



**CITY OF CAPE TOWN
ISIXEKO SASEKAPA
STAD KAAPSTAD**



**ENERGY, ENVIRONMENT & SPATIAL PLANNING
ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
BIODIVERSITY MANAGEMENT BRANCH**

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Biodiversity Area: False Bay Nature Reserve

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A large amount of attention was given to the clearing and maintenance of invasive flora on all reserves. Many follow up operations occurred across all sections of the reserve to maintain the areas already initially cleared by either IAS or the reserve staff. Water Hyacinth gained special attention after it resurfaced in Zeekoevlei.

Two notable fauna sightings this quarter were a Spotted Crake (*Porzana porzana*), which was sighted at Strandfontein Birding Area and at the Rondevlei section, and a Western Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*) which was spotted over Rondevlei. These two sightings may be attributed to the manipulation of the water levels in these areas. Another notable fauna related activity is the on-going hippo capture in the Strandfontein Birding Area which is nearing completion.

The Rondevlei weir was opened on 1 February 2017 to help flush the system of any excess nutrients and will remain open until the end of May 2017. In anticipation of the annual draw down of Zeekoevlei on 27 April 2017, a call to renew all reed maintenance and shoreline plans was issued on 1 January 2017. As of 30 March 2017, 28 plans have been renewed with four plans pending due to outstanding shoreline diagrams.

False Bay Nature Reserve: Rondevlei section is planning to conduct a prescribed burn for fuel reduction purposes. The burn is planned to take place along the Northern and Eastern shores of Rondevlei. The prescribed burn is aimed at reducing the nutrient loading in the Rondevlei reed beds, and the preparations for the burn are currently underway.

As a result of the current drought the staff have had a busy fire season whether it be assisting in other parts of the City on wild or controlled fires as well as on the reserve. There were five recorded fires at False Bay this quarter, four were wild fires of unknown causes and one wild fire was caused by arson.

As always False Bay has been busy with various environmental education programmes with February focusing on the importance of wetlands and the role they play in mitigating natural disasters.

New staff members including a student and two seasonal workers have started this quarter, and an EPWP team has started work in the Strandfontein Birding Area as part of the Greenest Metro projects.

A range of illegal activities were recorded at the reserve this quarter ranging from vandalism to an attempted rape of a minor.

Much needed maintenance jobs on various infrastructure were carried out by staff.

2. HIGHLIGHTS & CHALLENGES

Highlights:

- The water quality of the Zeekoevlei water body has dramatically improved over the last year and has maintained a clear water phase despite the hot dry summer that has been experienced. The last clear water phase was recorded in 2010 and only lasted for seven days.
- Much needed maintenance was done on infrastructure at Rondevlei and Zeekoevlei eastern shore.
- The employment of 2 seasonal workers for the day-to-day care of the visitor facilities.

Challenges:

- Notable lack of staff capacity on the ground.
- Increase vandalism on the eastern shore despite increasing various deterrents and foot patrols.
- The reappearance of Water Hyacinth in Zeekoevlei.

3. CONSERVATION PLANNING

The False Bay Nature Reserve has been greatly depleted in its staff capacity. The EPWP staff members were responsible for assisting in the day-to-day operations of the reserve and were reduced to maintaining infrastructure, such as the Zeekoevlei Section eastern shore picnic / braai facilities and toilet facilities. Two additional City of Cape Town seasonal workers were employed for 3 months to help maintain the Rondevlei Section museum, toilets and picnic area, and fence maintenance across the reserve.

Alternative solutions are currently being explored to bolster the current field ranger staff component of five persons, which includes a more sustainable solution with the appointment of permanent staff.

4. FLORA

Flora – Invasive Flora Management:

Aquatic Invasive Flora Management False Bay Nature Reserve

Strandfontein Birding Area

There are ongoing follow-ups of water hyacinth (*Eichhornia crassipes*) in the birding area. Removal of hyacinth happened in pans S2, S4, S7, S6 and the dirty pan. The removals mentioned was conducted by hand and using a canoe where needed. The corner of S1 is constantly being folia sprayed to keep the hyacinth out of that specific area. The M2 pan has water hyacinth in it, but cannot be removed as yet until the Hippopotamus (which is contained in the M pans) is captured and moved off site.

Approximately 550 pieces of water hyacinth was manually removed from the area and approximately 1200 pieces were chemically treated.



Staff busy removing water hyacinth from Strandfontein Birding Area (Photos: S. Khan and C. Moses 2017).

Zeekoevlei Section

Water hyacinth was a major problem in Zeekoevlei for many years. The vlei has been clear from hyacinth for a few years now, with the odd pieces floating around from time to time (which is immediately removed). On 31st January 2017 the conservation staff noticed pieces of water hyacinth moving down the Big Lotus River towards Zeekoevlei. Action was taken the very next day by folia spraying the hyacinth that came anywhere close to the vlei in order to keep it in current state (clear of hyacinth). Regular hyacinth patrols then followed to keep the hyacinth out of Zeekoevlei. S. Khan then arranged a meeting with D. Griffiths (Storm Water Dept.) and M. Meyer (Invasive Alien Species Unit) to discuss clearing the Big Lotus of water hyacinth. D. Griffiths agreed to clear the Big Lotus with a hand team and a long arm excavator.

On the 28th February 2017 while having a managers meeting, we noticed a few pieces of hyacinth floating close to the southern shore of the vlei. We then sent out one of our interns and a student on a canoe to collect the pieces of hyacinth and to conduct a patrol along the southern shore to make sure there is no other hyacinth. They then returned with a canoe filled with hyacinth which they found in the reed beds on the southern shore, and did a few more trips to remove all hyacinth they could see. False Bay Nature Reserve then followed up with a request to the residents surrounding the vlei to keep an eye out for water hyacinth and remove any they see.

Approximately 1000 pieces of water hyacinth were manually removed and 1500 pieces were chemically treated. Constant water hyacinth patrols are being conducted to keep Zeekoevlei hyacinth free.



CTEET intern, James Morton and student, removing hyacinth from the southern shore (Photo: A. Khan 2017).

Rondevlei Section

The Italian Road canal was 90% covered in water hyacinth, primrose (*Oenothera*) and wandering jew (*Commelina benghalensis*). All the water hyacinth in this canal comes from Princessvlei which leads directly into Rondevlei. 60% of the canal was cleared by the storm water department and the other 40% by the Invasive Alien Species Unit. In order for this to be avoided in future, Princessvlei should draw up a maintenance plan for the continuous removal of water hyacinth and implement the plan to the best of their abilities.

Approximately 15 000 pieces of water hyacinth was manually removed from the Italian Road canal.

S. Khan manually removed about 100 pieces of water hyacinth around the Scotto Hide, which probably came from the infestation in the Italian Road canal.

Terrestrial Invasive Flora Management False Bay Nature Reserve

Wood Harvesting at False Bay Nature Reserve

The False Bay Nature Reserve is committed to ensuring the protection and proper management of its natural resources found within its boundary. One aspect of this management is the control of wood harvesting (selected invasive alien plant species only) from the reserve. In order to ensure proper control, a permit system with guidelines was drafted and implemented. No wood harvesting is permitted in the False Bay Nature Reserve, without a valid permit. There are two types of permits, namely a wood cutting permit and a wood collecting permit. A wood cutting permit is only valid for six months and only a certain quota of wood cutting permits are issued per reserve per year for monitoring purposes. A wood collecting permit is valid for one year and is given to individuals that are collecting wood for use at home. No mechanical machinery may be used on a wood collecting permit.

This quarter, three wood collecting permits were issued to three local residents for Pelican Park / Zeekoevlei Sections.

Woody Invasive Vegetation Follow-up

Strandfontein Birding Area

Follow-up clearing was conducted by the Invasive Alien Species Unit during the month of February 2017. This clearing was conducted in management blocks 8, 10 and 11. Species such as Port Jackson (*Acacia saligna*) and Rooikraans (*Acacia Cyclops*) were removed.

Zeekoevlei Section

Follow-up alien clearing was conducted on the eastern shore during this quarter. There is lots of work that still needs to be done on the eastern shore with regard to aliens, but fortunately we are keeping it at bay. Species such as Port Jackson, Rooikraans and Bluegum (*Eucalyptus globulus*) were removed. Billy's block and the section behind the gate house should be earmarked for clearing in the next financial year.

Rondevlei Section

Follow-up clearing was conducted by the Invasive Alien Species Unit for the past quarter. The entire terrestrial area was demarcated for clearing and was done by a contractor. After three weeks of clearing Dalton Gibbs observed the contractor had sprayed herbicide in the Erica field's seasonal wetland and the 2016 ecological burn area. This has caused many endangered and critically endangered plant species to be killed. The wetland is known for hosting Cape Platanna (*Xenopus gilli*), which only occurs in Cape Town, is an endangered species that inhabits undisturbed acidic pools in Cape Flats Sand Fynbos.

This matter has been raised with the Invasive Alien Species Unit in order for this never to happen in future. We have raised our concerns as to how it could have happened when it was clearly stated that no herbicide should be used in these areas.

Zandwolf Section

Initial clearing of management blocks 7 and 8 was conducted through the Invasive Alien Species Unit. The total area of the blocks is approximately 58 ha and is located south of the Mitchells Plain Sewage Works and the Rocklands area. Species such as Port Jackson and Rooikraans were removed.

Follow-up clearing was conducted by False Bay Nature Reserve staff. While conducting the clearing, staff came across three waste skips belonging to Quetzal Trading. The company was contacted, but to date the skips have not been removed.

Pelican Park Section

Follow-up clearing was conducted on the boarder of management blocks 1, 2, 8 and 9 which is adjacent to the land set aside for developing the rest of Pelican Park. This was conducted to keep a buffer between housing land and the False Bay Nature Reserve. Species such as Port Jackson and Rooikraans were removed.

Flora – Indigenous Flora Management

Veld Rehabilitation at Zeekoevlei Section: Zeekoevlei Eastern Shore Veld Rehabilitation Project

Plans have long been underway to run a pilot veld rehabilitation project along a section of the eastern shoreline of Zeekoevlei. This project aims to test the feasibility of rehabilitating the entire eastern shoreline. On 19 July 2016, the project was finally implemented, mainly through the enthusiastic efforts and hard work of Mrs Suretha Dorse from the City of Cape Town Environmental Resource Management Department, who has been driving this project.

Close monitoring of the rehabilitation site has been ongoing since the projects implementation. The focus of these efforts has been to monitor the emergence of alien invasive vegetation (for the planning of clearing interventions), to identify any maintenance activities required e.g. weeding and localised watering of plants, and to monitor faunal species visiting the site.

There has been a surprising lack of the expected alien species – Port Jackson (*Acacia saligna*) and Rooikraans (*Acacia cyclops*). The alien plant we have found in the largest quantities is the Kikuyu grass (*Pennisetum clandestinum*) which is being closely monitored.

Erosion on the 'dune' sections of the rehabilitation section has been noted. A plan to move gum branches – empty of leaves and seeds is in the process of being implemented. The serious restriction of staff to do the job is hindering the process.

Plant Species Surveys at Pelican Park Section

On-going flora surveys are conducted at the Pelican Park Section in order to update the plant species list for the site. Three plant identification surveys were conducted this quarter (once a month), where staff and learners from the Pelican Park and Strandfontein Sections were assisted by Robin and Pat Burnett of the Zandvlei Trust (Friends group).

5. FAUNA

Fauna - Indigenous Fauna Management:

Notable Faunal Sightings at False Bay Nature Reserve

Strandfontein Section

We had a Spotted Crake (*Porzana porzana*) showing up early in this quarter and seemed to be roaming around in P2 for quite some time. This has attracted birders from far and wide as this is the first sighting of a Spotted Crake in the Cape Town area and a first for Strandfontein.

Rondevlei Section

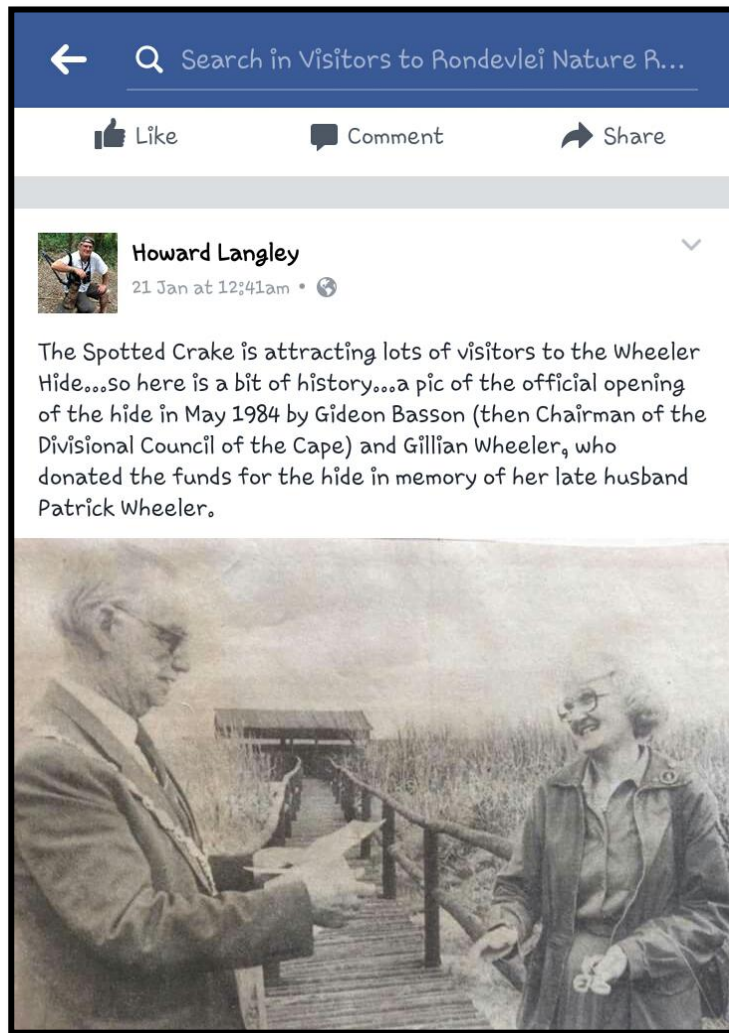
Shortly after the Spotted Crake was spotted in Strandfontein, another one showed up at Rondevlei, which made it the second sighting for Cape Town and a first for Rondevlei. The bird was roaming around the Patrick Wheeler hide for three weeks. This bird attracted more birding enthusiasts than the one in Strandfontein, as this crake was close to the bird hide which made it better for photographers to capture amazing photographs of this rare sighting. Rondevlei was alive with birders trying to get that perfect shot of this bird.

While everything was buzzing around the Wheeler Hide, Mr Howard Langley (one of the previous managers of Rondevlei) shared this bit of history on the Visitors to Rondevlei Facebook page.

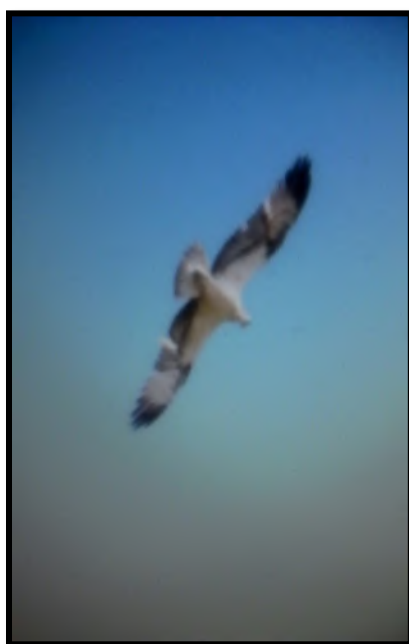


Spotted Crake (*Porzana porzana*) (Photos: D. Sheard 2017).

On the 16th February 2016 a Western Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*) was spotted flying over Rondevlei. The sighting is a first for Rondevlei section and very interesting. The photo quality below is very bad but is good enough to identify it as a western osprey.



Mr Langley's Facebook post, sharing a bit of history about the Patrick Wheeler bird hide



Western Osprey photographed over Rondevlei Section (Photo: D. Sheard 2017)

Human Wildlife Conflict

On the 11th January 2017 The rangers received a call from a resident that a nest had fallen out of the tree and she was worried about stray cats attacking the nestlings. The nest was rescued and taken through to the SPCA.



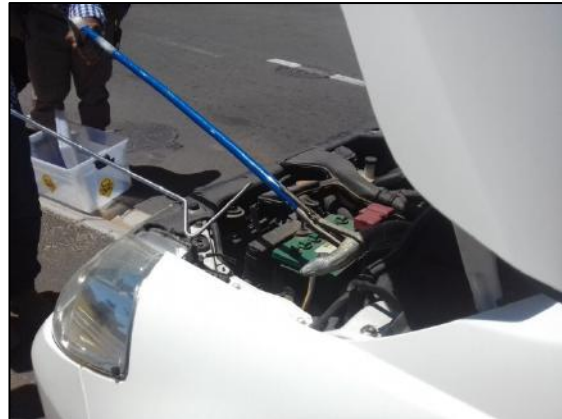
Nest with nestlings rescued from stray cats (Photo: Integrity team 2017).

On the same day Red Breasted Sparrow Hawk (*Accipiter rufiventris*) was confiscated from gang members. The bird was in good condition and after two days of monitoring the bird was rung and released.



Rashaad Satardien with the rescued Red Breasted Sparrow hawk (Photo: Integrity team 2017).

On the 13th January 2017 A Mole snake (*Pseudaspis cana*) was found in the engine of a Zeekoevlei visitor. The Mole snake was successfully removed by Clint Williams and released back into the veld.



Mole snake being removed from the car engine of a Zeekoevlei visitor (Photo: M. Wyngaard 2017).

On the 19th January 2017 a call to the Quemic control room informed the rangers that there was an injured Greater Flamingo (*Phoenicopterus roseus*) at the Zeekoevlei weir. The flamingo was rescued but unfortunately was seriously injured so had to be euthanized.

On the 8th February 2017 a call from the sewage works notified False Bay staff that there was a Greater Flamingo (*Phoenicopterus roseus*) stuck in the sludge by one of their screws. Efforts by False Bay staff and the rangers ensured a successful rescue of the flamingo. The flamingo was taken through to the SPCA.



Flamingo rescue from the sewage works (Photos: V. Day 2017).

On the 25th February 2017 a call came into the Quemic control room about a Western Leopard Toad (*Amietophrynus pantherinus*) in a ladies garden that she wanted removed. The rangers went through and collected the toad and released it into False Bay Nature Reserve.



Leopard Toad collected and relocated (Photo: Integrity team 2017).

An injured dog (*Canis lupus familiaris*) was found along Eastern shore. The rangers called the SPCA and the dog was collected.

On the 16th March 2017 while conservation staff were pumping water out M1 in SBA, they noticed a snake around one of the boma support poles. At first the staff thought it was a Mole snake (*Pseudaspis cana*) which then turned out to be a Cape Cobra (*Naja nivea*). The cobra was then caught and moved away from the boma as it poses a danger to staff working there.



S. Khan and the cape cobra (Photo: C. Gedult 2017).

Fauna – Monitoring

Strandfontein Section

The monthly Coordinated Waterbird Counts (CWAC) was conducted this quarter. The CWAC counts are conducted by members of the Cape Bird Club in conjunction with False Bay Nature Reserve staff. CWAC counts are done nationally.

Rondevlei Section

The monthly bird counts were conducted this quarter by the False Bay Nature Reserve staff. This count is conducted on every Wednesday closest to the 15th of each month. The bird count starts at the first viewing tower and ends at the Scotto Hide. On the way back to the first tower nothing is counted to avoid duplicate counting.

Hippopotamus (*Hippopotamus amphibius*) Capture Operation

The hippo has been in the Strandfontein Birding Area since last year. Soon after we were aware of him being there, we firstly contained him to a suitable area using electric fencing. The animal seems to be quite happy in his new environment and never tried attacking the electric fence. He is a young male, which was probably chased out of Rondevlei Section by the dominant male, and was seeking refuge in a suitable area away from the dominant male.

The boma was constructed in this last quarter and the container was moved from Rondevlei Section to Strandfontein Birding Area. After it was constructed we added water into the M1 pan to make the animal more comfortable close to the boma. The next step is to lure the animal into the boma with Lucerne and close the boma door. Once the hippo is in the boma the transport team will take over from that point.



A crane truck moving the container from Rondevlei to Strandfontein and capture boma construction work (Photo: S. Khan 2017).

6. SOIL

Nothing to report for this quarter.

7. WATER

Water Level Management at False Bay Nature Reserve

Strandfontein Section

Strandfontein Section contains a series of 22 sewage retention pans which are part of the Cape Flats Waste Water Treatment Works (CFWWTW). The pans are interlinked by means of inflow and outflow weirs. The water level in all the pans (primary, secondary and tertiary) can be manipulated by means of placing wooden planks into the weir to prevent water from flowing in or out of the pan (FBNR IRMP, 2011). As previously reported in the last quarter, the water levels in P1 and P2 were closed off to create a habitat comprised of sandy islands, shallow water and large littoral edges, which is perfect for wader bird species.

Rondevlei Section: Draw down

This quarter we opened the weir at Rondevlei in order to flush the excess nutrients. Nutrients brought down from the catchment are trapped in the water body and thus causes eutrophication in Rondevlei. Eutrophication could cause the system to collapse completely if it is not managed correctly. Once the vlei is dried, we catch-up with some maintenance that could not be completed while the vlei was full e.g. reed clearing, weir maintenance, etc. The weir was opened on the 1st February 2017 and will be closed in May.

Shoreline Maintenance Plans at Zeekoevlei Section

As of the first of January 2017, all issued shoreline plans expired. We are currently going through the process of renewing the shoreline plans. As of the 30 of March, 28 plans have been renewed with four plans pending due to outstanding shoreline diagrams. The requests for renewing the shoreline plans have had a very slow response even with two letter drops and two electronic notices. It is expected that there will be a rush of applications closer to the drawdown period.

Litter Removal from the Zeekoevlei Section

Water Monitoring at Zeekoevlei and Rondevlei Sections

Water samples are taken at various points in the Zeekoevlei and Rondevlei Sections to monitor water quality. Monthly water samples are collected and analysed by staff of the City of Cape Town's Scientific Services Department. Results are received and distributed to the relevant reserve managers and interested parties on a monthly basis through the Biodiversity Management Branch. Additional quarterly water sampling is conducted at two points along the eastern and southern shore of Zeekoevlei and at one point at Rondevlei Section located in the seasonal wetland to the south of the main wetland, known as Moddervlei. These water samples are collected by reserve staff and transported to the Scientific Services Department on the same morning of sampling before 10 am.

The quarterly water sampling was conducted at Zeekoevlei (Eastern shore) and Rondevlei (Moddervlei) on the 16th February 2017.

8. FIRE

Prescribed Ecological Burns at False Bay Nature Reserve:

Ecological burn preparation

False Bay Nature Reserve: Rondevlei section is planning to conduct a prescribed burn for fuel reduction purposes. The burn is planned to take place along the Northern and Eastern shores of Rondevlei. The prescribed burn is aimed at reducing the nutrient loading in the Rondevlei reed beds, particularly in burning material that has been cut. This in controlling reed beds which reduces the *Typha capensis* seeds (fluff) that is produced when the plants flower in autumn. If cut material is left behind, the nutrients are liberated and stimulate further reed growth.

Reed beds are important filters that remove nutrients out of the polluted City water that flows into wetlands.

It is important to note that the prescribed burn will only take place under ideal weather conditions, and upon obtaining burning permits from the City's Air Pollution and Fire and Rescue Departments.

The preparation for the ecological burn has commenced.

Wildfires at False Bay Nature Reserve

2017 has had a rather busy fire season. Members from the False Bay team have assisted on a few of the larger fires on Table Mountain and at the Stellenbosch fire.



False Bay Staff at the Stellenbosch fire (Photo: S. Dreyer 2017).

There were 5 recorded fires this quarter: four wild fires of unknown causes and one wild fire caused by arson.

15 February 2017 – Arson at the Southern bridge of Zeekoevlei. The suspects fled before they could be caught. The suspects set fire to the veld because they were denied entry through a non-entry point. The fire was extinguished successfully by Fire and Rescue, Quemic and False Bay Nature Reserve staff.

04 March 2017 – There was a wildfire at Southern Bridge, Slangetjiebos. The fire was contained fairly quickly by the Quemic rangers. Lakeside Fire Department assisted with mopping up and the fire was completely extinguished by 18h25. The temperature weather conditions for that day were a high of 21°C with 10km/h winds in a south-westerly direction and a relative humidity of 56%.

09 March 2017 – There was a wildfire in Management block 2, at Zandwolf. The fire was contained fairly quickly by the Lakeside Fire Department and Working on Fire crews. The weather conditions for the day were a high of 32°C with 29km/h winds in a south easterly direction and a relative humidity of 32%.

10 March 2017 – Wildfire at Zandwolf. A fire in the Zandwolf Section close to Baden-Powell road was contained fairly quickly by the Mitchells Plain Fire Station and Quemic rangers. Quemic assisted with the mop up. The weather conditions for that day were a high of 33°C with 15km/h winds in a southerly direction and a relative humidity of 29%.

16 March 2017 – There was a fire behind Capricorn Business Park within Slangetjiebos. Quemic rangers with the assistance of Lakeside Fire Department contained and extinguished the fire. The weather conditions for the day were a high of 24°C with 15km/h winds in a north north westerly direction and a relative humidity of 47%.



Lakeside Fire Department extinguishing the fire in Slangetjiebos (Photos:

Ecological Burn at Tygerberg Nature Reserve

On the 6th February 2017 False Bay Nature Reserve staff assisted at the ecological burn at Tygerberg Nature Reserve. The area that was burnt was quite small, but was situated between the residential area. The burn was successful and was conducted in conjunction with the City of Cape Town's Fire Department.



Ecological burn at Tygerberg Nature Reserve (Photos: S. Khan 2017).

9. PEOPLE, TOURISM & EDUCATION

Volunteers at False Bay Nature Reserve

False Bay Nature Reserve regularly receives assistance from volunteers, which is greatly appreciated as this helps increase staff capacity for carrying out various important conservation activities.

This quarter False Bay Nature Reserve received assistance from a second year Cape Peninsula University of Technology student, Tashreeqah Sadan. Ms Sadan worked alongside the Conservation Unit, under Reserve Supervisor, Shihabuddeen Khan. The work done included, but was not limited to; performing bird counts, clearing of reeds, alien vegetation clearing and monitoring.

Environmental Education at False Bay Nature Reserve

Wetlands Month and Water Month are celebrated at the reserve during the months of February and March respectively. This February focus was placed on the importance of wetlands and the role they play in mitigating natural disasters. A number of schools, as well as The University of the Third Age (U3A), visited the Rondevlei Section to learn more about this valuable ecosystem.

Various groups have visited the different sections of the FBNR for day programmes and overnight programmes with the Cape Town Environmental Education Trust (CTEET) this quarter. In celebration of Water Month, CTEET initiated a Water Awareness Campaign at Jam Eyyatul Qurraa (JEQ) Primary School.

Overnight environmental education programmes have been conducted by the Cape Town Environmental Education Trust staff at both the Zeekoevlei Environmental Education Centre and the False Bay Ecology Park Environmental Education facility. Groups participating in the overnight programmes included Sir Lowry's Pass Primary School, Strandfontein Primary School, Clarke Primary School, Balvenie Primary School, and Battswood Primary School, to name just a few. CTEET also conducted day programmes on site with Kommetjie Primary School.



Learners from the Imagineers Home School group captivated by the terrapin (Photo: Carimah Fataar 2017).



Learners from Rustenburg Girls' Junior School playing an ice-breaker game with the FBNR student, Liezal Slinger (Photo: J. van Eeden 2017).



Water Programme with JEQ Primary (Photo: CTEET 2017).

Table 1: Environmental Education Stats January – March 2017

Programmes	No. of schools	No. of learners	No. of Adults	No. of teachers	Hours of programmes
CCT on reserves	4	221	145	12	27
CCT off reserves	0	0	0	0	0
Partner organisation on reserves	1	38	12	2	2
CTEET on reserves	1	122	27	8	19.5
CTEET camps – ZEEP	5	175	60	24	498
CTEET camps - FBEC	4	248	9	24	90
CTEET off reserves	1	53	23	2	60

10. STAFF MATTERS

Staff Training and Development

False Bay Nature Reserve prides itself for training and developing individuals in various skills and experiences related to nature conservation. Developing people in a workplace scenario bears great benefits not just to the individual and to the organisation, but to the broader industry of nature conservation as a whole.

The student attended the student induction hosted at FBNR. They are introduced to different city policies and guidelines and learn skills that they can use in the coming year. It last for one week and includes all the students employed by the city of Cape Town nature conservation.

Informal Staff training

On 10/03/2017 and 16/03/2017, three informal training sessions were held with the rangers and V. Day to go through the different types of permits they will come across inside the False Bay Nature Reserve and what they should look for when examining the permits. This training has already shown positive results especially with the fishing at Zeekoevlei.



Ranger training session with Victoria Day (Photos: R. Satardien 2017).

New Staff

Dylan Mentor is the student doing he's Work Intergrated Learning (WIL) year at FBNR for 2017. To complete this year he will work alongside the staff to gain experience in the different disciplines of reserve management to obtain his National Diploma.



Dylan Mentor, FBNR student 2017 (Photo: M. Samsodien 2017).

False Bay Nature Reserve was fortunate to get two seasonal worker posts. Zinia Baatjies and Chanel Thomas were awarded the three month contract. Zinia Baatjies has come through the EPWP project and has been working on the eastern shore for the past four years. It is a lovely success story that shows that the skills gained through the EPWP project assists people in getting better opportunities for themselves. Zinia was placed at Zeekoevlei to assist with the eastern shore and Chanel was placed at Rondevlei to keep the public facilities clean.



Chanel Thomas (LHS), new seasonal worker for three months based at Rondevlei, and Zinia Baatjies (RHS), new seasonal worker for three months based at Zeekoevlei (Photos: V. Day 2017).

Eastern Shore EPWP Project

The current EPWP project is still continuing to run smoothly and the projects projected end date is still the 9 of April.

Ward Allocation EPWP Project

Zeekoevlei Section was awarded some money through a Ward allocation. This money is going to be used once the current EPWP eastern shore maintenance project comes to an end on the 9th of April. The process to get the EPWP project up and running has had a bit of a wobbly start. It took six weeks to get the Project Initiation Document (PID) approved which will delay getting the staff on the ground. The PID was finally approved on Friday 30 of March.

New Health and Safety Representatives

For the past 20 years Henry Pheiffer has been the Health and Safety Rep for the False Bay Nature Reserve. He has done a wonderful job over the past years keeping us safe. He had now been relieved of the position allowing him to focus on his other work. Ashley Barry and Andrew Arries were both voted in as the new Health and Safety Representatives. They are both looking forward to this new challenge and taken on this new responsibility with enthusiasm!



Henry Pheiffer (LHS), the safety rep for False Bay Nature Reserve for the past 20 years, and Andrew Arries and Ashley Barry (RHS), the new safety reps. (Photos: V. Day 2017).

Strandfontein EPWP Staff

Thanks to funding from the Greenest Metro Fund the upgrade to the Bird Information Centre could be done. Other projects to be done in the area include an Eco-loo which will be built near the entrance to Strandfontein section; and a Bird hide that will be built in the P2 pan. The upgrade and new projects in Strandfontein are being done through Vital Connections. Whilst the company is sorting out the materials and equipment needed for the projects and upgrades, we have been able to utilise their Extended Public Work Programme (EPWP) staff on other projects around False Bay Nature Reserve.

The EPWP staff started on the 15th of February with small jobs around the reserve whilst waiting for the upgrades and other projects to begin. To date they have removed and erected a section of fencing opposite the EE-Centre (approximately 130m), they have done alien clearing in Strandfontein Birding Section (Block 2) removing Port Jackson (*Acacia saligna*), Rooikraans (*Acacia cyclops*) and Manatoka (*Myoporum tenuifolium*).

The team has been involved with moving the reeds, previously cleared by the working for wetlands team, near the retention pans in Zeekoevlei. The reeds needed to be moved closer to the road so that the truck was able to access them and remove them from site.

The team is currently working on clearing reeds from around the fishing platforms at Rondevlei.

11. LAW ENFORCEMENT

Law Enforcement – Planning and Patrols

Patrols for the Slangetijebos, Zandwolf, Pelican Park and Zeekoevlei sections are taking place on a regular basis by the Quemic rangers.

Law Enforcement infringements at the False Bay Nature Reserve

Zeekoevlei Section

January

05/01/2017: Alarm activation eastern shore: One of the alarms in the toilet block 2 went off, on inspection the integrity team found that there were three people sitting inside the toilet block. A verbal warning was issued and they were escorted off site.

10/01/2017: Fire in a non-designated spot: Smoke was seen from the Zeekoevlei gate house on further investigation by the rangers it was someone who had made a fire in a metal drum. The fire was extinguished.

18/01/2017: Vandalism: one of the doors in toilet block 5 was found hanging off one of its hinges by the integrity team. The door was removed for the evening and rehung by the reserve staff the next day.



Door found in toilet block no. 5 hanging by its hinges (Photo: Integrity team 2017).

22/01/2017: Illegal water usage: a gentleman was found illegally pumping water from the Little Lotus River. The integrity team issued them with a warning and escorted them off site.



Illegal water usage (Photo: Integrity team 2017).

For Zeekoevlei eastern shore there was a total of nine toilet block alarm activations during the month of January. All activations were checked out, one activation provided an irregularity and was dealt with accordingly.

February

12/02/2017: Illegal possession of drugs: a gentleman was found in the parking lot of the False Bay Headquarters smoking cannabis. He was caught and escorted off the reserve by the integrity team.

15/02/2017: Arson at Southern Bridge: two young males were refused entry at the Southern Bridge, this is not a legal access point, they were chased out of the reserve and they set fire to the veld. Unfortunately the two suspects were not caught. Fire and Rescue, Quemic and Nature Conservation extinguished the fire.

16/02/2017: Public indecency: Two people were found performing indecent acts at the False Bay headquarters. These two people were given a verbal warning and banned from the reserve.

20/02/2017: Illegal copper burning: 4 suspects were caught on Eastern shore burning copper wire. Law enforcement was called and a R2 550 was issued.

26/02/2017: Attempted rape: a five year old girl was rescued by the Quemic rangers from an attempted rape. The man in question was held and arrested by SAPS. The victim was given over to the police for safe keeping until her parents came and collected her.

26/02/2017: Trespassing at Southern Bridge: five males and one dog jumped the fence line at Southern Bridge. SAPS were called but the suspects fled the reserve before they arrived.

March

06/03/2017: Public indecency on Eastern shore: The integrity team found a couple engaged in indecent acts. They were issued a verbal warning and escorted off the reserve.

10/03/2017: Illegal flora harvesting: Quemic noticed a man cutting grass with a sickle at the Little Lotus River. On further inspection they found he did not have a letter of permission to cut the grass. The man in question was issued a verbal warning and had the grass confiscated.

23/03/2017: Fishing outside the fishing permit allowances: Quemic was conducting a patrol on Eastern shore. They found two gentlemen fishing with one permit and four fishing rods. The rule at Zeekoevlei is two fishing rods per permit. Quemic informed the fishermen about this and they removed two of their rods from the vlei.

25/03/2017: Public indecency: Quemic was patrolling on Eastern shore, they found two people performing indecent acts. They were issued with a verbal warning and escorted off site.

25/03/2017: Illegal flora harvesting: Whilst on patrol Quemic and the student on duty noticed a man removing something off the ground. On closer inspection they found he was digging up April fool plants (*Haemanthus coccineus*). The plants were confiscated and replanted back in the reserve. The man was issued a verbal warning and escorted off site.

27/03/2017: A visitor came to the gate house complaining that a male had smashed her driver's window. SAPS were notified at 18h10. The group of nine men left the reserve; they were extremely aggressive and verbally abusive. They got into a taxi and left. Quemic advised the lady to go and make a case at the SAPS in Grassy Park. SAPS arrived on site at 19h18, by which time the lady had left the reserve.

30/03/2017: trespassing in Billy's Block: Quemic witnessed four adult males jumping over the fence in to Billy's Block. Quemic approached the four males and informed them they were trespassing, issued them a verbal warning and escorted them off site.

During the month of March there were 4 alarm activations on Eastern shore. All alarms provided no irregularities.

Pelican Park Section

January

10/01/2017: Livestock trespassing: It was reported that there were cows and goats roaming on the Pelican Park section of False Bay Nature Reserve. On inspection it was found that 127 cows and 139 goats were present. Once the owner had been found it was agreed to move the animals off site.



Photos left to right: Reserve staff speaking to the shepherds (M. Samsodien 2017); the cows and goats found on Pelican Park (C. Williams 2017).

Zandwolf Section

January

20/01/2017: Makeshift structures in the Zandwolf Section: Dylan Mentor and Henry Pheiffer accompanied the Land Invasion Unit to the 6 makeshift units found on patrol earlier that week. The occupants could not be found, the structures have not been moved as Land Invasion currently does not have the resources to do so.



Members of the Land Invasion Unit looking for signs that the dwelling is occupied (Photo: D. Mentor 2017).

27/01/2017: Removal of sludge on Lukannon drive: On the 27th January the operation to remove the sludge on Lukannon drive commenced. A front end loader was on site to pull the sand on the road. A hand crew then separated the sludge and the sand, the sludge was collected for disposal and the sand returned to the dune. Dylan Mentor was present as the representative for the reserve to ensure that the methods used were those agreed on and that no further damage was done to the surrounding environment.



Front end loader clearing sludge off the dunes (Photo: D. Mentor 2017).

February

16/02/2017: Illegal Skips: A patrol was being conducted by Clint Williams and Andrew Aries; three skips were found illegally placed there. The company was contacted and they were unaware of the skips location. The skips are still present on site and we are trying to get them removed.

17/02/2017: Illegal harvesting: Whilst Andrew Arries and Clint Williams went to check on the skips they found people illegally harvesting flowers on the Zandwolf Section. The flowers were confiscated and the people issued a warning.

Strandfontein Section

January

23/01/2017: Public indecency: two people were asked to leave the reserve after being found about to commit acts of public indecency.

March

23/03/2017: Illegal Helicopter landing: A helicopter was caught landing by P2. The case is currently being dealt with.

12. INFRASTRUCTURE & EQUIPMENT

As part of the Health and Safety of FBNR the fire extinguishers and fire blankets were replaced and refilled as need. Two hose reels and housing units were installed at the FBEP EE centre; the old reels were badly rusted and not operational. These were replaced, and to slow the future rust problems the housing units were installed.

Safety and directional signage was installed at Zeekoevlei and Rondevlei as identified by the health and safety checks.

Operationally Funded Projects

There are four concrete storage units by the False Bay Ecology Park Environmental Education Centre (FBEP). These units will be used to store sand, stone and the skip. The problem was the fence was in the wrong place for trucks to access the concrete units. This fence was moved by the Strandfontein EPWP team. A truck was organised to come and clear out the units but due to a professional driving licence (pdrp) expiring the truck driver was unable to drive the truck. We are currently waiting for the issue with the drivers licence to be fixed.



Section of fence line at the concrete revetments before it was moved (Photos: V. Day 2017).

Rondevlei Weir

The weir at Rondevlei has been broken and leaking for the past year. Now that the water has been drained, the weir can be fixed and ready for the following year.



False Bay Nature Reserve staff fixing the Rondevlei weir (Photos: S. Khan 2017).

Rondevlei Visitor Facility Repairs

A number of repairs were done in the Rondevlei visitor area apart from the regular maintenance done in the area.

This included installing wheelchair access at the disabled toilet. This was done by Henry Pheiffer and Dylan Mentor. The first tile was removed and replaced using cement.

The pump at the tearoom was replaced by Tony van Ginkel and all plumbing at the tearoom is finally operational again.

The windows of the old Rondevlei office were repaired as they were broken by strong winds over the December period. This building will be used to house the current students, while the student quarters currently undergo maintenance.



Henry Pheiffer fixing and building the wheel chair ramp (D. Mentor 2017).

Zeekoevlei Eastern Shore Repairs

Due to staff constraints the eastern shore visitor facilities were being maintained by 6 EPWP staff on alternating shifts of 3 members per team. Although the braai areas and toilet facilities were being cleaned and maintained certain other tasks were not being reached. Some extra hands and skills were directed to assist and they had the flower beds weeded, the grass cut and damage to the infrastructure repaired. Some of the boundary walls were damaged for various reasons and the bricks and hard tops had to be relayed. Henry Pheiffer used this opportunity to teach Dylan Mentor and Beryl Steers how to do some bricklaying.



Dylan, Beryl and Henry fixing damage boundary wall (D. Mentor and B. Steers 2017).

Little Lotus Vacant Plot

A vacant plot next to the Little Lotus River was allegedly being used for illegal activities according to the residents adjacent to it. In a combined operation with the Parks Department we agreed to clear the area. Reserve staff cleared all the *Crysanthemoides monilifera* on the site, and Parks then cleared the Eucalyptus species, and cut the grass to increase visibility. The area will now be added to Parks maintenance schedule and cleared accordingly.