In this edition:
Karoo hosts Kids in Parks

From the Editor’s desk

Thank you for the positive and constructive feedback I’ve received from some of you on the first edition of Park-thusiasts. Thanks to each of you who shared your opinions with me – it is through this process that I strive to put together an improved version with every edition. Don’t stop now … we’re not there yet! I look forward to hearing your thoughts on this one too.

This time round we look at news from Addo Elephant, Camdeboo, Karoo and Mountain Zebra National Parks as we finished off our 2012 – 2013 financial year. As a “newby” to SANParks – having only started with the company in October, I was astounded to see how much goes into keeping our Parks operational and what great output we have. That’s what I hope to achieve by bringing you this quarterly correspondence – keeping you abreast of happenings both inside and outside the Parks, as it relates to us.

There were a number of highlights in each of the Parks over the quarter, which you’ll pick up on as you work your way through the following pages. Those that stand out above the others for me, personally, were the Addo Trail Run (pg 3) and the birth of the first two lion cubs in the Karoo (pg 6).

Happy reading!

Fayroush Ludick
Regional Communications Manager

PS. Once again, should you wish not to remain on this mailing list, please reply “Unsubscribe” to this e-mail. If you’d like a friend/colleague/family member to be added to the list, please supply their names and e-mail addresses. Alternatively, feel free to forward the publication to them directly.
Canon/MyAddo Photographic Competition Winners

The entries this year for the Canon MyAddo Photographic Competition were once again of exceptional standards. A total of 283 entries were received in the SLR category, while 102 photographs were submitted in the point-and-shoot category.

Budding photographers had three months in which to capture special moments within Addo Elephant National Park. This is the third year that Katz Camera World has collaborated with SANParks Honorary Rangers: Addo Region to host the competition.

More than R50 000 worth of prizes were given away at the prize giving evening in April.

The aim of the competition is not only to raise awareness about the biodiversity within the Park, but also to raise funds for research and conservation initiatives within the Park. This year the competition raised about R10 000. Here are the results:

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**SLR category:**

1st Prize R20 000 Canon Voucher - Charmaine Joubert (Baby Elephant)

2nd Prize Weekend for two at Addo Elephant National Park - Nico Henning (Going Home)

3rd Prize Weekend for two at Mountain Zebra National Park - Sharon Corsar (Ellie Close Up)

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**Point-and-shoot category**

1st Prize R10 000 Canon Voucher - Elzaan Le Roux (Elephants B&W)

2nd Prize Weekend for two at Addo Elephant National Park - Lee-ann Kemsley (Ellie and Zebra)

3rd Prize Weekend for two at Mountain Zebra National Park - Sharon Corsar (Ellie Close Up)

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Showcasing the Bedrogfontein 4x4 route

Addo’s 4x4 route between Kabouga and Darlington was showcased on DSTV’s KykNet channel on the programme Safari 4x4 Roetes at the beginning of May.

The crew spent a night at Kabouga, before tackling the route – with a trailer – the following day. Presenter Andre de Villiers said although he didn’t come across any major obstacles on the drive, there were a number of tight spots he had to traverse.

After a night at Darlington, they made their way to Main Camp, where they filmed most of the activities and accommodation we have on offer, before interviewing Park Manager, Norman Johnson.
Capping
The main entrance gate at Main Camp received much-needed capping in February. Technical Manager, Llewellyn Meek, says this was necessitated due to ageing and some of the former capping falling on and damaging cars (the evidence is the white sections at the top of the thatched roof in the “before” photograph). It’s the first time this has been done since the structure was completed in early 2010.

Addo hosts Miss PE finalists
Addo Elephant National Park is proud to have been a sponsor of the Miss PE pageant this year. As part of the package, some of the ladies spent some time in the Park in January.

Entrant, Jolene Vorster, said “I just want to say a big ‘THANK YOU’ on behalf of my fellow Miss PE finalists who joined me on the game drive. We appreciate it a lot. We also want to say thank you to Jonathan, our game drive guide, who made the drive even more exciting than we thought it would be. We really enjoyed each and every moment and will never forget it.”

Conservation: Did you know?
• Twenty-two buffalo were caught for the 2013 Kirkwood game auction.
• Sixteen elephants were darted and fitted with satellite collars: Kuzuko x 2, Nyathi x 4 and Addo x 10.
• Three eland at Nyathi were collared with satellite collars for a research project.
• 108 penguins (mostly chicks) were taken off Bird Island for rehabilitation.
• Close to 2 483 kg of refuse was removed off Bird Island.
• Three separate photos were taken of leopard on camera traps in Nyathi.

AENP-sponsored athletes’ success at the Addo Trail Run
Of the seven entrants co-sponsored by Extreme Marathons, Absa Kirkwood Wildsfees and Addo Elephant National Park at this year’s Addo Elephant Trail Run, two finished in the top three in the 44km event. Michael Hendricks finished second and Ndyebo Qwaranisa came in shortly afterwards. Well done, and here’s hoping they perform even better next year!

Rainfall in AENP
(over the Addo section only)
– 2012/2013 Financial Year

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School renovations and upgrades
AENP’s People and Conservation and Technical Departments were responsible for a number of school renovations or upgrades over the past months, in the process bettering the learning environments and lives of hundreds of learners.

At Mhlophekazi three blocked classrooms were upgraded and painted, and a vegetable garden was fenced. The security system in the computer class was beefed up at La Trobe, and the school’s fence was upgraded by replacing 50% of a new perimeter fence, while four new access gates were also installed.

Both schools had an in-loco inspection from the French/GEF assessors, who sponsored the projects. They were pleased with the work that was done at both schools.

At Sandisulwazi a classroom upgrade was completed thanks to funding from SANParks’ conservation levies collected at our gates from tourists entering the Parks on a daily basis. That money is used for legacy projects in all our neighbouring communities. Legacy projects include infrastructure developments like building science and computer labs, and libraries – including mobile libraries. The money is also used for youth development in sport, which is presently aimed at the primary school level.
Addo Elephant National Park

Eco-schools

By Wendy Johnson

Eco-schools is a programme of the Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE) - supported by the Department of Basic Education. Eco-schools is implemented in over 52 countries worldwide. It is an International programme of the FEE, managed in South Africa by the Wildlife and Environmental Society of South Africa (WESSA) with national support from Nampak and PetroSA. Various organisations support Eco-Schools at a local level. Over 1 100 schools in South Africa are currently part of the programme.

The Eco-schools programme is about improving environmental management at schools, as well as environmental learning. This means that teachers, learners, community members and/or partner organisations get together and undertake a project to improve some aspect of environmental management at their school. This could range from saving electricity to starting a garden. The possibilities are endless! At the same time, teachers draw on these practical projects to strengthen environmental learning at the school. Each year they strive to improve on their efforts, thereby qualifying for an award.

Eco-schools South Africa supports the National Curriculum (CAPS) for Grades R-9, and Grades 10-12. Primary, pre-primary and secondary schools can sign up for the programme and so can schools for learners with special needs, home schools and environmental clubs.

The Eco-school programme is the only programme which involves whole school development, meaning that whatever environmental concern is raised in the classroom spills over into the community/township by involving the local stakeholders.

When schools start with the programme, there are seven steps they need to follow:

1) Eco-committee - Eco-schools promote whole school development. The greater the involvement from the principal, the teaching, admin and support staff, the school governing board (SGB), the learners, their parents and the wider community, the better for an Eco-committee to start, steer and hold it all together. The members and their role on the committee (or whom they represent), must be listed. Schools could initially start small, but this list will help see how they grow over the years.

2) Audit - Conduct an audit to identify the environmental management needs and environmental learning opportunities at the school. The representative should give the school a score, in discussions with colleagues, and explain or qualify this score where necessary.

Once the Whole School Review has been conducted, the results should be interpreted to decide which school improvements to undertake. An area should be chosen which has good opportunities for the school, or one that presents a problem. Decide which of the five themes this area relates to. Note! At the end of a year, the very same Whole School Review will have to be completed.

The year-end audit will show the progress, and where there are still problems, as a basis for planning the next year’s themes and activities.

3) Eco-code - The school representative should write an Environmental policy or Eco-code for their school. It should fit into the school’s general policy, and it should be something the school can actually strive for. The Eco-code should reflect what the school intends to do about environmental management and about environmental learning at the school.

4) Plan for teaching and learning - There are five themes from which to choose: Local and global issues, Resource use, Nature and biodiversity, Community and heritage and Healthy living.

5) Action - Which project action will the school do as an Eco-school? Also look at the calendar days and record evidence of everything.

6) Report and share - Lesson plans must be included. Learner work must always be included as proof that learners did the work in class. A report must be done by means of a portfolio.

7) Receive an award - A team of assessors with a background in education and environmental education will assess the school’s Eco-report at the end of the year. These are the minimum requirements to apply for Eco-schools status. Without them, your report will not be assessed. All the components must be clearly marked. Reports are assessed on the quality and depth of these sections, and not only on their presence in the report.

Successful schools will be awarded an award after the assessment and moderation process is completed. Schools need to re-register every year with the aim to qualify after five years for the International flag. Eco-schools need to sustain all projects initiated in earlier years, as they are about ongoing commitment to change.

The awards system:

Bronze – First year with one theme
Silver – Second year with two themes (including theme from 1st year)
Green Flag – Third year with three themes (including theme from 2nd year)
Gold – Fourth year with four themes (including theme from 3rd year)
International Flag – Fifth year with five themes (including theme from 4th year)
Platinum (only six or more years) - Project and lessons on special themes e.g. Climate change, Wetlands, Eco-foot-printing etc.

There is also now a Diamond decade award, for which schools must receive the Platinum award for at least four years (a total of 10 years on the programme altogether) before they qualify.

For more information, contact the respective Park’s People and Conservation departments.

Addo hosts Eco-schools award ceremony

By Martheanne Finnemore - Regional Manager, WESSA Eastern Province

Addo Elephant National Park hosted the EP region’s Eco-schools award ceremony in February. It was attended by 55 principals and educators from 30 schools. The event was held in partnership with SANParks and the Born Free Foundation, both of which support Eco-schools’ nodes in the area. Luthando Gxowa of WESSA served as the Programme Director.

AENP’s People and Conservation Officer, Wendy Johnson, welcomed all the educators to the Park on behalf of SANParks. She outlined SANParks school programme which was very informative as most of the principals and educators did not realise that they could bring their learners to the Interpretive Centre for free after making an arrangement with her.

There have been amazing successes of the Eco-schools in Paterson and Al-icedale. Water conservation including the installation of tanks, food gardens that provide nutrition for learners’ lunches, tree planting, a massive decline in teenage pregnancy after lessons were given by a local doctor, increasing pass rates, Eco-library corners providing environmental information, rhino poaching initiatives, litter clean ups and large donations received from corporates such as computers were just some of the highlights shared. The four schools falling inside the node are now in their fifth year of the programme and will be going for their International Flag this year.

The day’s awards ranged from Bronze awards up to Platinum for schools that had successfully promoted environmental education and management in their schools for more than five years. After this the participants enjoyed a game drive viewing two huge herds of elephants at the waterholes as well as numerous other species. Many educators had never been to the Park before and their description of the event ranged from “wonderful” to “absolutely amazing”. The drive went on to Jack’s picnic site where the teachers enjoyed some burgers and colddrinks (courtesy of Coca-Cola Fortune) before being transported back home.

Sindi Yoyo with the silver award recipients. Addo Primary educator, Ms Boesius, is in the centre, along with educators from Port Elizabeth-based schools.
Conservation – Did you know?

- One of the two buffalo bulls released into the Park late last year left the Park through camp 39 and ended up on the farm Gannaleegte. It was recaptured and relocated to the boma and was subsequently sold after being advertised for sale.

Rainfall in CNP - 2012/2013 Financial Year

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CAMDEBOO NATIONAL PARK
HOLIDAY PROGRAMME

Not sure what to do this school holidays?
WE CAN HELP!!
Camdeboo National Park will present a Holiday Programme for a week.

Each day has a selected theme filled with fun and adventure.

- **24 June 2013** – **Med Movie Monday**
- **25 June 2013** – “Big 5” Tuesday
- **26 June 2013** – **Brrrr Brown Wednesday**
- **27 June 2013** – Litter Fun Thursday
- **28 June 2013** – Play Along Friday

This will truly be a week not to miss.

**Date:** 24 to 28 June 2013
**Time:** 09h00 to 14h00 each day
**Venue:** Camdeboo Environmental Education Centre
**Age group:** 8 – 14 year olds
**Cost:** R15 / child / day

**NB!!** BOOKINGS ARE ESSENTIAL AS THERE IS LIMITED SPACE

For more information and bookings contact:
Rosemary Scheepers on (049) 692 3453 or
E-mail: Rosemary_Scheepers@sarparks.org
Our well-known Karoo Park

There’s been quite a bit of interest in the Karoo National Park over the past few months. No less than three television crews have visited the Park in the same number of months – Firstly a team filming a series on towing and caravanning for channel Ignition TV visited the Park in December, followed by “Cooked in Films” who visited the Park in February to shoot an insert for an upcoming documentary on the Karoo and lastly from “Homebrew Films” doing an insert for the show “Groen” on Kyknet featuring the Park’s lions. The team, headed by “The Ultimate Braai Master” host, Justin Bonello, spent three days filming in the Park. Park Manager Nico van der Walt (far left) and Senior Section Ranger Johan de Klerk (far right) with the crew of the upcoming documentary on the Karoo.

Karoo National Park’s feathery friends doing well!

Karoo National Park’s Brandy the ostrich chick and her “feathery feeding friend” shortly after they were united in February. After being picked up as a chick at Brandewyngat, hence her name, by Park Manager Nico van der Walt, the chicken was brought in to teach Brandy how to feed, until she’s big enough to fend for herself in the Park again.

Brandy’s grown nicely since February, and has started acting a bit like a chicken – with reports that like the chicken, she’s also trying to sit on the branches. But ALAS, she’s too heavy!

The ins and outs of Karoo’s lion population

There’s been a lot of changes within Karoo National Park when it comes to its lion population of late.

Did you know:
- Two new Kgalagadi males were introduced into the Park in February?
- One female was relocated from there to Mountain Zebra at the same time?
- Park Manager Nico van der Walt finally saw and photographed the first two cubs to have been born in the Park in March – after months of speculation of their presence?
- And that the two new males are now back in the boma, accompanied by a lioness, in the hope that she’ll settle them down more?

Yes, there’s been some frantic feline activity over the past few months - and it all has meant that the Karoo National Park’s lion population is now back to ten.

Karoo hosts Kids in Parks

Karoo National Park hosted the Kids in Parks programme from mid-April to mid-May, in which learners from 10 schools were hosted. They spent time in the Park with a P&C officer and nature conservation student, learnt how to make water cycle wheels, had fun tug of wars and a whole lot more!

A group of learners with P&C Officer Jan Jacobs and Nature Conservation student, Robert Daley.
National Water Week in Cradock
By Mxolisi Fulumente

Mountain Zebra National Park celebrated National Water Week in March with two Primary and one High School visits under the theme “Water is life – respect it, conserve it, enjoy it.” The main aim of the week was to educate the more than 450 learners about the importance of water.

It is believed that by changing the mindset of our youth, we will change the mindset of the adults – as the youth pass on their learnings to their parents.

National Water Week is an awareness campaign by the Department of Water Affairs which serves as a powerful mechanism re-iterating the value of water and the need for the sustainable management of this scarce resource. This awareness creation is coupled with the responsibility that every citizen must take in ensuring the integrity of our water resources and its efficient use in our water-scarce country.

Finally, learners were taught how to practically conserve water both indoors as well as outdoors.

Conservation – Did you know?
• There are currently five cheetah in MZNP: four females (currently in the veld) and the one male (currently in the bomas).
• Hyena spoor is seen regularly throughout the whole Park. One large set of tracks and two smaller sets of tracks were seen together along the Sonnedal fence line (could possibly have been pups).
• A small spotted cat has been seen on two occasions and caught on camera trap. This is the first known record of this species for the Park.
Rainfall in MZNPNP -
2012/2013 Financial Year

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**MZNP’s weed buster day activities—**

**By Mxolisi Fulumente**

“Teaming up to tackle weeds” was the theme of Mountain Zebra National Park’s Weed buster day activities in January. The programme centred around the Mathew Goniwe and Mihausdal High Schools in Cradock.

Weed buster week is an annual awareness campaign that works with the community to increase public involvement in weed management, education and awareness projects. As we all know, weeds can damage our natural system, agricultural system, water ways and coastal areas. They have an impact on agricultural areas, poison livestock and affect biodiversity by out-competing native plants and degrading habitats.

The day’s main objectives were to raise awareness and increase understanding about the impact of weeds, to provide information and opportunities to build skills and knowledge so that people can better manage weeds, to spray cactus in Mathew Goniwe, which is an emerging weed in the Karoo area, and to remove Agave sisalana.

Mountain Zebra National Park