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TABLE BAY NATURE RESERVE

QUARTERLY REPORT OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2015

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For the Nature Reserve webpage, click the link or type www.capetown.gov.za/tablebaynr in your browser.

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- **The Protected Area Advisory Committee** had its second meeting and elected Mr Gordon Laing as chairman. Two sub-working groups were established to focus on water pollution and aquatic invasive species in the Diep River. The sub-working groups have already met and several actions are under way to address critical concerns.
- **Water hyacinth removal** in the Diep River was conducted by Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) teams. The teams broke off over the festive season, but will resume in the New Year.
- **A Spring walk** was hosted for the Alta du Toit Aftercare Centre at the Milnerton Racecourse Section.
- **A bird census** in the Rietvlei wetlands recorded 2,561 birds of 37 species.
- **Camera trap surveys** in the Rietvlei Section recorded various species, including nocturnal animals.
- **Fish surveys** were conducted in the Rietvlei Water Area and the Milnerton Lagoon.
- **A female Steenbok gave birth** to a new lamb. When the female was translocated to Rietvlei from the Parklands / Sunningdale area in the previous quarter, it was not known at the time that she was pregnant.
- **A Stormwater Maintenance Management Plan** is being drawn up by the City of Cape Town for the stormwater infrastructure that drains into the Diep Estuary. The lower catchment areas of the estuary have largely been urbanised with residential, commercial and industrial properties, which all contribute large amounts of polluted stormwater. This stormwater drains into wetland environment and ultimately flows out to sea via the Milnerton Lagoon.
- **A wildfire** started in Rietvlei near SANCCOB during the Guy Fawkes celebrations due to a stray Chinese lantern that fell in the Nature Reserve.
- Nature Reserve staff attended no less than 22 **officials meetings** in the course of business.
- **Meeting facilities** at Rietvlei benefited 998 people.
- **Environmental education** benefited 128 people.
- **The Rietvlei Open Day** on 14/11/2015 gathered almost a 1,000 people to Rietvlei on one day.
- **Income from visitors** at Rietvlei was the highest ever recorded.
- Nature Reserve staff underwent 125 person days of **training** over 52 training event days.
- **The Cape Peninsula of University of Technology's two work-integrated learning students** (Hester Pentz and David Copley) both passed their final assessments and will graduate with their National Diplomas in Nature Conservation in the New Year.
- **Law enforcement actions** focused on removing domestic dogs and illegal cattle that grazed in the Diep River Section. Illegal structures and overnight camps were also removed, as well as illegal private walkways in the Nature Reserve.
- **The site of the Cape Radio Flyers** was cleared of all disused infrastructure. A final determination on the club's application for a renewed lease has not yet been decided by Council yet.
- **The Milnerton Aquatic Club** launched a refurbished jetty and helped the Nature Reserve to remove the old Council jetty for repairs.

2 HIGHLIGHTS & CHALLENGES

2.1 HIGHLIGHT: The Rietvlei Open Day on 14/11/2015, the first of its kind at Rietvlei, gathered almost a thousand visitors through the gates on one day. It was the first time that all the role-players in the Nature Reserve worked together to host an open day. The event was marketed by Pink Drive in collaboration with the Table Bay Nature Reserve, Milnerton Aquatic Club, Friends of Rietvlei and SANCCOB.

2.2 CHALLENGE: The irresponsible discharge of marine distress flares, Chinese lanterns and fireworks, in areas where this is not allowed, is one of the biggest challenges during the festive season. Too many wildfires have started as a result, causing huge losses. Emergency services spend large amounts of taxpayer money to manage these fires. It is time to take action to prosecute offenders before more property or lives are lost.

3 CONSERVATION PLANNING

3.1 The Protected Area Advisory Committee (PAAC) for Table Bay Nature Reserve had its second meeting on 8/10/2015. The meeting was attended by 25 representatives from 18 organisations (see below):

External members and civil society

- Cape West Coast Biosphere Reserve
- Dolphin Beach Body Corporate
- Friends of Blaauwberg Conservation Area
- Friends of Rietvlei
- Heron Waters and Villa du Cap
- Milnerton Aquatic Club
- Milnerton Canoe Club
- Milnerton Ridge Ratepayers Association
- Paardeneiland City Improvement District
- Sunset Beach Homeowners Association
- Woodbridge Island Body Corporate
- SANCCOB

Council of the City of Cape Town

- Subcouncil 1
- Subcouncil 15

Line Departments of the City of Cape Town

- Biodiversity Management Branch
- City Parks Operations: Northern District
- Environmental and Heritage Management

Guests

- Milnerton Central Residents Association

Some of the items on the agenda included:

- Feedback on matters arising from the previous meeting by Mr Koos Retief;
- Electing a chairman;
- Quarterly report feedback by Mr Koos Retief;
- The Cape West Coast Biosphere Reserve presented by Mr Ryno Pienaar;
- The proposed Rietvlei Open Day on 14 November 2015 by Mr Cornelius Visagie;
- Shore line stabilization proposal at Milnerton Aquatic Club by Mr William Gravett; and
- Application by Milnerton Central Residents Association to join the Advisory Committee.

The members elected Mr Gordon Laing (representative of the Milnerton Canoe Club) as the chairman of the Advisory Committee. The committee also accepted the membership application of the Milnerton Central Residents Association.

The chairman established two new sub-working groups to support the Advisory Committee. The one sub-working group will focus on water quality issues in the Diep River, and the other will focus on combating the spread of aquatic invasive vegetation.

Both these groups met during this quarter and some actions are already being implemented. The sub-working groups must report back and bring recommendations to subsequent meetings of the Advisory Committee.

3.2 The draft Recreational Water Area By-law has been completed by South Regional Manager Dalton Gibbs. It is expected that the document will be tabled at the City Council's Energy, Environmental and Spatial Planning Portfolio Committee early in the New Year. Thereafter it is planned to advertise to by-law for public comment and input.

The public participation process will facilitate input from any interested and affected stakeholders. The draft may have to be revised or amended, depending on the comments received. Once all the comments have been acknowledged, and appropriate revisions were done, the final by-law will be tabled at the Mayoral Committee and Full Council for approval.

The new by-law, once gazetted, would allow more flexibility in the management of recreational water areas in the City. This will be achieved by involving advisory committees in the decision-making regarding the recreational uses of particular water areas.

The key issues that need to be addressed at the Rietvlei Water Area include a possible amendment of the maximum allowable power boat length, in order to reflect changes in the ski-boat sector. Another provision is required for youth (under 16) to be able to undergo training in the power boat division.

Currently the maximum allowable power boat length at Rietvlei is 5,48 meters, and no under-16s are allowed to operate any power boat at Rietvlei.

South African Maritime Safety (SAMSA) regulations however do allow under-16s to participate in powerboat training where accredited service providers offer the training programmes.

4 FLORA

4.1 **Alien invasive species management** during this quarter was focussed on the following:

- Water Hyacinth removal in the Diep River and Milnerton Lagoon, undertaken by Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) teams;
- Cut and herbicide treatment of Blue Gum trees in the Diep River Section, north of the railway bridge;
- Follow-up clearing of previously cleared areas such as the Rietvlei Section, Coastal Section, and Milnerton Racecourse.

4.2 **A Spring walk** was hosted at the Milnerton Racecourse for the Alta du Toit Aftercare Centre on 3/10/2015. The walk was guided by Site Manager Landi Louw and Student Hester Pentz (see Figure 2).

The 2016 Spring Walk will be advertised shortly.



Figure 1. *Limonium equisetinum* at the seasonal pans of the Rietvlei Section.



Figure 2. Student Hester Pentz (middle bottom) with the Alta du Toit After Care Centre group at the Spring walk.



Figure 3. A floral landscape at the Milnerton Racecourse Section.

5 FAUNA

5.1 An integrated bird census was conducted on 16/10/2015. The census was done by the Nature Reserve team and a volunteer, covering 11 surveys sections. The water birds numbered a total of 2,561 birds comprising of 37 species (see Figures 4-6 for details).

- **17 species with single-figure counts accounted for 2,7% of the water birds**, including: 1 Purple heron, 1 Cape teal, 1 Southern pochard, 1 African fish eagle, 1 Three-banded plover, 1 Greenshank, 2 Water thicknee, 3 Redbilled teal, 3 African black oystercatcher, 4 Blackheaded heron, 4 Pied avocet, 7 Little egret, 7 Caspian tern, 8 Hadedda ibis, 8 Common moorhen, 9 Little grebe, and 9 African spoonbill.
- **15 species with double-figure counts accounted for 19,1% of the water birds**, including: 10 Yellowbilled egret, 11 Mallard hybrid, 12 Sacred ibis, 13 Glossy ibis, 13 Cape wagtail, 15 Great crested grebe, 19 Grey heron, 23 Reed cormorant, 27 Blackwinged stilt, 30 Blacksmith lapwing, 44 Yellowbilled duck, 49 Cape shoveller, 55 African darter, 81 White pelican and 86 Kelp gull.
- **5 species with triple-figure counts accounted for 78,2% of the water birds**, including 111 Whitebreasted cormorant, 150 Egyptian goose, 347 Greater flamingo, 446 Hartlaub's gull and 949 Redknobbed coot.
- **Additional species** included European starling, Redwing starling, Levallant's cisticola, Yellow bishop, Karoo Prinia, Pied crow, Red bishop, Pintailed whydah, Black shouldered kite, Cape spurfowl and Helmeted guinea fowl.

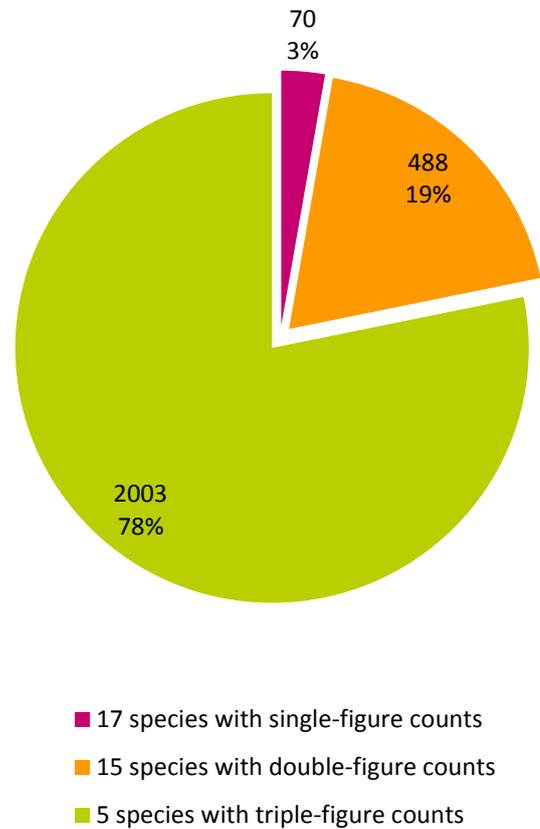


Figure 4. Relative contribution of low, medium and high counts.

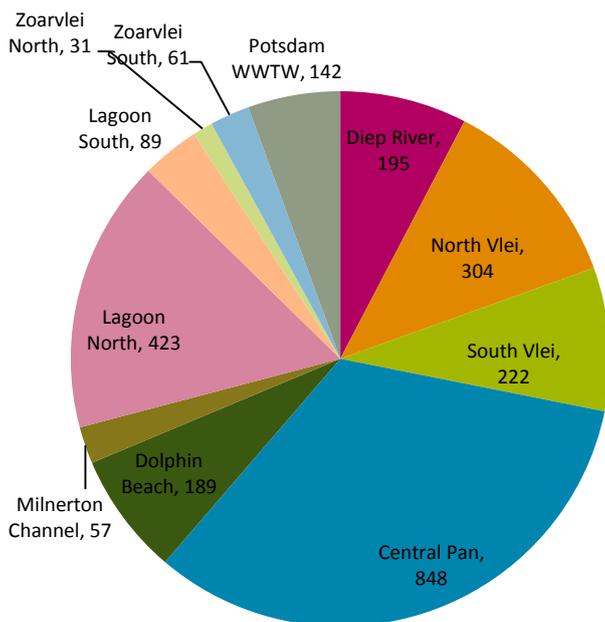


Figure 5. Relative contribution of birds from the survey sections.

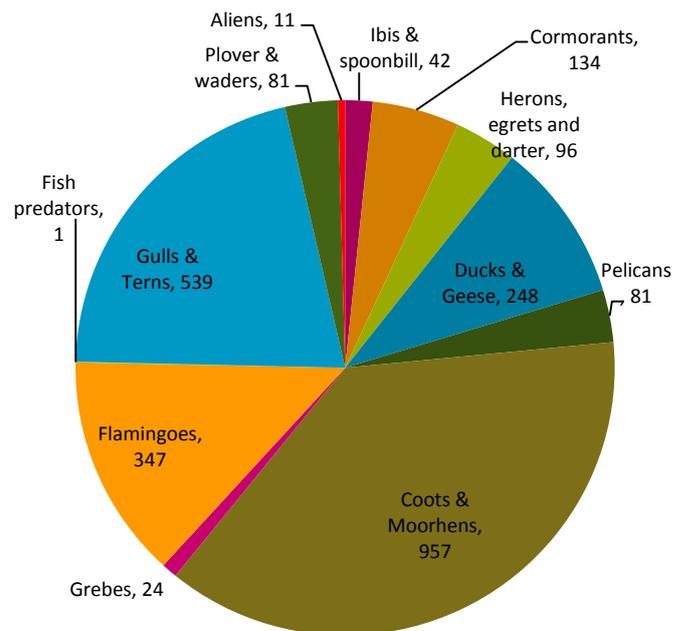


Figure 6. Relative contribution from the various groups of birds.

5.2 Camera trap surveys were done in the Rietvlei Section during this quarter. Some of the wildlife trapped by the cameras include Cape grysbok, Large grey mongoose and Black-headed heron. Camera trapping is becoming increasingly popular as a means of recording research and monitoring data. The data was collected by the students Hester Pentz and David Pickering-Copley. The results will be analyzed by monitoring & evaluation coordinator Leighan Mossop.



Figure 7. Two Cape grysbok in the night time.



Figure 8. Large grey mongoose in the daytime.



Figure 9. A Cape grysbok in the night time.



Figure 10. A male Cape grysbok in daytime.



Figure 11. Black-headed heron in daytime.



Figure 12. A Cape grysbok in the night time.

5.3 Fish surveys were conducted at the Rietvlei Water Area and the Milerton Lagoon on 12-13/10/2015. Marine research technician Corné Erasmus from the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries's (DAFF) Fisheries Branch assisted in the surveys.

5.4 A female Steenbok that was translocated to the Rietvlei Section during the previous quarter revealed that she was pregnant during the translocation. A lamb was born during this quarter. Several photographers captured images of the Steenbok ewe and lamb together (see Figures 13-14 below). One image that was captured and was published in the local media (see [Appendix B: Press Articles](#)).



Figure 13. The Steenbok lamb.



Figure 14. The Steenbok ewe.

5.5 A water mongoose was killed by a vehicle on the R27 next to the Rietvlei Section on 23/12/2015. The Nature Reserve staff collected the carcass which will be preserved for scientific and education purposes. The skin can be cured and used by a taxidermist to display the animal.

We want to urge motorists to observe the R27's speed limit of 70 km/h next to Rietvlei, and be vigilant for animals that might be crossing the roads.



Figure 15. Water mongoose road kill.

5.6 An adult female Cape Grysbok was captured in the Parklands area on a construction site and released in the Milnerton Racecourse on 27/11/2015.

Cape Grysbok antelope are known for moving through built-up areas, and browsing in gardens and landscaping.

When Grysbok are in danger it is best to contact the Nature Reserve to help relocate these animals.



Figure 16. Rescued female Cape Grysbok being translocated.

5.7 A domestic dog was found in the Rietvlei Section after it apparently escape from an unknown private residence near the Nature Reserve.

The dog was chasing birds and antelope, and might have killed one of them if it was not captured very quickly by the Nature Reserve staff.

The dog was taken to a local veterinarian hospital where it was scanned and returned to the owner.

Dog owners must ensure that their pets cannot escape from their properties into protected areas. Failure to keep a dog under control may result in criminal charges if the dog bites another person.

Even though the Nature Reserve staff do their best to capture domestic animals and return them to their owners, we cannot be held responsible for the ultimate fate of these pets.

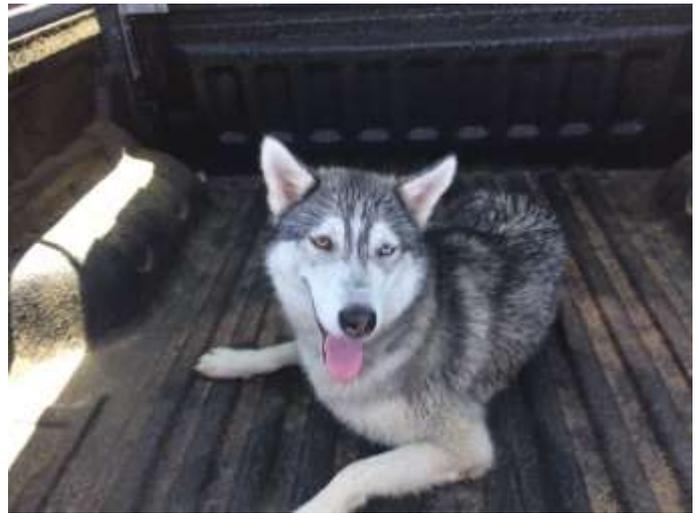


Figure 17. A domestic dog that was captured in Rietvlei and taken to a local vet.

5.8 Other indigenous animal sightings by staff and wildlife photographers include a Dideric cuckoo, a Cape clawless otter, an African fish eagle, and two African snipes (see below Figures 18-21).

We encourage responsible wildlife photography in the Nature Reserve and would showcase people's picture contributions in future versions of this report.

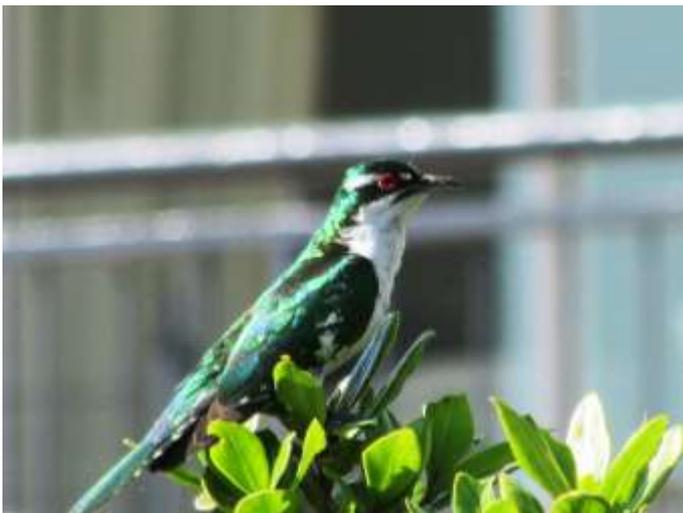


Figure 18. Dideric cuckoo in Milnerton Racecourse Section.

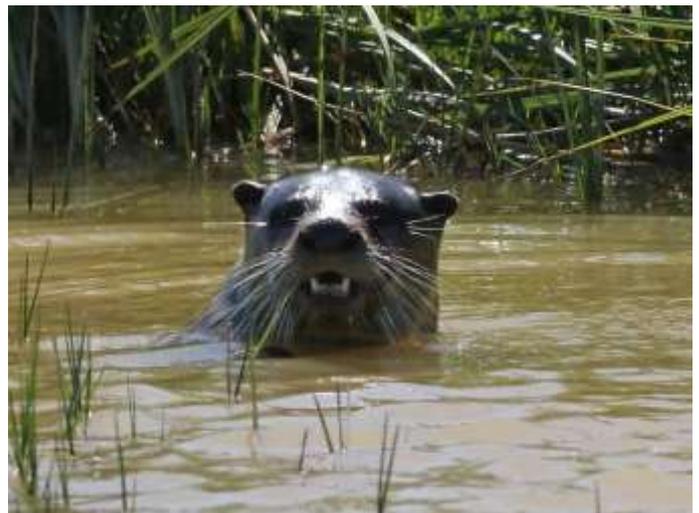


Figure 19. Cape clawless otter in Rietvlei (photo by Jan and Frieda Prinsloo).



Figure 20. African fish eagle at Rietvlei (photo by Jan and Frieda Prinsloo).



Figure 21. African snipe at Rietvlei (photo by Jan and Frieda Prinsloo).

6 SOIL

Nothing to report.

7 WATER

7.1 Stormwater Maintenance Management Plans are being drawn up for various estuaries by the City of Cape Town. The Rietvlei Wetlands and Milnerton Lagoon form part of the Diep Estuary.

A series of site visits took place on 02/12/2015 to inform the process and to obtain images of some of the important infrastructure that require maintenance.

Figure 22 across indicates a stormwater outfall near Milnerton High School that drains the Joe Slovo and Phoenix areas into the Milnerton Lagoon.

This outfall is particularly polluted. The image shows a litter grid which seems ineffective at stopping all the litter and needs to be cleaned more regularly.



Figure 22. Site visit at a stormwater outfall into the Milnerton Lagoon, near the Milnerton High School.

Water pollution is one of the biggest impacts in the Table Bay Nature Reserve, and very little can be done to alleviate this once the pollution has entered into the wetlands.



Figure 23. Much of the Table Bay Nature Reserve is mapped as wetland.

8 FIRE

8.1 Firebreak maintenance was undertaken at the Table View boundary and at Dolphin Beach Hotel.

8.2 A wildfire started on the evening of Guy Fawkes (5/11/2015) in the Rietvlei wetlands between the R27 and Pentz Drive, Table View.

SANCCOB's seabird rehabilitation centre was in immediate danger from the fire, and steps were taken to protect the building as well as the staff and birds in the facility.

The Biodiversity Area Manager assisted the Fire Department to identify access points at SANCCOB from Pentz Drive as well as locations of fire hydrants.

The objective was to save the lives of the occupants in the SANCCOB facility and to protect the building.

Due to the inaccessibility of the reed beds, it was impossible to send fire fighting teams into the wetland at night. Vehicles are unable to drive in the marshy area. A strategy was devised to allow the fire to burn through the reed beds and to extinguish it when it reached the R27 and Pentz Drive.

On 6/11/2015 SANCCOB evacuated the birds, for fear that smoke could adversely affect the birds.

The Fire Department extinguished the fire later in the day with no loss of life or damage to property.

The Area Manager mapped the 34 hectare fire boundary on 9/11/2015, and follow-up cleaning and alien plant removal took place thereafter.



Figure 24. The boundary of the Guy Fawkes fire of 5 and 6 November 2015 covered more than 34 hectares.

A Chinese lantern allegedly landed in the reeds and started the fire. The reed bed lies south-east of the Blouberg Beachfront where fireworks and Chinese lanterns were being launched during Guy Fawkes celebrations. A north-northwesterly wind presumably pushed the burning lantern directly towards Rietvlei.

The irresponsible discharge of flammable instruments such as marine distress signals and Chinese lanterns is an offence. Offenders may be prosecuted and held liable for damages and the costs of fighting a fire.

Several articles were published in the local press lamenting the impacts of fire works on animals and the natural environment (see Figure 25 below and [Appendix B: Press Articles](#)).



Figure 25. An emotional headline in a local newspaper.

9 PEOPLE, TOURISM & EDUCATION

9.1 Stakeholder Engagement

9.1.1 Internal Meetings

Table Bay Nature Reserve staff attended no less than 9 official internal meetings during this quarter:

- 09/10/2015: North Region Health & Safety Committee and Management Meetings;
- 06/11/2015: Biodiversity Management Branch annual team building day;
- 12/11/2015: Counselling of the NQF level 2 Nature Conservation learners;
- 12/11/2015: North Region Management Meeting;
- 13/11/2015: Diep River Maintenance Management Planning meeting;
- 03/12/2015: Biodiversity Management Branch meeting; and
- 08/12/2015: North Region Health & Safety Committee and Management Meetings.

9.1.2 External Meetings

Table Bay Nature Reserve staff attended no less than 13 official external meetings during this quarter:

- 02/10/2015: Milnerton Racecourse Environmental Management Committee and site meeting at Milnerton Racecourse footpath;
- 08/10/2015: Table Bay Nature Reserve Advisory Committee;
- 15/10/2015: Blaauwberg Development Area Environmental Liaison Committee;
- 20/10/2015: Site meeting with Kobus Botha at Dolphin Beach;
- 21/10/2015: Quotation site meeting with HENCHEM at Waves' Edge and Dolphin Beach;
- 21/10/2015: Department of Environmental Affairs & Development Planning regarding the operation of the Diep Estuary Management Forum;
- 27/10/2015: Cape Town Environmental Education Trust (CTEET) Annual General Meeting;
- 29/10/2015: Caroline Marx regarding water quality sub-working group;
- 30/10/2015: Tegan Bartram and associates regarding riverine invasive plants sub-working group;
- 09/11/2015: Planning meeting for the Rietvlei Open Day;
- 10/11/2015: Site meeting with Andre Hawarden about riverine invasive plants;
- 10/11/2015: Milnerton Ridge Ratepayers' Association Annual General Meeting; and
- 19/11/2015: Friends of Rietvlei evening meeting;

9.2 Benefit to People

9.2.1 Rietvlei Education Centre Usage

The usage of the Rietvlei Education Centre, excluding visiting school groups, generated about 277 person days of benefit to people over 14 event days.

DATE	GROUP	ACTIVITY	PERSON DAYS
15/10/2015	Blaauwberg Development Area Environmental Liaison Committee	Regular Meeting	12
29/10/2015	Biodiversity Management Branch	Biodiversity Network (Bionet) meeting	10
14/11/2015	Friends of Rietvlei	Marketing at Rietvlei Open Day	50
16-20/11/2015	NQF 5 Conservation Learnership	Training and support	65
19/11/2015	Friends of Rietvlei	Evening meeting	30
23-24/11/2015	NQF 5 Conservation Learnership	Training and support	26
04-06/12/2015	2 nd Bergvliet Scouts and Cubs	Overnight environmental education program	84
TOTAL			277

9.2.2 Rietvlei Boma Usage

The usage of the Rietvlei Boma generated 721 person days of benefit to people over 32 event days.

DATE	GROUP	ACTIVITY	PERSON DAYS
05-08/10/2015	NQF 5 Conservation Learnership	Training and support	48
08/10/2015	Table Bay Nature Reserve Advisory Committee	Quarterly meeting	25
12-13/10/2015	NQF 5 Conservation Learnership	Training and support	24
20-21/10/2015	Environmental Resource Management	Smart Driver training	45
27-30/10/2015	Biodiversity Management Branch	Fire crew leader training	62
30-31/10/2015	Table View Brownies	Overnight environmental education program	22
18/11/2015	Green Jobs Unit	Invasive Species: North Forum	84
20/11/2015	Western Cape Environmental Education Forum	Quarterly meeting	18
23/11/2015	NQF 2 Conservation Learnership	Assessment and examinations	25
24-26/11/2015	Cape Peninsula University of Technology	Nature Conservation student interviews and evaluations	86
27/11/2015	Planning and Building Development Management	GIS meeting	20
30/11-04/12/2015	Department of Environmental Affairs & Development Planning	Environmental Management Inspectorate training	150
04-06/12/2015	2 nd Bergvliet Scouts and Cubs	Overnight environmental education program	84
08/12/2015	Biodiversity Management: North Region	Monthly meeting	13
11/12/2015	Human Settlements Department	Year-end function	15
TOTAL			721

9.2.3 Environmental Education and Outreach

Environmental Education and Outreach generated 128 person days of benefit to people over seven event days (see Figures 26-27 below).

DATE	GROUP(S)	LEARNERS	TEACHER +ADULTS	PERSON-DAYS	PROGRAMME
13/10/2015	Amathemba	9	3	12	Introduction to Rietvlei and guided walk
30/10/2015	Table View Brownies	8	3	11	Introduction to Rietvlei, plant ID & nocturnal animals and sounds
31/10/2015	Table View Brownies	8	3	11	Teambuilding, Bird ID, arts & craft
21/11/2015	Milnerton Scouts and Cubs	7	3	10	Introduction to fishing & miniSass
04/12/2015	2nd Bergvliet scouts and cubs	11	5	16	Overnight environmental education programme
05/12/2015	2nd Bergvliet scouts and cubs	29	6	35	Overnight environmental education programme
06/12/2015	2nd Bergvliet scouts and cubs	21	12	33	Overnight environmental education programme
TOTALS		93	35	128	TOTALS



Figure 26. An overnight scout camp at Rietvlei.



Figure 27. Children having fun at Rietvlei while learning about nature.

9.3 Visitors and Income

9.3.1 The Rietvlei Open Day was hosted on 14/11/2015 and gathered almost a 1,000 visitors to the Nature Reserve. The event was marketed by Pink Drive in collaboration with the Table Bay Nature Reserve, Milnerton Aquatic Club, Friends of Rietvlei and SANCCOB. Each partner used the day to offer various activities and to market their respective organisations. Entrance fees were waived on this day.

9.3.2 Income from visitors at the Rietvlei Water Area during this quarter was the highest ever recorded. The month of December also recorded the highest income for a single month at Rietvlei. This quarter saw a total of 6,329 visitors that generated R89,478 income.

Figure 28 indicates the growing trend in recorded visitors entering the Rietvlei Water Area. Figure 29 indicates the monthly income of 2015 at the Rietvlei entrance, compared to the average income for each month. Figure 30 indicates the growing trend in income received from the Rietvlei entrance since 2010.

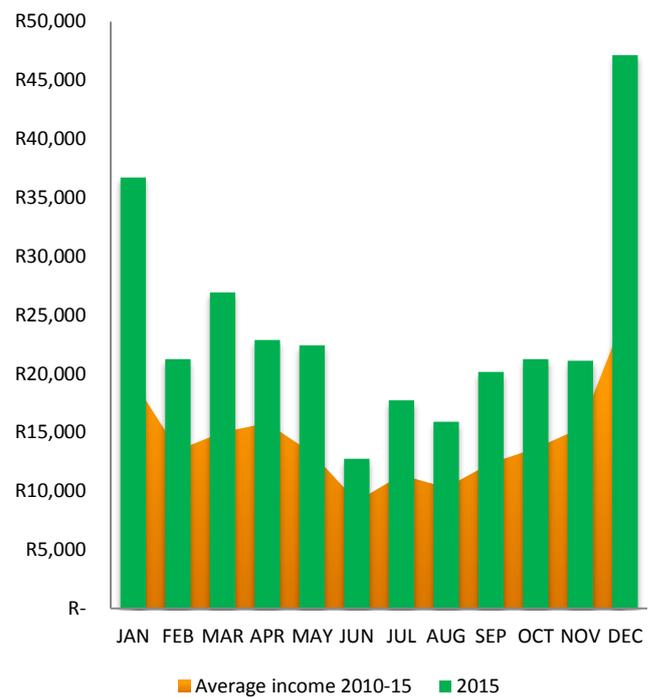
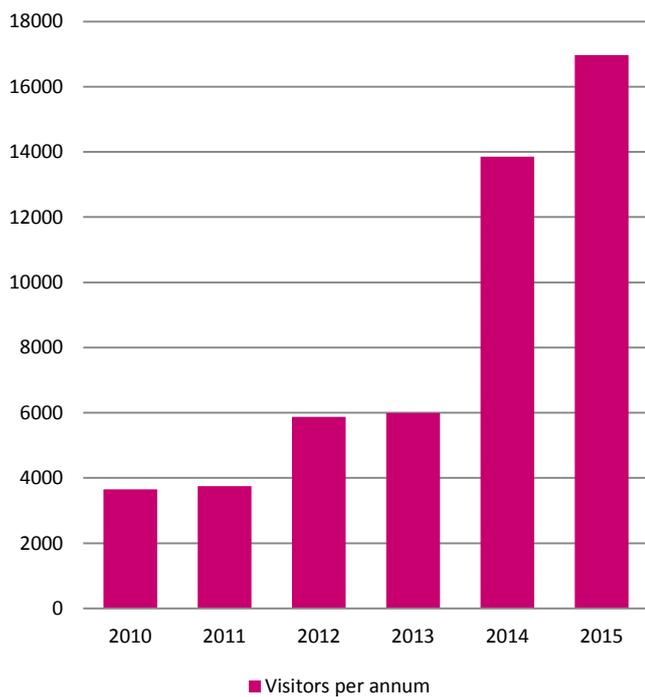


Figure 28. Recorded visitors per year.

Figure 29. Monthly income from 2015 plotted over average income.

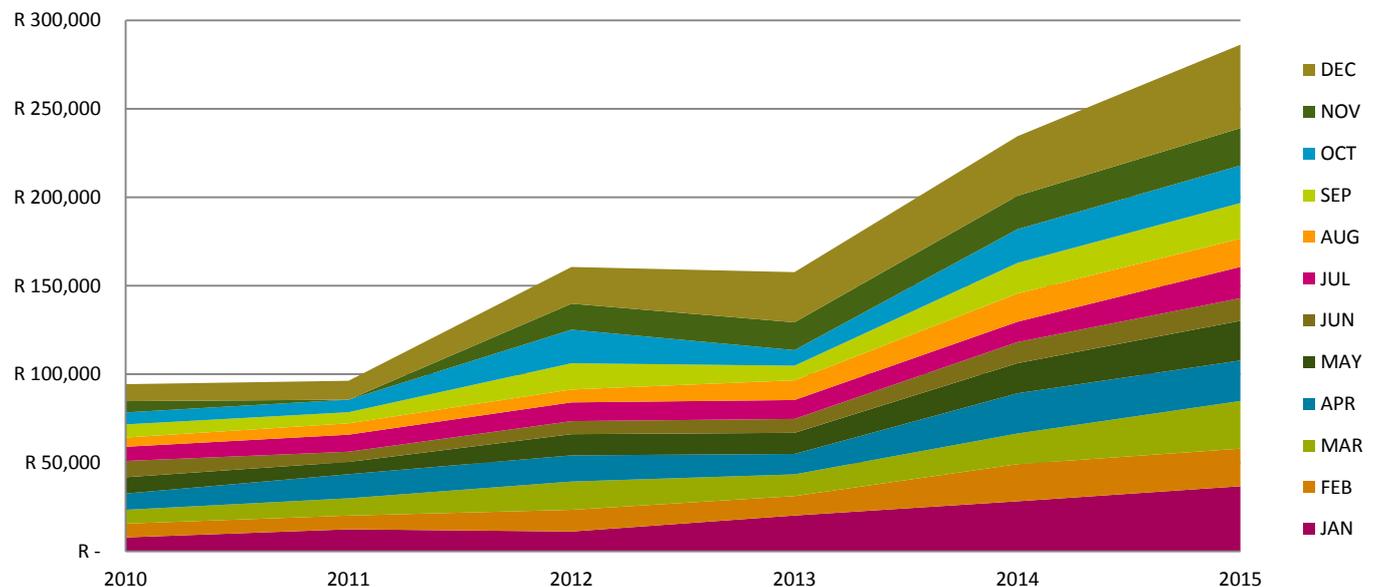


Figure 30. Monthly income since 2010, stacked per year.

10 STAFF

10.1 Training of permanent and temporary staff at the Table Bay Nature Reserve amounted to no less than 125 person days over 52 training event days, including the following interventions:

Date(s)	Course	Number of days x	Number of learners =	Person days
01-02/10/2015	NQF 5 Learnerships: Occupation Health & Safety Legislation	2	3	6
05-08/10/2015	NQF 5 Learnerships: Occupation Health & Safety Legislation	4	3	12
05/10/2015	Microsoft Word training	1	1	1
06/10/2015	Microsoft Excel training	1	1	1
07/10/2015	NQF 5 Learnerships: Time Management	1	3	3
12-13/10/2015	NQF 5 Learnerships: Learner Support	2	3	6
26-29/10/2015	NQF 5 Learnerships: Specialist Incident Investigation	4	3	12
27-28/10/2015	Fire crew leader training	2	4	8
02-03/11/2015	NQF 5 Learnerships: Learner Support	2	3	6
04-06/11/2015	NQF 5 Learnerships: Dreaded Diseases Handling	3	3	9
16-20/11/2015	Field ranger training	5	2	10
16-20/11/2015	Environmental Management Inspectorate training	5	1	5
16-18/11/2015	NQF 5 Learnerships: Systems Approach	3	3	9
19-20/11/2015	NQF 5 Learnerships: Problem Solving	2	3	6
23-24/11/2015	NQF 5 Learnerships: Learner Support	2	3	6
30/11-04/12/2015	Environmental Management Inspectorate training	5	1	5
23-24/11/2015	First Aid Training	2	1	2
07-10/12/2015	NQF 5 Learnerships: Dreaded Diseases Handling	4	3	12
14-15/12/2015	NQF 5 Learnerships: Learner Support	2	3	6
	TOTALS	52		125

- **The Nature Conservation Work-Integrated Learning students** from the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT), Hester Pentz and David Pickering-Copley, were based at the Table Bay Nature Reserve during 2015. The students submitted their portfolios of evidence to the CPUT at the end of October and underwent evaluations and interviews in the last week of November. Both students successfully passed the Work-Integrated Learning programme and will graduate with the National Diploma in Nature Conservation in the New Year. We congratulate David and Hester and wish them well for their future in nature conservation.
- **Hester Pentz** was also accepted into the B.Tech degree course in Nature Conservation at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU) for 2016. The course is offered full-time over a single year and is hosted at the NMMU's George Campus at Saasveld. If Hester passes this course, she would convert her National Diploma to a B.Tech degree.
- **The Medical Aid Schemes' Freedom of Association** was offered to staff at a general meeting on 30/10/2015. Permanent staff have an opportunity every year to change their medical aid provider.
- **Annual medical surveillance** of the Table Bay Nature Reserve staff was undertaken on 03/11 and 05/11/2015. The City of Cape Town monitors the health, hearing, and lung capacity of staff that work in the field or are exposed to noise, fires, and other sources of pollution.
- **The Area Manager of Table Bay Nature Reserve, Koos Relief**, acted as Area Manager for the Blaauwberg Nature Reserve during the absence of Jacques Kuyler, as well as North Regional Manager during the absence of Bongani Mnisi from 21-31/12/2015.
- **A year-end function** was held for staff in the afternoon on 11/12/2015.

11 LAW ENFORCEMENT

11.1 About 60 cattle were found illegally grazing in the Diep River Section. The cattle were removed by Nature Reserve staff and returned to the owner in Du Noon. The Law Enforcement Department was notified.

11.2 Illegal structures were removed from the Fynbos Corridor and Diep River Sections (on 08/10/2015) and the Zoarvlei Section (on 15/10/2015). The City's Displaced People's Unit, Anti-Land Invasion, Law Enforcement Department, Social Development Department, Milnerton SAPS, and the Paardeneiland City Improvement District (PECID) were all involved in the removals at the Zoarvlei Section.

11.3 Three illegal footpaths and walkways were removed by Nature Reserve staff from the Coastal Section adjacent to Sunset Beach (see before and after images in Figures 31-32 below). It is hoped that the vegetation will naturally recover in these disturbed areas.

Residents must familiarize themselves with the National Environmental Management Act (NEMA) and other Acts such as the Integrated Coastal Management Act. It is each citizen's obligation to comply with the law and residents should be aware that it is illegal to cut footpaths, build walkways or extend gardens over the coastal protected zone, or on Council property, or in any protected area. People who commit these offences could face criminal prosecution, with possible prison sentences, or fines or both.



Figure 31. Illegal footpath.



Figure 32. Footpath removed.

11.4 Several reports of illegal overnight camping in vehicles at the Coastal Section along Sunset Beach were received (see Figures 33-34 below). These cases were reported to the City of Cape Town's Law Enforcement Department based in Big Bay. According to Section 2(3) of the [City of Cape Town's by-law relating to Streets, Public Places and the Prevention of Noise Nuisances](#), it is unlawful to overnight in a public area, consume alcohol, and to urinate or defecate in public areas other than in a toilet.

Residents can report cases of illegal overnight camping to Law Enforcement at Big Bay at 021 554 8000.



Figure 33. Illegal camping in a motor-home.



Figure 34. Illegal camping in a vehicle with a rooftop tent.

12 INFRASTRUCTURE & EQUIPMENT

12.1 Key infrastructure maintenance activities during this quarter included:

- Footpath maintenance at the Milnerton Racource Section (northern block);
- Replacement of access control chains and booms at Heron Waters Complex, Diep River Section and Zoarvlei Section; and
- Replacement of damaged or removed edging bollards at the Rietvlei fishing sites.

12.2 Condemned items that were written off during this quarter included

- A STIHL FS450 brush-cutter (beyond economical repair);
- A FALCON 25/90R Bossie kapper (beyond economical repair); and
- Four steel jerry cans (fair wear and tear).

12.3 The site of the old Cape Radio Flyers Club at Rietvlei was cleared of all disused materials, except for a stockpile of asbestos-containing roof sheets and the remaining tarmac runways.

The asbestos-containing materials must be handled by a legally registered asbestos handling contractor and will be disposed of separately.

The Cape Radio Flyers made an application to the City of Cape Town to re-hire the area for flying after their lease expired on 31/05/2014.

The application was opposed by the Area Manager, but the City of Cape Town Council is yet to make a final decision on their lease application.

The intention is to completely restore the old site to natural habitat as it falls within the Nature Reserve.



Figure 35. All disused materials removed from the old CRF site.

12.4 The Milnerton Aquatic Club (MAC) launched their refurbished jetty at the Rietvlei Water Area on 14/10/2015. The MAC paid for the refurbishment of their jetty as well as the crane truck that was hired to launch it onto the water. The MAC also allowed the crane truck to remove the older Council jetty that is in need of refurbishment.

The Nature Reserve agreed to pay for the refurbishment of the Council jetty and will hire a crane truck to launch it once the refurbishment is complete. New timber is being ordered for the Council jetty.

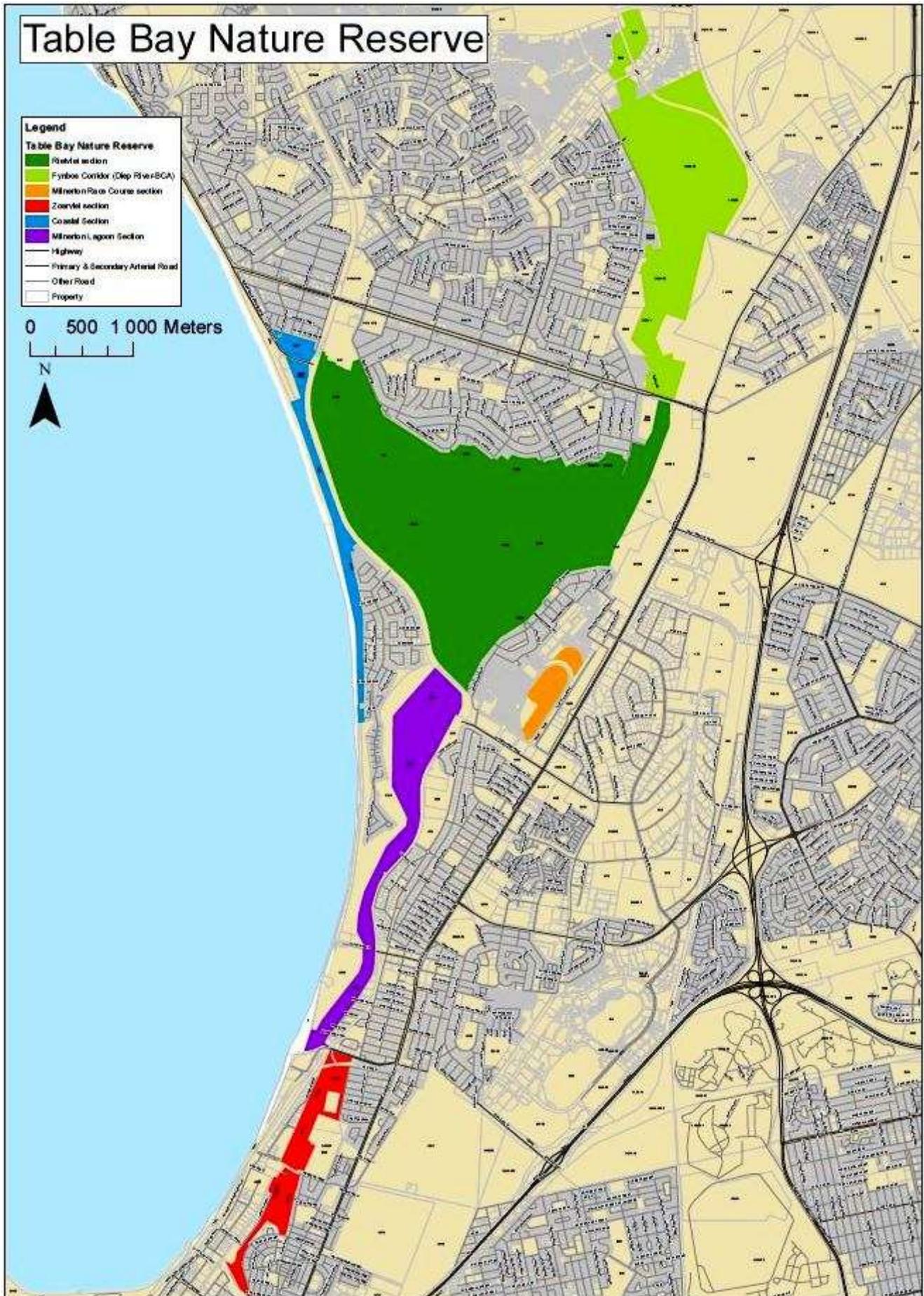


Figure 36. The Milnerton Aquatic Club's new jetty being launched with the help of a crane truck hired by the Club.



Figure 37. One of the two portions of the Nature Reserve's old Council jetty being taken out of the water for repairs.

APPENDIX A: MAP OF RESERVE



APPENDIX B: PRESS ARTICLES



■ Left: City of Cape Town site manager Landi Louw said Milnerton Racecourse became the first city nature reserve this year to actively manage the genetic diversity of its resident Cape grysbok population by introducing two males.

■ Right: From left, Amanda Austen, Ian Elliot, Mariette Kemp, Lani Louw and Jean Stephenson.

■ Bottom right: There are 19 plant communities in the racecourse, incredible biodiversity, such as this critically endangered Cape Flats conebush (*Leucadendron levisanus*).



PICTURES: KAREN WATKINS

Walking in 'little known gem'

Dubbed "spring flower walk", hardy hikers braved the rainy weather on Saturday October 3, for an annual guided walk at the Milnerton Racecourse Nature Reserve.

City of Cape Town site manager Landi Louw took hikers through areas usually off limits to the public. The land forms part of the Table Bay Nature Reserve and is one of the City's core biodiversity sites.

Ms Louw said that in the 1800s it was part of Rietvlei Farm and would have been connected to other nearby wetlands.

It was formerly known as the Royal Ascot Conservation Area and

is now called the Milnerton Racecourse Nature Reserve.

The City of Cape Town's environmental resource management department took over the management of the land inside the race track in 2003, and it is now used for nature conservation.

The 19.2 ha reserve is home to critically endangered Cape Flats sand fynbos.

More than 84% of this vegetation type has been destroyed by development.

Of the 16% that is left, only 1.5% is conserved at places such as Rondebosch Common, Kenilworth Racecourse and Tokai Park.

The racecourse is divided into two portions, a northern area and a larger southern area, which are physically separated – in the past by the horse racing track, and today by residential development.

Milnerton Racecourse was once the pride of the area, hosting some of the country's biggest racing events and attracting up to 25 000 people a day.

Although race horses no longer thunder down the track, it is still used for training and stabling.

A large portion of the land around the track was sold for the residential development, Royal Ascot in Milnerton.



Rush to bully reeds out of Rietvlei

The chemical treatment of bulrush reeds (*typha capensis*) at Rietvlei is set to be complete in the new year.

According to a statement by ward councillor Heather Brenner, there have been numerous requests from the public to reduce reed growth in certain water areas due to social and health concerns.

She explains the concerns centered on the health impact on those with sensitive respiratory tracts and the way the fluff clings to household objects.

She says since 2011 the City of Cape Town has implemented a systematic plan to eradicate this invasive reed.

"In 2011 when I became ward councillor I set aside R200 000 for our biodiversity department to investigate a plan to control the growth of the reed. *Typha capensis* is indigenous to Africa but is an invasive species that has spread across various areas and clogs most of the waterways in the City. One of these areas is at Waves Edge, opposite Dolphin Beach Hotel. Zoarvlei Wetland (in

Paardeneiland) is another site of concern."

According to Brenner, the biodiversity department has worked at Waves Edge with Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) teams since then and spent about R350 000 on the cutting and removal of reeds.

In the 2012/2013 financial year R400 000 was spent.

"This delivered some results, but the volume of dead reed material was overwhelming and the costs of transporting and dumping cut material was escalating. We had to make a plan to somehow remove accumulated dead material that was hampering the cutting work."

A public meeting was held on the matter with a proposal to conduct a controlled burn of the reed beds. This was supported and the controlled burn was done in March 2013.

This removed much of the dead material and opened up access for further cutting and chemical treatments.

"As was expected, however, by 2014 the re-

growth of reeds was significant. At this point it became feasible for herbicide application to take place. A private weed control company, Henchem, was employed to conduct a thorough herbicide treatment of the reed beds at Waves Edge, at a cost of about R80 000 in 2014. This was then repeated with a thorough follow-up chemical treatment of both Waves Edge and Dolphin Beach in 2015, at a cost of about R100 000."

At this stage she explains there is about 90% bulrush die-off at Waves Edge and 95% at Dolphin Beach.

"We have noticed how the habitat has started opening up and other (more desirable) wetlands plants are starting to replace the bulrush. We also learnt that after a chemical treatment, it is better to simply leave the dead reeds in place as this suppresses further regrowth. We are happy to have received positive responses from members of the public in this area. We know this is a very slow process, but we can see a difference already."

Enjoy free Rietvlei family open day

MONIQUE DUVAL
@monique_duval

Residents across Milnerton and Table View are being encouraged to come out and enjoy Rietvlei, the natural wonder on their doorstep.

Thanks to a partnership between Table Bay Nature Reserve (TBNR) and various non-profit organisations, Rietvlei will host an open day for families with a variety of activities for young and old.

Rene Anderson, a member of Milnerton aquatics club (Mac), explains the idea was first conceptualised when the nature reserve decided to embark on an awareness campaign. "They wanted to show the public what was on offer and opted to waiver the entrance fee for a day. Various organisations like Mac, Friends of Rietvlei, Saccob and Table View Baptist Church came on board," she says.

Anderson explains as Movember nears when many will be raising awareness about prostate cancer, the team decided to include PinkDrive that will provide cancer wellness screenings for men and women.

"The aim is to raise awareness, educate parents and children and to provide a fun day out for the whole family focusing on health, wellness and the ecosystem. With



Residents can enjoy a host of activities at the Rietvlei open day. PHOTO: ANGELA CAROLINE GRAY

Movember we hope to encourage more men to get tested. PinkDrive will provide prostate checks for R50 and the good news is that it is done pricking a finger and testing a drop of blood. The procedure is feared by many men, but this will provide a quick and easy way for them to check. In addition, they will

also provide free clinical breast examinations for women and if necessary a mammogram can be performed at a cost of R600."

The event will be held on Saturday 14 November and activities start as early as 07:00 with a fishing competition by Friends of Rietvlei and TBNR. There will be 10 teams of

two and participants will be awarded for catching the biggest fish. Entry is R100 per team and Anderson explains that along with the competition, participants will be given a chance to learn more about the ecosystem of the vlei.

Meanwhile Saccob will demonstrate the important role they play in saving African penguins and other seabirds. They will host a guided tour and attendees can also view the feeding of the penguins and chicks.

Water lovers can enjoy various water sports offered by Mac, which include free windsurfing, stand up paddling and sailing. You can also enjoy the power boats for R10. There will be a large swimming pool for adults and a splash pool for toddlers.

Table View Baptist Church will host various fun and free activities for children, including face painting, fishing games and balloon art among others, while Peter Wyness provides live music and entertainment.

Bird lovers can also participate in bird hide walks hosted by the Friends of Rietvlei. The galley restaurant will be open from 09:00 to 17:30.

For more information about the event and the various activities visit www.capetown.gov.za/tablebaynr, www.friendsofrietvlei.co.za, www.milnerton-aquaticclub.co.za, www.saccob.co.za, www.pinkdrive.co.za and www.tableviewbaptist.co.za.

Watch out for wildlife at night



Respect, not roadkill: Angulate tortoises, caracals and Cape grysbok are just some of the animals killed by motorists near nature reserves.

Cape grysbok, caracals, Cape cobras and porcupines are among some of the animals that are being killed daily by speeding motorists on roads near nature reserves. Nocturnal animals are particularly vulnerable in this regard.

Recently, a number of animals have been killed on Otto du Plessis Drive and the R27 near Blaauwberg Nature Reserve, as well as on Ou Kaapse Weg.

A caracal and Cape grysbok were killed on the road between Bloubergstrand and Melkbosstrand, near Blaauwberg Nature Reserve. Other animals killed over the last year include tortoises, Cape cobras, mole snakes, small-spotted genets and porcupines.

In an effort to protect wildlife and to ensure the safety of road users, the City urges

motorists to be vigilant and to slow down in these areas, especially at night.

Animals hesitate to cross roads, because it is an alien environment to them, so they will often do so suddenly and unexpectedly.

Many of the motorists are not aware that they are driving through these proclaimed nature reserve areas, and because many of the animals are nocturnal, it is difficult for motorists to see them at night.

Capetonians share the city with a range of unique plants and animals, many of which are found nowhere else in the world. The loss of a single animal can have a significant impact. We all have a responsibility to ensure that we conserve and protect our biodiversity.

For example, Blaauwberg Nature Reserve alone is home to at least 47 threatened plants,

and conserves 624 plant species, 40 mammal species, 166 types of birds, 30 species of reptile and four amphibian species, including the dwarf burrowing skink.

Blaauwberg Nature Reserve forms part of the Cape West Coast Biosphere Reserve and is located on the West Coast, about 25 km from the city centre, between Bloubergstrand and Melkbosstrand, and inland from the R27.

The reserve is bisected by two busy roads – Otto du Plessis Drive and the R27. This is a popular destination for Capetonians and tourists, offering outstanding views of two world heritage sites – Robben Island and Table Mountain – as well as a range of recreational and educational activities.

- For information about City nature reserves, visit www.capetown.gov.za/naturereserves.

City issues wasp warning for Bothasig

ATHINA MAY

Wasp nests have been dormant during winter, and as the weather warms up, they're starting to awake, and the City of Cape Town's Invasive Wasp Control (IWC) programme manager, Ulrike Irlich, warns that Bothasig may be at risk of a wasp invasion.

Since the launch of the IWC teams last year, the unit has already removed 8 000 European paper wasp nests in the northern suburbs.

Johan van der Merwe, the City's Mayco member for energy, environmental and spatial planning, said two homes in the Richwood area had reported wasp-nest invasions. The area has been deemed a hot spot for wasp sightings.

"It's a definite point of concern in the northern suburbs. The wasps are spreading, they multiply quite quickly. If we don't control them, they're likely to become a problem all over Cape Town like it is in the north."

The European paper wasp and the German wasp are listed as a Category 1b invasive species in the Alien and Invasive Species Regulations, National Environmental Management Biodiversity Act. This implies that the wasps need to be removed by law, as they have been identified as posing a threat to the local ecosystem and the fruit, wine and beekeeping industries.

"Our main concern is that wasps kill honey bees, which are impor-



Workers don protective gear to tackle a wasp infestation.



A wasp nest

tant pollinators," said Ms Irlich.

"They also compete with other indigenous animals and eat all the food they can find to limit food supply to other animals," she said.

Ian van Wyngaard, a registered pest-management operator, said wasps fight like big animals fight when the female is in heat.

"When they want to breed, the female will look for nooks and crannies to breed in. They usually don't like to go into homes, so the first thing to do when you see a swarm is to close your windows," said Mr Van Wyngaard.

Both Mr Van Wyngaard and Ms Irlich agree that wasp infestation should not be self-managed or be left alone.

"Don't disturb them, as their sting is particularly painful. I wouldn't recommend leaving them as the problem gets worse," said Ms Irlich.

Mr Van Wyngaard recommended that honey be used on a wasp sting to soothe it, but recommended that an anti-inflammatory or antihistamine be used for swelling.

"A single house in Stellenbosch had 70 wasps. It's really not some-

thing we want. Bothasig and the rest of Milnerton should keep an eye out, before it becomes a problem in the entire Cape Town area," said Ms Irlich.

Residents are encouraged to report sightings to the City or contact a pest-control company, as property owners are primarily responsible for pest control on their premises.

"If nests are removed privately, property owners are urged to email a report containing their street address and the number of nests removed to Invasive.Species@capetown.gov.za, as this helps with the City's future planning and research. The City will make every effort to timeously assist the public where possible," said Mr Van der Merwe. Sightings can also be reported on the spotter network at www.capetowninvasives.org.za/edrn/target-list

Have your say
SMS TALK with your message, name and area you live in to 30001 (32260)
SMSes charged of R1 each

A sting in the tail that really bites

DESIRÉE RORKE

Awaking from their winter dormancy, the devilish and very invasive little black and yellow paper wasps are back to make life hell for residents in the northern suburbs of Cape Town. But the City says they are ready for this onslaught.

Since invading the far northern suburbs of the city several years ago, the species – said to have made their appearance in Kuils River in 2010 – have plagued households.

"Since the launch of the invasive wasp control (IWC) teams in 2014, the City has removed 8 000 European paper wasp nests,

mostly from areas such as Durbanville, Kuils River, Brackenfell, Kraaifontein, Bellville and Bothasig and are ready to assist the public," says Mayco member for energy, environmental and spatial planning, Johan van der Merwe. According to him the wasp season usually occurs during warmer periods, from September to May.

Both alien invasive wasp species, the European paper wasp (*polistes dominula*) and the German wasp (*vespula germanica*) are listed as a category 1b invasive species in the Alien and Invasive Species regulations in the National Environmental Management Biodiversity Act.

"This means that scientists have agreed that the wasps, by law, have to be removed as they pose a threat to the local ecosystem and several important industries such as deciduous fruit, wine and bee keeping industries," says Van der Merwe.

Cape Town residents are advised to be aware that the sting from these wasps is particularly painful.

If nests are removed privately, property owners are urged to send a report containing their street address and the number of nests removed to invasive.species@capetown.gov.za as this helps with the City's future planning and research.

"The City will make every effort to assist the public where possible, within our available capacity, to ensure their safety and peace of mind," says Van der Merwe.

He adds that the IWC teams are neither trained nor equipped to deal with bee removal. Should residents require bee removal, they should contact a professional bee keeper.

Residents who would like assistance can upload sightings on the spotter network at www.capetowninvasives.org.za/edrn/target-list, and thereafter they will be contacted to arrange the removal. For a description of the booking procedures, please visit www.capetowninvasives.org.za/news



Parklands resident Frieda Prinsloo captured the flamingos at Rietvlei in the Table Bay Nature Reserve.

‘Stinky’ canal is a health hazard

ATHINA MAY

Residents living near the canal along Blaauwberg and West Coast roads in Table View are raising a stink about the stench issuing from the polluted waterway.

The canal is opposite Bayside and Table View malls as well as homes further along West Coast Road.

Table View resident Lucia Viljoen posted pictures of it on the Table View Neighbours (New) Facebook page after she took a walk near it and was shocked by its condition – litter clogged the murky water and there was a bad smell in the air.

“The stench at times is unbearable, but this week it is the worst I have ever encountered. I have seen reports, or rather excuses, through the years from the different authorities, but the problem is they wait for complaints, then some sort of effort is made to clean it up,” said Ms Viljoen.

Resident Ursula Keene responded, saying: “You will not believe how long this has been going on and how many pleas have fallen on deaf ears. Will the City of Cape Town ever resolve this problem? Even their signage has been stolen.”

Denise DeJager felt the canal posed a “health hazard”.

Ms Viljoen agreed with these sentiments. She said pedestrians used the walkway and bridge,



■ The dirt-strewn canal stretch has residents turning their noses.



■ The murky grey water in the canal emits a foul odour.

between Pick n Pay and the Blaauwberg Road pavement. She had logged an official complaint with the City, but it had gone unanswered.

“I feel it should not come to reporting something before something is done,” said Ms Viljoen.

Brett Herron, mayoral committee member for transport, said the Blaauwberg district depot of Transport for Cape Town (TCT), the City’s transport authority, was responsible for clearing the canal

of silt and alien vegetation twice a year.

“The most recent cleaning was in May this year, as part of the depot’s pre-winter maintenance programme. Residents must also accept responsibility for the environment by not dumping objects into the canal and by refraining from littering,” said Mr Herron.

“Apart from clearing the canal of silt, we also clear the banks of alien vegetation to ensure the free flow of stormwater run-off to the

vlei.

“Regrettably, we do not have control to monitor and police the illegal ingress of waste from properties along the length of the canal.”

Ward 104 councillor Heather Brenner said she had recommended alerting the City’s environmental health department to the canal’s condition at the last sub-council meeting.

The department had inspected the waterway and instructed the TCT to clean it up.

Mr Herron said the TCT had instructed the maintenance contractors to start the second round of cleaning in the first week of November.

The TCT was also investigating the possibility of upgrading the canal where it entered the Rietvlei.

“The required environmental processes for this exercise have already started, but the only long-term solution is for residents to work with the City in keeping our canals clean,” said Mr Herron.



Next beach clean on 5 December: Over 250 people participated in a recent beach clean-up hosted by Clean C. The group collected over 100 bags of litter stretching from Woodbridge Island to Big Bay. Three companies joined at Milnerton Lighthouse and 30 children from the Beautiful Future project from Joe Slovo Park assisted at Big Bay. The next beach clean-up will be hosted on Saturday 5 December. Call Gregory Player on 082 873 1962 for more information.



Firefighters attending to the blaze at Rietvlei last week.
PHOTO: DENVOR DE WEE

RIETVLEI FIRE: DOLPHIN BEACH RESIDENT MAKES REVELATION

'I saw how fire started'

MONIQUE DUVAL
@monique_duval

While speculation about what caused the blaze at Rietvlei last week continues, a Dolphin Beach resident has revealed what she witnessed on Thursday 5 November.

The fire, which raged throughout the night, damaged an extensive area of vegetation and saw several motorists who use West Coast Road take to social media to vent their anger. Several reports show thick clouds of smoke over the road as residents made their way to work.

Social media feeds for the greater Table View community were buzzing with debates

As the blaze continued into the next day an alert was sent out indicating the Southern African Foundation for the Conservation of Coastal Birds (SANCCOB) had to evacuate approximately 300 penguins and other seabirds from their seabird centre.

According to a statement issued by SANCCOB spokesperson, Francois Louw, the City's fire department was deployed and continued to fight the blaze throughout the night amidst strong winds.

"As a safety precaution, the seabirds were relocated to a safe location on Friday morning with the help of staff and volunteers until the fires were under control. At 11:00 most of the flames were doused and SANCCOB was given the clear to return the penguins and seabirds back to the centre to continue their rehabilitation. Approximately 126 of the seabirds are penguin chicks that were recently admitted to the centre after being abandoned in nearby colonies. SANCCOB would like to extend their gratitude to all the firefighters, volunteers and the local com-

as some called for all fireworks to be banned and several speculated about the link between the fire and Guy Fawkes celebrations which took place at the Table View beachfront on the same night.

Residents also vented their anger at the designation of the Table View beachfront as a suitable site for the discharging of fireworks. The recommendation by the Blaauwberg Subcouncil has come under scrutiny in recent months as residents and the Ward 23 committee claim it did not comply with the City of Cape Town's safety criteria.

On Thursday 5 November shortly before 22:00, *TygerBurger* witnessed smoke near West Coast Road. Fire trucks and other rescue vehicles could be seen along Pentz

community for their incredible support during this emergency," he says.

According to Mayco member for safety and security JP Smith, an investigation is underway and the cause of the blaze is still undetermined.

In a written response, Smith explains the fire was extinguished by 17:49 on Friday.

"An extensive area of reeds was damaged. While the SANCCOB building was under threat at one stage, the danger was averted."

On Saturday 7 November just before 11:00 *TygerBurger* saw smoke coming from the vlei. A firefighter walked into the reeds and appeared to be inspecting the vlei.

Smith explains this was a flare-up of the original fire.

"At 08:55 on Saturday a fire engine was dispatched. However, the flare-ups were in areas surrounded by water and therefore inaccessible to firefighters who monitored the situation and returned to base at 17:12."

He also says no eye witnesses have come forward regarding a lantern descending into

the vlei and explains lanterns were not allowed on the beach.

During Guy Fawkes Day celebrations, Law Enforcement officers were seen checking the fireworks taken into the firing point. Smith explains visitors were informed by staff on duty, as well as via a public address system not to discharge flares or let off Chinese lanterns on Guy Fawkes night.

"We also confiscated a container full of marine distress flares."

In a statement, the City says Table View was one of the busiest sites on Guy Fawkes day with 7000 people. Asked how this figure was derived, Smith says it's an estimation.

He added the beachfront was considered to be compliant with the criteria set out in the Community Fire Safety By-law after a site meeting with councillors and fire staff.

Meanwhile the team behind the Rietvlei open day planned to take place on Saturday 14 November confirms the event will go ahead and residents across Milnerton and Table View are encouraged to come out and

"I have never seen a sky lantern before except in photographs and have no experience of how they work. In my naivety I thought once it had descended it was extinguished. Only after further research on the internet did I see they burn a lot longer once down."

She later witnessed the blaze at the vlei. *TygerBurger* requested Martin submit a map indicating where she saw the lantern being lit and where she saw the fire.

According to her map the lantern was lit outside of the designated site for the discharge of fireworks. The map also marks where Martin witnessed the fire and this location correlates with what *TygerBurger* witnessed at 22:00.

► To page 2.

enjoy the natural wonder on their doorstep. Thanks to a partnership between Table Bay Nature Reserve (TBNR) and various non-profit organisations, Rietvlei will host an open day for families with a variety of activities for young and old.

In an earlier interview, Rene Anderson, a member of Milnerton aquatics club (Mac), explained the idea was first conceptualised when the nature reserve decided to embark on an awareness campaign. "They wanted to show the public what was on offer and opted to waive the entrance fee for a day. Various organisations like Mac, Friends of Rietvlei, Sanccob and Table View Baptist Church came on board," she said. One FM will be providing the music for the day.

Speaking to the *TygerBurger* this week, Anderson confirms the event will go ahead. She also says no dogs will be allowed on the day and reminds residents that MyCiTi buses can be used to get to the vlei.

► For more information about the open day, visit www.capetown.gov.za/tablebayr



■ Left: The fire spread through the Rietvlei reeds, causing clouds of smoke to cover Otto du Plessis Drive.



■ Right: Table View beach was in a mess after Guy Fawkes celebrations on Thursday November 5.

PICTURES: FACEBOOK

Fury in fireworks aftermath

ATHINA MAY

Was it worth it? That's the question many Table View residents are asking themselves after a Guy Fawkes celebration that left the beachfront strewn with litter and the lingering suspicion that it sparked the fire that swept through Rietvlei and forced a seabird sanctuary to evacuate.

On social media, residents

called for fireworks to be banned and blamed councillors for approving the Guy Fawkes venue on Table View beachfront over the safety recommendations of the fire department.

The fire started in Pentz Drive at 8pm on Thursday November 5. It ravaged Rietvlei and 29 firefighters and seven fire trucks were dispatched to fight it. The firefighters gave an evacuation order to the

Southern African Foundation for the Conservation of Coastal Birds (SANCCOB), and some 300 penguins and other seabirds were moved on Friday, at 11am.

Sanccob spokesman Francois Louw, said 80 baby chicks were also evacuated as it is chick season, and fortunately none of the birds were harmed.

As smoke and the smell of burnt ash hung over Table View and sur-

rounds on Friday morning, the Edgemoor Neighbourhood Watch posted this message on its Facebook page: "Besides the massive fire that has been raging all night, having to evacuate SANCCOB as well as all the animals that were reported injured or killed after trying to escape the loud bangs last night, look at the rubbish that was left behind on Table View beach by those who found joy in letting off

fireworks."

Other comments on the Table View Ratepayers' page included individuals calling for the fireworks to be banned completely and for people to clean up the mess left on the beach. One comment said: "People need to take their litter with them when leaving any venue

Continued on page 6

Some revellers strayed from beachfront – City



Have your say
SMS TALK with your message, name and area you live in to 3CCNG (32263)
SMSes charged at R1 each

From page 1

(beach, forest, etc). Take a plastic bag with you, and keep it till you get home or find the closest bin. It's not that hard."

Another comment said: "Clearly and definitely not the correct venue and in my opinion. My guess is our councillors are keeping their heads down this morning..."

City fire and rescue services spokeswoman Lizeel Moodie said it was possible a Chinese lantern seen floating towards Rietvlei had started the fire. However the cause was still under investigation.

JP Smith, mayoral committee member for safety and security, rejected claims that fireworks had caused the fire as the Guy Fawkes venue at Table View beachfront was kilometres away from Rietvlei and the wind had blown firework activity back onto the beach.

However Ernest Sonnenberg, mayoral committee member for utility services, said the City's post-Guy Fawkes clean-up had been made more difficult by the fact that some revellers had strayed from the beachfront.

"Due to the fact that the public did not adhere to the approved area, and also used the lagoon



■ Staff and volunteers at Sanccob evacuate the birds during the fire at neighbouring Rietvlei.

area, it took the clean-up crew longer to reach all of the areas in the Cleansing section's schedule," he said.

Ms Moodie said firefighters had eventually extinguished the fire at 5.49pm on Friday November 6, and on Saturday November 7 and fire engine had been dispatched to the area to deal with flare-ups.

Anger mounted on social media as residents continued to post pictures of the fire and the litter-strewn beachfront. Sub-council 1 councillors drew flak for having approved the Table View beachfront venue in the face of opposition from the fire department which had submitted a report stating it did not meet safety codes. ("Sparks fly over Guy



■ Firefighters douse the fire on Rietvlei.

Fawkes," Tabletalk, October 26). The beachfront site was chosen despite not meeting safety regulations as council members said it was in the community's best interest to have the site designated.

At the time, Ward 107 councillor Heather Brenner said the City had a mandate to override anything in the by-laws or rules where there is a need for it ("Festival organisers lose cool with ratepayers," Tabletalk, November 4).

"The City of Cape Town had a choice to either not choose a place for fireworks to be dispersed and not deploy resources to ensure it is safe, or to make sure it is a safe and happy event by deploying law enforcement and traffic enforcement. The City has to put the safety of the people first," said Ms Brenner.

Mr Smith meanwhile claimed the site had in fact met all the criteria in the Community Fire Safety By-law, and had been identified and agreed upon during a site visit by the City's fire and rescue services as well as ward councillors and members of the sub-

council. The Table View beachfront was the busiest of the 12 designated sites with an estimated of 7 000 people flocking to the venue.

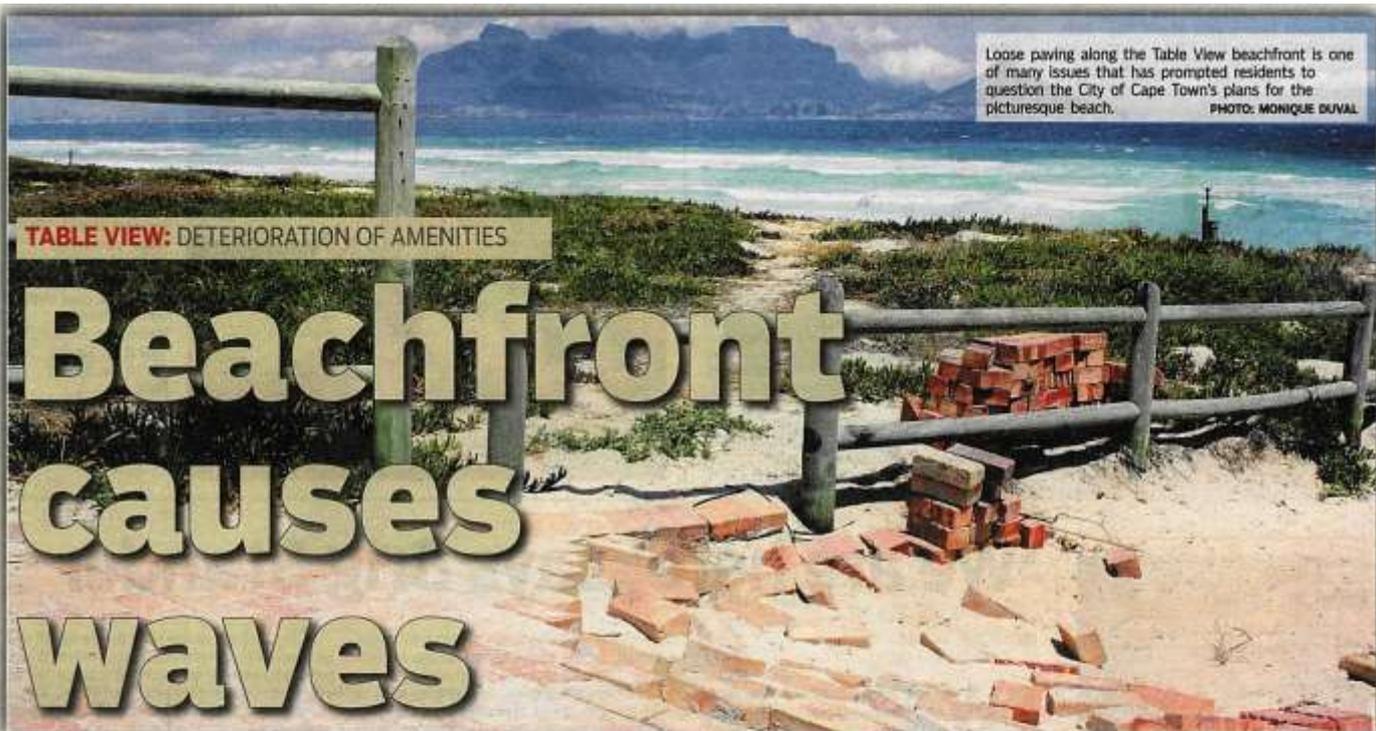
"The City's Community Fire Safety By-law already does the maximum that a local authority can do in terms of the law and that is to ban the use of fireworks in public places," said Mr Smith.

"Only the national government has the legislative competency to ban the import, production and sale of fireworks or restrict usage by age."

"The reality is that we are doing the best we can with what we have in order to police a tradition that has no place in our society, but has a keen following nonetheless."

Ms Brenner said there was "absolutely no evidence regarding the cause of the fire at Rietvlei."

"It is as unlikely to have been as a result of fireworks from the Table View beachfront permitted area considering the time it started – before 8pm – distance and wind direction as it is to have been caused by an arsonist," she said.



Loose paving along the Table View beachfront is one of many issues that has prompted residents to question the City of Cape Town's plans for the picturesque beach. PHOTO: MONIQUE DUVAL

TABLE VIEW: DETERIORATION OF AMENITIES

Beachfront causes waves

MONIQUE DUVAL
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The deterioration of the Table View beachfront has riled residents who have questioned what the City of Cape Town's plans are.

The erosion of dunes, loose boardwalks, collapsed paving and exposed electrical wires are among some of the main concerns.

During a visit to the area last week, residents questioned why money was being spent on an outdoor gym, while the rest of the beach continued to deteriorate.

The plan consists of maintenance for post and rails, access points, dune management and public ablutions. Various departments are responsible for maintenance on the coastline and have their own respective maintenance plans.

Prior to Guy Fawkes Day, residents illustrated how the newly installed benches could easily be lifted as they had not been bolted down. Walker says all benches were bolted during installation and the City will inspect if all benches are still secure.

During a visit to the beach, Walther showed *TygerBurger* several boardwalks which had been covered in sand. He says on one occasion one of the boardwalks at Dolphin Beach had lifted and posed a danger to beach users.

Asked how the entry points to the beach are maintained, Walker explains a study will be conducted to analyse the current status of all access points to the beaches between Sunset Beach and Small Bay. This, she says, will equip the City to commence

Resident Gavin Walther has documented the state of the beach in recent years using aerial images. Just over six years ago the beach was filled with greenery, but recent pictures show how vegetation has decreased as the dunes continue to erode.

With picturesque views of Table Mountain and Robben Island, Walther explains the beachfront creates the perfect setting for tourists.

"But what are they doing and why is the beach allowed to look this way? The paving is collapsing, the boardwalks are so high from the soil and just last week an electrical

cable leading to the new lamp posts was exposed," he says.

The municipality has come under scrutiny in recent months as residents have questioned proposals for events like the Blouberg Festival while the beach is "seemingly unmaintained".

According to City mayoral committee member for community services and special projects, Belinda Walker, in the last two years there has been maintenance and refurbishment projects to posts and rails, boardwalks, benches and public ablutions.

Responding to questions posed by *Tyger-*

Burger, she explains dune rehabilitation and irrigation projects are currently underway.

For the 2013/2014 financial year, just over R1,5m was spent on improvements along the Table View beachfront and just over R1,9m in the 2014/2015 financial year. She was unable to comment on how much will be spent during this financial year and explains it depends on budget availability.

"We cover a stretch of approximately 17km of beaches, from Lagoon Beach to Van Riebeeck Strand (Melkbosstrand).

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These concrete barriers can be seen along the Table View beachfront. PHOTO: MONIQUE DUVAL

a repairs and maintenance plan.

The study will look at various factors including pedestrian traffic volume, disabled-friendly access points, watersport-friendly access points, materials and structures used, durability and degree of being vandal-proof.

Responding to questions about the lack of

vegetation and the erosion of sand dunes, Walker says an irrigation plan has been completed.

"The first phase of the project will be implemented at Dolphin Beach (main area) and will include the rehabilitation of the dunes by reshaping and planting grass and flora."

In recent weeks, residents have also ques-

tioned why Table View beaches have not been granted Blue Flag status. Walker says not all Cape Town beaches have it, but this is not a negative reflection on these beaches.

"The Blue Flag status serves merely as a monitoring tool to assist the City in improving and enhancing services and facilities on all public beaches according to international best practice."

During a visit last week, City officials could be seen working on the area next to the old tourism office which is currently occupied by ward councillor Nora Grose. They confirmed they were starting work on a new gym for the beach.

Walther says the location of the gym makes no sense considering the distance to the nearest ablation facilities.

TygerBurger posed several questions regarding the new gym, but the City was unable to respond.

What are your thoughts on the condition of the Table View beachfront? Send a letter to briefew@tygerburger.co.za.

■ The wreck of the Commodore 11 has moved during the spring tides from the mouth of Milnerton lagoon to a corner. In November 2010 *Tabletalk* asked its readers to identify the object which had washed up there. Readers said it was part of a ship's hull. By September 2013 the wooden remains washed out of the lagoon, in front of the Lagoon Beach hotel. The ship started life in Seattle, America, in 1919. It reportedly had a varied career, ending in 1948 when she beached in Milnerton. "It looks like it could break in two," said photographer Colin Brown, who captured her wandering ways.



Entry fees thrown to the wind at Rietvlei open day; Residents across Table View and Milnerton participated in a host of activities at the Rietvlei open day. As part of an awareness campaign, the entry fees were waived and families enjoyed various activities including fishing competitions and sailing. PHOTO: MONIQUE DUVAL

Mother and child



■ Tabletalk reader Frieda Prinsloo captured a steenbok female with a baby in the Rietvlei section of the Table Bay Nature Reserve on Monday November 30. "We do a lot of wildlife photos at Rietvlei and already had a few of the Cape grysbokkies, but this is the first time that we encountered steenbokkies," she said.

Ratepayers call for fireworks to be doused

ATHINA MAY

With New Year's Eve approaching, concerns about fireworks being released on the Table View beachfront have again lit up a Table View Ratepayers' Association (TVRA) meeting.

At the meeting, on Monday December 7, ratepayers called for the fireworks to be moved to Melkbosstrand beachfront. This suggestion came after the TVRA introduced an unsuccessful motion at the Ward 23 committee meeting on Monday November 30, to cancel the fireworks.

TVRA chairman Leon Alhadeff, said that since Ward 23 councillor, Nora Grose, and Melkbosstrand Ratepayers' Association (MRA) chairwoman Smokie le Grange seemed to support the use of fireworks, the event should be moved to their area.

"If Melkbosstrand wants to vote in favour of fireworks, if they support it, then let them keep it. They meet all the municipal by-laws. We don't want it; they want it, so let's give it to them," said Mr Alhadeff.

"Our motion to have the fireworks cancelled got shot down with a motion to proceed before it reached the table and it was stated that the fireworks were the best handled event in the City, but who policed the fireworks? The same people who oppose it, the Table View Neighbourhood Watch (TVNW), because they wanted to



■ The Table View beachfront strewn with dirt was captured on Thursday November 5, after fireworks were dispersed, on the Table View beachfront.



Another resident, Allen Wood, said: "What has Guy Fawkes got to do with Melkbos? Have you seen what happens in Table View that evening and what the area looks like afterwards?"

"Give me one reason why it should be held here."

Karin Jorgensen said: "Aaahh. I won't worry about this a bit. Somehow we will all stand together as we always do and make sure this does not happen. And if it does, what's stopping us from forming human chains and blocking all entrances to our village town on given day?"

Ms Le Grange responded to Mr Alhadeff's comment about Melkbosstrand ratepayers and residents supporting the fireworks, saying that the MRA was in fact 100 percent against fireworks and wanted to have them banned.

"It seems as though Mr Alhadeff is causing trouble between Table View and Melkbosstrand. We're not for fireworks at all, the liquor left behind is shocking... The decision needs to be made by national government to ban fireworks," said Ms Le Grange.

Tabletalk also sent questions to Ms Grose, but did not receive a response at the time of going to print.

make sure no one gets hurt."

Mr Alhadeff said Melkbosstrand beachfront was much more suitable for fireworks, as the location complied with by-laws that prohibit using fireworks within 500m of a petrol station and 100m of a residential area, while Table View beachfront did not.

The proposal for the move was posted on the Melkbosstrand Facebook page by TVRA member

Wayne Crocker. He said the Melkbosstrand beachfront was ideal because it had a grassy area that could safely accommodate visitors and there was ample parking. And there was no nearby petrol station or homes.

"I do not know why this was not suggested or previously considered, as this is a far better venue than the Table View venue where there is a distinct shortage of parking facilities,

residential dwellings are within 40m and a petrol station is located within 260m of Councillor Grose's office," said Mr Crocker in his post.

The suggestion was almost immediately rejected by about 100 Melkbosstrand residents.

"No thanks Table View, don't try and pass the buck, rather call for a total ban on all fireworks! My dogs will be most grateful," said Morne Wolfaardt.

Couple 'click' through nature

Couple's forty-year love affair

ATHINA MAY

Parklands couple Frieda, 68, and Jan Prinsloo, 71, are renowned nature photographers and Frieda has won both national and international acclaim for capturing nature in all its glory.

Her pictures of South African wildlife have made their way around the globe, and have even featured in National Geographic.

She says she has her husband to thank for her success as a photographer. A keen photographer himself, he taught her everything he knew.

"When we got married in Pretoria in 1966, I bought Frieda a Pentax K1000 camera, and she cried when I gave it to her. We always went to the wilderness in Pretoria to take pictures of the birds and Frieda's ability to capture wildlife just improved," says Jan.

He runs off the many competitions his wife has won as Frieda sits smiling, blushing and modestly brushing off the praise.

Frieda has her own website (www.savoels.za.net) and the couple both belong to the Photographic Society of South Africa and the South African Digital Camera Club.

"You take beautiful photos too," says Frieda, putting her hand on top of Jan's.

Frieda also won Dje Burger: Buite photo competition earlier this year for her image of a male crested headed fish catcher feeding a female bird a lizard. The image was captured at Intaka Island and was deemed the best photograph out of 2000 entries.

Last year, Frieda took second place out of 4 000 entrants in the competition.

"When I took the picture, I was sitting in the garden when I heard the male crested headed fish catcher scream, so I knew something was going to happen... I positioned myself closer to the bird, and then he sat next to a female crested headed fish



■ A great crested grebe photographed by Frieda Prinsloo.



■ A purple heron photographed by Frieda Prinsloo at Rietvlei Wetland Reserve.

catcher and gave her a lizard from his mouth. That's when I took the picture," said Frieda sitting at the edge of her seat.

After 40 years of photographing birds, Frieda and Jan have become familiar with the signals they send, which helps them capture those rare moments.

But, Jan says, it's not simply their knowledge of this bird language, but also their own unique partnership as husband and wife taking photographs together that helps them see beyond the ordinary to make beautiful images.

"We do everything together as husband and wife. We wake up at 5am and go to Rietvlei or the Milnerton lagoon and sit there for hours. Jan carries my bag because my camera is very heavy, it's very

nice," says Frieda smiling. "Frieda is a very loved lady, I am very proud of her," says Jan. "Photography is a great hobby to have as a retired couple."

The couple visit Rietvlei three times a week, packing a picnic to enjoy while taking in the beauty around them.

"It is a very nice activity for people who go into retirement. Bird watching or wildlife photography is perfect for husband and wife to do together.

"You don't have to start out with expensive technology. You can start with a small camera or binoculars," says Jan.

● To view Frieda and Jan's wildlife photographs, visit the South African digital camera club at www.digitalekameraklub.co.za



■ Wildlife photographers, Frieda and Jan Prinsloo spend their days capturing birdlife at the Rietvlei Wetland Reserve, and Milnerton Lagoon.



■ A crested headed fish catcher bird emerges from the water at Intaka Island.



■ An Egyptian goose takes an evening stroll along Milnerton beach.



■ 340 000m² of bulrush reed beds on the Rietvlei Wetland Reserve was scorched by the fire on Thursday November 5.

Rietvlei's recovery

ATHINA MAY

City of Cape Town biodiversity area manager Koos Retief says the fire that swept through the Rietvlei Wetland Reserve during Guy Fawkes on Thursday November 5 burnt about 34 hectares, mostly bulrush reed beds and a small area of Cape Flats dune vegetation.

"From a birdlife point of view it was not a good time for a fire, because spring is the nesting period for many birds," said Mr Retief.

"I conducted a site inspection shortly after the fire and found, however, not many birds nested in this area."

When *Tabletalk* visited the vlei, patches of burnt reeds covered the once green landscape and flamingos and the common sandpipers and their chicks could be seen clustered in small groups among parts of the vlei not ravaged by the fire.

Mr Retief said several Cape grysbok inhabit the area, but they were unharmed by the fire. Cape grysbok, actually depend on seasonal fires to stimulate new vegetation growth in their feeding areas, he said.

"Two years ago we applied for a permit to do a prescribed burn on exactly the same land, but the permit application was turned down by the air pollution control department in the City. We applied because we know how



■ The once green and lush Rietvlei area was scorched by the fire which ravaged the area on Thursday November 5.

old the reeds and vegetation is in this part of Rietvlei. We wanted to reduce the fuel load (dry plant material) under controlled conditions, as well as stimulate new plant growth for the antelope to feed on. It is a normal practice to use fire as a management tool to reduce a fire hazard and improve habitats and promote vegetation growth."

While a planned burn could be easily contained a wildlife brought with it a completely different set of challenges, he said.

"Prescribed burning is a proactive approach that allows for better planning and allocation of resources in advance, whereas during a wildfire it is difficult to bring the necessary

resources to a fire. The wildfire at Rietvlei happened at night and took more than 24 hours to burn out."

Firefighters, he said, had opted to let the fire burn out towards the R27 and Pentz Drive and then put it out once it was within reach of the fire trucks, which could not drive inside the reed beds.

"The vegetation will grow back, after the wild fire, but lives cannot be replaced. Firefighters and nature conservation staff places their lives at risk to battle wildfires in nature areas. It is time communities start to help us by reporting the irresponsible use of flares and lanterns to their nearest police station," he said.