



NOETZIE CONSERVANCY OWNERS' ASSOCIATION

Newsletter

Autumn 2008

Chairman's Chat

Carl Metelerkamp

As we go into another Noetzie year I have agreed to take the chair of the NCOA for 2008. With the support of all committee members taking various portfolios under their wing; Eion Brown the Infill development and the possible future Environmental Education Centre project, Julie Gosling with Municipal liaison, Cathy Shimmin as treasurer, Rookien Podesta and Santie den Boestert - the Conservancy, Nick Taylor as Secretary and Penny Suckling assisting with the newsletters, I am confident that we have a team of individuals who are committed to furthering the aims of the NCOA.

The Executive Mayor of Knysna recently called the NCOA and Pezula to a round table discussion to address perceived differences between the Pezula Group and the NCOA. We indicated at the meeting that our position regarding Pezula is exactly the same as with any other property owner at Noetzie in that we expected all Noetzie property owners to observe the law and to adhere to the Town Planning Scheme, should they wish to depart from the Town Planning Scheme they should then follow due process to get approvals.

We indicated to the Knysna Municipality that we were concerned about their apparent lack of will to enforce the law at Noetzie especially regarding the ongoing illegal trading from Montrose Castle with the negative consequences thereof. The municipality has since taken further action against the owners of Montrose Castle.

A very positive outcome from the Mayor's meeting was Pezula's offer to draft plans by the end of March 2008 to build a board walk through their property connecting the existing parking area to the steps to the beach, replacing the current temporary forest path. This will ease access to the beach for the general public post Pezula's closure of access to the steps via the road to Noetzie castle. These plans have since been drafted as per Pezula's undertaking.

The Final Scoping Report for the Noetzie Infill in has been submitted to DEADP by Pezula and the NCOA will be engaging DEADP and the Knysna Municipality as this report follows its due process. To our disappointment it appears that Pezula have reneged on the written agreement with the NCOA and submitted a development plan for the Infill that does not conform to the Town Planning Scheme as per our agreement.

A ROD for the establishment of a Green Waste Management site near the start of the road to Noetzie at the N2 has been issued. This site will only handle green waste and building rubble and should not be a threat to the environment. The NCOA will be contacting the authorities with a request to participate on the Environmental Liaison Committee overseeing the establishment of the site.

The NCOA website www.noetzie.co.za will be receiving regular updates this year. Newsletters, minutes of committee meetings, NCOA correspondence and other matters of interest will be posted on the website, follow the link to "Conservancy Matters". Please visit the site regularly to keep up to date with NCOA activities and use the relevant email address links on the website to communicate with the committee.

In closing, as property owners at Noetzie let's never lose sight of the absolute privilege we have of owning properties at Noetzie and ensure that the environment is conserved to be enjoyed by all who visit Noetzie in the years to come.

chairman@noetzie.co.za

Outeniqua Conservancy Forum Meeting

Santie den Boestert

On Saturday 15 March, Julie Gosling, Wendy Dewberry and I attended a meeting of the Outeniqua Conservancy Forum organised by Cape Nature and hosted by the Dana Bay Conservancy.

We saw a slide show on the St. Blaize upgrade project (between Mossel Bay and Dana Bay) and then Sue Swain of the Garden Route Initiative explained how her organisation was trying to organise for corridors to be put in place between conservation areas to ensure that wildlife will in future be able to move between the different areas.

Bronwyn Botha of the Western Cape Crane Conservation Project explained that Blue Cranes have been listed as critically endangered and urged anybody who sees ringed cranes, to report to her on 082 3200 911. It is important to note the following:

- Species (Wattled, Blue or Gray Crowned Crane)
- Date of sighting
- Exact location
- Sequence and colours of rings on the legs

Every conservancy then gave a feedback on what they have achieved (or not) and Julie reported on some of the good things that have been achieved, like the cleaning up of the road at Nekkie's. Some of our problems, like the problems with Pezula, were mentioned and the poaching of rooiwortel, which fetches R30 on the multi-market and perekuil (alikeukel) which is allegedly sold to a Knysna Restaurant. Cape Nature offered that those interested could visit their medicinal nursery so that we can then teach poachers to propagate their own plants and not take indiscriminately from nature.

The next meeting will be held in October, the venue is still to be decided

environment@noetzie.co.za



NCOA 2008 Membership Fees

Membership fees for 2008 are R200.00 per member.
Please pay your contributions into the following bank account

Account Name: Noetzie Conservancy Owners Association
Bank: Standard Bank
Account: 00 189 849 3
Branch: Sandton 019205

Please could note you name and/or erf number when making payment

Any donations to the NCOA are most welcome

accounts@noetzie.co.za

Beach Driving

The NCOA has received complaints about permit holders driving excessively and fast on the beach. As per our permit conditions, limit your driving on the beach to **no more than 4 trips** per day and maintain a speed **no more than 20km per hour**.

ANIMAL SIGHTINGS

Julie Gosling

Since moving into our new home on the hill at Noetzie we have seen so many mammals, birds, insects and amphibians that don't occur, or that I have never seen, while living on the beach.

I am attempting to compile a database of insects and amphibians that occur in our conservancy and surrounds. If anyone has photo's or information of any *creepy crawlies* please forward them to me on knoetzie@mweb.co.za . It would be great if we all chip in to this project.

We have regular sightings of Bushbuck and daily sightings of their spoor. I found a distraught Steenbok trapped on the road between the Pezula electric fences. It was darting backwards and forwards trying to find an escape route. I managed to herd it out of the corridor back to the safety and freedom of unfenced land.

The Porcupine and Bushpig are also regular visitors as is a large troop of baboon that have not been corrupted by human behavior. They are happy to forage for themselves and not 'window shop' for their food. The Vervet's stay well clear of baboon territory so we are fortunate not to have to keep our doors and windows closed. The monkey's are still hanging around the beach and river houses taking every opportunity to grab a quick bite of any food that is left lying around and visible. I urge you all to help curb the monkey problem by putting all tempting morsels out of sight and by ensuring that your dirt bins are monkey proof. As the saying goes **A FED MONKEY IS A DEAD MONKEY**

Cape clawless otter, and their spoor, have been seen often over the last few months as they make their way to the sea to fish.

A mongoose family visits us regularly and Genet cats show that they are in the area as well.

Jessica Hayes, Pezula Environment Manager, has several snaps of Rooikat, also known as Caracal or Lynx, taken on a camera, which is set up in the forested area of their estate.

Rameron pigeon, grass birds, Knysna Warbler, orange breasted sunbirds, Nedicky, red necked Francolin, red chested Cuckoo, and several different owls (Donald will have to help identify them) are some of the birds that I have seen that I haven't seen at our beach house. Jackal and forest Buzzards are always seen perching on the telephone poles or soaring above searching for prey. A pair of fish Eagles, which I hadn't seen for a few weeks, have made their presence known by their wondrously African call and their ability to make flying look so simple and inviting.

The most foreign insect I have seen was a predaceous diving beetle, which had found it's way into a water tank leaving the water smelling rather unpleasant. The beetle gives off a foul smell to deter any would be predator.

The search is now on to find the Knysna Skolly butterfly, which David Edge reckons, could be found in the northern facing fynbos slopes of the Noetzie Conservancy. Would that not be wonderful? Keep your eyes peeled!

Noetzie Beach 1950's



Illegal Removal of Plants and Molluscs (poaching)

Julie Gosling

Large quantities of Rooiwortel (*Bulbine Latifolia*) are being removed from the Noetzie Conservancy. The root, which turns an orange colour when exposed to sunlight, is harvested for its medicinal properties. It is also used to make a paste to smear on the face to ward off bad spirits. It fetches R30 per kilo on the Herbal market.



Rooiwortel

Although the plant is easy to propagate, when unsustainably harvested it could be depleted to very low levels. Unfortunately the harvesters are carrying away kilos at a time. We are unsure of what damage they are causing to the surrounding vegetation in the process.

I intend propagating the *Bulbine* to give to the "harvesters" in the hope that it encourages them to grow their own.

Justine Sharples, of Cape Nature, is organising an outing to the Medicinal Plant Nursery in George, which Santie, Wendy and I will attend. This will be an opportunity to see what plants are in demand and what their uses are. Hopefully it will help us to protect the flora of our Conservancy.

Poachers are removing hundreds of Alikreukel, or Perekuil as it is known to the old Knysna folk, off the rocks over Spring low tide. The legal bag limit, with a permit, is 5 per person per day and the minimum size 63.5mm.

They occur in the intertidal and subtidal zone and are easily found amongst the rocks at Spring low. On the 9th March, Wendy and I apprehended two young men with bags full of Alikreukel. There were also a couple of the biggest limpets I have ever seen. After a few tense moments we persuaded them to put the shellfish back into the rock pools and then escorted them back to the beach, educating them about intertidal biodiversity en route! They were intending to sell the Alikreukel to "*a restaurant there by the jetty*"

I reported the incident to SANparks. The correct procedure, of course, would have been to keep the poached goods as evidence, but then again there would have been 200+ less Alikreukel in the sea.

The following day Wendy saw more poachers arrive at Noetzie. She immediately contacted SANparks, who were very supportive and arrived within the hour and carted the poachers off.

Please remember that permits are required for mollusc picking and for angling. An annual permit for fishing is R45 and for picking molluscs R60. The application forms are available from the Post Office.

The Knysna Skolly

David Edge

Introduction

The Knysna Skolly, *Thestor brachycerus brachycerus* was discovered and described at Knysna by Roland Trimen (discoverer of the Brenton Blue) in 1883 and is now Red-listed as "Critically Endangered". Its rarity is due to its very narrow habitat specificity, small geographic range (it is still only known from Knysna) and its low abundance. There has been a declining population trend since the 1960's and this has accelerated since 1980.



1a Male upperside

1b Male underside

1c Female upper side

History of the extinction process in progress

The strongest colonies of the Knysna Skolly close to the Knysna Eastern Heads were destroyed by building activities there since the 1980s. The last colony on the Eastern Head was lost in 1996, when the farm owner built a house on the exact centre of this colony. A strong colony was found on Sparrebosch Estate in 1996 but despite the developers being made aware of this in the EIA report, it was exterminated during the building of the access road to the (now Pezula) Golf Estate in 1998. A small colony on the Duthie farm on the hills overlooking the Woodbourne pan was eliminated by the change to sheep farming in the early 2000s. Overgrazing with sheep and regular burning similarly weakened the moderate sized colony on the easternmost portion of the Duthie farm (now the Fernwood development). The developers were instructed in their approval ROD to put aside an area for the butterfly. They have subsequently been uncooperative towards butterfly experts who have approached them, despite their using the presence of the butterfly as a marketing tool, and the status of the colony is now uncertain, although no butterflies were seen three years ago on the last visit to the site.

Another small colony at Pezula (opposite the hotel) was destroyed during the building of the golf course. There is now only one colony extant on Pezula (below the sixth fairway) and the Pezula owners have undertaken not to disturb it, and to manage the site in accordance with the recommendations of butterfly experts. In December 2004 a small colony was discovered during the scoping study for a development proposed on the lower slopes of Pezula (adjacent to Hunter's home). Fortunately the butterfly colony is outside the proposed development area. Further to the east, the north-facing slopes in the north-east corner of the Pezula Estate which were covered by plantations are being rehabilitated, and it is hoped that suitable habitat can be created, although the butterfly would have to be introduced – a difficult process indeed. Plantations along the coastal strip extend as far as the Harkerville State Forest and most of the way to Plettenberg Bay. Any landowners in this corridor that have undisturbed north facing fynbos slopes (see habitat description below) should contact the author so that searches can be conducted for the butterfly.

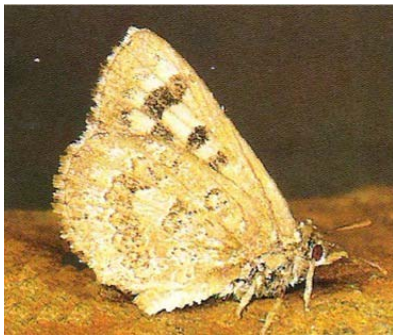
Life history

Very little is known about the life histories of *Thestor* butterflies. Their caterpillars (larvae) do not appear to feed on plants, and the adults are unique in that they do not have a proboscis to feed on nectar from flowers. Female adult *Thestor* have been observed laying eggs, but they lay on dead twigs, rocks, on the ground, or occasionally on a variety of plants. It is known that they are associated with ants, and on a number of occasions the larvae have been found in ants' nests. However, captive rearing in artificial ants' nests has shown that the larvae do not feed on the ant brood (as is found in some butterflies), nor do the ants feed them. Current

theories are that the larvae feed on coccids (scale insects) which are farmed by the ants, or on the detritus in the ants' nests.

Habitat description

The Knysna Skolly inhabits fynbos covered north, north-west and north-east facing slopes at an altitude of 10 – 180m above sea level. The underlying geology is Table Mountain Sandstone, which outcrops in places and the soil is sandy. The insect can cope with an intermediate level of disturbance such as low intensity cattle grazing. At higher disturbance intensities e.g. regular burning or where sheep grazing is practiced it cannot persist. The vegetation at the known habitats is dominated by *Erica versicolor*, with *Agathosma ovata*, *Muraltia alopecuroides*, *Phyllica axilaris* and *Erica formosa* as character species. Where grazing has been practiced, *Metalasia muricata*, *Restio eleocharis* and *Helichrysum cymosum* become more abundant. When the vegetation gets too dense and overgrown the butterfly disappears, since it prefers many small open patches within the habitat. The opening up of hand cut paths has been found to encourage occupation by the butterfly.



Female underside



Female upperside

General threats to butterfly populations

Property development

All along the southern Cape coastline there has been a dramatic expansion of property development. This has already destroyed significant areas of habitat for coastal species, and many more areas are threatened by planned developments.

Alien vegetation

Alien plants have been identified as one of the most critical threats to the Cape floral kingdom, with lowland fynbos being the most extensively invaded vegetation type in southern Africa. Many butterfly habitats in lowland sites are prone to this threat, in the short or long term. Invasions are often triggered by some initial disturbance such as road building or clearance of land for agricultural or property development. Fortunately some progress is being made through biological control of certain species, and the Working for Water programme in catchment areas, but alien invasions remain a massive problem on private land.

Loss of natural processes

Many butterfly habitats require periodic disturbances in order to promote host plant growth or to create suitable microhabitats for their host ants. Natural fire is one such disturbance, which has been shown to play a critical role in the regeneration of fynbos. Other significant disturbances were historically caused by indigenous grazing or browsing mammals (from elephants to porcupines). These processes are excluded partially or fully by the proximity of human dwellings or agricultural activities with consequent impacts on ecosystem function and structure.

Should Noetzie Merge with other conservancies?

There has been some discussion recently about the possible merging of the Noetzie conservancy with other conservancies in the area and the sharing of resources. Eion Brown recently approached Cape Nature for comment. Below is the comment Eion received back from Justine Sharples at Cape Nature.

I have discussed your email with Allisdair MacDonald and Barend le Roux (Conservation Services Manager), and can report back as follows:

Regarding the idea of Noetzie Conservancy joining up with other conservancies in the area (Eastern Head to Noetzie), maybe some recent information on this could be of use to you.

During 2007 an application for the registration of the Knysna Coastal Conservancy was received. The area included in this is seven properties belonging to the Pezula group of companies and Sparrebosch. Currently we are awaiting the registration certificate for this conservancy from our Head Office. At the time that this proposed conservancy presented their application it was a strong recommendation from this office that they should try to include landowners to the west of the Sparrebosch boundary towards the Eastern Head, in order to achieve an ecologically sound coastal corridor. The reason for this was in part due to the fact that Noetzie Conservancy already exists to the east and is bordered further to the east by Sinclair Nature Reserve.

At the time that Noetzie Conservancy was established, the remainder of Noetzie Farm was a plantation, and the interests of the landowners (private residential holiday dwellings vs a commercial plantation) were very different. In order to focus on projects applicable to your area, it was advised (by CapeNature) that the conservancy confine its boundary to the Noetzie township area.

As further background information, I might mention what is happening on the Western Head. Landowners in the Brenton Arc, Goukamma Valley and residential areas in the vicinity have organized themselves into a conservancy with various management nodes. These nodes are primarily influenced by the geographical lay of the land combined with the land-use of the area (farming / conservation / residential).

In the case of Noetzie Conservancy, I would not suggest that you "join up" with another conservancy, but rather remain a conservancy on your own, but share effort (through resource / cost-sharing arrangements) with the other conservancies as they become established to achieve greater conservation effectiveness in your area. To illustrate what I am referring to, I can use the Fransmanshoek Conservancy as an example. Fransmanshoek Conservancy has appointed a Conservancy Ranger who is employed by the conservancy to perform various tasks within the area. The person has a National Diploma in Nature Conservation and is able to operate independently and take initiative. Over time, neighboring conservancies have started contributing towards this person's salary and running costs in exchange for a percentage of his time being spent in their conservancy areas. I would hope that with a good working relationship in place, that the conservancies in your area could consider something like this too.

RECYCLING

The Knysna Municipality is urging all residents to make an effort to sort their domestic waste and place all recyclable material into Green Bags for collection.

Material Suitable for Recycling

- Paper
- Plastic
- Cardboard
- Glass
- Cans

Please rinse all containers

Not Suitable for Recycling

- Any wet or soiled paper
- Safety and laminated glass
- Light bulbs
- Carbon paper and chemically treated paper (fax)
- Food and sweet wrappings
- Wax paper
- Milk/juice cartons
- Poly or plastic coated glossy paper
- Tinfoil, clingwrap, cellophane and polystyrene.

Green Bags and laminated lists of the recycling requirements can be collected from Wendy Dewberry at the house on the hill. 044 3842913

Social News

- Congratulations to Chris and Iona Everett on the birth of their grandchild
- Welcome to the new hosts of Lindsay B&B, Jean and Allan de Souza and their children Gaby and James.
- Wishing Laurel Robertson a healthy recovery after heart surgery
- Jacqui Shimmin married Bill Cilibanov from Canada at the Clouds Estate in Franschoek on the 28th of March



Oops, this Landie went farming off Lindsay's castle road. After much effort by a local vehicle recovery service using a powerful winch it was saved