Calling all avid mountain bikers! Entries are open for the annual Roof de Karoo Challenge – the only event in the country which starts and finishes in two different national parks and traverses pristine private property in between. The three-day, 190km mountain bike adventure covers plateaus grazed by herds of antelope, crosses desolate stretches of dramatic Karoo landscape with a unique diversity of fauna and flora and navigates mountain ridges with picturesque panoramic views.

The fourth event of its kind kicks off, as is customary, camping under the Karoo skies in Mountain Zebra National Park near Cradock on the evening of Thursday 2 April before an early start on the bike the following morning. Another camp awaits fully set-up for participants after about 85km of cycling on the first day, where they get to experience true Karoo hospitality and cuisine prepared by the local farmers and share tales and sights from the back of their bikes that day. On the second morning the riders set off for another 80kms until the next overnight stop. The final day of the event is the shortest, with riders only required to cover 25km before they finish at Camdeboo National Park outside Graaff-Reinet and finally get to relax after finishing the course at the last mobile camp of the journey.

This event is the proud product of the Mountain Zebra Camdeboo Protected Environment (MZCPE) which was created to protect the critical biodiversity of the area that lies between the two national parks in the Greater Karoo. The adventure trail is held in partnership with South African National Parks.

The entry fee of R4 450 per person or R7 950 per two-person team not only covers participants’ meals, accommodation, medical support, raconteur and goody bag, but ultimately helps protect this wonderful area and the species and people who rely on it. Supporters are welcome at additional costs. The closing date for entries is Friday 20 March. To enter or for more information, please visit www.mzcpe.co.za/rdk.html or contact Annette Kingwill on 082 851 5580 or roofdekaroo@gmail.com.
Compliments

**Addo**
- We had a very pleasant stay at Main Camp recently. Found the staff there all very friendly and helpful.

**Karoo**
- Karoo National Park was a stopover en route back home and has been for many years. We love this Park and can’t fault it in any way - friendly, attentive staff, beautiful, well kept. Please keep up your good track record of this beautiful gem. We want to keep coming back. Thank you.
- We have just spent four days at Karoo National Park. We would like to congratulate you and ALL the staff on the exceptional service from start to finish. The friendly welcome at the gate, the helpful and very competent reception staff, the restaurant staff - all were outstanding. Our room was immaculate with not one single maintenance issue. We will definitely recommend Karoo National Park to all our friends. Thank you for making our holiday a memorable and enjoyable one.

**Mountain Zebra**
- Absolutely *loved* visiting MZNP (our first time!) and hope to return soon. It was a revelation. I wasn’t expecting so much! And we even saw aardwolf and bat-eared fox!
- My first visit to Mountain Zebra National Park and I was so impressed by how well maintained and how well this Park is run! We had great sightings, our chalet was clean and comfy, we had interesting and informative game drives with Richard, the staff is helpful and friendly and the restaurant’s food is delicious! I will definitely be back.
- An excellent Park and camp - very well managed.

Honorary Rangers visit schools

Pierre Ferreira, who leads the Public Education and Awareness Project (PEAP) team for the Addo Region of the SANParks Honorary Rangers, conducted his first school visit this year at Kabega Primary School in Port Elizabeth.

Pierre hosted two sessions with the Grade 6’s. The pupils were given an overview of Addo Elephant National Park, the role that the SANParks Honorary Rangers play, the dangers of littering, poaching and climate change.

The PEAP team decided that every school visited this year will receive spekboom plants, which can be planted on their premises. This South African wonder plant is the best carbon sequestrator in the world. Hectare for hectare, spekboom removes ten times more carbon than the Amazon Rain Forest. At the end of the second session Pierre handed over the spekboom plants to Mrs Oelofson, one of the Grade 6 teachers.

Forbes ranks Addo tops!

Forbes magazine has included our very own Addo Elephant National Park on its list of “Top 7 Under-The-Radar African Safaris”.

In a recent article, it states: ‘The popularity of African safaris can make some over-crowded reserves seem more like zoos than wildlife refuges.’ Many parks are known for being far too busy throughout the year to be enjoyed, not to mention the high season over the December holidays. So it was no surprise that Forbes listed three of South Africa’s less congested parks in its list.

Two of South Africa’s national parks, Addo Elephant and Kgalagadi Transfrontier National Parks got the nod as did the private Madikwe Game Reserve which Forbes said is so attractive because, ‘not only does it offer the Big Five, but, unlike Kruger, it’s malaria-free’. Addo Elephant National Park is highlighted as South Africans’ go-to park when they want to safari away from crowds of tourists.
Camdeboo a revelation after the rain!

Graaff-Reinet locals couldn’t decide if it was a late 2019 or early 2020 Christmas on the morning of Saturday 8 February when they woke up to the news and sights that water had begun flowing into the empty Nqweba Dam! Much needed rain had been falling over the town, and even more so, over the catchment areas, over the preceding days. The dam had been empty for the better part of the last year. By the beginning of the week, the Dr Beyers Naude Local Municipality reported the dam at was 5.41% capacity. Meanwhile, the entire Park has greened thanks to the rain – with especially the area around the Environmental Education Centre looking exceptionally lush again.

Addo People and Conservation Department celebrates Matric Class of 2019

The People and Conservation Department of Addo Elephant National Park participated in a celebratory dinner in honour of the matriculants of the Sundays River Valley. The purpose of the event was to acknowledge the high pass rate achieved by the matriculants of 2019. Representatives from SANParks, together with various stakeholders such as the Sundays River Citrus Company, Mayibuye Ndlovu Development Trust, various local guest speakers and the five high schools of the Sundays River Valley attended the dinner which was held at the Africanos Country Estate.

Guest speakers representing the Sundays River Valley Municipality and locals who have made a success of their lives despite the difficulties they have faced in life delivered motivational speeches to the learners. Xolelwa Mantungo, a local from Addo delivered a speech on her successful university career. She encouraged learners to partake in tertiary studies and informed them that even though they might have many difficulties getting into tertiary institutions, they should still persist as there are various financial aids for learners to study further.

Rosslee Wagner, Tourism Manager at Addo Elephant National Park, represented SANParks and delivered a motivating speech of how learners can grow within an organisation, particularly in the hospitality field. She explained how learners can even go work abroad and that an education provides learners with many opportunities abroad.

The top three students were then presented with awards in the form of study vouchers. Following the awards a learner from each of the schools present delivered a speech on their experience through their final year of school and thanked their educators for their hard work which resulted in their successful results.
New appointments

Please join us in welcoming our new staff members at Camdeboo National Park:

**Field Ranger**
Daphney Morowane

**Conservation Students**
Ncebakazi Kinkana and Tshepiso Motshele

**General Worker**
Sinethamba Blouw

Congratulations and everything of the best!

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American students donate to Addo

A group of students from Centre College in Kentucky, USA camped in the Park recently. What makes their visit worthy of a mention here is that they came bearing gifts for the needy in surrounding communities.

They handed over sleeping bags, yoga mats, mattresses and tents to the People and Conservation Department, for distributing to those in need.

We thank them, on behalf of the recipients, for their kind and generous donation. The items will definitely go a long way in improving the way of life for many of the Park’s neighbours.

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Karoo wins at bowling competition

On 1 February two of Karoo National Park’s rangers, Armond Nel and Tieber Likongo participated in a bowling competition hosted by the local school, Vuurvliegie Academy. 24 teams participated, with Armond and Tieber’s team winning first place. Tieber joined the local bowling club only two years ago and plays regularly on Saturday’s. During this time he received his own set of bowling balls from a supporter.

From the left: Armond Nel, Tieber Likongo and the rest of the team.

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PLEASE NOTE: Addo’s Narina Bushcamp is closed until further notice due to necessary maintenance. The road to Narina is also closed to non 4x4 vehicles due to damage caused by recent heavy rains. Additionally, the Kabouga 4x4 trail is also closed while rain damage to the roads are repaired.