

Message from the Chairperson

Lots are happening in the conservancy and we are proud to share this with you in our latest newsletter. Some important points to emphasise are the portable radios now available for purchase, the account statements are now available and due and the auction of the giraffe skin. As always, any problems or suggestions, please contact me directly.

Henriëtte

For a change a really cold winter!



The recent cold weather resulted in sub-zero temperatures and plenty of ice and some interesting winter scenes!

(Photos by Angelique Kieser)



Fence patrols

One of the major maintenance tasks in the conservancy is the daily patrols of the perimeter fence. The fence is cut on average twice a week, leaving holes through which unwanted visitors can enter and game can escape. The purpose of the twice-daily patrol is to spot and repair these holes.

We were saddened by the death, on 21st June, of John Mashiloane, who faithfully undertook the daily fence patrols in spite of failing health. We will have to look out for

someone else to take over this role but in the meantime we are grateful to Hennie and his team who are taking responsibility for the fence patrols as an interim measure.

An alarming number of traps "strikke" are spotted and removed during the patrols. The traps are set for a range of animals, from birds and rabbits to the larger game. Please be on the lookout of these typical wire loops when you talk a walk in the conservancy and remove them. Also communicate this to you staff – it really seems like the traps are an inside job.

Firebreaks

The long grass and late rains caused the annual fire breaks to be a real challenge this year. As usual all employees of conservancy members were invited to participate in the fire team. The team spent three weeks to burn the perimeter and we are now prepared for the risky period with August winds picking up. If you have a request for block burns on your property, please inform Hennie by 13 August.

When you spot any fire inside or outside the conservancy please contact Hennie immediately on 082 4505 921/2 or 012 811 1168 during office hours.

Conservancy fees

As approved at the AGM, the conservancy fees for the period 1/3/2010 to 28/2/2011 remain unchanged at R2100 per annum.

The annual statements and invoices will be mailed to everyone on 9 August. Please, arrange for your annual contributions to be paid by end September or let Henriëtte or Jane know when you will make the payment.



Radio communication in the Conservancy

Security is always a concern! During the AGM we agreed that the general communication between us can be enhanced greatly with the use of two-way radios. Closer communication between neighbours in rural areas such as ours is also strongly recommended by the SAPS.

Every member should acquire at least one two-way radio. These radios will be programmed to communicate to all other radios in the conservancy and will be used to inform, alert and call for help during events such as burglary or fire.

Two radio options are available:

| | |
|---|-------|
| Kenwood TK-2306 portable radio C/w KNB-30 battery and KSC -31 charger | R1800 |
| Kenwood TK-7100 mobile radio c/w KMC 30 microphone * 64 channels * Alphanumeric LCD display * Scan function * DTMF - use with KMC 32 microphone Plus Power supply with back-up battery Plus Mobile type antenna | R3700 |

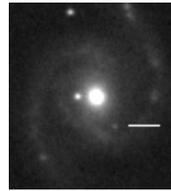
The portable model is hand held and very easy to carry around – reception is good throughout the conservancy and the advantage is that you can take it with you from room to room or outside.

The mobile unit cannot be carried around and should be installed either in your car or your house. The advantage of this unit is better reception.

Please consider acquiring a radio if you are residing inside the conservancy. To place an order just send an email with the model you require to Henriëtte at h@bronberg.co.za and we will assist you with the purchase and installation.

Our resident astronomer is in the news again!

Supernovae are relatively rare events, occurring about once every 50 years in the Milky Way galaxy. Berto Monard has once again made the news by discovering his 100th Supernova.



A supernova is an exploding star that can become billions of times as bright as the sun before gradually fading from view. At its maximum brightness, the exploded star may outshine an entire galaxy.

The explosion throws a large cloud of dust and gas into space. The mass of the expelled material may exceed 10 times the mass of the sun.

Astronomers recognize two types of supernovae -- Type I and Type II. Type I supernovae probably occur in certain binary stars. A binary star is a pair of stars that are close together and orbit about each other. A Type I probably occurs in binaries in which one of the stars is a small, dense star called a white dwarf. If the two stars are close enough to each other, the gravitational pull of the white dwarf draws mass from the larger companion. When the white dwarf reaches a mass about 1.4 times that of the sun, it collapses and then explodes.

A Type II supernova results from the death of a single star much more massive than the sun. When such a star begins to burn out, its core quickly collapses. Tremendous energy is suddenly released in the form of neutrinos (a type of subatomic particle) and electromagnetic radiation (electric and magnetic energy). This energy causes the star to erupt into a supernova.

Most supernovae reach maximum brightness a few days after they occur and shine intensely for several weeks. Some fade within months. Others fade over a period of years.

Supernovae can also leave behind different types of objects. After some supernova



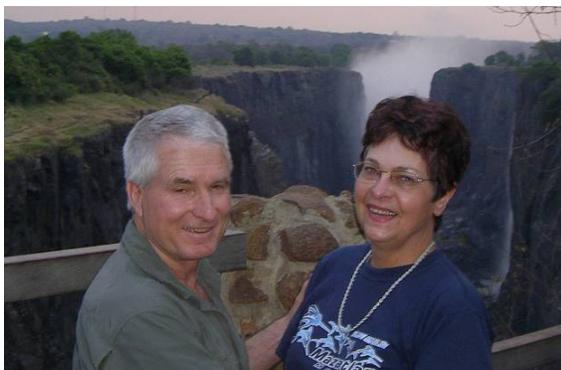
explosions, there remains a small, dense star composed mainly of neutrons or perhaps of elementary particles called quarks. Such a star is called a neutron star. Rapidly rotating, highly magnetized neutron stars are called pulsars. After other explosions, an invisible object called a black hole may be left behind. A black hole has such powerful gravitational force that not even light can escape it. In some cases, no object of any kind remains after a supernova explosion.

Scientists believe that supernovae created all the heavier elements, such as iron, gold, and uranium, which are found on earth and have been detected in objects outside the solar system. Also, there is evidence that some high-energy cosmic rays originate in supernovae.

In 1054, Chinese astronomers recorded a supernova so bright that it was visible during the day. The explosion left behind a pulsar and a huge cloud of gas and dust known as the Crab Nebula, which still can be seen today.¹

**Goodbye Berto & Brigitte Monard,
Welcome Harold and Helen Späth**

The Monard's sold Plot 39 and will be moving to the Karoo. We wish you all the best for the future and hope that there will be many more supernova discoveries.



Harold and Helen Späth (above) are the new owners of Plot 39 and they will move in during

¹ Brecher, Kenneth. "Supernova." World Book Online Reference Center. 2005. World Book, Inc.
<http://www.worldbookonline.com/wb/Article?id=ar540310>.

September. Harald is an engineer and Helen is a teacher. We look forward to welcome you as part of the conservancy.

Giraffe Skin Auction!!!

The skin of the giraffe that broke its leg last year has been processed and must now be sold to the highest bidder in the conservancy. It was a young giraffe bull and the skin is smallish but beautiful. We have decided to open the bidding from 9 to 27 August. If you are interested in the skin, please send your bid to giraffe@bronberg.co.za, clearly indicating the amount that you are willing to bid for the skin. The reserve amount is R2000 as this was the cost associated with the processing of the skin.

Nature news

In the winter months it is easy to lure some of the birds in the Conservancy close to our houses by throwing out some bird seed. Apart from the seed eaters, the emergence of the showy aloe flowers also encourages a range of nectar eating birds to come to the plants. This provides a unique opportunity to observe some of the physical characteristics and habits of the birds close up.

Many of the birds are looking rather drab at this time of year, no longer in their breeding plumage, and this makes identification more difficult. This makes it all the more important to be able to identify a bird from a range of different characteristics.

The non-breeding plumage or "eclipse plumage" is primarily adopted by the male of the species, and may serve to reduce conflict between adult males when not breeding. At the end of the breeding season the feathers of most males are in need of replacement due to the wear and tear of maintaining their territory. But replacing the fancy pigments and elaborate adornments such as tail streamers needs a lot of energy as well as certain dietary ingredients that may not be freely available.²

² Information from Beat About the Bush: Birds by Trevor Carnaby. Jacana Media, 2008.



This pintailed whydah has retained its red beak but shed its long tail feathers.



The Cape weaver loses its reddish head colouration in Winter but the male retains its distinctive white eye colour.



The male masked weaver is distinguishable by its red eye despite having lost its bright colouration



White-eyes keep their colouration through the Winter months and enjoy feeding on nectar. They use their short, sharp bill to puncture a hole in the base of the flower. They then lap up the leaking nectar with their specialized brush- or sponge-tipped tongue.

Please send us your news and notices of events for inclusion in the newsletter.



This little bokkie has her own "website"

Have a look at the wonderful collection of photos on our website

www.bronberg.co.za, thanks to Derek & Jane Abson.