

## Conservation Corner: October 2023

By Jane Doherty

Environmental education helps raise awareness and build knowledge about the issues affecting the natural world. It also equips learners with skills to contribute to conservation efforts. Environmental education can be particularly effective when it addresses local issues and allows learners to gain hands-on experience.



Photo: Jane Doherty

At the end of August and into September, learners at The Floreat Primary School began planting locally indigenous plants in a degraded patch of land which is being converted into an outdoor classroom and indigenous garden. The Cape Bird Club has donated R40,000 towards the realisation of this initiative, which is also supported by the Ingcungcu Sunbird Restoration Project. Learners from the Floreat Educational Environmental and Gardening Clubs have planned the space under the guidance of the school's Deputy Head, Kristi Rossouw.

It will take three years to establish the indigenous garden which is designed to attract insects and birds. Learners will be able to witness the return of nature as a result of rehabilitating the land through their own efforts.



Photo: Jane Doherty



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More on the Floreat Educational Environmental Club can be found at [https://www.birdlife.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/BirdLife-South-Africa-Owl-Awards-2022\\_Citations.pdf](https://www.birdlife.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/BirdLife-South-Africa-Owl-Awards-2022_Citations.pdf), as it was a recipient of Birdlife South Africa's Owl Award in 2022.

This year the Cape Bird Club also donated funds to help rehabilitate two natural areas in the City: a natural dune in Westridge Gardens in Mitchell's Plain, and a new wetland on the Lower Liesbeek, Observatory.

Here are a few photos to show you how these areas looked at the end of the rainy season (in early November). The plants have taken well at both sites, although the bulbs at Westridge are now dormant and no longer visible. Both sites now face the challenge of a hot, windy summer. Once the sites have become fully

established later next year, we will report in more detail on the progress they have made.



The location of the dune rehabilitation site in Westridge Gardens. Alien plants will be removed, and locally indigenous species re-planted, over the next three years.

*Photo: Cliff Dorse*



There are very few remnants of Cape Flats Dune Strandveld, which makes the rehabilitation of this site important.

*Photo: Cliff Dorse*



The new wetland on the Lower Liesbeek is now dry. Seasonal wetlands are important as they support plant and animal species that do not occur in permanent water bodies.

*Photo: Jane Doherty*



In November, Cliff Dorse visited the wetland to discuss how to manage weeds and potential kikuyu encroachment with Nick Fordyce and Jessleena Suri from the Friends of the Liesbeek.

*Photo: Jane Doherty*

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<https://www.capebirdclub.org.za/conservation-corner/>