

The Heat Is On

World Environment Day 2008 was celebrated at the conservation centre over two days with 50 children from local schools on the 5th of June, and 100 visitors on the 6th of June.

The children, from various local schools and the Isipho AIDS Project in Paterson, were involved in a variety of games and activities.



The half day event was focused on global warming and the “3R’s”: Reduce, Reuse and Recycle. The children learnt about the effect of global warming on the ice cap and what they can do to help minimise their impact on the environment. They played games focusing on recycling different materials such as paper, plastic, tins and glass. They also created their own crafts, from pencil holders to flowers, all

made out of plastic bottles, egg cartons, toilet paper tubes and other reusable materials.

The next day, the ACC hosted their first world environment day targeted at adults. The centre opened its doors to 100 visitors ranging from Amakhala’s rangers, staff and guests to students from Rhodes University (Grahamstown) and Nelson Mandela Municipality University to people from the local community. The event also focused on Global Warming and how to minimise our impact. It started with a fantastic production centred around global warming from UBOM! called “Meltdown”.



The show was followed by a series of talks including Nikki Kohly (Environmental Officer, Rhodes University, Grahamstown) on “Recycling”, Lil Haigh (Water

Ecologist, Institute of Water Research, Grahamstown) on “Water in South Africa”, Lusanda Maqaqa (Environmental Officer, Eskom, East London) on “Energy Saving” and Dr Garth Cambray (Makana Meadery, Grahamstown) briefly spoke on Biodiesel. During the morning and lunch breaks, people were able to browse through a range of displays from local businesses providing information on solar water heating systems (TASOL, Port Elizabeth), biodegradable products (Wetrok, Port Elizabeth) and energy saving devices (Rubicon Electrical, Port Elizabeth).

The whole event was such a success that it will now be an annual ACC event, reminding everyone the damage we, humans, are doing to the natural world around us.

Special thanks to everybody including the Ulovane Environmental Training, Hands-On-Conservation, lodge rangers and staff for their invaluable help on both days.

Can You Smell a Braai?

Sunday 25th of May was a very special day for the conservation centre as it finally saw the return of its very much missed land rover.

The vehicle had broken down due to engine problems one year ago. In April 2008, a 2nd-hand engine was purchased and installed. Following thorough checks and testing, the vehicle was brought back to the ACC.

As part of our “Going Green” project which aims to operate the centre with as small a carbon footprint as possible, the ACC is testing biodiesel. The biodiesel used is produced by Makana

Meadery from used vegetable oil and animal fats.

Initial tests have shown no adverse effects to the engine or its performance, although the fuel filter has to be changed on a regular basis, but this should be temporary. The only major drawback is the land rover smells like a braai!

On a more serious note, the land rover was driven around the reserve to ensure the cheetahs, lions and other animals did not adversely reacting to the smell. Fortunately, there were no lions

queuing up behind the land rover for a bite.



In addition to the ACC land rover’s return, a second land rover has been recently purchased. This means double the work on the conservation front!

In Brief

George's Stones

In February 2007, Amakhala saw the sad loss of one elephant bull called "George" who electrocuted himself on one of Eskom's electric poles on the reserve. Following negotiations, Eskom agreed to provide stones to be placed around the poles in order to possibly prevent further fatalities.



At the end of 2007, the ACC started stone packing some poles. On the 30th of April, the ACC and the students from the Ulovane Environmental Training, packed the remainder of the stones around electric poles. Unfortunately, this is just a drop in the ocean and a lot more stones are required to pack the remaining electric poles.

The Ground Is Shaking On Amakhala

The ACC would like to say thank you to J&B Boerediense in Port Elizabeth for donating 2 bow saws and 10 pairs of gloves, and supplying picks and spades at cost price. Amakhala's alien plants and encroaching plants species are all shaking in their roots now, they can hear the ACC coming!

Big Thank You!

With funding from the Sindisa Foundation, a UK Charitable Trust and a 45% trade swap discount from Insight Technologies in Grahamstown, the ACC was able to purchase a new computer in addition to the existing one. This has dramatically improved the work productivity in the office by enabling all the field research data collected to be centralised and allowing several people to work concurrently. The ACC would like to give a huge thank you to the Sindisa Foundation and Insight Technologies for their support.

Annual Game Count



An annual game count was conducted on the 7th May 2008. 1,271 animals were counted, resulting in a 9% increase in the game on Amakhala Game Reserve. The warthog population seems to have exploded with a 355% increase from last year's numbers. Waterbucks have also shown a significant increase of 69%, whilst red hartebeest, black wildebeest and burchell's zebra have all had population increases of over 10%. Overall, 2007/08 has seen some of the best growth rates in the past few years.

Amakhala Guests Survey

The conservation centre conducted the first reserve-wide guests survey. Guests staying on Amakhala Game Reserve between March and May 2008 were requested to fill out a questionnaire on their arrival. This was to ascertain exactly what factors had influenced their choice of game reserve, their interests and their prior knowledge on African game.

A total of 118 questionnaires were completed, producing some interesting and surprising results:

62% of the guests stated that being a "Big 5" game reserve was one of the most important reasons why they chose Amakhala, although only 45% correctly named the "Big 5".

Interestingly, 93% of the guests said they would be content that they did not see all of the key species (lion, cheetah, rhino, elephant, buffalo, giraffe) during their stay with the knowledge that Amakhala Game Reserve provides a big enough natural environment for the animals to disappear from time to time.

Some of the answers to what guest most wanted to see during their stay were surprising. Although the usual suspects featured high in the results, some unexpected answers appeared such as: kudu, monkey, pangolin, honey badger, tiger and cougar (the last two of course don't naturally occur in Africa).

Global Warming Fast Facts

- Carbon dioxide released into the atmosphere is mainly through the burning of fossil fuels (for example: petrol, diesel). By 2030 the number of automobiles in the world will increase by 50%.
- Carbon dioxide is the gas most responsible for increased global warming (50%). Despite natural emissions of carbon dioxide, human activities are now adding about 7 billion metric tons of carbon into the atmosphere every year.
- Arctic ice is rapidly disappearing, and the region may have its first completely ice-free summer by 2040 or earlier. Polar bears and indigenous cultures are already suffering from the sea-ice loss.
- Coral reefs, which are highly sensitive to small changes in water temperature, suffered the worst bleaching—or die-off in response to stress—ever recorded in 1998, with some areas seeing bleach rates of 70 percent. Experts expect these sorts of events to increase in frequency and intensity in the next 50 years as sea temperatures rise.