



NOETZIE CONSERVANCY OWNERS' ASSOCIATION

Newsletter

Spring 2009

Chairman's Chat

Carl Metelerkamp

I am very pleased to report that the 2008 committee members in their existing portfolios were retained for 2009 at the AGM and I agreed to continue in the chair for a further year. It really was great to see the wonderful turnout and lively debate at our last AGM in December 2008 and judging by the turnout and vast majority of properties represented there, I think anybody alleging that the NCOA only consists of a small number of people would have been proved absolutely totally wrong.

The NCOA committee has met regularly on a monthly basis this past year and I am happy to inform you that we have succeeded in keeping Noetzie outside Knysna's proposed "Urban Edge" and that after a long battle, Pezula has re-opened their access road from the car park to the top of the municipal steps to the general public! Well done to Julie Gosling for all her efforts in tackling this issue head on, hopefully the proposed boardwalk through the forest can now be shelved.

Many of our parents and grandparents successfully opposed the apartheid regimes attempt to impose their cornerstone "group areas act" at Noetzie thereby ensuring that Noetzie remained open to all who wanted to visit it during that unjust period in our past. I was so sad to recently read in an online article entitled "**Knysna: Is the magic over?**" by Andrew Barnes on www.GoTravel24.com that a perception has been created whereas the general public feels unwelcome at Noetzie, almost like economic apartheid! Some quotes from the article below.

"....a short drive along the N2 up to Noetzie and its castles is still a magical thing to do, even if the golf estate is slowly swallowing it all up. What used to be a sprawling natural reserve has been eaten away to the point that day-trippers now feel more like trespassers."

"Noetzie is jaw-droppingly stunning, but I couldn't help but feel a little sad for anyone who hasn't seen Noetzie the way it used to be; before the branded beach umbrellas and all the bespoke plots on the golf estate. If you've been before, don't go back. Rather remember it the way it used to be."

For the full article and readers comments go to <http://www.gotravel24.com/theme/feature-focus/knysna-noetzie-magic-over>

The NCOA and its members in their individual capacity, at great personal expense, have fought hard for the last number of years to ensure that access to Noetzie is not inhibited and that illegal commercial activity is not allowed at Noetzie. Even though I can't agree entirely with all Andrew Barnes views we can't ignore his summation on Noetzie and I think based on that it is quite apparent that to date the NCOA has almost lost its battle with the Knysna Municipality with regard to stopping the ongoing illegal trading from Noetzie properties.

We have to keep up this fight, as members of the NCOA we have to continue to ensure that Noetzie is conserved for future generations, not ruined by unnecessary development and commercial activity (like Herolds bay and Victoria bay have been) and most importantly that the public will always feel welcome and want to come back to enjoy unspoiled beauty of Noetzie again.

I look forward to seeing you all at the AGM on the 30th December 2009. I will not be standing for re-election to the committee as I think it's time for someone else to take the chair of the NCOA and I wish to thank you all for your support in the last 3 years.

chairman@noetzie.co.za

Drought Leads to Drastic Measures

Santie den Boestert

Knysna Municipality decided to install a seawater desalination plant on Sedgefield's Myoli Beach before the onset of the holiday season. They raised concerns about growing water shortages for Sedgefield and the possibility that the town's main water supply, the Karatara River, may well dry up before the holiday period.

The Municipality considered the potential water shortage as an emergency and therefore started instalment of the desalination plant without conducting an Environmental Impact Assessment or a public participation process.

The consultants, Cape E A Prac, submitted their Motivation Report to the environmental authorities on Monday, 9th Nov. 2009, and concluded that the plant should not have any significant detrimental environmental impact. The desalination plant is presently being assembled in Cape Town (there is a similar one at Shelley Point) and will be installed during December.

The construction of the beach infrastructure (such as beach wells) should be completed before the end of November.

Environmental organisations are still worried about matters like the noise levels during operation, how much brine will be produced, will it be contaminated by chemicals used during the process, will it have an influence on marine organisms. The visual impact of the plant (12m high) and its ancillary facilities on Sedgefield's most popular beach is also a concern.

environment@noetzie.co.za

Outeniqua Conservancy Forum meeting

Santie den Boestert

There were 3 speakers

1. Keith Spencer of the Goukamma Reserve spoke about the role of Marine Protected Areas and indicated that there is a possibility that the Goukamma Reserve may be extended at some time in the near future.
2. Carol Walton spoke about the Seabird and Penguin Rehabilitation Centre in Mossel Bay that she runs with a vet as partner and showed us pictures of her centre as well as the processes that the poor birds have to endure to get them clean again after oil pollution.
3. Lastly Norman Elwell from Sedgefield spoke about the breeding success of the African Black Oystercatcher in the Garden Route. **Did you know that the life span of an Oystercatcher is 35 years!** He was pleasantly surprised to hear of our healthy population of Oystercatchers at Noetzie.

We were one of the conservancies that had to give feedback on the state of affairs in the conservancy and with the help of Wendy and Julie and their lovely photo's, I was able to give a good presentation. Quite a few people spoke to me afterwards and people who have never been to Noetzie, were very impressed with the beauty of the place and said they definitely wanted to go there and see for themselves.

Two new conservancies joined - Cola Conservancy (between Goukamma and Sedgefield) and Phantom-Homtini (on the Rheenendal road)

environment@noetzie.co.za

Alien Clearing at Noetzie

The NCOA has approached SANParks to assist in clearing alien plants up the Noetzie River. Below is the plan from **Nico Oosthuisen** of **SANParks**, there are 6 places available for NCOA members to join this initiative, so if you are there on the 9/12/2009 **take up the challenge**. Unfortunately SANParks are unable to do this later into December due to annual leave considerations for staff at SANParks.

Dear Santie

Again, thanks for your interest and initiative you took in eradicating alien plants in the Noetzie River and surroundings. I met with Jessica Hayes, Conservation Manager and Rob Botha, Estate Manager from Pezula today, who gave permission for access over their property, to the river. Pezula management is also very keen in assisting with the planned activity. Therefore, a summary of the planning so far:

Project Location: Upper Noetzie River

Area/ Distance: Approximately 1.8km x 20m (10 m from each side of the river)

Duration: 3 days (might be longer)

Access: Via Pezula gate, near office. **All will meet at Pezula Office on 09/12/2009 @ 07h30.** SANParks supervisor and NCOA representative must report at Pezula office every morning, for access. Transport will not be allowed to travel in and out of the gates, for security purposes.

Teams: SANParks = 11 trained workers plus supervisor
Pezula = 6 trained workers plus supervisor (might be more people)
NCOA = 6 volunteers
Total of 23 workers and 2 supervisors

Tools and equipment:

- SANParks will supply PPE, chainsaws, slashers, herbicide and cans for their own labourers. Herbicide will only be applied by trained SANParks workers.
- Pezula will provide own slashers and PPE for the personnel.
- NCOA will mainly assist with hand pulling and stacking.

Work/ Clearing method:

- Area will be approached in two directions, to the upper and lower side of the river.
- The access road divides the river into two sections. The SANParks team will mainly clear the upper section and the rest will do the lower section.
- Both supervisors, from SANParks and Pezula will meet every morning to report on progress.
- Both supervisors will be responsible for recording all production and herbicides used.
- Two herbicide applicators will join the team at the lower river section.
- All hand pulled trees will be stacked above the high water level, at least 30m away from the water course.
- Larger trees will be frilled, ring barked and treated with herbicide.
- All litter will be removed from the site at the end of each day.

Media coverage:

SANParks' Garden Route Media Protocol will apply to all SANParks officials.

NCOA will write an article on the event.

environment@noetzie.co.za

Water quality in the Noetzie River

The NCOA has asked the Knysna Basin Project Association to test water samples taken from the river. Please see their report below.

KNYSNA BASIN PROJECT ASSOCIATION

Established in 1995
for the protection of the Knysna estuary
South Africa

20 November 2009

The Noetzie Conservancy
c/o Action Ads
Knysna
6570

Dear Colleagues,

I have attached the faxed copies of the NHLS laboratory report on the duplicate water samples you left at the filed station on Monday 16 November. The samples were taken to the NHLS laboratory at the Knysna Hospital and sent on Cape Town. Fortunately you had provided sufficient ice to keep the samples cold, and we added more to ensure that they would stay cold until they reached Cape Town. The results are summarized in the table below.


Table 1. Non-potable water test for coliform and *E.coli* density as number of colony forming units (cfu) per 100ml in water samples provided.

Sample details	Total coliform	Faecal <i>E.coli</i>
Harbour	>2419 / >2419	12 / 6
Gilliomme	>2419 / >2419	5 / 6
River	>2419 / >2419	9 / 5

These are excellent results and complement the Conservancy's strong environmental position.

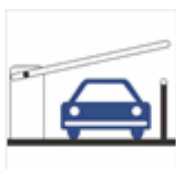
Note that the high values of total coliforms (>2419) tell us that the number of naturally occurring coliform bacteria is high – greater than can be measured by the technique used in the NHLS laboratories. There is nothing sinister about this: coliform bacteria are the commonest naturally occurring bacteria in soils and water. The remarkably low densities of faecal *E.coli*, 5 – 12 cfu/100 ml, provides the assurance that there is no significant external source of faecal pollution.

Best wishes


Brian Allanson

P.O.Box 1186, Knysna. 6570 - Field Laboratory 32 Waenhout Street, Industria, Knysna, 6570
South Africa. Cell 082 551 9738 - tel/fax 044 384 0658 - mail: estuary@rnweb.co.za

Boom gate on the Wagon Road



The boom gate on the wagon road is now permanently manned. The NCOA has printed access disks for property owners. If you want to bring your car down the wagon road you will need a disk, please contact Julie Gosling on 044 384 2913 or contact@noetzie.co.za Hopefully this will help to keep the illegal 4x4's off the beach.

The Garden Route National Park

Santie den Boestert

The new Garden Route National Park, comprising of the Tsitsikamma and Wilderness National Parks, the Knysna National Lake Area, the Southern Cape Indigenous Forests and the associated fynbos Mountain Catchment Areas, was proclaimed in March this year (2009) and the launch took place at the SANParks offices in Knysna.

It is a unique conservation model and there are only three other National Parks in the world where people live inside the borders of a proclaimed park – in Italy, Canada and the USA. The GRNP is the first of its kind on the African continent.

The geographical diversity of these various areas creates an exceptional conservation model and there can be no other park in South Africa that will include the unique combination of coast, lakes, indigenous forest and mountain catchment areas. The GRNP does not have any additional entrances gates and fences to mark its boundaries, other than those already erected at the various parks - the idea being to have "conservation without boundaries"

SANParks, with financial support from the World Bank, is managing a stewardship programme to motivate sustainable management of private land adjacent to the park areas, as private land often links protected areas and has a direct influence on those areas – there are more than 1000 private landowners adjacent to the Park.

Both the Noetzie Conservancy and Sinclair Nature Reserve now fall within this area, which straddles 2 provinces, 2 district municipalities and 4 local municipalities.

environment@noetzie.co.za



NCOA 2009 Membership Fees

Membership fees for 2009 are R250.00 per member.
Please pay your contributions into the following bank account

Account Name: Noetzie Conservancy Owners Association
Bank: Standard Bank
Account: 00 189 849 3
Branch: Sandton 019205

Please could note you name and/or erf number when making payment

Any donations to the NCOA are most welcome

accounts@noetzie.co.za

Low Flying Aircraft



SANParks will deal with any aviation violations within their jurisdiction. With the launch of the Garden Route National Park, Noetzie falls within this area. The number to call is 044 3822095.

CAHRS - Confidential Aviation Hazard Reporting System is based in JHB. Mandla Nkosi is the person that deals with all aviation violations and will send someone to investigate. He can be contacted on 011 5451240.

The vertical limit is also **1000ft** – i.e. no aircraft may fly closer than 1000ft to a cliff or, mountain or building.

Alien Mussels

Gugu Calvo-Ugarteburu
Marine biologist

The Mediterranean mussel *Mytilus galloprovincialis* was first detected on the west coast of SA in the late 1970s, close to the small town of Saldanha. The harbour in Saldanha Bay was at the time frequently used by Spanish fishing vessels, mainly from the north western area of Galicia, where this mussel is commonly cultivated. It was noticed when one researcher was cooking some of the mussels collected and commented on the unexpected orange colour of the gonad, compared with the cream or brown colour of the indigenous mussels to the area. Genetic studies confirmed that it was a different species.



M. galloprovincialis soon became the dominant mussel species on the west coast, where it displaced some of the native mussels, and it started spreading south. By 1994 it was already found in Plettenberg Bay and by the late 90s it was as far as East London. It was feared that it was going to displace the native brown mussel *Perna perna* on the south and east coasts, as it had displaced *Aulacomya ater* on the west coast. However, surveys in areas where *Mytilus* has been established for more than 10 years show that both *Mytilus* and *Perna* seem to have found a way to coexist. If you walk down to the rocks and look carefully at the first mussels you encounter, you will notice that the vast majority have a blue shell, and every now and then you will find one or two with a brown shell. As you walk towards the low water mark you will see that the blue becomes more scarce and the brown more dominant, till you get to the lower intertidal, where the majority of the mussels are brown. The blue mussel is the invasive *M. galloprovincialis*, easily recognized for the blue colour, the single mussel scar and the lack of pits. The brown mussel *P. perna* has an internally divided mussel scar and a pitted ridge on the inside of the shell.

Both mussel species have separate sexes and Males and females are easily recognizable when they are mature by the colour of the gonad (yep, most of what you eat of a mussel is gonad! EEEK!!!!). Females are usually of an orange colour whilst the males are whitish-creamish. Once the mussels are mature they release their eggs and sperm into the water where external fertilization takes place. That is why sometimes you may find a very big mussel with just about no meat inside. Once an egg has been fertilized it takes about 4 to 5 weeks to be ready to settle back on the rocks. Whilst *Mytilus* is a good colonizer, having no problem to settle on bare surfaces, pipelines, jettys, etc. *Perna* seems to prefer to settle in between other mussels.

gugucalvo@yahoo.com

Municipal Water at Noetzie?



Don Lindsay has asked all property owners at Noetzie who may be interested in possibility connecting to the municipal water supply to please make contact with him. Don can be contacted on 082 5703196 or 044 384 1849.

Dogs at Noetzie

*Natalie Anthea Baker
Garden Route Conservation Services
CapeNature*

Many thanks for your e-mail enquiry on dogs in Conservancies.

CapeNature does not see the keeping of dogs as pets to be problematic if they are kept under control by their owners. However, we do have a problem with the so called 'rondlopende hond' that has not got an owner and is hunting wildlife in our natural areas.

These free roaming dogs form packs and do a lot of damage not only to our wildlife but to domestic stock. Many times, when we have received call-outs to come and investigate the killings of calves, lamb or even fully grown sheep, we have confirmed that it is actually dogs that have ripped apart the animal and not a caracal or leopard. Unfortunately these beautiful predators get blamed for stock killings when in most cases we have found it to be that of a dog/s.

In principle if kept under control by its owner (either on a lead in natural areas or contained in a nice garden) then a dog is a welcome friend to any person and can be trained not to hunt wild animals from the time it is a puppy.

I trust this answers your question. Should you wish to contact me directly, please feel free to do so at the numbers below?

Tel: (044) 802-5327
Fax: (044) 802-5313
Mobile: 082 772-8073

CapeNature received an enquiry about dogs at Noetzie from one of our members, above is their response. I hope this will put an end to the debate, let's face it, nobody has a 'rondlopende hond' at Noetzie that hunts in packs with others. If you have to bring your dog to Noetzie then please follow these guidelines and be respectful to your neighbours and wildlife at Noetzie.

*Carl Metelerkamp
chairman@noetzie.co.za*



This caracal visited Julie Gosling's house in May 2009

Stealth Camera at Noetzie

Wendy Dewberry

NCOA has acquired two Stealth Cameras this year in order to monitor the wildlife movement and populations within the Conservancy area. These cameras are amazing because not only can they take video or stills footage, they work with infra-red, so at night there is no flashing to scare the animals.

We have set the camera's up around Julie's home at the top. What is quite amazing is that the area we have used up to now is no more than 100m², and so many different species have been snapped. Imagining the animal numbers and populations within the whole Conservancy area and Sinclair Nature Reserve - we feel very fortunate to live in such a precious area.

So far, the list includes:

A very shy pair of Knysna Loeries, Francolins, Genet, Grysbok, Honey Badger, Caracal, Wild Pig, Porcupine and Mongoose.

Male and female bushbuck - the value of the camera showed itself here. We first got a video of the male and female mating. Then, for months we only got pictures of the male, and a few videos of him limping. I thought the female had run into an early demise; since poaching here is a problem, cars travelling too fast along the road are also a danger. However, last month we set the camera a bit further away, deep into the bush near Dons Plot, and there she was...shy and skittish. So perhaps she may be nurturing a soon-to-be baby bushbuck? Will keep you posted



Honey Badger



Genet



Steenbok

Recycling

The Knysna Municipality is urging all residents to make an effort to sort their domestic waste and place all recyclable material into Green Bags for collection.

Material Suitable for Recycling

- Paper
- Plastic
- Cardboard
- Glass
- Cans

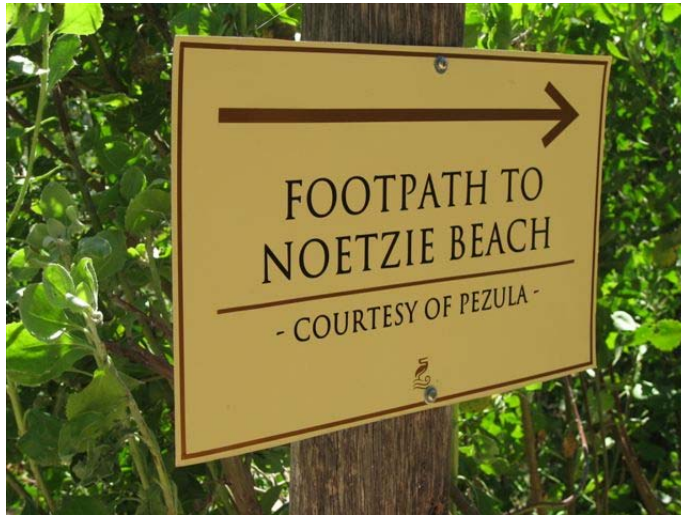
Please rinse all containers

Not Suitable for Recycling

- Any wet or soiled paper
- Safety and laminated glass
- Light bulbs
- Carbon paper and chemically treated paper (fax)
- Food and sweet wrappings
- Wax paper
- Milk/juice cartons
- Poly or plastic coated glossy paper
- Tinfoil, cling wrap, cellophane and polystyrene

Green Bags and laminated lists of the recycling requirements can be collected from Wendy Dewberry at the house on the hill. 044 3842913

The steps to the beach are open again!



The general public and Noetzie residents can now once again safely access the top of the Municipal steps to Noetzie beach from the car park via the access road to Noetzie Castle that was used for generations. The re-opening of this access road by Pezula is welcomed.



Lovely rainbow picture taken from Julie Goslings lawn

Stop press - Leopard at Noetzie!

This leopard was picked up on the Stealth Camera on the 27th of November 2009.



Watch the video clip on YouTube <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KPegYke95xk>