

President Gets Involved

A tree planting frenzy went on around Amakhala between the 8th and 10th of April. Youths from the President's Award for Youth Empowerment Programme came to Amakhala Conservation Centre to participate in the 3C project.

The objectives of the 3C project are to reduce Carbon dioxide levels, Conserve Africa's biodiversity and give Communities a stake in the conservation and development of rural Africa.

The project aims at planting indigenous trees with help of the local community/ schools in degraded and afforested areas. For every tree planted a R10 donation

goes to the local community/ schools.



The President's Award programme is a member of the International Award Association, which oversees award programmes in over 111 countries. It encourages young people to become responsible citizens within their communities through skills development, physical recreation, and community service. As part of

celebrations held in Grahamstown to mark twenty five years of youth development in South Africa, 150 youths from a variety of different backgrounds came to the Conservation Centre over 3 days and planted an amazing 175 trees in the bare area between Amakhala Game Reserve and the N2 national road.

To date the 3C project has planted 500 trees since it was initiated in December 2006.

Thank you to everyone's hard work and commitment. Special thanks to the Cape 300 Foundation who provided the funding with which the trees were purchased.

Cute and Cuddly

Damara and her cubs have been doing very well. However, some large wounds around her back legs were discovered during the monitoring conducted by the ACC. It is most likely that the injuries were inflicted by an antelope during a hunting attempt.

Although her wounds looked serious and she was initially limping, Damara has been tending to her injuries and keeping them clean. Her progress was closely monitored on a daily basis to

ensure the wounds were healing and she was able to hunt. The cubs were extremely helpful, being seen to take turns licking the wounds, keeping them clean and preventing the risk of secondary infection.

The cubs are now 8 months old and finally the ACC team can confirm the sex of the cubs: one female and one male. Identification features of each cub have also been established which will enable behavioural data to be recorded of the individual cubs.



The trio have been seen regularly around the eastern section of the reserve between Big Hoek and Woodbury Flats but did spend a week in the western section of the reserve during April.

Cute But Not So Cuddly



The oldest cow, Nomabongo and her new calf, Inkululeko are doing fantastically well.

Nomabongo's older male calf Geza seems to have settled down without his mother and is now hanging around with another female called Nomvula and her calf, Becky. Nomvula has been seen protecting Geza against the dominant male rhino. Geza had previously spent some time with Nomtsha and her male calf, Isipho before he joined Nomvula and Becky.

However, some fighting between Geza and Isipho was recorded recently, and Nomvula also went head to head with Nomtsha. Fortunately, the only results were minor cuts on their faces and they carried on their separate ways. Previous monitoring has shown this is to be normal white rhino behaviour and there is no cause for concern.

Black Rhinos Settle In

As mentioned in the December newsletter, two male black rhinos were released onto the reserve as part of their rehabilitation to the Wild. One was rejected by his mother at birth, whilst the other was orphaned at the age of two.

The rhinos have now been on the reserve for 5 months. Aside from a few initial hiccups, both have settled well. They are slowly exploring their new home and

seem to be enjoying their newfound freedom.



They have also been acquainting themselves with the various other residents of Amakhala, some of which are completely new to them.

Over the next two years, additional female black rhinos will be introduced to establish a breeding population on Amakhala Game Reserve.

In Brief

Welcome And Farewell

Welcome to Ntsikelelo who joined the ACC team as a fulltime staff member on the 1st of April. Ntsikelelo got stuck in straight away by digging holes for the tree planting that took place the following week.

Unfortunately Mat Dry's stay at the ACC was brief. He received a job opportunity after his first week. Mat will be very much missed but the ACC wishes him all the best for the future.

How It All Started...

The ACC has set up a new half or full day induction programme about the Conservation Centre and Amakhala Game Reserve. The induction covers the formation of the ACC, current/future conservation projects and other activities run by the Conservation Centre, as well as the history, creation and present days of the game reserve.

Anyone interested in attending an induction programme, please contact the ACC to arrange a date.

Honey Badger? ...Where?

The first sighting of a honey badger on Amakhala since it became a game reserve was reported by one of the Ulovane 3 months students, Heinrick. The brief sighting was on The Platt during a night drive.

Many Hands

As the ACC grows and the conservation projects increase, the workload continues to mount. Fortunately, the Ulovane Ranger Training School on Amakhala Game Reserve has incorporated ACC projects into their 3 month training course. This will add to the continued and invaluable support provided by the Hands-On-Conservation student programme. All these extra pairs of hands mean that the ACC will be able to take on bigger and more challenging projects in the future.

Can You Feel The Heat?

As a celebration of World Environmental Day, the ACC will be hosting a week-long event from the 5th to the 12th of June. The main focus will be on energy saving, conserving water and reducing waste by recycling.

Day 1 will be for local school children and will involve educational activities and games presented in English, Xhosa and Afrikaans.

Day 2 will be open to rangers, landowners, guests and visitors. Special guest speakers will present different ways in which we can all make a contribution to limiting global warming.

This will be followed by a mini road show to the staff of each lodge on Amakhala Game Reserve.

Vegetation Revival

Blue bush is an encroaching plant which prevents other plants, including grass, from growing in the same area. It can have a significant impact on the grazing value of a piece of land.

Amakhala has its fair share of blue bush, so a specific site of 500 m² was selected as an experimental site. The recovery of vegetation will be monitored once the blue bush has been removed.

The blue bush will be uprooted and laid down with the roots up. This not only helps the soil retain moisture, but also prevents soil erosion and protects the new grass shoots from grazers until it has firmly established itself.

The Ulovane students, Hands-on-Conservation students and the ACC made an early start on blue bush removal after 24mm of rain. The rest will be removed on the 14th of May. Everyone's help will be very much appreciated.

A Slithering Lesson

The ACC welcomed Mark Marshall from Sandula Conservation based in Port Elizabeth which actively encourages reptile conservation. Mark gave a 2 hour lecture on snake identification and handling to an audience of over 30 people. A special thanks to Merko from Carnarvon Dale for organising the event.

Did you know?

A puff adder can strike its victim up to 8 times in a single attack, at a speed of 3-4 times per second. It would have already struck its victim 2-3 times before the victim even notices the snake striking.