

Western Cape Birding Forum

Now represents 8 clubs with more than 2,000 members in the Western Cape.

Minutes from the **Education Workshop** on 9 June 2007, at the **Durbanville Nature Reserve, Durbanville.**

Vernon Head – Chaired the Meeting. Welcome was extended to all.

Helen Fenwick – Minutes.

Those Present

Cape Bird Club: Vernon Head, Anne Gray, Jo Hobbs, Otto Schmidt, Dave Whitelaw, Frank Wygold, Helen Fenwick, Heather Howell

Tygerberg Bird Club: Brigid de Kock, Antoinette le Roux, Helene Thompson, Ione Vanderwalt

Somerset West Bird Club: John Carter, Brian Dennis, Freya Brett

West Coast Bird Club: Jan Jurgen Kotze, Keith Harrison

Birdlife Stellenbosch: Willene van der Merwe, Nico Venter

Hermanus Bird Club: Lee Burman, John Saunders

Visitors: Doug Newman (Birdlife SA), Les Underhill, Doug Harebottle

Apologies

Anton Odendal, Sylvia Ledgard.

Helderberg Nature Reserve

Freya Brett explained in detail the programme she does at Helderberg Nature Reserve. Children regularly visit the reserve on school excursions and camps. She has fun and interesting worksheets as applications to her lessons. She also uses competitions and prizes to stimulate the children's interest.

There is a campsite in the Helderberg Nature Reserve and groups of children can stay the weekend. The cost presently is R35 per child including meals but they have to bring their own bedding. Part of the programme includes an evening of drama where children act out skits to demonstrate what they have learned during the weekend.

Freya also does a programme with pre-schoolers where she teaches conservation through Mother-Goose type stories. She uses power-point presentations for children in the intermediate phase and covers flying reptiles to modern birds.

The Helderberg Nature Reserve has a wonderful resource centre stocked with excellent posters for teachers and information covering all kinds natural history subjects but Freya reported that people rely more on the Internet these days.

Tygerberg Nature Reserve

Antoinette le Roux from Tygerberg Bird Club is the voluntary Education Officer on behalf of TBC, together with Estelle Mellville of Tygerberg Nature Reserve. She, Brigid de Kock and Marianna Delpont, give regular talks at local high schools.

Each year TBC is involved with YES week (Youth Environmental Schools). Schools apply to attend 9 workshops. This year the buses were not sponsored which made it too expensive for less fortunate schools to attend. Teacher strikes and bus strikes complicated matters. In 2006, 33,000 children attended.

Tygerberg Nature Reserve also has an annual Olympiad for the Environment. Schools apply and three Grade 11 or 12 learners from each school and 1 teacher from each of 14 to 18 schools are selected. The

curriculum covers various topics such as farming methods and geology and is presented by various professors from UWC. Antoinette teaches the basics of Bird Ecology and how to use field guides, binoculars and scopes.

There are excursions up the Tygerberg Hill and walks on farms where Renosterveld occurs. The course takes place over three Saturday mornings from 8:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. There is a written and practical examination and cash prizes are presented to the children and a book prize to the school.

Antoinette is also involved in the Land Care Programme run by the Department of Agriculture. They sponsor 2 ½- day outdoor education camps for previously disadvantaged Grade 6 learners in the Slanghoek area. She bases her lessons on the Grade 6 curriculum, why birds fly, feathers, digestion etc. It is the first time that birding information has been presented at the Landcare camps and the organisers now want to spread this information to all the Landcare camps.

West Coast Field Studies Centre

Frank Wygold explained how he reaches out to local schools and teaches them in his well-equipped West Coast Field Study Centre.

He has groups of 200 children from Grade 6 and above. He divides them into 5 groups to study different aspects. He provides binoculars to the birding groups and nets to the butterfly groups.

He demonstrates how various organisms are dependent on each other and about the priorities of the food chain.

Teachers may use his facilities while presenting their own lessons, on specific components of the curriculum or they ask Frank to do the lesson. He has a facility for overnight stays for 60 to 80 children, during the summer months. This is by arrangement and then tented accommodation is provided.

Frank receives some funding from Total Gas just enough to subsidise one school group per month.

Cape Bird Club pays for his security system.

Cape Bird Club – Junior Birders

Heather Howell from Cape Bird Club gave an account of the work that she does with her group of keen junior birders. She explained how the group was dependent upon parent involvement as they have to bring the children to the monthly outings. Heather also visits schools where she presents bird workshops and takes children on excursions.

Way Forward

Vernon requested that somebody take on the position of Education co-ordinator to keep the different branches informed with other branches activities. Iona van der Walt tentatively agreed to the position and requested direction in support of the position.