have eaten infected meat) and elephants though no mortalities have been recorded to my knowledge in any non-equine species.

Just interesting...

As an aside the black rhino bull from last years sale has still not been taken off Madikwe but should be removed shortly.

Tsessebe

Just a quicky to say thanks for the updates. Please will you guys call them in to Hotel 0 instead of me from now on. That way I can get them all at the end of the month because sometimes I don't write them down straight away and then I forget. Tanx.

Right then... that's that from me...

Remember, it's a jungle out there so keep your onions peeled...

Dec.

3. Industry Information (By Sibusiso)

The one certain thing about tourism statistics especially by Statistics SA is that you will never get an agreement across the Industry. The bone of contention is the numbers from the African continent. The question has always been whether people from the African countries cross the borders for better economic opportunities or shopping (buying food, clothing & appliances instead of curios and other "tourist" related products.), can indeed be classified as "tourists". This is the relevant question if you take into account that over the last couple of years, foreign number increase has been largely due to African visitors.

Statistics SA recently released Tourism & Migration Statistics for May 2007. On foreign arrivals, the report shows that " more than two thirds (79,5%) of foreign arrivals were from Africa whilst approximately one fifth (19,9%) were from overseas country. Overseas travellers came mainly from Europe (54,8%) followed by North America (20,4%), Asia (14,3%), Australasia (6,1%), Central and South America (2,8%) and Middle East (1,6%)". Virtually all arrivals (97,8%) from Africa came from the SADC (Southern African Development Community) countries. On the purpose of travel, the report shows that "whereas 94,5% of travellers from SADC countries were recorded as on holiday, 80,0% of travellers from 'other' African countries were admitted on visitor's permit.

In an Industry that is fiercely contested with fluctuating tourist numbers and foreign exchange, spending power becomes more important than the volumes. In this instance, African visitors (most) come here for the day and spend as little as they can on shopping. They do not carry with them a Five-day Itinerary that includes a stay at an exclusive Five-star Game Reserve. What is interesting about this report is that it highlights the importance of visitors from the SADC countries (including Zimbabwe). SADC visitors come to our country as holiday makers whilst other African visitors come on " visitor's" permit.

The importance of SADC visitors for our tourism Industry was further strengthened by the recent meeting of the Tourism ministers of SADC in Victoria Falls (Zimbabwe) , to discuss the region's strategy for the 2010 FIFA World Cup. The meeting also focused on establishing the Univisa- a unique visa for tourists that travel within the region and visa exemption for SADC tourists. In May this year South Africa, Zimbabwe, Zambia and Mozambique signed agreements to share the tourism spin-offs of the 2010 FIFA World Cup, through "border free" tourism packages. The packages of four countries would ensure that benefits of the World cup and beyond were shared by the region. These are encouraging developments for the future growth of our tourism Industry and economic development of the region.

4. From the Park Manager's Desk

The restituted land's title handing over ceremony has come and gone, and what is left is for the affected parties to start negotiating for a co-management agreement between the North West Parks and Tourism Board and the Communal Property Association, representing the Barokologadi Tribe.

I want to believe that the board is in a process to consult with owners of the lodges affected by the land claim to find ways to attend to changes that may have to be considered, with regard to the fact that, the land on which their businesses are situated will change hands in the next six months.

As the management on the ground we are somewhat anxious to see the process unfolding, though we anticipate some teething problems in the envisaged arrangement we are also looking forward to make the best of the situation.

The above mentioned co-management arrangement will be the first of its kind in the province and may be even a first in the country. It is for this reason that we would like to embrace our new stakeholders in a partnership which will go a long way in ensuring that the principle of people and parks can work to benefit all the affected participants.

You will be kept abreast of the latest in this exiting development.