

## ***Technology and industry come to the aid of Paarden Eiland Blacksmith Lapwings - Plovers*** by Frank Wygold.



*photograph supplied by Frank Wygold*

*The nesting site with one of the 30 trees relocated from the Cape Town Parade after the World Cup upgrade. See the chevrons erected to demarcate the area.*

Just before Christmas 2010 during the shutdown of the factories and businesses in Paarden Eiland, Mr and Mrs Blacksmith Plover completed their nuptials and looked around for a quiet neighbourhood in which to start their family. They found what they thought to be the ideal place on the edge of the Zoarvlei (the Paarden Eiland Wetlands) under one of the trees relocated from the Parade in Cape Town and near the kerb of a turning circle in Gray Street.



*photograph supplied by Frank Wygold*

*Mrs Blacksmith incubating the eggs.*

The nest, a shallow scrape in the ground and lined with small pebbles, was prepared. Mrs Blacksmith Plover laid three eggs and together with Mr Plover they proceeded to incubate the eggs in peace and tranquillity until.... 10 January 2011, when all hell broke loose: the factories re-opened after the holidays, there was the buzz of hundreds of people moving about and giant diesel trucks hauling containers started using the turning circle. To the two little plovers, it was like a war zone.

Lisa Procter, the observant manager of a company in Gray Street alerted Patricia Tallant, manager of the Paarden Eiland City Improvement District (PECID), and Brynie Victor, a member of the PECID Environmental team.



*photograph supplied by Frank Wygold*

*The eggs.*

Urgent calls were made to Dr Frank Wygold of the Friends of Paarden Eiland Wetlands for advice on how best to handle the situation. Traffic chevrons, hastily borrowed from one of the BRT contractors, were placed around the site to give further protection.

Camera control operators, who monitor all the security cameras in Paarden Eiland, were asked to keep a close watch on the nest site and dispatch PECID security patrol officers to alert any pedestrians and vehicles approaching the nesting mother and eggs. Truckers who stopped on the circle were asked to move on and pedestrians were encouraged to walk on the opposite side of the road.



*photograph supplied by Frank Wygold*

*Mrs Blacksmith being monitored by the security camera - date, time and place captured.*

For the next five days vigilance of the Plover family was paramount and early on Friday, 14 January, it paid off as two babies emerged from the eggs. The third egg's occupant, however, ignored the rule of synchronizing hatching for its species and caused a bit of a panic in case the pied crows, common in the area, should discover the chicks already hatched with fatal results.

Fortunately, by 17h00 the third chick broke from his bondage and shortly afterwards the parents led their babies away to safety into the tall vegetation of the Zoarvlei.