

NEWS FROM THE ADDO ELEPHANT NATIONAL PARK, South Africa *April/May 2007*



About this newsletter

This is a general newsletter - sent out on a monthly basis - about the latest happenings and developments in the Addo Elephant National Park. Please see contact details at the end for further enquiries.

CHEETAH RELEASED IN KUZUKO

Two male cheetah were released into the Kuzuko Contractual Area of Addo Elephant National Park on the 28th of March 2007.

The wild-caught cheetah, which are expected to prey mainly on springbok which occur in the Park, were supplied by the De Wildt Cheetah and Wildlife Trust.

Kuzuko, a 14 500-hectare property which has been contractually incorporated into the Park, lies on the eastern side of the Darlington Dam area of the Park. The fence which currently separates the contractual area from the rest of Park will be taken down in the future to allow wildlife to roam freely.

Maxwell Moss MP and disability activist Fadila Lagadien, both trustees of Disability Empowerment Concerns (DEC), were guests of honour at the function marking the cheetah release. A consortium of South Africa's seven main disability groups, the DEC trust holds a 24% share in trading operations.

The 48-bed Kuzuko Lodge, still under construction, is being marketed and managed by the Legacy group, whose flagship hotels are Michelangelo and Michelangelo Towers in Sandton and the Portwood and Commodore hotels on the Cape Town Waterfront.

ADDO ELEPHANT TRAIL RUN

Despite heavy bouts of rain and cold conditions, 16 runners successfully completed the third annual 100-mile (160-kilometre) Addo Elephant Trail Run through the Addo Elephant National Park ON Sunday, 29th of April.

The event also included a shorter 50-mile (80-kilometre) course which attracted 39 entries this year, with 37 of those successfully finishing the course.

The trail run once again attracted international interest with representation from Singapore, Australia, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

A first for 2007 was the growing contingent of women who took part in the 100-miler with six women entrants this year.

Contestants had to keep an eye out for some of the Park's Big Five species on sections of the course. However, their safety was ensured by Park rangers who patrolled these sections of the course to ensure no incidents occurred.

The trail run also saw contestants cross part of the Zuurberg Mountain range in the Park, with its breathtaking views and pristine fynbos, grassland and forest vegetation.

Heavy rain the day before the event forced the organizers to re-route the course due to extremely muddy and slippery conditions on the original trails. Feedback from the contestants was still positive, however, with many commenting on the scenic beauty of the trail.

AO Okreglicki from Cape Town took first place in the 100-miler in a time of 21 hours and 30 minutes.

Second place was claimed by Reiner Stucky in a time of 22 hours and 54 minutes while joint third place went to Raymond Cranston and Michael Webb in a time of 23 hours and 33 minutes.

The first lady to cross the finish 100-miler finish line was Jo MacKenzie from Maclear in a time of 23 hours and 39 minutes, which earned her fourth place overall.

Local runner Michael Hendricks took first place in the 50-miler in a time of seven hours and four minutes, with Vuyisile Aaron Benzi finishing a few seconds behind Hendricks. Another local runner, Chris Antonie, finished third in a time of seven hours, fifteen minutes.

The sponsorship of entrance fees and running gear for these top three 50-milers by the Addo Elephant National Park made it possible for these locals from disadvantaged communities to take part in what is fast becoming a prestigious event.

The youngest competitor in the 50-miler race, 21-year old Australian Chris Hills, took eighth place in a time of eight hours and forty minutes.

The tough 100-miler course saw contestants running through the night, with only torches and luminous markers for direction, and into midday of Sunday the 29th of April.

Race dates are chosen each year for their proximity to the time of full moon to provide the 100-miler contestants with better light as they enter the night hours.

Pacers on bicycles and on foot shadowed the 100-mile contestants who had to report to marshals at regularly-spaced checkpoints. This ensured that any runners who strayed off course or injured themselves could be found if they failed to check in.

The weary runners crossed the finish line in the Main Camp of the Addo Elephant National Park, after starting the course in the Park's northernmost section, Darlington (100-miler), or in the town of Kirkwood (50-miler).

THE SUCCESSFUL YEAR THAT WAS...

Addo Elephant National Park has once again shown record tourism figures for the year 2006/7 (April 2006 - March 2007).

Visitor numbers increased by 15.02% from 140 745 to 161 884 tourists.

The average annual occupancy rate for Addo Main Camp was 92.03%, showing an increase of 1.13% from 90.9%. Camp Matyholweni increased its occupancy by 27.5% to 53.2% from 25.7%.

Guided game drives were lucrative, with an increase of 13.1% from 27 531 seats to 31 138 seats.

Five new chalets will be built this year in Addo Main Camp to cater for the accommodation demand.

The Park is used as a valuable tool for environmental education. A total of 11195 learners and 1652 adults visited the park during the year 2006/7. Of these visitors 1717 were brought in on the school bus from disadvantaged local community schools. Learners from local schools surrounding the Park were involved in the celebration of Water Week, Arbour Day, Marine Week, Youth Day and SA National Parks Week.

The Park celebrated its 75th Year anniversary in style with the Minister of Environmental Affairs & Tourism as guest of honour. The celebrations included the official opening of the southern access road that links Camp Matyholweni to the main game area and Main Camp of the Park, as well as the opening of a new underground hide.

The Park received extensive media coverage, particularly around the Park's 75th Year Celebrations and the Minister's announcement of the Draft Norms & Standards for Elephant Management.

Negotiations with private landowners continue to increase the size of Addo Elephant National Park, now at 164 233 hectares.

Rainfall for the year was generally above average resulting in a good condition veld and many rivers flowing.

Addo Elephant National Park has increased its protected area to 164 233 ha. The Park has also increased biodiversity with the introduction of oribi and cheetah.

A 50-km predator-proof fence was completed around the Matyholweni section of the Park and a 39-km predator-proof fence completed around the Darlington section of the fence. The 120-

km predator-proof fence around the main game area and Nyati section was effectively patrolled and maintained with no breakouts.

The annual aerial wildlife census in May 2006 reported the following figures for key species:

Species	Number
Elephants	327
Buffalo	268
Black Rhino	12
Eland	66
Kudu	2035
Red hartebeest	294
Warthog	931
Springbok (Darlington section)	247
Lion	11
Hyena	14

Note: Aerial census figures are not completely accurate, particularly for species which are difficult to spot from the air. Ground counts of elephants estimate the population size at 459 animals.

News from South African National Parks...

Black Rhino in Mountain Zebra National Park

The black rhino population in Mountain Zebra has recently increased by one with the birth of a calf to the female, Dundi, who is now 12 years old.

The calf, now about one month old, is still too young to be identified as either a male or female.

Rangers will be monitoring the cow and calf as often as possible to check on their condition as this is a crucial period for the young calf. A previous calf born to the female Faru, died at the age of six months.

Section Ranger, Johan De Klerk, suspects that the cause of this calf's death was stress.

De Klerk is hopeful that there may be yet another rhino calf in the Park.

"The other adult female, Faru, has not been seen on our patrols recently. This, and the fact that it is now 20 months since she gave birth to her previous calf, may be an indication that she has had another calf and is hiding it while it is still young", said De Klerk.

The gestation period of a black rhino is 15 months.

Black rhino of the *Diceros bicornis bicornis* subspecies or so-called 'desert ecotype' occur in Mountain Zebra, Karoo, Addo Elephant and Mokala National Parks.

SANParks to increase conservation fees

South African National Parks (SANParks) announced on the 2nd of May that it will be increasing conservation fees with effect from 1 November 2007 after maintaining the same rates for more than 4 years since the last increase in June 2003.

For the large and established parks comprising of, Kruger and Kgalagadi National Parks, standard conservation fee rates increase by 10% from R120 to R132. For South African residents and Southern African Development Community (SADC) nationals the rates also increase by 10% from R30 to R33 and R60 to R66 respectively. In the case of Addo Elephant, which has developed and expanded considerably over the past few years, fees increase by 25% from R80 to R100 for standard conservation fee, R40 to R50 for SADC nationals and R20 to R25 for SA residents. Tsitsikamma rates remain unchanged at R80, R40 and R20 respectively for standard conservation fees, SADC national and SA residents respectively.

In the case of medium sized parks, comprising of Au-grabies, Golden Gate Highlands, Karoo, Marakele, Mapungubwe, Mountain Zebra and /Ais-/Ais/ Richtersveld; standard conservation fees, SADC nationals and fees for SA residents will increase by 16,7% from R60 to R70; 16.7% from R30 to R35 and 13.3% from R15 to R17 respectively. Other parks in the Developing Category like Agulhas, Bontebok, Camdeboo, Vaalbos, Namaqua, Tankwa-Karoo and Wilderness will maintain the same rates for all categories. For West Coast National Park fees will be R60, R30 and R15, respectively except during the months of August and September when they will be R80, R40 and R20 respectively.

The tariff increase is a result of various factors involved in the day-to-day management of national parks. Among others, the South African CPIX (Consumer Price Index) has generally increased, which resulted in increased costs at a much higher rate. With the decline in the value of the rand over the past years, exchange rates generally favoured international visitors. Infrastructure maintenance and other national parks' security elements also had a major contribution the tariff increases. In parks with transfrontier agreements, there are also increased collective costs, such as joint marketing and administration.

"We are confident that the envisaged increase will not have a negative effect on our visitor profile; in fact, it will make visitors realise how valuable and important these national assets are to South Africa and the rest of the world." explained Dr Mabunda, Chief Executive of SANParks.

For Wild Card, all clusters will also increase as follows:

Single Park Cluster

Individuals:	From R170 to R180
Couples:	From R295 to R310
Family:	From R395 to R420

All Parks Cluster

Individuals:	From R195 to R205
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Couples: From R335 to R350
Family: From R440 to R460

International Cards

Individuals: From R795 to R840
Couples: From R1 395 to R1 475
Family: From R1 795 to R1 900

Mabunda further explained, "While there are mixed feelings amongst the international and local visitors, Wild Card holders which form a major part of our regular visitor profile; have generally accepted the increase well and understand the rationale behind the conservation fee structure".

SANParks Writing Competition

This competition is your chance to explore South Africa's National Parks...with words. The theme for the competition is "SANParks: A Journey of Discovery". The theme is wide open to interpretation, and your submission can be purely fictitious, biographical, autobiographical, funny, sad...anything goes! So get creative and get writing!

Entries must not be longer than 5000 words in the adult categories and 2500 words in the children's categories. Word counts must be adhered to.

The competition is divided into the following 6 categories:

1. Poetry
2. Prose - Material submitted in this category can be entirely "fictional" or based on personal experience. Stories in this category should have a strong sense of place, or complex characterisation or plot.
3. Stories for Children (fiction)
4. Trip Reports (accounts of real trips to the parks) - Material submitted in this category should comprise of an engagingly written account/report of a trip to a SANParks park over the last 12 months. Reports in this category should convey a strong sense of place.
5. Stories by Children (ages 8-12)
6. Stories by Teenagers (ages 13-17)

Entrants should submit their writing via e-mail as attached word documents to diannet@sanparks.org with the subject line of the e-mail clearly stating: Writing Competition and Category (e.g. Writing Competition: Poetry).

Prizes to the value of R20 000 will be distributed to the winners and will include accommodation and branded merchandise.

See the [submission guidelines](#) on www.sanparks.org for more information.

DID YOU KNOW?

✂ The telephone numbers for Addo Elephant National Park have changed. Please dial +27(0)42 2338600 or send your fax to +27(0)42 2338643.

✂ You can help purchase a webcam for Addo Elephant National Park by making a donation online at www.sanparks.org

✂ You can have your say or simply read what others have to say on our website forums. Visit www.sanparks.org/forums

✂ You can check availability of accommodation in any of the 20 South African National Parks by clicking on the link below, then choosing the park and rest camp you wish to investigate: www.sanparks.org/tourism/availability/default.php

The information is updated once a day at 08h00. This will save you time when making your booking. To book, email reservations@sanparks.org or Tel: +27 (0)12 4289111.

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