



VOGELGAT NATURE RESERVE

NEWSLETTER 2015

FROM THE BRIDGE



Giorgio has been awarded Master in Science from Rhodes University. The title of his thesis was “Variation in breeding systems, floral morphology and nectar properties in three co-occurring *Erica* species with contrasting pollination syndromes”. This study investigated three species of *Erica* and compared their pollination and breeding systems and floral biology. Research, including field experiments and pollinator observations was undertaken in the Vogelgat Private Nature Reserve, Maanschynkop Nature Reserve and Boskloof farm in the vicinity of Hermanus in the Western Cape Province of South Africa. Field observations were conducted to determine what flower-visitor interactions occurred, while nectar volumes and sugar concentrations were measured to determine the value of the reward to the different visitors. Selective exclusion and breeding system experiments were carried out to determine whether these *Erica* species were capable of autonomous self-fertilization or whether they are pollinator dependent for breeding success. *Erica lanuginosa* had an unusual closed flower and had researchers guessing for many years of which pollinator was responsible. On close observation nothing was revealed and only when trap cameras were installed that rodents

were captured visiting its flowers! The very first photographs in the field of rodents visiting *Ericas!* The possibility of the long proboscis fly visiting our endemic *Erica aristata* (Pride of Hermanus) was also tested. Fleeting visitations, plus breeding system experiments confirmed this possibility. When we thought we knew it all – nature reveals its secrets! Giorgio would like to thank the Trustees of Vogelgat for allowing him time to complete his Masters. His supervisors Dr Craig Peter (Rhodes) and Dr Jeremy Midgley (UCT) kept Giorgio on track, as did Ross Turner and unlimited support by Dr Di Marais and Prof John Verster. Giorgio has been overwhelmed by these acts of kindness.

LEOPARD CAMP AND BEACON HUT REVAMPED



We have had such a demand for Sip Lodge that after 15 years, we have decided to make some changes at Leopard Camp. All the beds and “kitchen” were removed to be replaced with 2 single beds that open into 2 double beds. It is now more spacious. A new kitchen has been installed and the entrance flanked with 2 full pane glass doors is now facing the beautiful Hemel n Aarde valley. One can lie in your bed and dream into never, never land.

Beacon will be ready in December. It will have its internal space revamped. It will support a single bed that opens into a double. Two other single beds and another “ceiling bed”! Plus a covered deck for inclement weather. We are also planning to create an eagles eyrie - consisting of 3 fully glassed panelled doors, so you will have an evocative eagles perspective of the whole of Vogelgat, framed by Walker Bay when you lie in bed.

THE VALUE OF NATURE

“The natural world, its biodiversity and its ecosystems are critically important to our well-being and economic prosperity, but are consistently undervalued in conventional economic analyses and decision making” UK National Ecosystem Assessment.

The services of ecological systems and the natural capital stocks that produce them are critical to the functioning of the Earth’s life-support system. They contribute to human welfare, both directly and indirectly, and therefore represent part of the total economic value of the planet. We have estimated the current economic value of 17 ecosystem services for 16 biomes, based on published studies and a few original calculations. For the entire biosphere, the value (most of which is outside the market) is estimated to be in the range of US\$16–54 trillion (1012) per year, with an average of US\$33trillion per year. Because of the nature of the uncertainties, this must be considered a minimum estimate. Global gross national product total is around US\$18 trillion per year.

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Positive health effects of green space have been observed on longevity, cardiovascular diseases, people's self-reported general health, mental health, sleep patterns, recovery from illness, social health aspects and birth outcomes. Some of the associations were shown to be modified by socioeconomic status and level of urbanity, with greater benefits for populations of a lower socioeconomic class and those in more urban areas.

AHOY THERE!

CANNONS AFLOAT



The cannons were given their respected carriages. These British 9 pound Blomefield cannons, were cast from 1790 onwards to protect British commercial cargo ships against pirates and privateers. Guns No. 481 and 482 stood as gatepost protectors at the Hills sweet factory in cape Town until it was demolished, then housed at Doc Williams' Voelklip residence till 2003, when they were brought to Vogelgat.



VIEW ON THE BAY

A baleen plunge pool was started in January of this year, but then the drought came, so we have waited till now to complete this. For those of you that hike up to Mosselnook, these are the views that await your dipping!

BECOME A VOGELGAT LOYALTY FRIEND

Vogelgat has become a member of Lyoness, a Global Shopping Community, and the world's fastest growing Loyalty Programme. You can assist Vogelgat by becoming a member, and in turn, generate funds for conservation projects within the reserve, when you shop. Membership is **Free**. No monthly or annual fees. As a Lyoness Member, you will personally receive up to 5% Cashback and Bonus Shopping Points for every purchase you make at a Lyoness Loyalty Merchant. These Shopping Points generate exciting discounts for you on Special Deals.

We join the likes of "The Rhino Pride Foundation", also raising funds as a member of the Lyoness Shopping Community.

Not only do you make money back on your purchases but every transaction will benefit VOGELGAT as well as the GREENFINITY FOUNDATION: <http://www.lyoness-gff.org>

Your support would mean a lot to us, and we look forward to your participation.

Give me a call to pick up your **free** card or contact me via vogelgatreserve@telkomsa.net and I will register you.

BRING N BRAAI

Do not forget the members Brunch at Vogelgat on the **16th of December at 11h00.**

NNB! Please remember to pay your annual fees they are due now.

Vogelgat Nature Reserve **R2 050.00**

Maanschynkop **R270.00**. A total of R2 320 for both reserves.

Do note that **Leopard Camp R75 per person per night.**

Bank – Standard Bank – Hermanus

Branch Code 05031200

Acc No. 082268053

NNB reference your surname + Initials. Thank you.