

Message from the Chairperson

We had a very enjoyable Conservancy braai at Joe Klerck's place last weekend. All those who participated had a good time. Many thanks to Henriette, Liz, Reinette and Joe for the organization!

The Gauteng Conservancy Association awards are to be announced next weekend and we will be interested to see if our Conservancy wins any awards. The Ecological Plan that was commissioned from EcoLife over two years ago has now been delivered to us, and we will be discussing the way forward over the next few days.

Jane

Botanical Society Visit and Members Get-together

On Saturday 23 May we all had a good time when the Botanical Society members visited and we then gathered for a Conservancy braai. Here are some photos of the day:



Members of the Botanical Society enjoy a break on the hill slopes in the Conservancy.



Conservancy members gather around the fire, waiting for the potjiekos to be ready.



A relaxed atmosphere



Enjoying the party atmosphere



The serious business of eating

A new arrival

In the last newsletter we reported that the Absons' favourite dog, Mars II, had been bitten by a puff adder and was in intensive care at Onderstepoort. Sadly, after 9 days fighting the poison in his system, his heart finally gave in. He will never be forgotten, but one life leads to another, and so here is a picture of little Sirius, the new arrival, playing with his friends!



Nature News

How much attention do you pay to the birds around us? We have well over 120 species in the Conservancy. Here are a few well known ones.



Groundscraper Thrush (Turdus litsitsirupa)

The groundscraper thrushes are often seen on our lawns. They feed almost exclusively on the ground, and use eyesight and hearing to detect the insects that they eat. Both sexes incubate the eggs. Groundscraper thrushes form a link between the "true" thrushes such as the kurrichane and olive thrushes, and the ground thrushes. In comparison with the "true" thrushes, they have a shorter tail and a larger bill.



Mocking Chat (Thamnolaea cinnamomeiventris)

The mocking chat also eats insects, as well as fruit, and prefers dry habitats where they feed mostly on the ground. The nest is usually lined with dassie or antelope hair, often built over a swallow's nest after they have ousted the previous occupants.



Crested barbet (Trachyphonus vaillatii)

Most of us know the sound of the barbet, like an alarm clock with the bell removed. They also eat insects as well as worms, snails etc. Their strong beak is used to excavate a nest hole in a tree.