

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION PHYSIOLOGY AND DISEASE WORKSHOP

Peter Buss

SANParks Veterinary Wildlife Services hosted a Wildlife Conservation Physiology and Disease Workshop, providing an opportunity for research groups to collaborate and for postgraduate students and early career researchers to learn from experts in their field



SANParks' Veterinary Wildlife Services hosted a Wildlife Conservation Physiology and Disease Workshop in partnership with the Brain Function Research Group from the University of the Witwatersrand, funded by Aarhus University, Denmark. The workshop, from 13-17 March 2023, was attended by 26 delegates from both local and international locations.

During the workshop, delegates had the opportunity to present their research and ideas on topics

such as veterinary anaesthesia, disease surveillance, species monitoring and wildlife conservation physiology. In addition to presentations, a practical elephant darting exercise was conducted for tuberculosis monitoring and physiological variables were collected for analysis. The workshop provided an excellent opportunity for different research groups to collaborate and also served as a platform for postgraduate students and early career researchers to learn from experts in their field.

A slow paddle against the busy-ness of everyday demands

Stef Freitag-Ronaldson & Izak Smit

Photos by Stef Freitag-Ronaldson

In our ever more hurried working lives with its constant interruptions and ever accelerating busy-ness, the time for 'deep work' is squeezed constantly. For scientists, this often means that keeping up with the latest research, engaging intensely and philosophically with new published papers and contemplating what this means for and in practice, takes place in short time fragments or outside of normal working hours. And yet reading, thinking, learning and applying knowledge are key attributes and strengths of scientists and SANParks' science function.

Nine self-selected colleagues from the Cape Research Centre and Garden Route Research Unit decided to leave their laptops behind to make explicit time to read and reflect at a reading retreat in April 2022. We chose an off-grid location, without cell communication and only accessible by canoe, to ensure full immersion in the chosen papers for the 2 days. Whiskey Creek cabin on the Keurbooms River was the perfect setting for reading, thinking, quiet reflection, meaningful conversations,

sharing experiences and immersion in nature. We felt both calm and energised as we paddled the 7 kilometers back to the demands of our inboxes, with greater appreciation of each others' contexts, new ideas crystallizing and supportive relationships strengthened.



Reading retreat at Whiskey Creek Cabin – (back) Charlene Bissett, Kyle Smith, Izak Smit, Wendy Foden, Cloverley Lawrence, (front) Thabang Sibibiya, Stef Freitag-Ronaldson, Alison Kock, Marna Herbst.