

**APRIL – JUNE 2012  
JACOBUS JOHANNES RETIEF  
TABLE BAY NATURE RESERVE  
QUARTERLY REPORT FOR THE MILNERTON AREA  
CITY OF CAPE TOWN – BIODIVERSITY MANAGEMENT**

*\*All photos by the author, unless otherwise indicated.*

## 1 BIODIVERSITY MANAGEMENT

- This is a **three month report** and it will be covering all the activities for the period running from **1 April 2012 to 30 June 2012** within the Table Bay Nature Reserve, in the Milnerton Area of the North Region.
- **Highlights:**
  - **Launch of TBNR offices:** The launch of the new offices based at Rietvlei took place on 2012/06/27 in the boma area. The executive major was first taken on a field trip to highlight success stories of the Professor Kader Asmal Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) in the TBNR. The executive major assisted with planting indigenous plants in a restoration site at the bird hide block. Thereafter, short speeches were given by Julia Wood (Manager: Biodiversity Branch), Osman Asmal (Director: Environmental Resource Management Department), Koos Retief (Area Manager: TBNR), Louise Stafford (Coordinator: Invasive Species), and Patricia de Lille (Executive Major: City of Cape Town). The media were invited along with key stakeholders and role-players in the TBNR. The major's speech is reprinted below, and several articles appeared in the local media (see Figures 1-9 below).

### **SPEECH BY THE EXECUTIVE MAYOR OF CAPE TOWN, ALDERMAN PATRICIA DE LILLE AT THE LAUNCH OF THE TABLE BAY NATURE RESERVE: MEDIA RELEASE NO. 534 / 2012 - 27 JUNE 2012**

Molweni, good morning, goeie more

The City of Cape Town is committed to building a caring society. This means not just caring about the well-being of the residents of the City but also the environment in which we all live.

It also means taking proactive measures to ensure that future generations can cherish the natural beauty of the landscape of the city.

To this end, the City has put in place various environmentally friendly initiatives. One such initiative is the Kader Asmal Integrated Catchment Management project, in honour of the late Dr. Kader Asmal, to keep our rivers and waterways clean.

The aim of the Kader Asmal Integrated Catchment management project is the restoration of our freshwater ecosystems through: (1) bringing alien plant infestations under control; (2) addressing sources of pollution; (3) raising awareness and thereby engaging civil society to become custodians of our freshwater and (4) ensuring long term sustainability through a river warden system.

The river warden system which ensures longer term job creation is designed to serve as an early warning system for pollution and alien plant invasions and activation of a rapid response to address the problems before they become wide-spread.

Funded by the Mayor's Special Jobs Programme, this project has provided job opportunities to over 450 people based on the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP), mostly young people from poor areas in 20 projects benefitting 15 rivers, 4 wetlands and vleis across the city.

This project has made a significant difference in preventing our rivers from receding into further decay.

We are now in the process of finalising the allocation of R18 million to the Kader Asmal Catchment Management Project to expand it to other rivers in the metro and provide create more jobs for the unemployed.

This month we introduced a daily janitorial service for flush toilets in identified and qualifying informal settlements in partnership with the Social Justice Coalition as part of our on-going efforts to partner with civil society to address the needs of our residents.

The service includes the daily cleaning of flush toilets, standpipes and surrounding areas, doing minor repairs of flush toilets and reporting all instances where major extensive repairs are necessary.

More than 500 community members have been employed, through the EPWP programme, to provide these janitorial services and basic plumbing skills. They are also assisting us to educate communities on how to properly care for and utilize communal toilets.

Our success in implementing the EPWP programme; which has created approximately 34 000 job opportunities through 228 projects has earned the City incentives to the value of R19million from the national government.

The launch of the Table Bay Nature Reserve and its new office complex today forms part of this administration's broader plans to optimise the full potential of the city's natural reserves.

The use of green energy resources ranging from rain water harvesting for the flush system of all urinals and lavatories to the use of maximum natural lighting in order to minimise the use of electricity at this complex are a model for green building that the city encourages.

To this end, we are finalising the Cape Town Smart Building Handbook which will be published soon.

This will contain a set of guidelines and practical information that will assist residents to make informed decisions about the use of energy-efficient technologies and suitable materials and solutions for green buildings.

We are planting the seeds for a sustainable green future in the face of global climate change by initiating these programmes. But we cannot not achieve this on our own.

Protecting the natural beauty of our heritage from harm should not only be the obligation of the government of the day or the obsession of environmental advocacy groups.

We must all do our bit in our different capacities to act responsibly to protect our natural heritage from degradation.

END

# Vyf bewaringsgebiede word een reservaat

Yaël Maigas

KAAPSTAD. – Vyf van die stad se bewaringsgebiede het gister amptelik saamgesmelt om saam 'n reservaat van 880 hektaar te vorm.

Dit is gedoen nadat die Kaapse stadsraad planne ondersteun het om die vyf bewaringsgebiede aan die Tafelbaai se kus almal onder een vaandel te bring.

Die idee is verlede jaar ten tyde van 'n openbare gesprek voorgestel. "Dit was 'n blink idee wat deur die gemeenskap voorgestel is – iets wat hulle self wou hê," het Koos Retief, bedryfsbestuurder van die Rietvlei-natuurreservaat, gesê.

Die gebiede wat nou die Tafelbaai-natuurreservaat sal vorm, is die fynbos-korridor langs die Diepriet en die Diepriet se Zoorvlei, Rietvlei, Milnerton-strandmeer en die Milnerton-vleiland.

"Elkeen van hierdie gebiede is onafhanklik bestuur. Die samestelling beteken egter dat die



Koos Retief, bedryfsbestuurder van die Rietvlei-natuurreservaat. Foto: EDREA DU TOIT

bestuur van die groter gebied versprek word. Bewaaring en bemaking van die go-

bied sal ook makliker wees," het hy gesê.

Volgens die direkteur van omgewingshulpbronbestuur van die Kaapse stadsraad, Osman Asmal, hou die gebied en sy biodiversiteit verskeie geleenthede vir die stad in. "Dit is belangrik om 'n wisselwerking te vind tussen die sowat 3 miljoen mense in die metropool en die sewe biome wat binne die stadsgrense lê," het hy gesê.

Volgens Asmal kan die wisselwerking tot geleenthede in toerisme, omgewingsonderrig en werkskepping lei. Die jaarlikse waarde van die stad se biodiversiteit word tussen R1,26 miljoen en R5 miljoen gesaam.

Hoewel dit die geraamde waarde van die metropool se flora en fauna is, is daar tog Kapenaars wat nie van die bewaringsgebiede weet nie.

"Hulle ry op die paan en sien die gebiede, maar is nie bewus van die toegang wat hulle tot hierdie gebiede het nie," het Retief gesê.

## Gebiede van die Tafelbaai-natuurreservaat



Figure 1. Article regarding the Table Bay Nature Reserve launch.

# Mayor plants seeds for a greener future

## Table Bay Nature Reserve officially launched

Mayor Patricia de Lille launched the Table Bay Nature Reserve and its new office complex at Rietvlei on Wednesday June 27.

The Table Bay Nature Reserve covers 880 hectares and consists of the Rietvlei Wetlands, Milnerton Lagoon, Milnerton Beach, Milnerton Racecourse, Zoorvlei Wetlands, Diep River and the Parklands Fynbos Corridor.

Ms De Lille said proactive steps had to be taken to ensure future generations could cherish the natural beauty of the city.

To this end, the City has put in place various environmentally friendly initiatives including the Kader Asmal Integrated Catchment Management Project, in honour of the late Dr Kader Asmal, to keep rivers and waterways clean.

It works towards the restoration of freshwater ecosystems by bringing alien plant infestations under control, addressing pollution, raising awareness and thereby engaging people to become custodians of the freshwater ecosystems and ensuring long-term sustainability through a river warden system.

The river warden system ensures longer term job creation and serves as an early warning system for pollution and alien plant

invasions and activation of a rapid response to deal with problems before they escalate.

Funded by the Mayor's Special Jobs Programme, this project based on the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP), has provided job opportunities to over 450 people, mostly young people from poor areas in 20 projects benefiting 15 rivers, four wetlands and vleis across the city.

Ms De Lille said the project has made a significant difference in preventing rivers from receding into further decay.

"We are now finalising the allocation of R18 million to the Kader Asmal Catchment Management Project to expand it to other rivers in the metro and create more jobs".

She said the success in implementing the EPWP programme, which has created approximately 34 000 job opportunities through 228 projects, has earned the City incentives to the value of R19 million from national government.

She said the launch of the Table Bay Nature Reserve and its new office complex formed part of the City's broader plans to optimise the full potential of the city's natural reserves.

The facility used green energy

resources, ranging from rain water harvesting for the flush system of all urinals and lavatories, to the use of maximum natural lighting to minimise the use of electricity made it a model for green building that the City encouraged.

Ms De Lille said the Cape Town Smart Building Handbook, which will be published soon, will contain a set of guidelines and practical information that will help residents to make informed decisions about the use of energy-efficient technologies and suitable materials and solutions for green buildings.

"We are planting the seeds for a sustainable green future in the face of global climate change by initiating these programmes. But we cannot achieve this on our own.

"Protecting the natural beauty of our heritage from harm should not only be the obligation of the government of the day or the obsession of environmental advocacy groups.

"We must all do our bit to act responsibly to protect our natural heritage from degradation".

The entrance to the Table Bay Nature Reserve is in Grey Avenue, Table View and is open from 7.30am to 5.30pm daily. For details call 021 550 1086.



Area manager Koos Retief, Pat Downing, a member of Milnerton Aquatic Club, Ross Cowing, commodore at Milnerton Aquatic Club, Patricia de Lille, Pat Titmuss, a member of Friends of Rietvlei, Peter Albert and Dr Frank Wygoid, both members of Friends of Paarden Eiland Wetlands and Niel van Wyk, a member of Friends of Rietvlei.

Figure 2. Article regarding the Table Bay Nature Reserve launch.

# New Table Bay Nature Reserve

**John Yeld**  
ENVIRONMENT & SCIENCE WRITER

THE PEOPLE spoke and the city listened – and Cape Town's new consolidated nature reserve has been named the Table Bay Nature Reserve. The new Table Bay Nature Reserve consists of seven parts: Rietvlei

Wetlands, Milnerton Lagoon, Milnerton Beach, Milnerton Racecourse, Zoarvlei Wetlands, Diep River and the Parklands Fynbos Corridor.

This was not the name that the authorities had envisaged when their proposals for the future conservation of seven important natural areas around the edges of the bay – includ-

ing Rietvlei, its associated wetlands and the Milnerton lagoon and beach – were put up for discussion during a public participation process.

It was during this process that the vision for consolidation into a single reserve named after iconic Table Bay and for a unified management plan had emerged, guests heard at the

reserve's inauguration by Mayor Patricia de Lille this week.

"From very humble beginnings, we've always had a (conservation) dream and finally we feel we're taking a massive step to making this dream come true," area manager Koos Retief told them.

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Gulls make the most of an otherwise deserted jetty on the shores of Rietvlei at Milnerton  
PICTURE: DAVID RITCHIE

Figure 3. Article regarding the Table Bay Nature Reserve launch.

# Green jobs, better lives in Asmal's honour

**JOHN YELD**

HE ONCE famously announced that the only thing he knew about water was that it was the stuff he added to his whisky – but that was right at the start of the late Professor Kader Asmal's tenure as minister of water affairs.

Tackling his new career with characteristic energy and enthusiasm, Asmal went on to become an expert in the field, championing equitable water provision, water conservation, and the sustainable use of this precious resource – so much so that he was subsequently honoured with the Stockholm Water Prize in 2000, an award popularly referred to as the Nobel Prize for water.

Now, Asmal's legacy is being honoured in the best possible way through a project that is helping restore and rehabilitate Cape Town's rivers and wetlands.

This is the mayor's special project for Integrated Catchment Management, under way in Atlantis, Masure, Pella, Diep River and Blaauwberg, and in the new Table Bay Nature Reserve that was inaugurated by Mayor Patricia de Lille last week.

Before the inauguration, De Lille was taken to the wetlands of Rietvlei – one of the seven components of the new reserve, which also includes Milnerton lagoon and beach –

where she was introduced to some of the people employed on the project, and viewed their rehabilitation work.

Funded through the mayor's special jobs programme, the project has provided job opportunities for more than 450 residents – mostly young people from poor areas in 20 projects – working on 15 rivers, four wetlands and several vleis across the city, including Rietvlei.

In her address at the inauguration, De Lille explained that the catchment management project named after the feisty professor was aimed at restoring the city's freshwater ecosystems through four major activities: controlling alien invasive plants; preventing pollution at source; raising awareness of residents and getting some of them to become "custodians" of freshwater resources; and by ensuring the long-term sustainability of rehabilitated rivers and wetlands through a "river warden" system.

The system, which provided longer-term job creation – the rehabilitation work is done on the short-term, poverty relief model of the government's Expanded Public Works Programme – was designed to serve as an early-warning system for pollution and alien plant invasions, De Lille said. This meant there could be a rapid response before the problem became widespread.



GREEN SCENE: Workers from the mayor's special project for Integrated Catchment Management rehabilitate the wetland shores of Rietvlei. The project honours former water affairs minister, the late Kader Asmal.  
PICTURE: DAVID RITCHIE



GOOD COMPANY: Mayor Patricia de Lille with some of the 450-plus people who are being employed to help rehabilitate rivers and wetlands around the Diep River at Milnerton, right – a crucial element of the new consolidated Table Bay Nature Reserve.  
PICTURES: BRUCE SUTHERLAND/CITY OF CAPE TOWN



"This project has made a significant difference in preventing our rivers from receding into further decay," she said.

She announced her office was in the process of finalising an additional R18 million for the project to expand it to other rivers in the metro, and create more jobs for the unemployed. Also, last month saw the introduction of a daily janitor-

ial service for flush toilets in certain informal settlements, in partnership with the Social Justice Coalition. This service includes the daily cleaning of flush toilets, standpipes and surrounding areas, doing minor repairs of flush toilets and reporting all instances where major extensive repairs were necessary, De Lille explained.

"This is part of our on-going

efforts to partner with civil society to address the needs of our residents. More than 560 community members have been employed through the Expanded Public Works Programme to provide these janitorial services and basic plumbing skills. They are also helping to educate communities on how to care properly for, and utilise, communal toilets."

The city's success in imple-

menting the public works programme has created 34 000 short-term job opportunities through 228 projects, and has earned incentives to the value of R19m from the national government, she pointed out.

● For information on the city's nature reserves and natural areas, visit [www.capetown.gov.za/naturereserves](http://www.capetown.gov.za/naturereserves)

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Figure 4. Article regarding the TBNR launch and the Professor Kader Asmal project.

# Nature reserve grows

LEON STEENKAMP

Having their headquarters in the heart of the newly formed Table Bay Nature Reserve will greatly help local conservationists to protect the unique biodiversity found only in Cape Town.

This was the sentiment of Koos Retief, manager of the newly proclaimed Table Bay Nature Reserve.

The proclamation of this reserve – which now incorporates seven local protective portions of land under one entity – as well as the newly built headquarters at Rietvlei was officially launched during a ceremony on Wednesday.

"This is a process that started 12 years ago and we feel we have now taken a massive step towards being able to manage Rietvlei to the best of our ability," Retief said during the event which was attended by local Friends groups and dignitaries including the executive mayor of Cape Town, Patricia de Lille.

Retief extended an appreciative word of thanks to the Friends of Rietvlei and the Friends of the Paarden Eiland Wetlands who played a big role in uniting the seven parcels of conservation land under one name and management body.

The proposal to combine the Rietvlei wetlands, Milnerton lagoon, Milnerton beach, Milnerton race course, Zoarvlei wetlands, Diep River and the Parklands fynbos corridor as the Table Bay Nature Reserve came about during a public participation process early last year which was part of the application to proclaim 15 sites with unique and critical biodiversity as contract nature reserves.

The city's plans to proclaim these sites as contract nature reserves were aimed at giving them greater conservation protection.

Other speakers highlighted the important role Cape Town's biodiversity plays in tourism, job creation and poverty alleviation.

"Cape Town only covers 0,1 per cent of South Africa but has 18 per cent of the country's Red List spe-



Present at the launch ceremony of the Table Bay Nature Reserve and the unveiling of its new head office at Rietvlei were (from left) Koos Retief (manager of Table Bay Nature Reserve), Pat Downing (Friends of Rietvlei), Ross Cowing (commodore of Milnerton Aquatics Club), Patricia de Lille (mayor of Cape Town), Pat Titmuss (Friends of Rietvlei), Peter Albert, Frank Wygoid (both Friends of the Paarden Eiland Wetlands) and Niel van Wyk (Friends of Rietvlei).

Photo: Leon Steenkamp

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Asmal added that tourism is the cornerstone of the Cape Town economy and that the city's conservation image is therefore a very powerful draw-card.

Louise Stafford, invasive species co-ordinator, stressed the current threat to the city's freshwater bodies. "The two main problems are pollution and invasive vegetation," she said.

She said political will and support through funding is what is needed in the fight against invasive plant species.

In her speech De Lille said the city has put in place various environmentally friendly initiatives to ensure that future generations can cherish the natural beauty of the landscape of the city. One such initiative is the Kader Asmal integrated catchment management project which aims to keep local rivers and waterways clean.

"The aim of the Kader Asmal integrated catchment management

project is the restoration of our freshwater ecosystems through bringing alien plant infestations under control; addressing sources of pollution; raising awareness and thereby engaging civil society to become custodians of our freshwater; and ensuring long-term sustainability through a river warden system," De Lille said.

She added that the river warden system which ensures longer term job creation is designed to serve as an early warning system for pollution and alien plant invasions, activating a rapid response before the problem becomes wide-spread.

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"This project has made a significant difference in preventing our rivers from receding into further decay," she said adding that the city is in the process of finalising the allocation of R18 million to the Kader Asmal Catchment Management Project to expand it to other rivers.

Figure 5. Article about the TBNR launch and Professor Kader Asmal Project.

TYGERBURGER (Durbanville)  
04 Jul 2012, p.8

# 7 reserves into 1

LEON STEENKAMP

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NEW AGE, THE (First Edition)

28 Jun 2012, p.8

## R18m for rivers, vleis and wetlands project

ABOUT R18m will be set aside to hire "wardens" to look after rivers and wetlands in and around Cape Town, mayor Patricia de Lille said yesterday. "The river warden system is designed to serve as an early warning system for pollution and alien plant invasions," she said in a speech prepared for delivery at the opening of the Table Bay Nature Reserve. The wardens would be able to raise the alert about any worrying environmental signs at 15 rivers, four wetlands and a variety of vleis. More than 450 people had already been employed, mostly young people from poor areas in the city. The system, formally known as the Kader Asmal Catchment Management Project, would be funded by De Lille's special jobs programme. – Sapa

CAPE TIMES (Second Edition)  
28 Jun 2012, p.6

## Table Bay reserve launched

The new Table Bay Nature Reserve – which incorporates conservation sites across the Table Bay area – was launched yesterday by mayor Patricia de Lille.

The Diep River Fynbos Corridor, Rietvlei Wetlands, Milnerton Racecourse Nature Reserve and Zoarvlei Wetlands have been united under the new Table Bay Nature Reserve banner. The reserve is open for hiking, bird watching, picnicking, sailing and other water sports. The individual sites can still be accessed as usual. Information can be obtained from an eco-friendly office which has been built on the grounds of the Rietvlei section.

BUSINESS DAY

28 Jun 2012, p.3

## Cape Town hires river wardens

**EARLY WARNING** | About R18m would be set aside to hire "wardens" to look after rivers and wetlands in Cape Town, mayor Patricia de Lille said yesterday. "The river warden system... is designed to serve as an early warning system for pollution and alien plant invasions," she said in a speech prepared for delivery at the opening of the Table Bay Nature Reserve. Sapa

Figure 6-9. Articles about the TBNR launch and Professor Kader Asmal Project.

- **Protection status:** Full Council approved the process for proclamation applications for the nature reserves in the City. Table Bay Nature Reserve (TBNR) is part of the batch of reserves. A **Conservation Development Framework (CDF)** was submitted to the Rietvlei Management Working Group for comment. The comments on the CDF will be used to amend it accordingly. The integrated reserve management plan is also completed. The only outstanding work is the survey diagrams that have to be amended for subdivided properties to be included in the nature reserve estate. Cliff Dorse is undertaking this work.

## 2 CONSERVATION

### 2.1 Flora Management

#### 2.1.1 Invasive Species Management

- **Wave's Edge *Typha capensis* reed clearing:** An EPWP team was utilised to clear *Typha capensis* reed infestations in the Wave's Edge wetland since the previous quarter. This work was inspired by much input from surrounding residents at Wave's Edge who requested relief from the spreading *Typha capensis* seeds. The team that conducted this cutting work eventually had to withdraw from this site due to elevated water levels with the onset of winter. The team continued with invasive vegetation clearing in other areas of TBNR. They will return to Wave's Edge once the water levels have dropped again (see Figure 10 below).
- **Expanded Public Works Programme:** Three EPWP teams were utilised to conduct follow-up clearing of terrestrial woody invasive species throughout the TBNR. The main focus areas were at Milnerton Ridge boundary, the Milnerton Lagoon, the Coastal Section, the Table View boundary, and the Diep River at Gie Road. Some areas of invasive kikuyu grass infestations were also treated with herbicide. The teams were supervised by TBNR field rangers (see Figures 11-13 below).



**Figure 10.** Field ranger Sakhile Luhani inspecting the cutting work at Wave's Edge.



**Figure 11.** A small path of invasive kikuyu grass treated with herbicide.



**Figure 12.** One of many palm trees in the Milnerton Lagoon section before it was removed.



**Figure 13.** A small remnant prickly pear. These are removed when found.

- **Water hyacinth:** Louise Stafford (Invasive Species Unit) is planning to make a team of EPWP workers available to conduct large scale manual clearing of water hyacinth in the Diep River system. A site meeting was conducted to assess the work load and to prioritise sections for clearing. See figures 14-15 below.



**Figures 14-15.** A site meeting of water hyacinth work load in the TBNR with Louise Stafford, Russel Ikin and Christopher Singo.

- **Interesting pictures:** Figure 16 below indicates an odd trio of avian visitors to Rietvlei. Normally Pied Crows are seen, but these are White-necked Ravens. Figure 17 is indigenous plants being cultivated at the Maitland nursery for re-introduction to TBNR.



**Figure 16.** Three White-necked ravens photographed at the Rietvlei picnic facilities

**Figure 17.** Plants destined for TBNR being cultivated at the Maitland nursery managed by Geert Sprangers

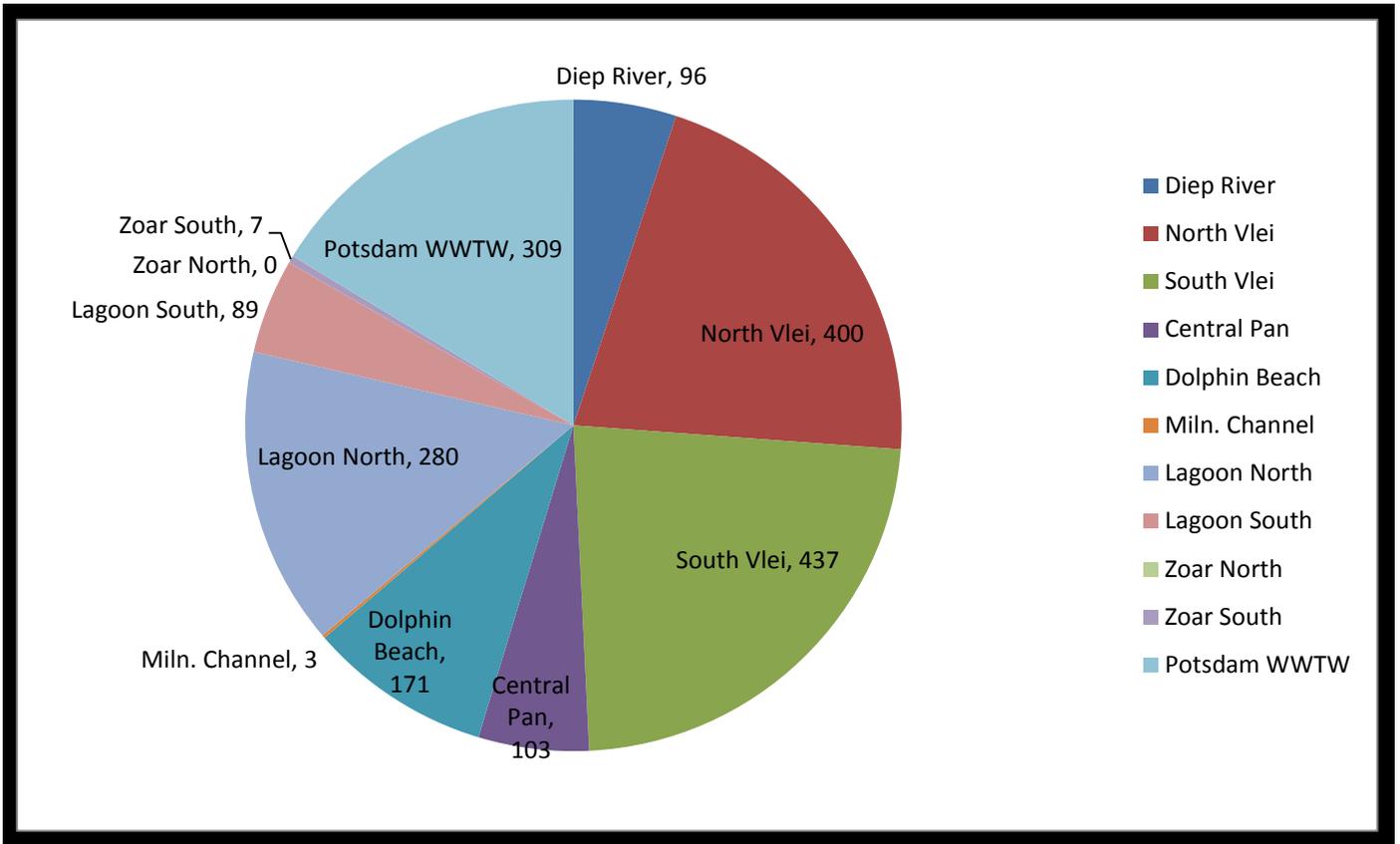
## 2.2 Fauna Management

### 2.2.1 Monitoring of Wildlife: Game counts and sightings

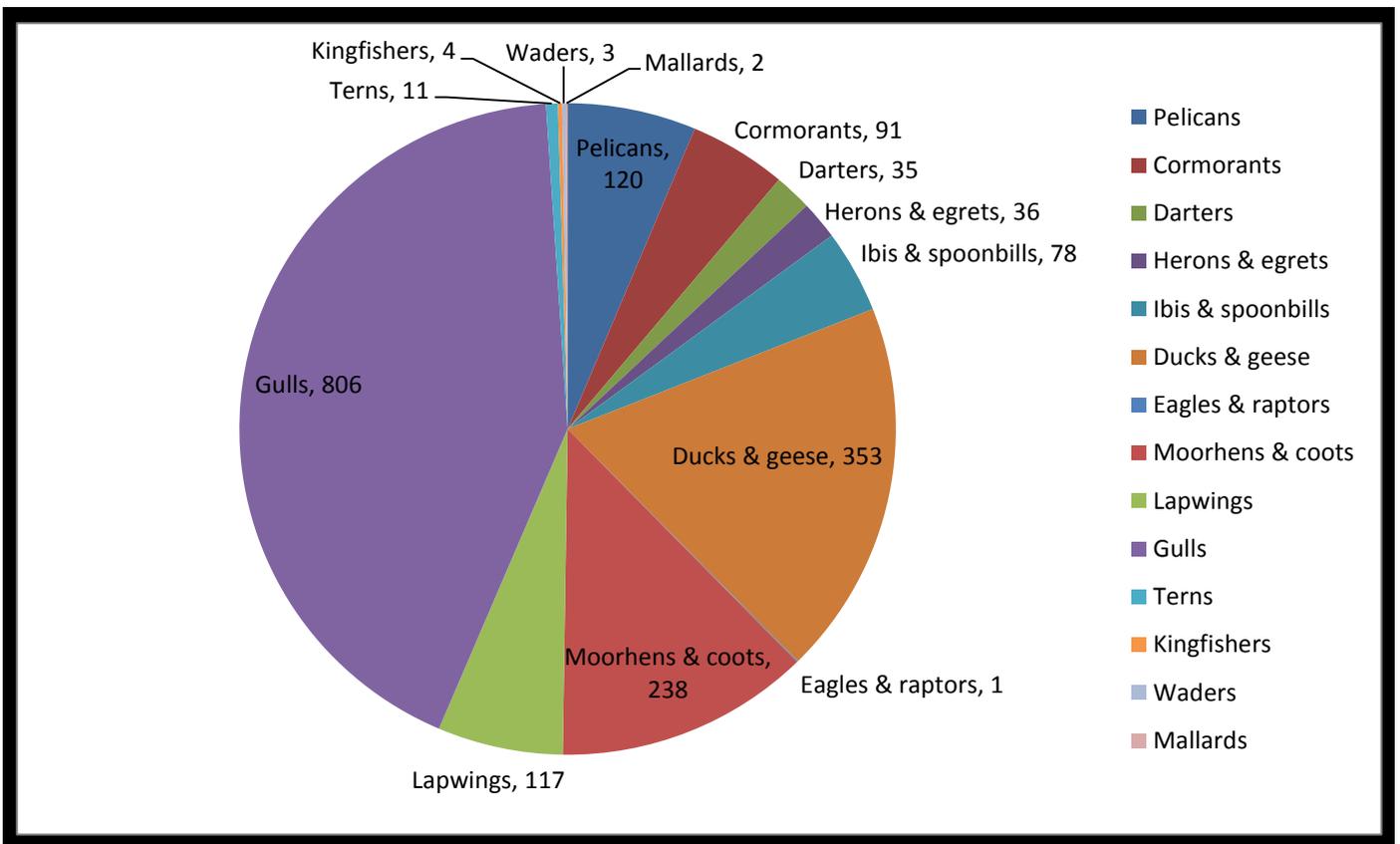
- A **Coordinated Waterbird Count (CWAC)** was conducted at TBNR on 2012/04/20. See Table 1 below for results from the water bird census. A total 1,895 birds were counted, comprising 26 species. These included White Pelican 120, Whitebreasted Cormorant 29, Reed Cormorant 62, African Darter 35, Grey Heron 22, Blackheaded Heron 3, Little Egret 11, Sacred Ibis 72, Afr spoonbill 6, Egyptian Goose 280, Yellow-billed Duck 32, Cape shoveller 18, Spurwinged Goose 23, Africa fish eagle 1, Common Moorhen 19, Red-knobbed Coot 219, Blacksmith Lapwing 117, Kelp Gull 401, Hartlaub's Gull 405, Caspian tern 1, Swift Tern 5, Common tern 5, Pied Kingfisher 2, Malachite Kingfisher 2, Cape Wagtail 3, and Mallards 2. Also see below Figures:
  - Figure 18. Pie chart of numbers of birds in various survey sections; and
  - Figure 19. Pie chart of groups of birds of CWAC survey of 2012/04/20.

**Table 1.** Summarised data from CWAC census of 2012/04/20.

Bird\site	TOTAL	Diep River	North Vlei	South Vlei	Central Pan	Dolphin Beach	Miln. Channel	Lagoon North	Lagoon South	Zoar North	Zoar South	Potsdam WWTW
White Pelican	120			120								
Whitebreasted Cormorant	29		4	11				10	4			
Reed Cormorant	62							51	9		1	1
African Darter	35		7	20		1		4				3
Grey Heron	22		3	5	1			10				3
Blackheaded Heron	3						3					
Little Egret	11			3				4	2			2
Sacred Ibis	72			5				13			4	50
Afr spoonbill	6			5				1				
Egyptian Goose	280		6	163	28			52	4			27
Yellow-billed Duck	32	10	12			1		7			2	
Cape shoveller	18					18						
Spurwinged Goose	23	18		5								
Africa fish eagle	1				1							
Common Moorhen	19	12		1		6						
Red-knobbed Coot	219	50	19	84		61						5
Blacksmith Lapwing	117		7		8	2		27	4			69
Kelp Gull	401		315	8	5			18	35			20
Hartlaub's Gull	405	3	24	4	60	81		76	28			129
Caspian tern	1		1									
Swift Tern	5							3	2			
Common tern	5		2	3								
Pied Kingfisher	2							2				
Malachite Kingfisher	2	1				1						
Cape Wagtail	3	2							1			
Mallards	2							2				
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>1895</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>437</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>309</b>



**Figure 18. Pie chart of numbers of birds in various survey sections of CWAC 2012/04/20**



**Figure 19. Pie chart of groups of birds of CWAC 2012/04/20**

### 3 WATER AND SOIL MANAGEMENT

- **Water quality monitoring** was done on 2012/04/24, 2012/05/29, and 2012/06/26.
- **Zoarvlei water quality and pollution problems:** There were several articles in the media highlighting the problems with pollution, littering, water quality, and the management of invasive aquatic species in the Zoarvlei section (see Figures 20-24 below).

**TABLE TALK**  
27 Jun 2012, p.22



■ The rubbish accumulating at the Zoarvlei Nature Reserve is mostly a result of human behaviour, says the City of Cape Town.

■ Apart from waste flowing into the vlei, people have also used the area as a rubbish dump.

■ The nutrient-rich (sewage-filled) water has become stagnant because of rapid bulrush growth.

**CLEMENT DEANE**

**T**he City of Cape Town intends to address the bulrush problem plaguing Milnerton, specifically at Zoarvlei Nature Reserve ("Toilet stink at Zoarvlei", Tabletalk, June 20).

Rugby resident Matt Weisse, 47, was critical of the City's slow response to fixing ongoing sewage leaks from drain covers, specifically in Donegal Street.

The sewerage pipes were often blocked and water, containing sewage and other pollutants, would gush out of manholes and into the vlei.

Bulrush growth would then increase and block off the water-flow, resulting in a polluted, stagnant and unhealthy mess.

Nearby residents, who used to get the smell of the sea, now received a distinctive toilet odour, especially on a hot day.

Alderman Belinda Walker, mayoral committee member for economic, environmental and spatial planning, said the City did not have an integrated reed and bulrush management plan for nature reserves.

However, she said the Environmental Resource Management Department (ERMD) had done clearing operations for habitat management, fire management and invasive species control.

She said the ERMD would compile a report for "an integrated management plan for reeds and bulrushes."

"Reed clearing work is very expensive, and suitable sources of funding have to be allocated for such work to be undertaken.

"This report may lead to policy decisions being taken on the management of reeds and bulrushes.

"Experience shows that bulrushes return very quickly after cutting or herbicide application, due to the fact that the roots are still underneath the ground, and are not easily killed by these methods," she said.

"So far the City's attempt to stop the bulrush explosion has been to spray them with herbicide, but it was only a temporary relief.

Bulrush roots grow up to a metre deep and unless they were removed, the plants regrew and continued to spread.

Furthermore, the poison used to kill the bulrushes could pollute the water supply, which is why they preferred not to use herbicide. Ms Walker said additional pollution came from people not properly disposing of their waste and it was not simple to remove.

She said this would lead to increased fires, increased plant growth – such as bulrushes – occasional algae blooms, as well as a loss of species and a decline in habitat diversity.

Frank Wygold of the West Coast Field Study Centre was also critical of the City's slow response to address the bulrush and sewage problem.

He said leaking sewage was at the heart of the bulrush explosion but that it could be solved by fixing sewerage pipes and increasing the salinity of the vlei's water, which would be relatively simple. If they gradually introduced salt into the ecosystem, it would eventually kill off the bulrushes and allow the water to flow again.

Councillor Sheham Sims, mayoral committee member for utility services, said the sewage problem was mostly as a result of human negligence.

She said blockages would occur because foreign substances would be discharged into the sewers, especially when drain covers were stolen.

Ms Sims said the City had a blockage-free sewer campaigns which aimed to raise awareness about the impact of blocked drains and how to alleviate the problem.

"Any sewage flowing into an open environment such as a public water body, open veld or roadway is undesirable as it could have an adverse effect on human health.

"People don't always see the connection between their actions and the resulting pollution and accompanying environmental impacts," Ms Sims said.

Councillor Brett Herron, mayoral committee member for transport, roads and stormwater, also felt the problem was a result of human behaviour.

He said while the City could implement many measures to mitigate pollution in its watersheds, residents and industry could assist by not dumping waste in catchment areas.

This included an ongoing trend of pollution finding its way to the beach. While the Paarden Eiland Wetlands were affected mostly from sewage, the Black River/Salt River – which split Brooklyn and Paarden Eiland, and was close to the wetlands – was also affected by large amounts of litter. Mr Herron said the City would soon be commissioning a study to investigate the most effective trap design to stop litter from getting to the beach.

The City said it also planned to meet with the public at the next Zoarvlei Management Advisory Committee meeting on Friday July 20, which will include representatives of the Paarden Eiland City Improvement District.

The discussion will be about the management of the Zoarvlei.

**The problem was the result of human behaviour**

## City plans to address Zoar's bulrush plague

Figure 20. Article about the water pollution at Zoarvlei section.

**TABLE TALK**  
20 Jun 2012, p.1



■ The Zoarvlei Nature Reserve, also known as the Paarden Eiland Wetlands, is heavily polluted.

■ The nature reserve's sewage filled and stagnant water has been described as a toilet.

**CLEMENT DEANE**

**T**he Zoarvlei Nature Reserve has become a toilet, says Rugby resident Matt Weisse, 47, who accuses the City of not tackling chronic pollution at the reserve.

Also known as the Paarden Eiland Wetlands, the reserve stretches from Boundary Road, near Milnerton Lagoon, to Paarden Eiland. It has become an unsightly mess over the years.

Mr Weisse, who is a member of the Friends of the Paarden Eiland Wetlands, said the problem started with blocked sewer pipes. Sewage flowed from Donegal Street manholes, near the reserve, into the vlei.

Mr Weisse has reported the blockages many times, but they keep happening.

When he asked municipal workers why, they said someone was throwing oil down the drain. But this did not explain why the City had not cleaned up the vlei.

Last year, Tabletalk reported how the city's rivers were filled with litter, including plastic bottles, chips packets and other debris that accumulated at the Salt River mouth ("Mountains of plastic adrift in our waterways," October 5 2011). This problem extended to the Paarden Eiland Wetlands, said Mr Weisse, because they too had become a dumping ground for rubbish.

# Toilet stink at Zoarvlei

Residents living near a badly polluted nature reserve say the authorities are deaf to their concerns. Tabletalk sent a list of questions to the City two weeks ago... we're still waiting for answers.

Continued on page 4

Figure 21. Article about water pollution in Zoarvlei section.



PICTURE: CLEMENT DEANE

■ The *Typha Capensis* reeds (bulrushes) were sprayed with chemicals which would kill them off, and also coloured them pink.



PICTURE: MATT WEISSE

■ Water gushing out of a manhole in Donegal Street which contains sewage and other pollutants.

## City gets flak over reserve pollution

From page 1

The sewage-filled water in the wetlands is an ideal environment for bulrushes, to grow. These then stem the water flow.

Mr Weisse, who runs tours of Cape Town's old underground tunnels, has become well-acquainted with the importance of water flow. He said the vlei had



become "a lake of crap".

"It's why we have so many bulrushes. They love the nutrient-rich water and the whole ecosystem has changed. The

bulrushes have closed the waterways and the water has become stagnant," said Mr Weisse.

He said the City had sprayed the reeds but it was only a temporary solution. Their roots grew up to a metre deep and unless they physically removed them or made the environment uninhabitable for the bulrushes, they would return.

He said that a few years ago, builders of a complex nearby accidentally broke a sewer pipe which pumped raw sewage into the vlei for a week before the City responded. Mr Weisse believed this aided the explosion of bulrushes.

"We used to get a lovely smell of the sea but now it's a toilet smell from the stagnant water. This situation stinks," said Mr Weisse.

His sentiments were shared by a member of the Zoarvlei Management Committee, Frank Wygold, who also runs the West Coast Field Study Centre. Mr Wygold used to run an environmental educational course for school children, which included cleaning up the vlei, but the bulrushes have made it unsafe, espe-

cially since vagrants have started moving in.

Mr Wygold said the problem extended to the Paarden Eiland Metro and he reckoned that a sewer pipe, which ran from Paarden Eiland to Boundary Road, was to blame. He said the pipe

*We used to get a lovely smell of the sea but now it's a toilet smell*

leaked regularly and spewed sewage into the vlei.

"The vlei used to be tidal. It was an outlet of the Black River in the 1960s until they built a canal. Now, the only outlet is Milnerton Lagoon. The only water going into the vlei now is stormwater, rain and some sewage. The original Salt River used to be what the vlei is now. People have told me that they could canoe from the Black River to Milner-

ton and that's impossible now," said Mr Wygold.

He said two years ago, the City was making a channel for stormwater near Justin Street when they broke a sewerage pipe. The sewage flowed for about three months before the City repaired the leak, said Mr Wygold. He said there were records of birds and other wildlife in the vlei, which had all but vanished as a result of the pollution. They had been replaced by an ever-growing bulrush problem.

"The seed head of the bulrush produces about a dessert spoon full of pollen. It's wind-pollinated and causes great discomfort for people with asthma and allergies. As the head develops, the female seeds are fertilised. The head becomes thicker and contains 250 000 seeds. These parachute-like seeds clog up airconditioning and they also interfere with typing, printing and spraypainting, which is a big problem for an industrial area," said Mr Wygold.

Figure 22. Article about water pollution in Zoarvlei.

The Environmental Resource Management Department (ERMD) has very little resources to tackle all the water pollution and littering problems in the City. To achieve better results stronger cooperation from various other departments are required, including Transport, Roads and Stormwater, City Parks, and Pollution Control.

It is tragic that the pollution and littering in surrounding built up areas and industrial zones, which are primarily private properties, unfortunately follows stormwater flows into the City's wetlands. The costs involved in cleaning the wetlands, where the pollution ends up, is several times higher than the costs would be for the private property owners to prevent pollution in the first place.

Often the detrimental impacts on the natural ecosystems in these wetlands are irreversible. The City of Cape Town's departments cannot take all the responsibility for pollution and littering, but the residents and private property holders in all spheres of society must take responsibility to curb pollution at the point of origin, rather than at the end point in our valuable wetlands.



■ Plastic pollution from Paarden Eiland washes up on Milnerton beach at the Black River mouth.

PICTURE: MATT WEISSE

#### From previous page

Adding salt to the water in the vlei would kill off the bulrushes, but, despite many talks with the City of Cape Town, its Environmental Resource Management Department, which oversaw biodiversity management, had been slow to react.

Mr Wygold said they discussed the idea and were ready to boost the salinity of the water, but were stopped.

Mr Wygold said the Paarden Eiland Wetlands once had a high salt content, but it had become fresh water as the area developed. He said gradually reintroducing salt into the ecosystem should kill the bulrushes and revive the wetlands because the microscopic life in the vlei was tolerant of sea water.

The Paarden Eiland City Improvement District also weighed in on the matter and handed a petition to save the wetlands to the City Manager Achmat Ebrahim on Thursday June 7. The petition had 2 133 signatures from the Paarden Eiland CID members, Paarden Eiland industrialists and their employees, Friends of the Paarden Eiland Wetlands Group and residents from Brooklyn, Rugby and surrounding areas. The petition appealed to the City to take urgent action to clear the bulrushes from Zoarvlei.

Les Holtzhausen, chairman of the Paarden Eiland City Improvement District (CID) said in a statement that over the past 10 years failure to manage the wetlands had seen the bulrush growth intensify at such a rate it swallowed up the "precious water bodies".

"The resultant dry reed beds have attracted illegal campers, provided a haven for criminals and given easy access for dumping loads of trash."

He said the dramatic drop in birdlife was indicative of a dying wetland system, which was once home to hundreds of species of waterfowl and other creatures.

Mr Holtzhausen said the annual spreading of pollen from the bulrushes had a detrimental effect on those suffering from allergies and the seasonal dispersal of seeds blocked air-conditioners, settled on office, workshop and factory equipment, and was a constant source of disruption and aggravation to workers and residents.

Despite co-operation

between PECID, the Friends of Paarden Eiland Wetlands and the Zoarvlei Management Committee, little effort was made to improve the situation.

Total eradication of the bulrushes, he said, was not expected, but the water bodies needed to be opened enough to encourage the return of creatures to their habitats and offer visitors to the Zoarvlei something other than dry reed beds, filthy campsites and the odd pool of stagnant water.

Mr Holtzhausen said Mr Ebrahim was asked to intervene in "what can only be termed as an impending conservation disaster".

"Those in authority must be called upon to halt the degradation of this purported 'green lung' and to make the Zoarvlei an attractive spot for the people of Cape Town and beyond. It should begin by first diminishing and then controlling the growth of bulrushes."

Mr Holtzhausen's statement said Mr Ebrahim suggested a team be put together to work with the City Improvement District and other relevant role players to improve the state of the wetlands.

When Tabletalk contacted the City of Cape Town's media department on Thursday June 7 asking if they were aware of the problem at Zoarvlei, they acknowledged that the enquiry had been

received, but did not respond to any questions. Tabletalk followed up on Tuesday June 12 and received confirmation on Thursday June 14 that the City had not completed a response to the enquiry despite promising to do so.

● After two weeks of email correspondence, the City's media department promised to respond by today, Wednesday June 20, which is after our deadline, but we will publish a response in the next available edition of Tabletalk.

## Foul vlei

**B**locked sewer pipes in Milnerton have caused a chain reaction at Zoarvlei Nature Reserve, also known as the Paarden Eiland Wetlands. The sewage finds its way into Zoarvlei and the result is an explosion of bulrushes stemming water flow.

The City has been slow to respond to residents' calls to clean up the vlei. The bulrush seeds are not only a nuisance to people with allergies and asthma, but also pose a problem for industrial activities such as printing, spray painting and air conditioning systems.

The City sprays the bulrushes with chemicals to kill them, but it is not a permanent solution. What is disturbing is that the City stopped a committee that wanted to introduce salt into the wetlands, which would have killed the bulrushes and restored the ecosystem to a healthy state. While the City has dragged its feet in finding a permanent solution to the problem, ratepayers have to live next to a vlei that has become a toilet.

During summer when the water heats up and gas escapes, residents are treated to a foul odour. It is odd that the City is so slow to respond to a call to improve a nature conservation area along the MyCiTi bus route. The City said the reason for including as many bus stops as it did in Paarden Eiland was because it took possible residential developments into account. But who wants to live next to a dirty vlei filled with problem plants and a toilet smell? The City needs to clean up its act – and fast.

Figure 23. Articles about water pollution in Zoarvlei section.

# Paddlers take back the city's waterways

KAREN WATKINS

While Queen Elizabeth II celebrated her diamond jubilee with a flotilla of boats on the Thames, Capetotian outdoor adventurers highlighted the state of the city's waterways.

As the rising sun bathed Zandvlei and the Maatzenberg Peak in a rosy glow on a glorious Sunday June 3, about 26 people took to kaysaks, dinghies and canoes to paddle from False Bay to Table Bay. A further 12 joined them along the way. Navigating vleis and rivers, they sometimes dragged or carried their vessels, hauling them up and down canal walls.

The route takes paddlers through diverse environments, rich and poor, nature reserves, shopping centres and commercial areas. Doctor Kevin Winter of Rondebosch, one of the original four "pioneer paddlers" said from Marina da Gama they paddled through the squagmiste and mess of Coniston Park, Steenberg, Lavender Hill and Retreat. Car tyres, bumper, fridges and more, but not as much plastic as in the previous two years. He suspects this is due to the booms which catch the garbage.

Arriving at Princess Vlei, an environmental education programme was well under way. Co-ordinated by Ednao Africa, four groups of youths from Lavender Hill schools and Afri Oceans Warrior Programme were listening to Hennie van Wyk tell the legend of the Khoi

Princess. "I was cold but had fun learning about my past," said Kim Davids of Heal the Hood, an organisation which uses hip hop as a tool for education.

On the water there were shots and screams of delight as children were taken for their first paddle by Gravity Adventure. Others learned about alien aquatic plants from Philippa Hundy of the Wildlife and Environment Society (WESSA). Much of the paddle event had been organised by Catherine Ritchie, also of Wessa, based in Kirstenhof. Councillor Jan Burger of Ward 72 which includes Grassy Park, Steenberg and Southfield, was also there. Plumstead resident Francois Raubenheimer said he enjoyed the fun activities and energy.

In Plumstead the paddlers took to bicycles supplied by BEN (Bicycling Empowerment Network), to cycle the watershed to Access Park before once again entering the canal.

At Sybrand Park the paddlers were joined by co-presenter of *Cozy Blanche* Derek Watts. He later described the paddle as a frightening wake-up. "Life will improve if the state of the rivers is improved," he said.

Louise Stafford from the City's Invasive Alien Species Management Programme watched paddlers pass beneath the bridge over the Black River. She said through the Kader Annual River Cleaning Project 10 river wardens are deployed on the Black River. Additional teams were



■ Paddlers wear masks along the Black River stretch.

called upon to assist the river wardens with the clean-up in preparation for the event. Since Saturday (June 2) morning, 12 tons of litter were removed on the section between the Athlone Sewerage Works and the Salt River. She said they will continue with follow up work using a labour force of 20 people with two river wardens on each 1km stretch. This will be an early detection and removal programme for invasive plants, dumping, leaking sewers and rubble. The plan is to expand the project to take care of the tributaries.

Louise Astal and her son Adam were also there. Adam was filming the paddle to be part of a documentary on the project set up by the late Kader Ansal. Councillor Suzette Little from

Ward 49 which includes parts of Athlone, said people do not appreciate the environment and use the rivers as a refuse dump.

"People think they can throw rubbish into the river and it's gone; but it isn't. People must be accountable for what goes into the rivers and realise the link between dirty water and illnesses, mosquitoes and flies. My goal is to improve the environment first and then bring development to the area," said Ms Little. She said she feels the paddle is a wonderful idea for creating awareness and she hopes that next year the paddlers can do it without wearing masks.

Rowing past plastic and other waste, the paddlers entered Table Bay at Paarden Eiland. They were joined by endurance

swimmer, maritime lawyer and environmental campaigner Lewis Pugh. Doctor Winter said he had taught Mr Pugh, also known as the human polar bear, at Camps Bay High School. The two reminisced about how a geography teacher at this school made a huge impact on Mr Pugh by telling him to dream. This opened up his world, particularly about the ocean, as he day-dreamed while looking out of the school window.

Trevor Hughes of the Friends of the Liesbeeck went along to give support. He said a dog had been rescued along the way as well as a house snake which was floating on a polystyrene ring.

Hannah Baleta of Vredehoek enjoyed the paddle, saying it was an interesting way to understand the city's waterways. "A lot of it is hidden away so we aren't aware of the state they're in," she said.

After the paddle and at the Milnerton Canoe Club, Doctor Winter gave credit for the early finish to the Kader Ansal Project and good rain a few days earlier.

There was less portage and the rivers were much cleaner with less litter, except for the estuary at Paarden Eiland. Doctor Winter has taken water samples in the same locations as on the previous two paddles and will provide the results.

Doctor Winter said the paddle is a simple campaign that catches the imagination and is not boring like many environmental events.

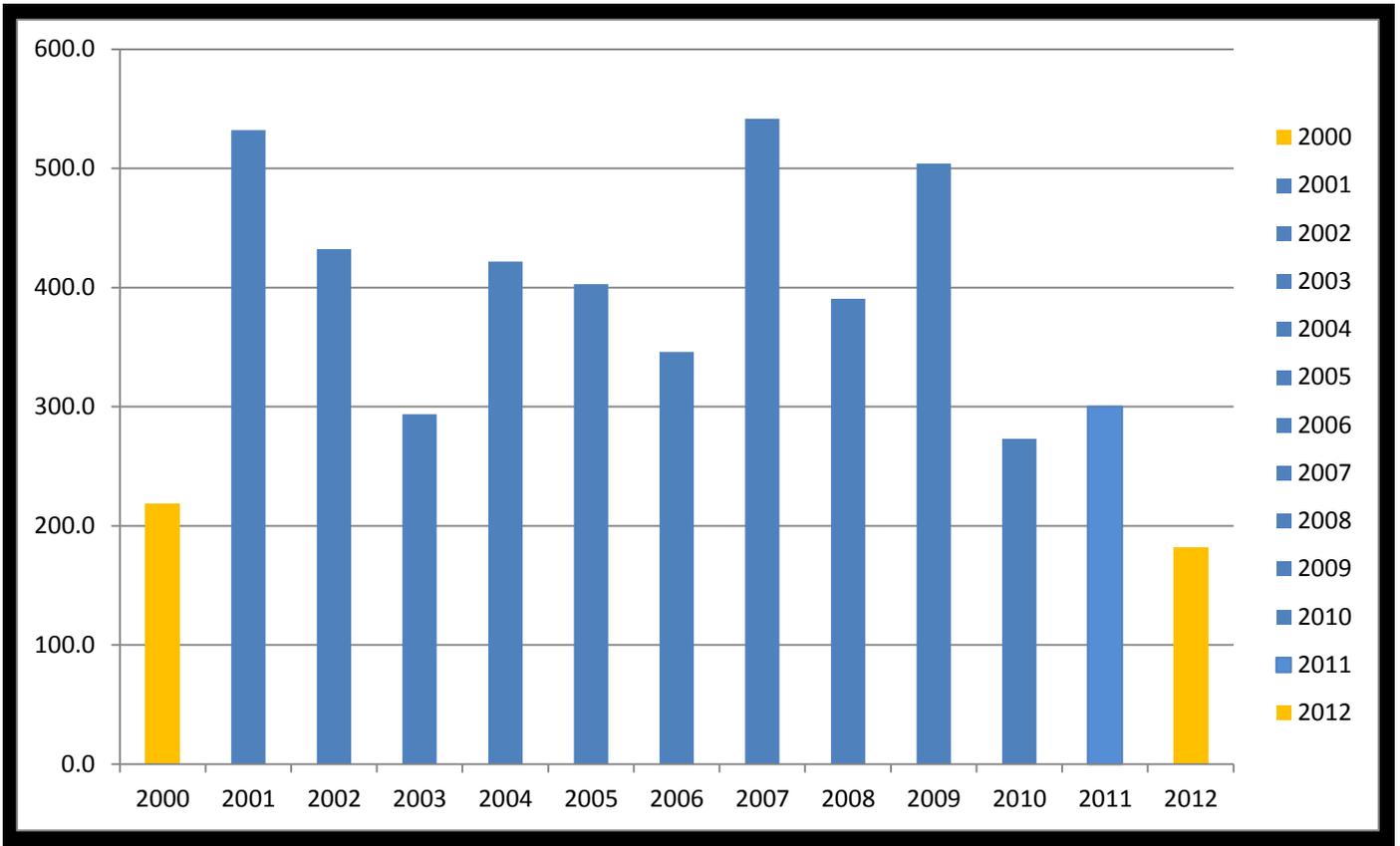
Figure 24. Article about recreational use of the City's waterways.

- **Rainfall at Rietvlei:** Despite low rainfall in the previous quarter, the rainfall during this quarter increased to above average levels. A 177 mm were recorded. See Table 2 and Figures 25-27 for graphic representations of the rainfall data below.

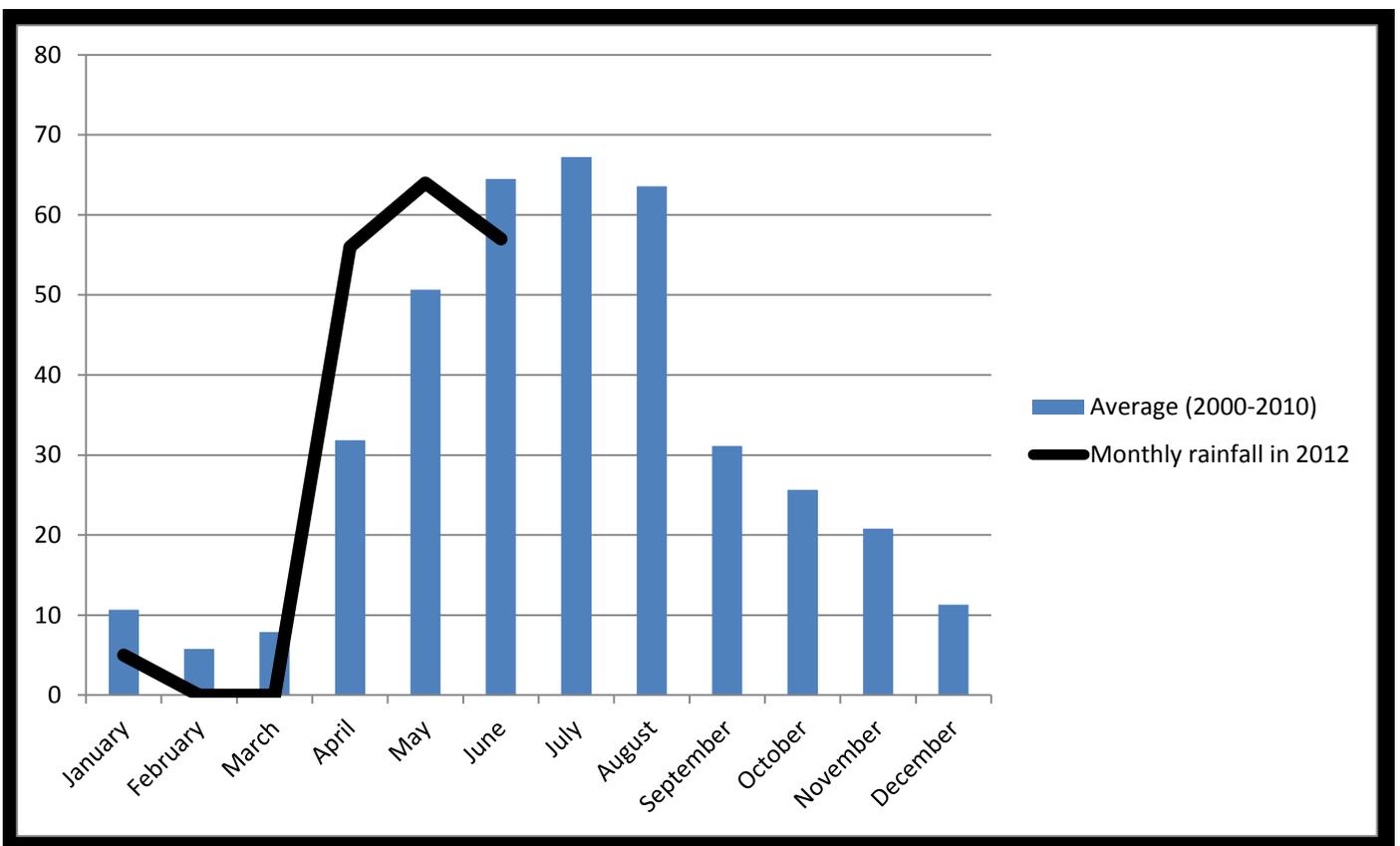
Table 2. Rietvlei rainfall data: Updated 2012/07/18

RAINFALL DATA:	Updated on 2012/07/18													
	Ave	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
January	10.658		16.0	57.9	3.5	8.0	16.0	1.0	1.5	4.0	4.00	1.00	10.00	5.00
February	5.7833		2.0	10.0	6.0	0.9	4.0	7.0	19.5	6.0	9.00	5.00	0.00	0.00
March	7.9		0.0	10.1	32.2	7.0	14.5	4.0	15.0	4.0	0.00	1.00	7.00	0.00
April	29.825	5.0	18.9	29.9	10.9	79.5	69.5	27.2	45.5	10.0	32.50	9.00	20.00	56.00
May	49.533	26.1	48.7	38.6	22.2	2.3	54.1	104.0	42.5	44.0	94.00	84.00	34.00	64.00
June	65.096	51.6	36.4	62.8	13.1	66.8	83.3	25.5	127.7	67.0	83.00	71.00	93.00	57.00
July	67.213	46.1	175.7	69.5	27.3	65.8	38.0	64.2	96.0	116.0	57.00	38.00	13.00	
August	63.579	24.3	108.7	66.9	81.1	45.5	74.0	45.0	86.0	68.5	79.00	30.00	54.00	
September	31.154	49.3	61.5	19.5	53.8	17.8	30.0	12.0	34.0	4.0	47.00	12.00	33.00	
October	25.646	5.3	31.2	33.7	25.3	119.0	9.8	20.5	22.0	2.0	29.00	0.00	10.00	
November	20.8	8.8	22.5	13.2	2.8	3.0	9.8	31.0	30.0	46.0	62.50	12.00	8.00	
December	11.3	2.5	10.5	20.1	15.5	6.5	0.0	4.5	22.0	19.0	7.00	10.00	18.00	
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>219.0</b>	<b>532.1</b>	<b>432.2</b>	<b>293.7</b>	<b>421.9</b>	<b>402.9</b>	<b>345.9</b>	<b>541.7</b>	<b>390.5</b>	<b>504.0</b>	<b>273.0</b>	<b>300.0</b>	<b>182.0</b>

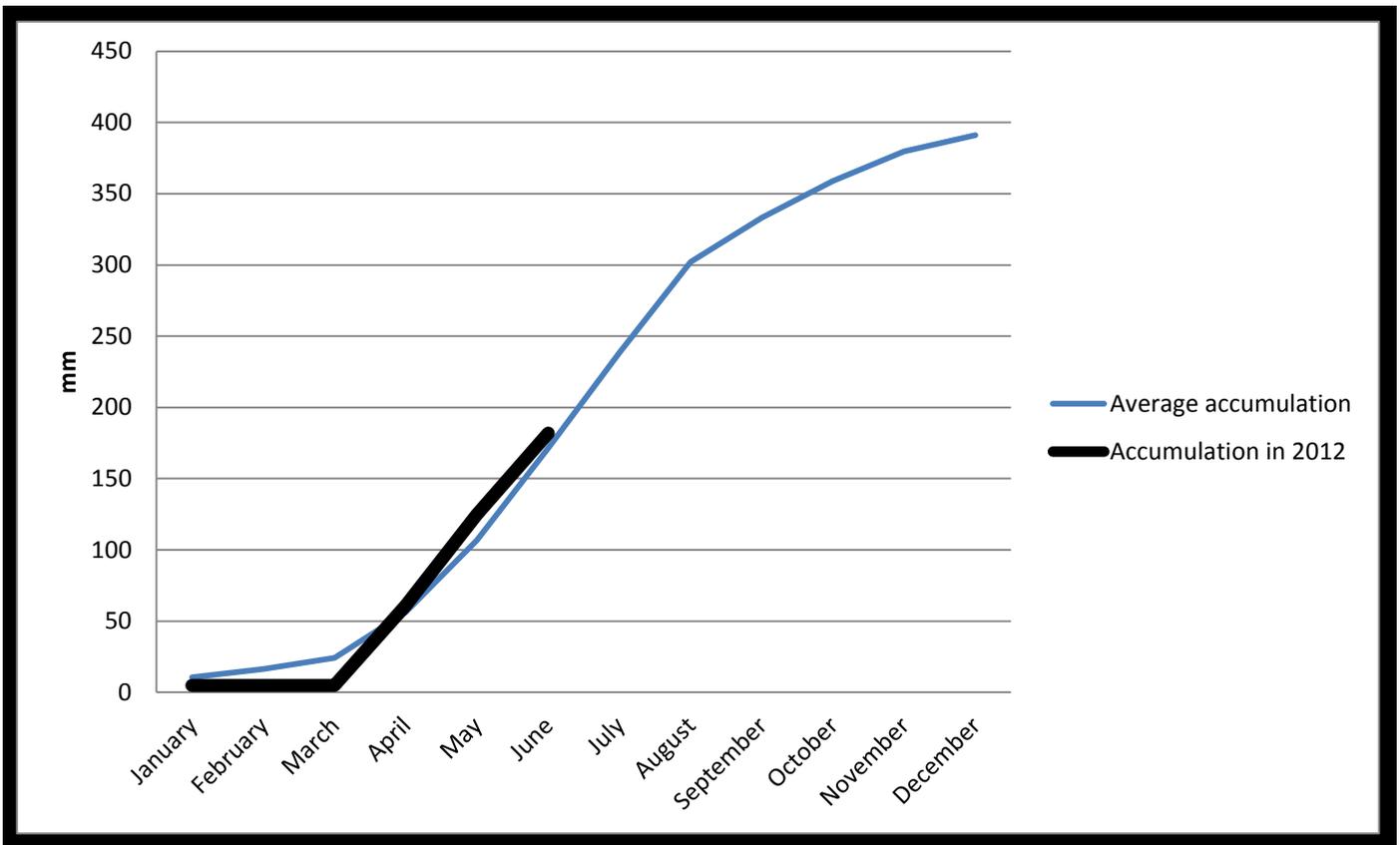
NB: Open Spaces = No DATA (RED) indicates insufficient DATA



**Figure 25.** Annual totals of rainfall at Rietvlei (updated 18 July 2012)



**Figure 26.** Rainfall trend in 2012 over averages per month (updated 18 July 2012)



**Figure 27.** Rainfall accumulation in 2012 vs overall average accumulation (Updated: 18 July 2012)

- **Dust management:** The water pumping operation that started the previous quarter was halted in this quarter when the winter rains started. Though some dust was seen on occasion, no public complaints were received.
- **Erosion control at Rietvlei north shore:** Further planting of *Phragmites australis* was done to augment the reed beds that have already established at this shoreline. The established reed beds appear to be very effective at breaking the wave action and allowing other vegetation and grass to cover the previously exposed bank. The bank seems to have stabilised and no new collapsed section have been noted. See figures 28-29 below:



**Figures 28-29.** Scenes at the Rietvlei northern shore where reed beds have stabilised the eroding shoreline.

- **Dolphin Beach:** Several discussion and site meetings have been undertaken to discuss the concerns of Dolphin Beach Body Corporate about moving sand that could impact on their hotel. The Dolphin Beach Hotel were historically allowed to flatten the dunes between the hotel and the sea. In terms of stricter environmental legislation, earth-moving of dunes is not permitted without an environmental authorisation. The Dolphin beach Body Corporate will now be conducting a Basic Assessment to investigate dune management option and to obtain environmental authorisation for whatever work is approved. See figures 30-31 below:



**Figure 30.** Dolphin Beach workers clearing sand at a beach access path leading from the hotel.



**Figure 31.** Grass clippings from the Dolphin Beach gardens being dumped in the natural vegetation.

## 4 FIRE MANAGEMENT

- **Fire response preparedness:** The TBNR is represented on the local Fire Protection Association, and all fire preparedness is reviewed by the committee.
- **Wave's Edge Wetland Block:** After the initial decline of a burn permit application for Wave's Edge wetland block, the application was re-submitted to further investigate the feasibility of a burn. A public meeting was held on 2012/04/12 where Koos Retief gave a presentation. Subcouncil 1 requested that the same presentation be made at the Subcouncil meeting. The permit was then awarded, but due to the long delays and the onset of winter, there was no practical way in which the controlled burning could be undertaken. This controlled burning work must be delayed until next summer season. Nonetheless, an article did appear in the local media. The application would have to be resubmitted at a later stage for reconsideration. **Figure 32.**

### PUBLIC MEETING

#### Proposed ecological burn at Wave's Edge, Table View

The City of Cape Town has arranged a public meeting in Table View to discuss the proposed ecological burn at Wave's Edge, Table View, which is part of the Table Bay Nature Reserve.

The City is proposing to use burning as a way of managing the natural and invasive vegetation at Wave's Edge.

**Date:** Thursday 12 April 2012  
**Time:** 18:00  
**Place:** Leibrandt van Niekerk Hall, South Road, Table View

ACHMAT EBRAHIM  
CITY MANAGER  
5202012



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Tabletalk

# Ecological fire a burning issue

**PAM FOURIE**

The City has called for a public meeting to discuss an ecological burn along the wetlands at Wave's Edge in Table View to manage the natural and invasive vegetation at this site.

The meeting will be held at the Leibrandt van Niekerk Hall in South Road on Thursday April 12 at 6pm.

They have applied for permission to carry out this open burn following a site meeting that was held on March 20 with biodiversity management, fire services, traffic services and air pollution control. This is a procedural step in all open burning applications.

This comes just weeks after the City agreed to use manual labour to cut down the *Typha* reeds that has run amok throughout this section of the wetlands; its seeds causing havoc with the lives of residents in the area, and without intervention for many years ("City moves to tackle invasive reeds" Tabletalk February 22 and "Tired of life on the 'seedy' part of town", Tabletalk March 7).

When word got out that the City intended a controlled burn, it caused concern. Resident Anton van Wyk questioned how conservationists could consider this decision, as it would be "an indiscriminate way of controlling the reeds", without consideration for the animals, indigenous plants and the soot that will fly about for weeks.

At Wave's Edge there have been small spot fires over the years, but no complete burn was recorded to date. Osman Asmal, director of environmental resource management said that as a result dead plant material has accumulated over decades.

"The City is now funding the suppression of the bulrush reeds on site to alleviate the impact of



■ *Typha* reeds have run amok throughout the wetlands and the City is considering a controlled fire to manage the vegetation at Wave's Edge in Table View.

tant and ecologically recommended way of removing accumulated fuel and excessive nutrients in vegetation. At the correct intervals, controlled burning can promote indigenous vegetation and reduce the subsequent risk of uncontrolled wildfires.

Before open burning takes place at Wave's Edge, all residents will be notified through the media and letter drops. Open burns are undertaken in prescribed weather conditions by trained and experienced nature reserve managers.

"Though smoke and ash is a temporary result of burning, this will not persist long after a fire. Controlled burning must take place before the winter rains for it to be effective."

He said the City is proud of the Table Bay Nature Reserve and endeavours to manage this nature area sustainably through the use of ecological management tools, including the use of fire, for the benefit of present and future generations of Capetonians.

He said that recommendations by the Wave's Edge community are always welcomed, but that the City does not support the suggestion they introduce tons of plain salt to kill the reeds.

"Plain salt is very toxic to all plants and animals and will kill everything on site. Such an intervention would have dire negative effects at Wave's Edge, leaving the wetland completely dead and rotting. At best, the introduction of natural seawater (as opposed to plain salt) into the wetland should be studied in the form of an Environmental Impact Assessment. If not approved by the provincial government, such interventions would be a contravention of the National Environmental Management Act."

The Table Bay Nature Reserve consists of various management sections, comprising of primarily three vegetation types, including Cape Flats Sand Fynbos, Cape Flats Dune Strandveld and Cape Lowland Freshwater Wetland.

Management objectives stipulate that various vegetation types in the Cape Floristic Region must burn at intervals relevant to the type of vegetation and the amount of accumulated fuel load (dry plant material).

The City has conducted various controlled burns in the Table Bay Nature Reserve, notably at the Rietveld, Deep River, Milnerton Ridge, and Milnerton Racecourse sections. The purpose was to remove

and cut invasive vegetation in the form of stockpiles of *Rooibos* and Port Jackson brush to allow indigenous plants to return.

In the Cape, most vegetation types require fire on an interval basis for its survival through the activation of seed germination. Without the influence of fire, all fynbos areas would lose natural biodiversity overtime, and certain species could become locally extinct. In an urban setting, nature reserve managers must change their vegetation management strategy from a wildfire-driven ecosystem to a managed and controlled burning regime. This is for biodiversity, ecological and fire safety reasons.

**Figure 33.** Article regarding the management of *Typha capensis* and the burning of reed beds at Wave's Edge Wetland.

## 5 PEOPLE AND CONSERVATION

### 5.1 Stakeholder Engagement (external meetings)

- **SANCCOB** has featured in several articles to promote their work and volunteering activities at their rehabilitation facility at Rietvlei. North Region and TBNR staff often collaborates with SANCCOB in environmental education programmes. The following articles appeared in the local media (see Figures 34-37 below).



Figure 34-37. Articles about SANCCOB and volunteering.

- **Milnerton Aquatic Club and water sports:** Water sports at Rietvlei have featured in the local news (Figures 38-39), highlighting the recreational value of the nature reserve.

TygerBurger Table View Page 20 Nuus/News Wednesday 4 April 2012

# Challenge: sail boat for 25 hours

**ANDRÉ BAKKES**

Excitement surged through the crowd and the competitors at Milnerton Aquatic Club's (MAC) ever popular MAC 24-Hour Challenge this weekend.

The energy levels might have been slightly more subdued in the very early morning hours on Sunday, but the excitement remained ever-present.

For 25 hours, a variety of sailboats circled the lagoon again and again.

Every time teams changed over, it was surprising that the previous incumbents could walk in a straight line!

People on the banks of the majestic Rietvlei cheered the sailors as the sun set, willed them on as the stars twinkled in the cloudless sky, urged them on when the sun made it's welcome appearance and finally applauded as the gruelling 25 hours came to an end on Sunday at midday.

The contestants rightly received kudos, but those on the vlei banks, and the organisers, deserved just as much praise.

TygerBurger caught up with MAC's Pat Downing on Saturday to find out more about this wonderful event.

She elaborates: "The first one was in 1996! They start at 12:00 on the Saturday and should finish at 13:00 on Sunday, but since Nestle Bar-One with their '25-hour-day' came on board; we decided to stretch it to 25-hours - if they want to win the Nestle Bar-One trophy that is!"

There are 30 sailboats, which fall into seven classes: Enterprise, GP14, Sonnet, Mirror, 420s, Bosun and the Saldannabs.

The team consists of a maximum of eight competitors and it's up to them to decide how to distribute the time among them. The bigger sailboats get to have 12 in a team.

When asked how the atmosphere is at 03:00 in the morning, she just laughs.

"Half the people are asleep, but there are always people on the shoreline that scream and shout, to keep them going!" she exclaims.

Entertainment was, of course, not only limited to watching sailboats circling the vlei.

Some watched rugby indoors, some caught up with old friends and some kicked a soccer ball around.

Irrasivleis smoke also filled the air on more than one occasion.

"This is one of the major events of the year for us. It certainly draws the public, because we can always see the boats, as opposed to some bigger events at other places," she continues, before adding that there are probably close to 500 people.

The cherry on top was the fact that the weather was absolutely perfect for the anticipated event.

Two days prior to the MAC 24, clouds were threatening to rain on the parade, but in the end the cloudless skies were complemented with a fairly regular brisk breeze.

The National Sea Rescue Institute from Station 18 did the rescue work and first aid for free and even entered a team themselves.

Team Dog Balls, who sailed in a Sonnet, came first with 191 laps, team False Bay Pirates (also a Sonnet), came second with 189 laps, and Old Seamen (in a 420) was third - also with 186 laps.




MAC 24-Hour Photo: André Bakkes

Craig Latigan from Table View.

**Racing ready: Grade 3 Eikanah House learner Anke van Jaarsveld recently completed two sailing courses at the Milnerton Aquatic Club. The first basic course was a four-day course to get them sailing on their own. This course she completed during the school holidays in January. During February and March she attended practical and theory training so that she could obtain the certificate for the intermediate sailing course. For her theory exam she received 87 percent. Of the seven children who completed the course, she was the youngest. The next step is for her to start racing.**



**Figures 38-39.** Articles relating to Milnerton Aquatic Club activities.

- **External stakeholder meetings:** Table 3 below summarises TBNR’s involvement with external stakeholders this quarter.

**Table 3. Records of external stakeholder meetings relating to the TBNR.**

Area	Date	Meeting/Workshop	Purpose
TBNR	2012/04/03	Meeting with Dr Pat Holmes and Leejuan Brews (UCT) about potential research project	Planning
	2012/04/04	Rietvlei Management Working Group	Feedback
	2012/04/10	Diep River maintenance with Louise Stafford, Saliem Solomon and Russell Ikin	Planning
	2012/04/12	Public meeting regarding Wave’s Edge reed clearing and proposed open burning application. Koos Retief did a presentation.	Feedback
	2012/04/16	ERMD mentorship workshop with Lynn O’Neil	Planning
	2012/05/10	CPUT mentorship workshop	Planning
	2012/05/18	Zoarvlei Management Advisory Committee	Feedback
	2012/05/29	Bid Adjudication Committee regarding additional funds approved for Rietvlei office construction	Planning
	2012/06/13	Fire Protection Association: Atlantis Electricity Boardroom	Planning
	2012/06/15	Meet North region students and CPUT with Chrisna Joubert	Planning
	2012/06/20	North Region Champions Forum: Blaauwberg Hall	Feedback
	2012/06/25	Dolphin Beach dune management site meeting	Planning
	2012/06/27	TBNR Launch	Planning

- **Rietvlei Boma Usage:** The Rietvlei boma was used by about 75 people for formal meetings this quarter. See Table 4 below for details of its usage:

**Table 4.** Rietvlei boma usage and benefits to people in person days.

Date	Activity	Person days
2012/04/16	ERMD mentorship workshop with Lynn O’Neil	20
2012/06/27	TBNR Launch	55
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>75</b>

- **Environmental Education:** TBNR staff reached 242 people over five visits with environmental education messages this quarter. The EPWP workers also underwent some environmental education on an informal basis during this time. See Table 5 and Figures 40-41 below for details.

**Table 5.** Environmental Education Statistics at TBNR (April – June 2012)

Name of School/Community/Friends	Number of Schools	Number Learners	Number Adults	Days of EE	Programme
EPWP worker team	0	0	40	1	Biodiversity & Importance of Wetlands
Wolraad Woltemade Primary School	1	40	1	1	Biodiversity - YES
MAC Youth day with Mannenberg Primary	1	25	7	1	Joined Youth day Programme with Milnerton Aquatic Club
MAC Youth day with Mannenberg High School	1	16	0	1	Joined Youth day Programme with Milnerton Aquatic Club
Parklands College	1	68	4	1	Joined SANCCOB programme. Plants and fish dissection
Wolraad Woltemade Primary School	1	40	1	1	Biodiversity - YES
<b>Totals</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>189</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>6</b>	



**Figure 40.** The Parklands school visiting SANCCOB and Rietvlei on a combined excursion.



**Figure 41.** Artwork made by EPWP team members during rainy day environmental education.

## 5.2 Stakeholder Engagement (internal meetings)

- TBNR staff attended five internal stakeholder meetings this quarter. See Table 6 below for details.

**Table 6.** Records of internal stakeholder meetings relating to the TBNR.

Reserve	Date	Meeting/Workshop	Purpose
TBNR	2012/04/03	TBNR staff with HR Management about potential shift roster	Planning
	2012/05/09	ERMD meeting regarding the Rivergate development	Planning
	2012/05/17	Biodiversity monitoring workshop held at Rondevlei	Planning
	2012/06/19	TBNR launch planning meeting	Planning
	2012/06/22	North Region Protected Area Reviews: Rietvlei	Planning

### 5.3 North District Meetings: Health and Safety, Monthly etc

- TBNR staff attended one Branch function this quarter. See Table 7 below for details.

**Table 7. Records of district meeting relating to the TBNR.**

Date	Venue	Type of Meeting (s)
2012/05/25	Mamre Information Centre	North Region Health and Safety Meeting
		North Region Management Meeting

### 5.4 Environmental Resource Management Branch Meetings/Fun Days

- TBNR staff attended one Branch function this quarter. See Table 8 below for details.

**Table 8. Records of branch meetings relating to the TBNR.**

Date	Venue/Theme
2012/05/31	Branch meeting, False Bay Nature Reserve offices

## 6 HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

### 6.1 Staff Establishment

**Table 9. TBNR staff complement.**

Area	Position	Purpose	Number	*P/CE
Milnerton	Area Manager	Functional / Operational Management	01	P
	Assistant Cons Off	Gate Control/Visitor Management/Law Enfor	02	P
	Assistant Cons Off	Conservation Compliance – Diep River	01	P
	Small Plant Operator	Chainsaw/Brushcutter/weed eaters etc	01	P
	Foreman	Supervision of junior staff	01	P
	Senior Worker	Labour/field ranging	04	P
	Students	Nature Conservation Diplomas	02	CE
	EE Intern	EE Programme Management	01	CE
<b>TOTALS</b>		*P/C E: Permanent or Contract Employees	<b>13</b>	

- **Public Holidays:** There were four public holidays this quarter (2012/04/06, 2012/04/09, 2012/04/27, and 2012/05/01). Essential staff were still on duty at the access control point.
- **Office relocation:** Koos Retief relocated out of the Milpark Centre to the new TBNR offices at Rietvlei. Presently no permanent electricity connection has been made. As a result computer network and telephone connections have not been installed. Once the Eskom service is provided, the on-line facilities will be provided and telephone numbers will be assigned. These numbers will be communicated to the public and media in due course.
- **Peace officers card issued:** Koos Retief and Clinton Roux were issued with peace officers cards. Kyle Kelly and Christopher Singo still have to meet certain requirements to have their cards issued.
- **Nature Conservation Students:** The new Nature Conservation students from the CPUT for the year 2012 are Robert Slater and Cassandra Ricketts. Both students were recommended to produce posters of the research projects and to present these at the Fynbos forum 2012. Robert Slater's project relates to overwintering trial of water hyacinth biological control agents. Cassandra Ricketts's project relates to populations of Cape Dwarf Chameleons.

- **Internship Programme:** The new environmental education intern, Bulelwa Speelman, appears to have pulled out of the internship programme. This position will not be filled during this internship period.
- **EPWP work records:** Below Table 10 details some of the main focus areas of the EPWP teams at TBNR during this quarter.

**Table 10. EPWP implementation (April – June 2012)**

Team	Focus	Site
<b>Wave's Edge</b> (orange) 17 staff members	Alien clearing, weed pulling	RTV08, RTV09, RTV10, RTV06
	Restoration work	RTV07
	Fire break maintenance	
	General maintenance (Removal of illegal occupants structures in)	RTV08, RTV09 and RTV10
	General litter clean-up	RTV06, RTV07, RTV08, RTV09, RTV10
<b>Diep River</b> (blue) 8 staff members	Alien clearing, weed pulling	DRC03b
	Restoration work	DRC 04
	Fire break maintenance (planting <i>Carpobrotus edulis</i> along the footpath)	DRC03b
	Infrastructure maintenance (boom gate)	
	General maintenance (Litter clean up and removal of illegal occupant structures)	
	General litter clean up Diep	DRC03a, DRC03b, DRC04
<b>Biodiversity Strategy Implementation</b> (green) 17 staff increased by 28 = 45 staff members	Alien clearing, weed pulling	RTV03
	Restoration work	RTV07
	Fire break maintenance	
	General maintenance	RTV06, RTV07
	General litter clean-up	RTV03, RTV06, RTV07

## 6.2 Staff Training

- TBNR staff attended fifteen person days of training this quarter. See Table 11 below for details.

**Table 11. TBNR staff training records.**

Area	Date	Type of Training	Attended Staff	Person Days
TBNR	2012/04/10-12	Chainsaw training	2	6
	2012/04/18-19	4x4 off-road driving	3	6
	2012/05/14-16	Labour relations training	1	3
<b>TOTALS</b>				<b>15</b>

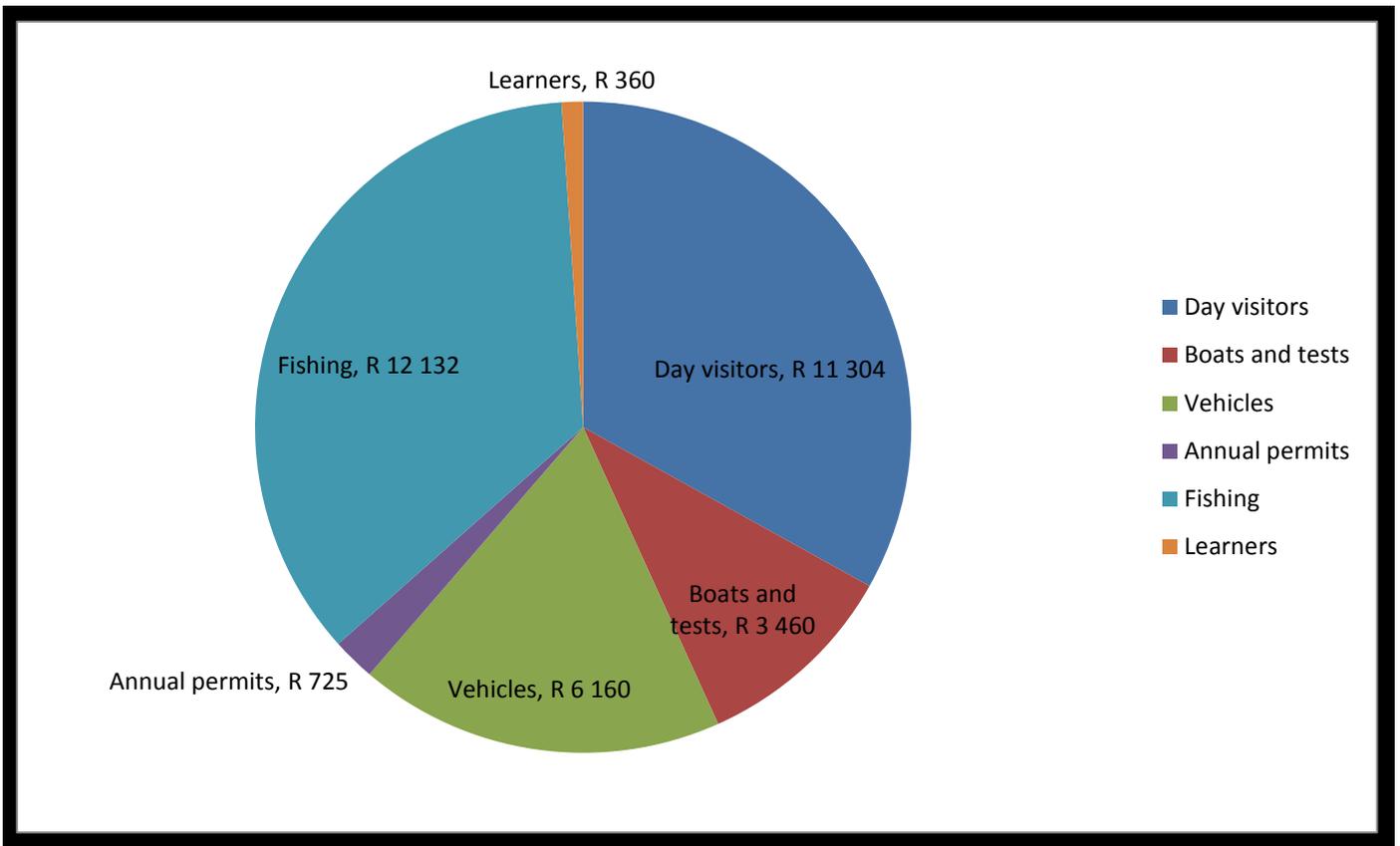
## 7 TOURISM AND VISITOR STATISTICS

### 7.1 Summary of this quarter: January – March 2012

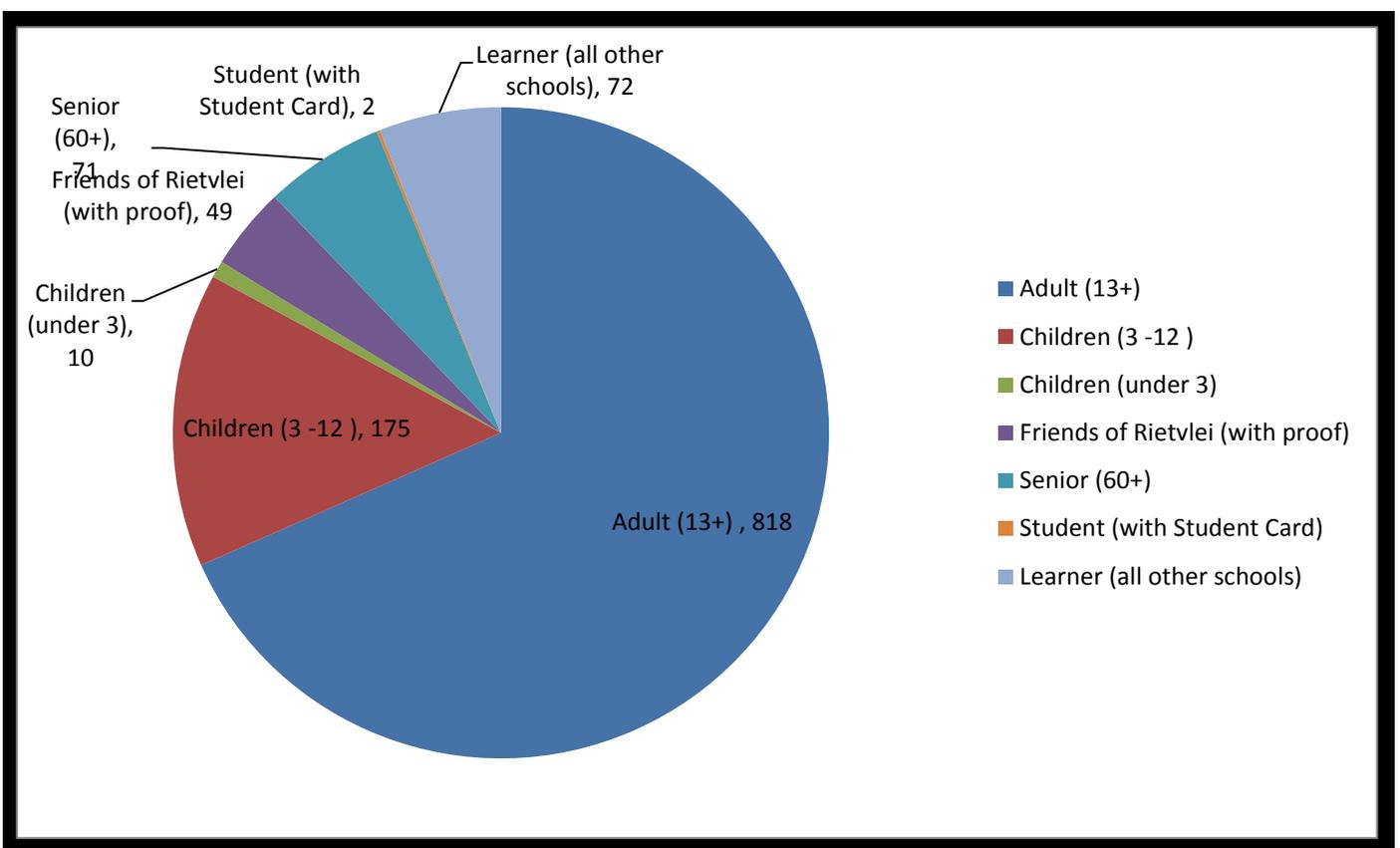
- A total of **R34,141** was collected at the Rietvlei main entrance gate during this quarter (see Table 12 below). This is **R5,352** less than the **R39,493** of the previous quarter. This is may be due to the winter season. The financial year will close at the end of this quarter and new tariffs will be applicable from 2012/07/01. See Figures 42-43 for pie charts relating to the income and visitors.

**Table 12. Income at TBNR during April 2012-June 2012**

Description	Apr	May	Jun	Cost	Quantity	Income	Total
<b>Daily Entry</b>							<b>R 34 141</b>
Adult (13+)	361	292	165	R 12.00	818	R 9 816	
Children (3 -12 )	90	57	28	R 6.00	175	R 1 050	
Children (under 3)	2	4	4	R 0.00	10	R 0	
Friends of Rietvlei (with proof)	32	13	4	R 0.00	49	R 0	
Power boats	24	23	16	R 42.00	63	R 2 646	
Senior (60+)	19	40	12	R 6.00	71	R 426	
Student (with Student Card)		1	1	R 6.00	2	R 12	
Vehicles	173	129	83	R 16.00	385	R 6 160	
<b>Season Tickets</b>							
Adults	1	1	2	R 111.00	4	R 444	
Family- (parents & 3 children to 13 years)			1	R 169.00	1	R 169	
Seniors (60+)		1	1	R 56.00	2	R 112	
<b>General</b>							
Boat Testing (Mon-Fri)	14	5	3	R 37.00	22	R 814	
Fishing (adult: 13 and older)	134	111	56	R 36.00	301	R 10 836	
Fishing (children: 3-12)	29	25	6	R 12.00	60	R 720	
Fishing (seniors: 60 and up)	19	18	11	R 12.00	48	R 576	
<b>Environmental Education</b>							
Learner (all other schools)			72	R 5.00	72	R 360	



**Figure 42. Pie chart of income generated at TBNR during April - June 2012**



**Figure 43. Pie chart of visitors through the TBNR control point during April - June 2012**

## 8 LAW ENFORCEMENT / COMPLIANCE MANAGEMENT

- **Woodbridge Island – Illegal Occupation under the Bridge:** Though access control measures at the Wooden Bridge have largely been effective at stopping illegal overnighting under the bridge, this problem is not entirely resolved. Constant repairs to the access control measures are required, and displaced people's overnighting material has to be removed.



**Figures 44-45.** Removal of displaced people's structures.

- **TBNR: Diep River section security:** Security has increased and reports of crime have decreased due to more visible presence of TBNR staff in the Diep River section. There are however still some isolated incidents reported in the media as illustrated in the below article.



**Figure 46.** Article reported on a body found in the Diep River section.

- **Theft of Council property and poaching:** Isolated incidents of theft of Council property and poaching are still recorded. Below is an example of theft and a wire trap.



**Figure 47.** Stolen signboard, Milnerton Lagoon.



**Figure 48.** Wire trap found at Wave's Edge.

## 9 INFRASTRUCTURE

### 9.1 Repairs and Maintenance

- TBNR staff conducted various general maintenance activities detailed in figures 49-54 below:



**Figure 49-50.** Path maintenance at SANCCOB and the indigenous garden near the environmental education centre.



**Figure 51.** Accumulated rubble behind the environmental education that is being removed.

**Figure 52.** An old grass cutter that has to be removed.



**Figure 53.** Fence maintenance and firebreak cutting at Sandpiper Crescent.

**Figure 54.** An old boardwalk between the Milnerton Lagoon section and the Golf Course.

- **Restoration work:** TBNR conducted restoration work by removing old derelict fencing material from both the central pans area, as well as the northern section of the Milnerton Racecourse section. See figures 55-56 below.



**Figure 55.** Removal of old derelict fencing material from the central pans.



**Figure 56.** Removal of old derelict fencing material from the northern part of the Milnerton Racecourse section.

## 10 FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

### 10.1 Capital Projects

- **Signage installations:** TBNR conducted signage installations at the Rietvlei main entrance with a name sign and a regulatory sign. A second phase of regulatory signs will be rolled out in the next quarter. See figures 57-58 below.



**Figure 57.** Regulatory sign at Rietvlei entrance.



**Figure 58.** Reserve name sign at Rietvlei entrance.

- **Rietvlei office construction:** Various final upgrades were done in this quarter at the Rietvlei offices and main entrance. These include the Biodiversity management identified on the building, flagpoles, boom gates, gate repairs, landscaping and bollard fencing (see Figures 59-64 below).



**Figure 59.** Biodiversity identifier on building.



**Figure 60.** Flagpoles at main entrance.



**Figure 61.** Boom gates at main entrance.



**Figure 62.** Gate repairs at main entrance.



**Figure 63.** Landscaping around main entrance.



**Figure 64.** Bollard fencing around building.

**Koos Retief**  
**Area Manager: Milnerton (Table Bay Nature Reserve)**  
**Biodiversity Management Branch, Environmental Resource Management Department (ERMD), City of Cape Town**