

botfriends newsletter

march 2019



Elephants on the Bot?

You might have read about the proposed game park in the nearby Lamloch area? This comprises largely the wetlands between the Bot and Kleinmond estuary, bordered by the sea in the south and stretching northwards below the R44 road. The Bot estuary winds through the wetlands towards Kleinmond, a largely unspoilt area and the home to the famous Kleinmond/Rooisand wild horses.

Amongst the proposals for the game park is an application to keep some elephants in an enclosed area. According to the application documents, this will be a tourist attraction and a source of revenue for this area. There are so many questions about this application that you may wonder where the elephants will come from and whether elephants were ever endemic in this area? If you feel that this application should not be approved, then you have an opportunity to record your objection against the proposed game park. Send your comments to adel@dougjeff.co.za.



For more information on this application, please refer to the Basic Assessment Report (BAR), prepared by the applicants' consultant. Email botvlei@gmail.com for a copy.

Frans Theunissen

STILL ... not a paid up member of Botfriends? Contact the Secretary at botvlei@gmail.com and we'll send you a membership form.

Clearing aliens

Botfriends has recently been clearing aliens in various public spaces including the bottom of Stormalong, the entrance to Fisherhaven and Seaway. We have also picked up the shocking amount of litter near the entrance.



Syles and Peter doing a great job clearing aliens at the estuary.

Elephants, lions and the environment

The present proposal on game farm RE 892 455 ha is for the development of the farm buildings, roads and infrastructure including a restaurant. In terms of the legislation this requires an environmental assessment and there is a public participation process involved. Comments should be directed to the people contracted to do the EIA. This should then be submitted for approval to Cape Nature and the DEA&DP, which is provincial government, who must consider what comments are submitted by the EIA people. The present proposal is mostly concerned with the impact on the environment that will be made by the buildings and how that will be done. They then make recommendations and approve, or modify the project. The establishment of a game farm was submitted to Cape Nature and approved by them in May 2018. Certain species of game were



approved with that application, but no lions or elephants. The farm is not big enough to accommodate a pride of lions or a herd of elephants, especially with all the other game animals that will be competing for the available food, the browsing and the grazing which grows naturally on the land. Cape Nature claims, however, that a public participation process was not required for the game farm establishment.

Populating the farm with elephant seems to not be getting considered as wild game: they will be housed on the farm and fed supplementary food. This has to happen as there will not be enough food available from the slow-growing (and not very productive) indigenous species growing on the farm. The farm has been cleared of invasive alien species in terms of the environmental laws. Those laws require that follow-up management keeps the invasive species out. In theory, at least, the elephants can be used to clear invasive species, but how do you get them to eat Port Jacksons and not eat the hundreds of indigenous species mixed *with* the Port Jacksons? The elephants would probably eat the reeds in the wetlands in preference to Port Jackson anyway. How much damage would be done to the wetlands having bulky elephants wading through them? Or are the elephants to be kept out of the reed beds, the most bulky food source which grows on the farm? Historically, elephants *did* occur here, but they passed through the area, ate the available food and moved on to other areas – and maybe came back a year later. There is no evidence that they remained resident here – there was probably never enough food in the summer months.

Nevertheless, Lamloch is privately-owned property and the owner has the right to fence it. He can extend his buildings as he wishes within the guidelines set as part of the biosphere and within the building regulations, as long as he works within the national environmental laws. As for the game farm, if he thinks that he can make an economically viable proposition of a game farm within the environmental laws and guidelines, and also add jobs and income to the area, he is within his rights to do so, and he has approval from Cape Nature. The only question is that: are the numbers of species and the numbers of individual species likely to damage the environment over the long term. Cape Nature seems to think damage will not occur. Also, the proposed tented camp is within the wetland area and within the 5m contour. Fresh Water Ecological Assessment recommended that this be moved out of the 5m and the wetland zone. This has been ignored. The proposed sewer system is right on the edge of the wetland and any accidents will directly affect the wetland, as will the actual building and running of the camp. There has also been no environmental assessment for the proposed bird hide and walkway across the wetland.

Michael Austin



BOTFRIENDS AGM

The Botfriends AGM will be held on Saturday 4 May 2019 at 10:00 at the Lake Marina Yacht Club.

There are a few amendments to the constitution on which members will be asked to vote. The agenda and the proposed changes are attached to this email for members' information.

Please peruse them and diarise this date. If you wish to submit proposals for any constitutional changes or additions to the agenda, please do so before the end of March.

Refreshments will be served.

What indigenous plants do you grow in your garden? Let us know. Letters to The editor botvlei@gmail.com.

Editor: Renee Austin



GREENHEART PROJECTS

For proper and effective private plot clearing and follow-up, phone Mike 0832610543 for a quote.