

Fynbos



NATURBEWARINGSVERENIGING
KLEINMOND
NATURE CONSERVATION SOCIETY
REG NO / NR 005-622 NPO
POSBUS / PO BOX 2
KLEINMOND
7195

130 Nov 2011

**Quarterly edition /Kwartaallikse uitgawe
Editorial / Redaksioneel:**



Indien u graag die nuusbrief per e-pos wil ontvang, stuur asb 'n e-pos aan jeanette@maxitec.co.za
If you would like to receive your newsletter by e-mail, please send an e-mail to jeanette@maxitec.co.za

In Memoriam Peter van Zyl

Peter was nominated and elected as treasurer to the Society's committee in April 2000. At that time he was not well-known to most of the committee members, including myself. However, he soon changed that, not in the manner of an extrovert, but by his quiet dedication to his task as treasurer and his pleasant nature. He is the one who most frequently opened our meetings with an appropriate prayer.

In time I got to know him much better since he usually came to me as one of the three members commissioned to sign cheques and other financial documents on behalf of the Society on his way to the bank. As a matter of courtesy, he always phoned in advance. His papers were well prepared and the work took no more than a few minutes. Invariably we chatted

about other matters as he was leaving, often about national events of the moment, and by the time he drove off, we had set the world to rights.

Peter's participation in the discussions during meetings was limited. His financial reports were precise and invariably correct. Occasionally we agreed to alter a debit to one of our three accounts to another. These accounts can be a bit confusing. We have three: A current, investment and development account. Minor sums only are kept in the first as it earns no interest, but has a cheque book facility. All annual membership fees are placed in the second and only interest from it is used to defray normal operating expenses. Donations for specific projects are kept in the third and independent balances are maintained for each project. Whenever payments are to be made by cheque for e.g. a project expense, funds have to be transferred to the current account for the purpose. Deposits have to be dealt with in a similar manner. This entails more work for a treasurer than for most small Societies. Peter kept track without fail and even on the day before his death, was immediately able to give Jeannette a precise answer to a query.

Because of his limited participation in discussions of matters during meetings, I sometimes wondered how keen he was on nature and its conservation. At the end of last year I had my answer. A family member or friend had arranged a stay for Peter on a very expensive game farm in Mpumalanga at no cost to him. He told me beforehand that he would be away for a while. On his return, he told me how wonderful his visit there was, and his love of nature was suddenly fully revealed.



We mourn his untimely death and he will be sorely missed by the Society.
Peter Müller, Vice-Chairman.

The Rocky Shore By Moonlight *by David Horne*



Many of us, on holiday in Kleinmond, or living here, have spent a few happy moments looking into the rock pools on the shore, looking for delightful creatures. Yet, often we come away vaguely disappointed, as there was not much to see. Maybe a small fish flitting by, a glimpse of a crab, or, if we are lucky a sea urchin or anemone unmoving and seemingly lifeless. Sure, there are the barnacles, and molluscs, but they too seem rather dull and lifeless.

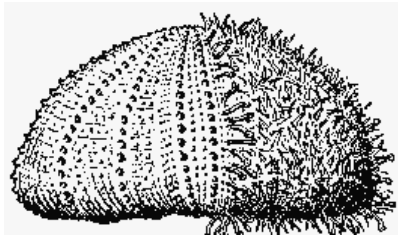
So where then is the life in the rocky shore pools? To find more life in the pools one needs to go out after dark. Low tide is essential, so keep an eye on the published tide tables. Sometimes, unfortunately low tide can be quite late. Also, full moon is good – it not only helps you see where you are going, but also is a key time for much of the life in the pools. So, after the evening braai, gather some family and friends, some strong torches and head to the shore. One of the best places is the concrete walkway into the rocks near Second Street. Take care walking, and do not go alone. Keep a close eye on the children. Al-

so, good advice is, never put your hands or feet into rock pools at night. In the Western Cape, there are no Moray Eels, unlike up the Natal coast, which will, and can inflict nasty bites, but here there are many spiny urchins that can cause a nasty wound.

So what is there to be seen? Wonders of Creation, rock pools teeming with life. On a recent visit to the rock pools I was able to see the following animals. Further, unlike during the day, almost every animal I saw was moving. Even the limpets and periwinkles! Let us start with those – approaching the high tide waterline, almost all the rocks and surfaces has movement on them, even the concrete pathways. The gastropods were out feeding! Mostly they graze on algae and so move around grazing. You therefore need to be careful where you stand, otherwise there is a nasty crunch. Then into the pools left behind by the receding tide. Shining a bright torch quickly into a pool usually frightens everything in it. Slowly move the torch beam into the pool. If you have some red cellophane, or a piece of red plastic, you can use this to shield the beam, and it causes much less fright.

First seen – small fish. Still, like in the day, they move pretty fast. Likely candidates – blennies, gobies, klipfish. By keeping the torch still, they slowly start moving out again.

Next, crabs. They seem very pale in the torch light, and first stop dead still before carrying on.



Much time can be spent watching them moving around and feeding. Always worth seeing is two crabs bump into each other.

Then sea urchins. An incredible array of vivid colours – reds, purples, greens! Here, at night, they show life now – the spines slowly waving around, and, if you watch long enough, the slow gradual movement. Close by was a

star fish. Huge. The size of a dinner plate. This was very slow moving though. Scattered around were some wonderfully beautiful brittle stars. These have a flat circular body, with five or more long thin arms, which are jointed and flexible, but break off easily, hence the name. The ones visible also had small spines on the side of the arms. There were a good number of these around.

They are beautiful delicate creatures. Scattered around, almost everywhere were shrimp. These are small delicate shrimp, not the type you eat. In the torchlight, their eyes reflect an intense green colour. Keeping the torch steady again lets them gain confidence and start moving around again. There was a brief glimpse of a lobster, however better sightings should be possible. Even a spider came out.... almost over my foot. The spider was a seldom seen catch – a Formidable Shore Spider. Truly, that is its name. It grows up to 20mm in size with huge fangs, up to one-third of its body length. During the day, and high tide, they trap air in silk lined crevasses and come out at low tide to hunt isopods and amphipods. This was just a short look into the rock pools. They are teeming with life, so longer visits, and in different seasons should result in lots more to see. Chitons, sea cucumbers, sponges, anemones, corals, zoanthids, hydroids, flat worms, bristle worms etc are out there waiting to be seen. Even the grand sighting – an octopus.

Excellent reference books are *Two Oceans, A guide to the marine life of Southern Africa*, by Branch, Griffiths, Branch and Beckley, and *The Living Shores of Southern Africa*, by Branch and Branch.



Baboons – are there sustainable solutions?

Penny Palmer

(Summary of one of the regular talks arranged by the Kogelberg branch of the Botanical Society)

There must be very few residents in the Hangklip/Kleinmond region who have not had some type of encounter with our wild neighbours. Many of these encounters resulted in an appalling



and expensive shambles in a home and a feeling of enraged helplessness. Into this aura of negativity came Associate Professor Justin O'Riain head of UCT.'s Baboon Research Unit. He pointed out that as he did not live here he was able to approach this emotive subject from the impartial sidelines.

We were given an overview of baboon biology and details of the mass of ongoing research that is in progress all over the Cape Peninsula, and in our area. He pointed out that residents everywhere wanted action and solutions from their local authorities. One of the stumbling blocks and frequently used excuse is that there is no municipal funding for baboon control.

Baboons learn by trial, error and by follow their leaders; many erstwhile complicated door and window fastenings can be overcome by them in time. Therefore it is up to the property owners to take responsibility themselves e.g. securing their refuse bins, ensuring vulnerable doors and windows are closed or baboon proof. The sight of fruit in a bowl will tempt any baboon and once access has been gained, all possible cupboards, fridges etc will be opened and emptied and if the whole troop is present the entire house trashed.

Why do these animals appear invincible to us?

Baboons are seen as the most successful primate (after humans) in Africa. From the very north to down here in the south, right through this huge continent, baboons have lived and thrived during major changes which included the emergence of humans. This is because they are generalists and opportunists, and highly adaptable. They forage successfully from the shore line up into the mountains. Another reason for their success is that most of their natural enemies, the big carnivores, have been removed from most areas, and their eco systems. The local exception is the Cape leopard but being slighter than their northern counterparts



they are unlikely to trouble the numerically superior baboon troops with their large powerful males.

One of the reasons we have such a rich collection of wildlife in the Western Cape is the presence of the mountains. We humans prefer to occupy the flatter parts of the country where we have farms and dwellings. Consequently those animals that can survive in mountains have persisted despite massive increases in humans and their houses at lower altitudes. Baboons can survive in marginal habitat at higher altitude but like us prefer the lower regions for foraging. However much effort is required to forage for natural food on rocky slopes and so baboons look to find food on the more productive flat land where humans have built their houses. With time baboons have overcome their natural fear of humans and discovered fresh food in houses in addition to an almost endless amount of entertainment in and around houses. Prof O'Riain stressed the importance of body language in a confrontation. A firm confident stance will earn the respect of a baboon who will prefer to back off, whereas a scream and retreat will be interpreted as an invitation to proceed.

The dilemma for many residents is whether we have the right to destroy a species. The general consensus appears to be an irrevocable NO. Furthermore, despite the many, years and opportunities where baboons and humans have come together, mostly in conflict, no human has ever been killed by a baboon. There was one episode where a homeless man fell to his

death after being bumped by a fleeing baboon, but the death was related to the fall and not the animal.

So what needs to happen?

The City of Cape Town uses money from the rate payers to employ a small army of baboon monitors who are tasked with preventing baboons from crossing the urban edge. Monitors have proved to be effective in keeping whole troops out of town for long periods but have little answer to lone raiding males who readily outflank and outrun them. Electric fencing can be extremely effective if correctly constructed and maintained and is currently being deployed in various raiding hotspots on the Peninsula. . Bear bangers have provided the community of Simons Town with two years of troop free living but the use of this method is subject to a variety of restrictions and is not recommended for private home owners. O'Riain thinks that many of the tools that have been tested on the Peninsula could offer relief to the residents of the Overberg with villages like RooiEls being relatively easy to defend while Betty's Bay offered a much bigger challenges due to its sprawling design and proximity to steep slopes that baboons use as a refuge.

Desember funksie/December function

**Ons nooi al ons lede en besoekers om 'n aand
saam met ons te geniet.**

**Anton Odendaal sal ons gasspreker wees en hy
sal oor voëls gesels.
Na die praatjie nooi ons u om gesellig saam met ons
te verkeer.**

**19 Desember /December 2011
19h00 vir 19:30
Fellowship Kerk/Church
Sesde Straat / Sixth Street
Kleinmond**

**We invite all our members and visitors to come and
enjoy an evening with us.**

**Anton Odendaal will be our guest speaker
and he will talk about birds.
We invite you to join us for wine and snacks after
the talk.**



Fynbos Newsletter /Nuusbrief ☎028 271 5686 ✉ 2, Kleinmond, 7195

Saamgestel deur die Redaksionele Komitee / Compiled by the Editorial Committee

*Articles, except reprints from other sources, may be reprinted or cited without permission
Provided the source, Fynbos, is acknowledged / Artikels, behalwe herdrukke uit ander bronne,*

*Mag sonder verlof herdruk of aangehaal word, mits die bron Fynbos, erken word.
Die opinie van die outeurs is nie noodwendig die opinie van die Vereniging nie.
The opinion of the authors is not necessarily the opinion of the Society.*
