



Marlothii Conservancy

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Marlothii Bewarea

Reg No R11/05MUC

Chairman's Chat.

To keep you updated.

July 2006

I am now one of the fortunate; moved into Marloth Park permanently. My new home in the bush. What a pleasure! What a privilege! It's quite a change though. Now I'm retired, I thought I would have all the time in the world. Don't you believe it! I have never been busier in my life. I can now also spend more time on conservation matters and other things I enjoy doing.

Being one of the "permanents", one begins to see and understand matters from a very different angle. More than when one comes here once in a blue moon - expecting at least zebras on your stoep and never asking yourself how they do survive in the bush.

We were introduced to Marloth Park quite a few years ago by a good friend and we fell in love with the place, bought a piece of "Bush" and built on it. Marloth Park is such a unique place, I doubt if there is another place like it in South Africa. The bush, the animals, the birds, the sound of Hippos from the Crocodile river, the hyena's in the early evening or the lions from Lion Spruit. Also, you get more familiar with all the visiting animals, the Zebra's, Warthogs, Kudu and Giraffe, not forgetting the baboons, who wish to rob your pantry, all making their appearance almost on a daily basis.

Almost forgot. Your sundowners taste so must better under the African stars! Do we have something in common? I'm sure we have.

Someone shouts at me, from the back, "yes but"!!

Yes! There are always some matters of concern, dislikes, etc. Like some people driving at alarming speeds in Marloth, forgetting that this is a holiday township/ game reserve, not a National Freeway. Kids driving Dad's 4x4, recklessly amusing themselves by frightening animals. Our environment is most precious! Please slow down!! (Only 50km/hr on tar and 30km/hr on gravel roads).

Yes! That people bring in their dogs, cats, canaries, goldfish, and other lovable pets IS totally against the rules and regulations. Domestic animals, e.g. dogs, cats and birds are carriers of diseases and their scent scares away the animals we love and enjoy so much. Please don't!!

Yes. Property owners plant trees and/or shrubs either alien or not endemic to Marloth Park. Ignorance?? Would you like to know more about our beautiful indigenous trees and shrubs? There are numerous books on this subject. Please remember, that indigenous to South Africa, does not necessary means that they are indigenous/or endemic to Marloth Park.

Next. As per our constitution, one of our objectives; "To promote scientific-based principles of nature conservation in Marloth Park" refers.

The "Ecological Resource Evaluation of Marloth Park with Management Recommendations by Ben Orban, (Pri. Sci. Nat.)" which, at the recommendation of the Marlothii Conservancy, and financed by the Nkomazi Municipality, is now available. This 151 page, in colour, scientific / coffee table edition gives you all the answers to environmental issues in Marloth and is an absolute MUST for every caring property owner. As is being a member of the Marlothii Conservancy! Your Conservancy fully supports this report and have strongly recommended to the Nkomazi Municipality to adopt this as the Management Plan for Marloth Park for immediate implementation. You, as a property owner, will need to participate in the preservation of our fauna and flora. If we do not follow the recommendations from this study, Marloth Park may not have a future. The study deals in detail, with, for example and relevant to Marloth Park

- a) geology
- b) vegetation classification on Marloth
- c) veld condition assessment and the calculation of potential grazing capacity
- d) the assessment of available browse and calculation of browsing capacity
- e) general management of Marloth
- f) stocking recommendation
- g) supplementary feeding
- h) disease and parasite control
- i) veld management
- j) bush encroachment
- k) noxious and invasive weeds
- l) endangered, vulnerable and rare plants
- m) general management recommendations for Marloth

Get the full story, order your copy of the "Ecological Resource Evaluation of Marloth" now and be in the picture!!

Place your order together with a cheque for R210.00 plus R30.00 postage to "Marlothii Conservancy" P.O. Box 281

Hectorspruit 1330. We will send you your copy as soon as possible.

Next

The Relationship between the Condition of the Veld and the number of animals it can sustain is of prime importance. Virtually everyone comes to Marloth Park to be with, and live amongst animals of as many varied species as possible. However, the number and types of animals the veld can sustain is limited by many factors. In a natural environment, mother nature would take care of this balance, but because of man's activities, eg buildings, exotic gardens, roads, and fencing as well as lack of other natural controls like predators, we, urgently needed a good management plan. The correct stocking rates for our animals to ensure their good health is vital. Factors affecting stocking rates to be taken into consideration are:- sex ratios, age structure, restrictions due to social behaviour and the increased risk of diseases due to poor grazing.

The more we can improve and keep the veld in a good well-balanced productive state, the more varied types of animals we can introduce in due course.

Next.

Animal stocking recommendations.

Your Conservancy convened a meeting with all interested stake-holders in Marloth Park on the 27th of June 2006 to discuss the "Ecological Resource Evaluation study, by Ben Orban" and it was unanimously adopted as the management plan. All known organisations were issued with a copy of the "Ben Orban" report prior to this meeting for their perusal and input.

As at present, the browsing capacity is exceeded by 54% due to the large number of Impala feeding thereon; your conservancy has proposed the urgent removal of 280 Impala and unfortunately, 10 Giraffe. (As recommended).

In order to protect themselves the acacias, being severely over browsed, tend to release toxic flavonoids and tannins which are not only unpalatable to the giraffe but cannot be digested by their digestive systems. They actually suffer from both under nutrition and mal nutrition making them prone to Tuberculosis and death from starvation. They therefore need a huge feeding range - One giraffe per 200ha! Though at present only 47% of the ecological grazing capacity is being utilised, Burchell Zebra, which should not exceed 4 per 100 ha of suitable habitat to maintain a healthy population, could be reduced by 12 animals. (As recommended).

To achieve an ecological balance in veld management, we proposed an initial extra introduction of a minimum of up to 15 Blue Wildebeest (short grass grazers) and up to 15 Waterbuck (taller grass grazers) as minimum viable group size breeding herds. All the above as recommended by the ecological report and unanimously accepted by the interested stake-holders present.

We are looking at the possibility of a live barter deal for our animals IN EXCHANGE for Wildebeest and Waterbuck. We will keep you informed!

Feeding behaviour and food preferences.

Herbivores can either graze from grasses, herbs and forbs, brows from trees and bushes, or do both.

There are 4 feeding classes:

1. Bulk or non-to low-selective grazers which are mainly larger animals eating coarse grasses with a high fibre contend. E.g. Zebra, buffalo, rhino
2. Concentrate or highly selective grazers which are mostly small animals eating plants with a high nutritive value. E.g. Bush buck, wildebeest, waterbuck
3. mixed feeders which graze and browse. E.g. Impala are the most voracious.
4. browsers which feed on leaves, fruit, flowers and other woody plant components. E.g. Giraffe, kudu, duiker, steenbok.

To establish how many, and what types of animals an area can support we need to know both the grazing and browsing capacity of an area. "For environmental planning not only the vegetation but also the habitat has to be considered.

It is therefore, prudent that plant communities, rather than individual plant species, should be considered for management and planning purposes" (Orban report Page 25)

And you thought being a property owner in Marloth was plain sailing? Stick around, there is more to come! (REMEMBER, if we do not implement the recommendations from this study, Marloth Park may not have a future!)

In our next newsletter we will discuss the veld management and bush encroachment proposals.

Stay one step ahead, get the full report, and get involved!! It's your investment!

Next.

What is your interpretation of the word "culling"? Referring to my Oxford Dictionary the word cull means; to pick, select, remove. In S. African environmental circles it seems to mean "to kill-off". I have always interpreted culling as "killing-off" as an animal population control measure. In one of SA National Parks Board's magazines it, at last, refers to animal population control measures by means of capture, translocation, contraception or culling and where culling is necessary, animal products should be utilised etc.. There you are, straight from the horse's mouth. Or should it be, straight from the Zebra's mouth?

Next.

Do you remember "Frikkie", our rhino from Lion Spruit? The Conservancy is going to try and take him out of the "pickle", and of course we need your help! We are still in the planning stage, but things look promising. Like re-assembling him, design housing facilities, etc, etc. Watch this space! We will keep you posted.

Frikkie was an orphan and was reared by humans as a pet. He was part of the bargain when Lionspruit was bought by Marlothpark in 1992 and he became a legend in his time.

Next.

Are rats a problem? Than use "Racumin" produced by Bayer. This poison has no harmful effect on other living things or the ecology. It will kill the rats but will save the owls!

Finally

Just a reminder. Membership contributions to the amount of R50-00 for 2006 were due for renewal in March. Regrettably this amount does not go far when copy paper, printing ink and mailing costs are considered. To those who have not renewed their contribution, do so by return, as this is the last newsletter we can afford to send you. An added donation would be most welcome! Direct deposits can be made to our account as detailed below. Please indicate your name and stand number ON YOUR DEPOSIT SLIP and Mail OR E-mail us A COPY!

Account name	Marlothii Conservancy
Bank	First National Bank
Branch Number	270-952
Account number	62080272653

