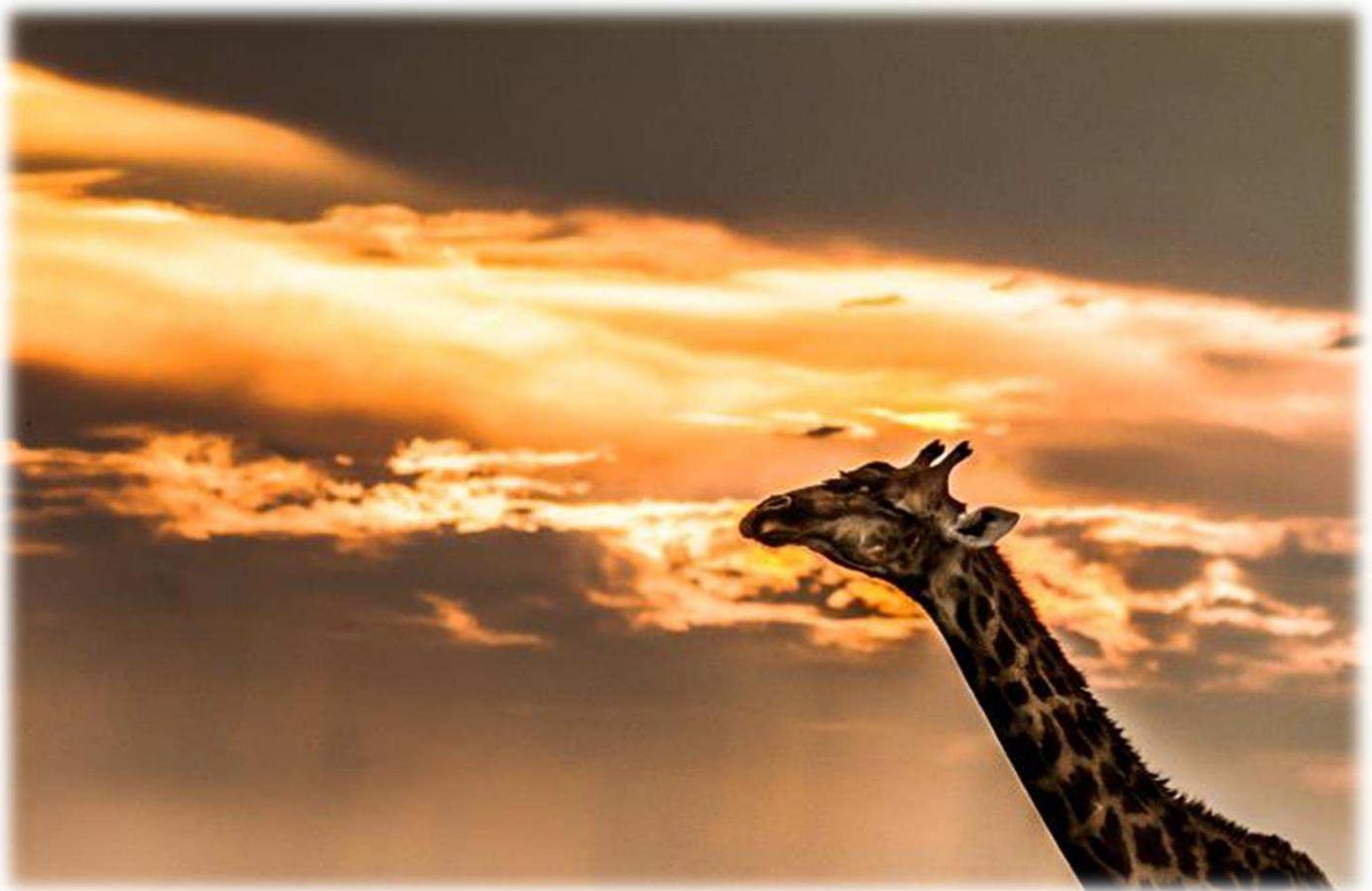




ORGR BUSH TELEGRAPH

THE April 2020 EDITION



Dear Olifants Community

We trust you are all safe and healthy during these most challenging times we find ourselves in at the moment. Who would have thought that the world would be held under global quarantine caused by a microscopic organism? It is something that could be extracted from the script of the next big Hollywood movie, but instead, it will be recorded in history books as a significant moment in the history of our planet. It is a time to hunker down and wait for this storm to pass over so we may all emerge stronger and more prepared than we were going in. We hope you all had a peaceful Easter and managed to spend some quality time with loved ones.

ORGR on Lockdown

Following the Presidential order of a National Lockdown to curb the spread of the Novel Coronavirus, Olifants River Game Reserve followed suit and implemented our Lockdown Protocols to comply with government regulations.

The following actions were taken by ORGR:

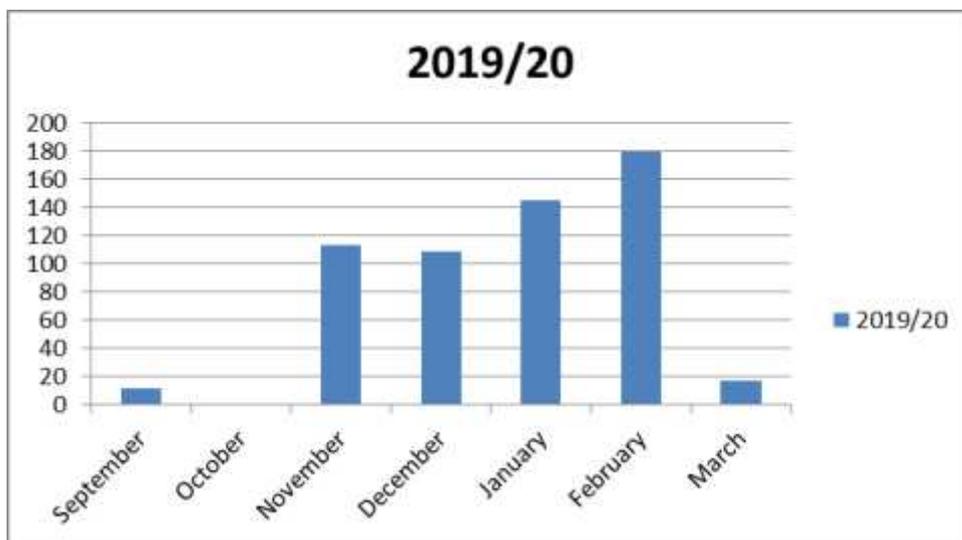
- Before Lockdown, Social Distancing measures and staff education sessions were implemented at ORGR together with stricter hygiene practices for all public and personal spaces.
- All non-essential staff was given the option to remain on the reserve or head home to their families. All staff opted to go home during the lockdown. Staff left the reserve on Wednesday the 25th of March to allow them enough time to prepare for the Lockdown.
- All external contractors had to leave the reserve by 18h:00 on the evening before Lockdown, leaving only Members, landowners and essential staff left on Balule.
- Anti Poaching and Management staff to remain on the reserve to perform the essential services of Security, Anti Poaching, Conservation and essential technical and waste removal support for the reserve.
- All member services were halted for the Lockdown except for emergency and refueling services.
- All public places including Office, Clubhouse and Hides have been closed.
- The sightings Whats App group has been put on hold during the Lockdown and we have asked that sightings are not called in on the Radio to avoid inappropriate gathering.
- No traversing is allowed between North and South for the duration of the Lockdown
- The southern gate has been closed down and only authorized grocery shopping trips are permitted through the entry point for members and staff to purchase essential goods

These measures were all put in place to ensure we do our bit to flatten the curve for South Africa.



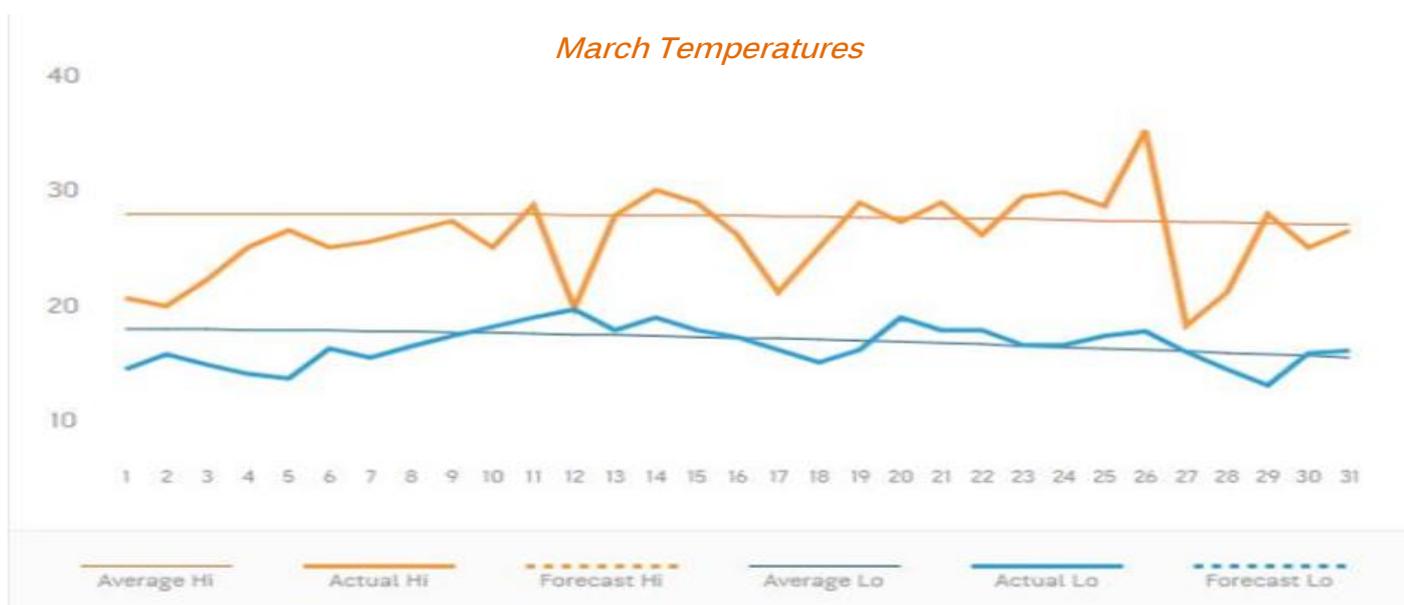
THE WEATHER REPORT

March has brought our seasonal change with very little rain falling during the month. A total of 17mm was recorded on the reserve in three small events. This brings our seasonal total up to 575.5mm of rain received. The grasses started changing from their lush green colour at the beginning of March, transforming the reserve into a rich spectrum of yellows and greens. This is my favourite time of the year.



Temperatures have been moderate in February with our average high being 26 degrees and average low temperature being 18 degrees. The last week in February saw our minimum temperature drop below 15 degrees which is a clear indication of the seasonal change.

We have had some warm weather in March, especially towards the end of the month with temperatures peaking at 37 degrees. There is a steady decline in the forecasted temperatures in April. Winter is coming.



OUR NIGHT SKIES FORECAST

The bright stars near the summer Milky Way are still prominent on April evenings but are further to the west than in March. Stars rise about 2 hours earlier and set about 2 hours earlier than they did on the same day of the previous month — our point of view keeps changing as Earth goes around the Sun. The Milky Way gets more and more impressive as the night progresses, as the center of our galaxy rises in the east and eventually passes overhead before dawn.

Venus still shines brightly as the Evening Star and is located near the constellation Taurus, and will be near the Moon on 26 April. Mercury, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn can be observed in the early morning sky. Mercury can be observed near the constellation, Pisces, and will be near the Moon on the 21st April. Mars can be observed near the constellation, Capricornus, and will be near the Moon on the 16th April. Jupiter and Saturn are located near the constellation, Sagittarius, and near the Moon on the 15th of April.

Orion can still be seen in the NW in the early evening, with Taurus the Bull charging at him from low in the NW. Since Orion is upside down for us in the southern hemisphere, we see Sirius (the brightest star in the sky and the eye of Orion's Large Dog) 'above' Orion, with the dim stars of the Hare just above Orion's feet. Between Orion and the stars of Leo, the Lion (rising in the NE in early evening) are the dim stars of the Unicorn and the Crab, with Procyon (the brightest star in Orion's Small Dog) between them, while below Procyon are the 'Twin' stars Castor and Pollux low in the NNW.

In the NNE at the end of evening twilight is the upside-down question mark of Leo the Lion. Brightest of Leo's stars is Regulus, the 'prince' and one of the four 'royal stars', Second-brightest among Leo's stars is Denebola ('tail of the lion'), well to the east of the 'question mark'. According to Egyptian legend, the sun was in Leo immediately after the Creation, near Denebola.



On a more scientific note, Denebola is about 36 light-years away, and 12 times as bright as our sun. The dust clouds around this star suggest that planets may have formed around it, but none have been detected yet.

Blue-white Spica, the brightest star in Virgo, is often shown as an ear of wheat held by a young woman, who in Babylonian mythology was the queen of the stars and the lover of the god of grain. Above her in the eastern sky fly the four stars of the Crow. The head of the water snake (Hydra) is a small group of stars between Leo and Orion's Big Dog. The rest of the snake winds its way down toward the Crow, with its brightest star, Alphard, the heart of the serpent, high in the northwest. Above and to the left of the Crow, for an observer facing east, is the Cup. Alphard is an Arabic name meaning the 'solitary one', as

there are no other bright stars near it. At about 40 times the diameter of the sun and 400 times as bright, Alphard is one of the 'bright giants' in our neighborhood. But our 'neighborhood' is rather large. Alphard is 11 million times as far away from us as our sun – so it looks a lot dimmer to us!

To the south of Sirius, and nearly overhead, is Canopus, the second brightest star in the sky, lighting the keel of the great ship Argo. If they were at the same distance, Canopus would appear far brighter than Sirius. Canopus is 15000 times as luminous as the sun, a rare yellow-white supergiant 313 light-years away. If placed at the center of our solar system, its surface would be three-quarters of the distance from the center to the orbit of Mercury, Earth would be global toast, and so would we!

CREATURE FEATURE – THE KLIPSPRINGER

Klipspringer (*Oreotragus oreotragus*)



This antelope's name is Afrikaans for 'rock jumper.' And the Klipspringer certainly lives up to this description, leaping around among cliffs and rocky outcrops like a mountain goat. A typical view will be of one individual standing stock-still on top of a rock. Look closer and you will invariably spot its mate nearby. Keep your eyes peeled on the rocky outcrops along the Olifants River for these beautiful little creatures.

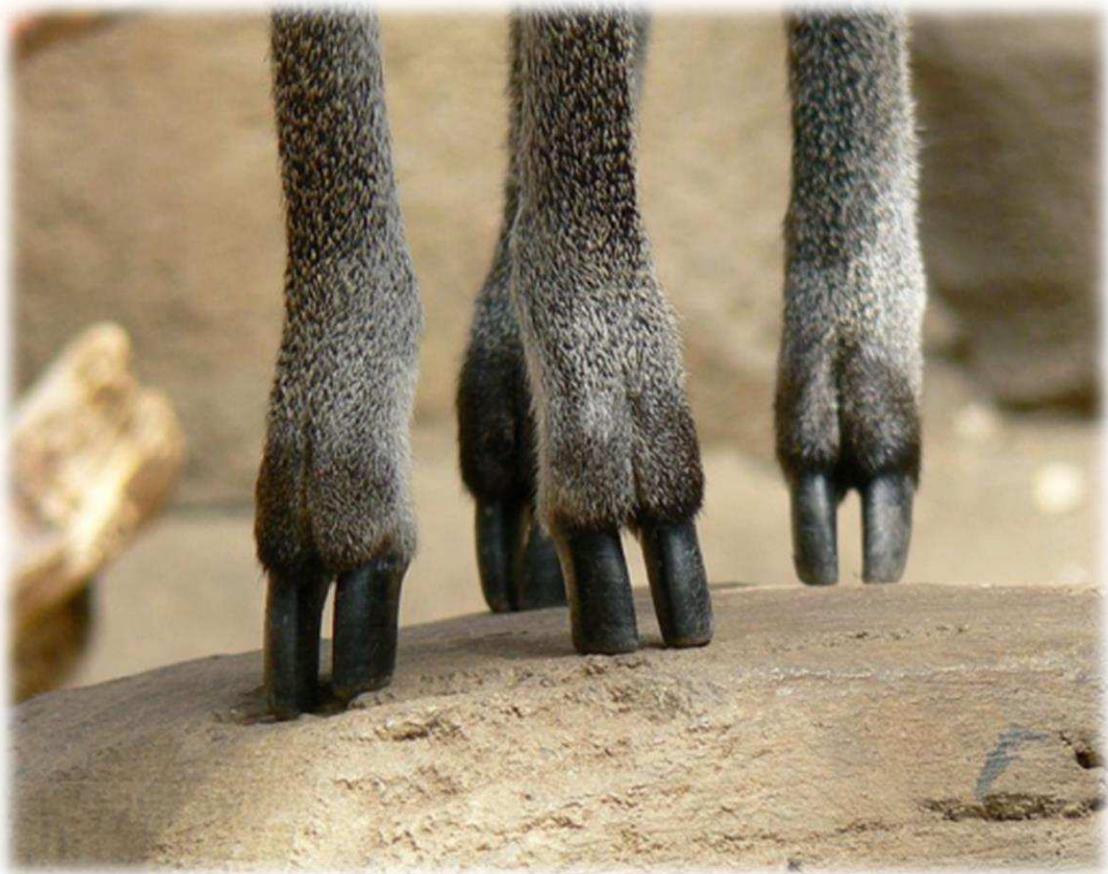
Typically nocturnal, the klipspringer rests during the middle of the day and late at night. A gregarious animal, the klipspringer is monogamous to a much greater extent than other antelopes; individuals of opposite sexes exhibit long-term to lifelong pair bonding. The mates tend to stay as close as within 5 meters of each other at most times. Males form territories, 7.5–49 hectares, in which they stay with their partners and offspring. Primarily a browser, the klipspringer prefers young plants, fruits, and flowers.

The klipspringer lives for around 15 years and is a seasonal breeder with mating times varying geographically.. Females become sexually mature by the time they are a year old whilst males take slightly longer to mature. Mating behaviour has not been extensively observed.

Gestation lasts around six months, following which a single calf is born weighing just slightly more than 1 kilogram, is born in dense vegetation. The newborn is carefully hidden for up to three months to protect it from the view of predators; and the mother suckles it three to four times a day. The visit frequency lessens gradually as the offspring grows.

Males are protective of their offspring, keeping a watch for other males and predators. The calf is weaned at four to five months and leaves its mother when it turns a year old.

The klipspringer inhabits places characterized by rocky terrain and sparse vegetation. Its range extends from north-eastern Sudan, Eritrea, northern Somalia and Ethiopia, South Africa, and along coastal Angola and Namibia. The International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) classifies the klipspringer as Least Concern. There are no major threats to the survival of the klipspringer, as its habitat is inaccessible and unfavorable for hunting. Significant numbers occur on private farmlands. As of 2008, nearly 25% of the populations occur in protected areas throughout its range.



5 Fascinating Facts

- A klipspringer's stocky build is due to the thick, coarse fur that cushions and insulates its body. This fur was once much in demand for stuffing saddlebags and led to heavy persecution, particularly in South Africa.
- A klipspringer's hooves are cylindrical and downward-pointing, giving it a tiptoe walk and provide amazing sure-footed agility on the rocks.
- Klipspringers form life-long pairs, each marking out a small territory, where one browses while its mate acts as a sentry. If one partner spots danger it gives a piercing whistle – followed almost immediately by its mate's. Then both will usually bound away for a short distance.
- A klipspringer's chief predators are those animals that can ambush and pursue them on rocky hillsides, namely leopards, caracals. And, from the air, the black eagles.
- In southern Africa, only male klipspringers have horns. In parts of East Africa, however, horns are present in both sexes. This is possible because these populations experience greater competitive interactions.

CONSERVATION MATTERS

#1 EXPERIMENTAL REHABILITATION PROJECT



The Serengeti Project has taken some strain in March due to Impala feeding on the fresh grass shoots. As the reserve's grass started turning yellow and losing its palatability, the immediate impala population responded by jumping the fence and gorging themselves on the fresh green shoots of our project. We have always had the odd impala jump the fence but it was sustainable due to their small numbers. On one recent night inspection, I counted 96 Impalas!!

The newly developed grass shoots are still present but they have just been cropped down by the impala. I am certain that during the next rainy season this grass will grow together with the rest of the grass on the reserve, which will prevent the impala from specifically targeting the fresh shoots when the rest of the reserves crop has started turning yellow. This also demonstrates the destructive property of large Impala populations in an area; these are just as responsible for deforestation as Elephants are, by not allowing new tree shoots to mature. Besides the new grass shoots being grazed, this area is doing well and other plants are growing in all the areas that the soil was turned to alleviate the compaction present. I have consulted with our conservation expert Pete Zac and will continue to talk to him regarding the way forward with this experimental project

#2 ALIEN INVASIVE SPECIES REMOVAL



We have had a reserve of Cockle prolific around the some drainage Our priority was to from the drainage the most long term riverine Cocklebur year from the Olifants River.



focused drive to rid the Bur. This weed is very riverfront and along lines within the reserve. remove the Cockle Bur lines first as this is where impact will be seen. The gets replenished every floodwaters of the

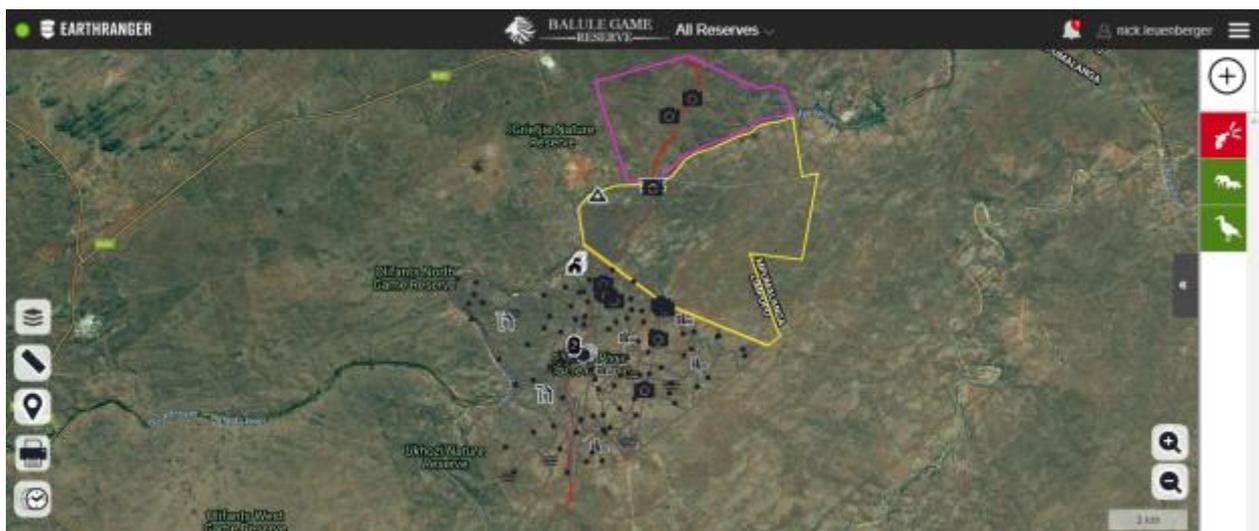
We brought in a team of three casuals who spent 8 Solid days removing Cockle Bur between Hide Dam and Sand Dam. We managed to remove vast amounts, a total of 32 tractor-trailer loads.

The process has been pulling the weed out by the roots, those that could not be pulled were chopped and the remaining stumps sprayed with herbicide. The project was halted by the Lockdown and we still have a lot of work to do. Once Lockdown is lifted we will bring the team back in to continue.

#3 EARTHRANGER AND WPS

We have been in contact with two organizations, EarthRanger and Wildlife Protection Solutions. Both organizations offer services to protected areas managers, free of charge, as they are both funded NGO's. We have seen these systems in action in Thornybush recently and feel we will greatly benefit these programs.

"EarthRanger is an easy-to-use online software tool built by Vulcan Inc. to meet the unique needs of protected area managers. Our solution collects, integrates and displays all historical and real-time data available from a protected area—wildlife, the rangers protecting them, spatial information, and other threats. EarthRanger empowers protected area managers and rangers to take immediate, proactive actions to prevent and mitigate threat incidents." (<https://earthranger.com>)



WPS is an NGO that is using technology to assist protected area managers with linking camera traps in the field with their monitoring algorithms that filter all the photos we received from the camera traps and only alert us for any threat detected. This means we won't have to manually go through all the camera trap images, saving us a lot of time. We receive between 180 and 250 photos a day from 10 Cameras in the field which we currently monitor 24 hours a day. How it works is they receive our camera trap Photos, they get analyzed by software and verified by a human. Should a threat be detected, they contact you immediately to notify you which camera has detected an incursion 24 hours a day. (<https://wildlifeprotectionsolutions.org/wpswatch/>)

Both EarthRanger and WPS work with one another, so any threat detected will automatically display visually on the Earth Ranger platform for us to easily deploy and later report on an incursion or Incident. EarthRanger will also integrate with Cartrack (which we recently have installed) and our Digital Radios,

which will in essence act as location beacons for field Rangers, displaying their current location on the EarthRanger platform. Cybertracker also has an integration with EarthRanger which means we can start to record Rhino tracks and it will display them onto EarthRanger as well. (<https://www.cybertracker.org/>).

All of the above-mentioned technology will not cost us anything as it is all already sponsored via the organizations. WPS will also give us additional Camera Traps to install on ORGR so we can broaden our network of coverage.

I have been in touch with both organizations who have done a site assessment and have both agreed to partner with us, very exciting! We have started rolling both systems out on ORGR as of April.

#4 SECURITY (Callan Hartman)

March was a very quiet month on the security side of things, with no incidents to report, not just on ORGR but in the whole APNR. There are a few factors that have now come into play that will increase the probability of an incursion. Namely, the level of the Olifants River has dropped significantly making it easy to cross at any point, the bush is very thick making it almost impossible to track and lastly the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. We expect there to be a sharp increase of incursions into the reserve during April and to combat this we have changed our tactics, which I will go into more detail below.

Change in AP tactics during COVID-19 lockdown:

The commencement of the national lockdown on the 27th of March 2020 brought the tourism industry to a standstill, which in turn has sadly led to many people in the area being retrenched and left without a job. This means that there are a lot of desperate people in the communities that neighbour the reserves and this will, sadly, lead to an increase in poaching in the area. With this in mind, we have decided to change our AP tactics and go for a more intensive and aggressive approach. All APU personnel were called back on duty and the following plan was hatched:

The plan consists of four components:

1. Way-Lays – Two way-lay teams will be placed in strategic throughout the area in hopes that we will catch the perpetrators on entry before any damage is done. These way-lays will be conducted ad-hoc when required and various locations.
2. River and Cutline OP – Various Observation post will be set up along the River and Cutlines to detect any Human movements at night time using our advanced thermal imaging devices,
3. Walking Patrols – A walking patrol will be conducted along our various detection zones on ORGR at least three times a day. The night walking patrol will be followed by disruptive night vehicle patrols throughout the reserve.
4. Night Driving Patrols – Night patrols will carry on as usual throughout the night, from 20:00 until 04:00 every night as standard practice,

We believe that new AP tactics adopted by the ORGR APU and management will combat the increase in poaching activity that we expect to see in the reserve during the coming months. With all hands on deck, we will be able to keep the members and animals of ORGR safe during this tough time.

We have also received our new state of the art Thermal Imaging equipment to use in the fight against poaching. We have received a long-range set of Thermal Binoculars capable of spotting a heat signature at a distance of 2km away in the pitch dark. The pic below shows how dramatically it works and the links below to demonstrate its incredible video capability..

<https://www.instagram.com/p/B-mFTh7gs6h/?igshid=4hqzr41re78q>

<https://www.instagram.com/p/B-oqa90AOi4/?igshid=odctxa91tepm>

A further two smaller Thermal Monoculars have also been received which assists our Field Rangers during their Night Walking Patrols, Ambushes and hot pursuits at night. Thank you to the ORGR Board and all the members who contributed to the APU fund which made these acquisitions possible, and hopefully putting us a couple of steps ahead in this ever-evolving game.

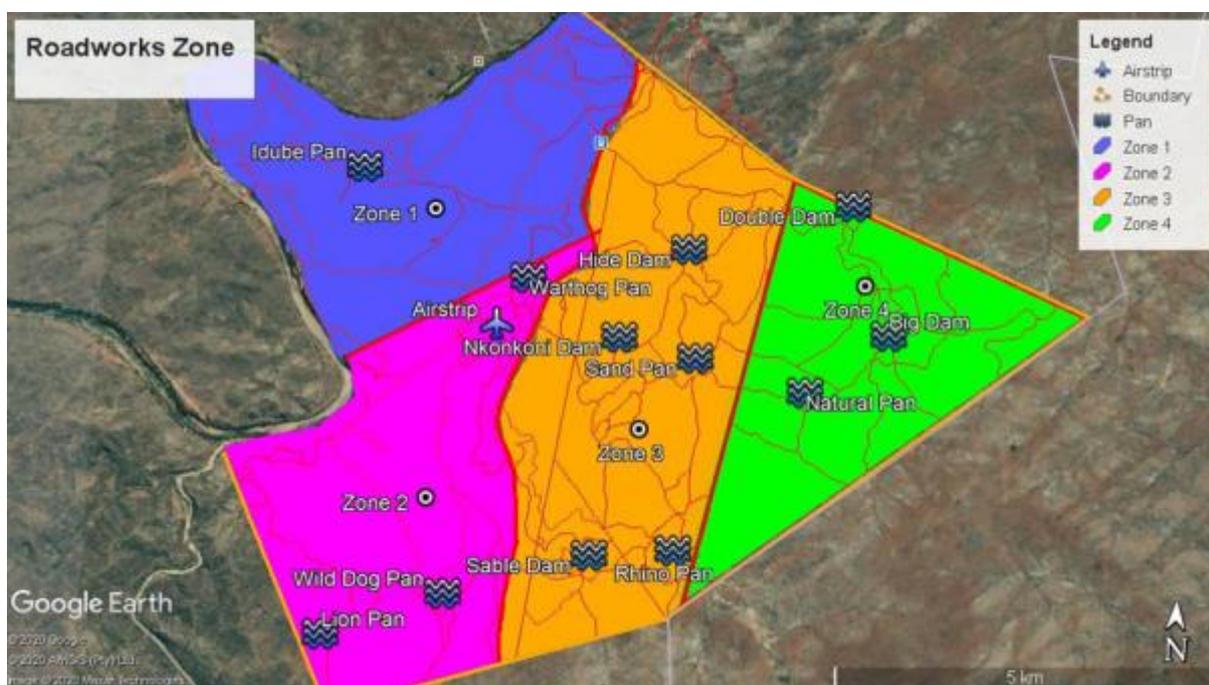


THE MEMBERS UPDATE

ROADS

Every month since November we have received a big downpour (Over 80mm at once), and this amount of rain during a single event undoes all the work that has gone into repairing and maintaining the roads before the downpour and sets us back to square one, and we start again. March has been the first month since November with minimal rain and our progress was rapid and effective up until Lockdown, and frustratingly we are now at a standstill.

We have divided the Reserve into 4 Road Maintenance Zones as indicated in the map below. This will assist us in planning our schedule and will make reporting on progress easier. We are moving systematically through each zone to ensure we complete each one before moving onto the next.



Zone 4 has been graded, drains opened and most of the ruts filled. We still have a few ruts to fill and these will be addressed once we are fully operational again. Four Powerlines and northern boundaries were also worked on and in good condition. We are aware of the rutted roads around Warthog Pan and Wild Dog pans and we will get to those areas when we move into the respective Zones.

We plan to start grading and patching big ruts in Zone 2 as soon as Lockdown is over and we have our workforce back. This should take us around a week, from there we will move into Zone 1 to grade, open drains and patch big ruts. Once the network is repaired we will begin installing new humps and drain to improve drainage for the next rainy season. Installation of Gabions will also take place once all 4 zones are graded.

OCCUPANCY

The average occupancy for March was 18% with an average of 15 Units in residence. March has been a busy month on the reserve with Occupancies reaching 30 % with 25 units in on the weekend before Lockdown. We currently have 17 units on the property with us during the lockdown.

March 2020					
	Occupancy	No of Units		Occupancy	No of Units
Week 1	11%	9	Week 3	23%	19
Week 2	16%	14	Week 4	22%	17

WASTE MANAGEMENT

We have formalized the waste receptacles at the workshop by properly labelling the skip and the cage to ensure members can drop off their separated waste in the correct place. The organic waste can be disposed of in the steel-clad cage and recyclables directly into the provided Skip which has been moved adjacent to the Organic receptacle. Monitoring the waste for March has shown that there is still a lot of unseparated rubbish being disposed of.



WORKSHOP CLEAN-UP

We have removed the unsightly old incinerators from the workshop area together with two old scrap trailers, and as you can see from the pic below this has cleaned up that area dramatically. There is still quite a bit of scrap metal around which we will remove in time, as well as allowing for the rehabilitation of some vegetation in this vicinity.



ORGR PREFERRED CONTRACTOR LIST

The following is a list of our preferred trusted contractors we use regularly on ORGR. These contractors are all registered at our entry gate and all their staff have been vetted against criminal records. We would like to stick to only using these contractors for consistency and security reasons, but will consider alternatives when necessary..

Electrical	Hoedspruit Electrical
	Pumori
	Abupeli
Plumbing	Big Five
	Pumori
	Wildebeest Construction
Thatching	Big Five
	Hoffmans
	Pronix
Solar	Bushmaster
Reserve Pumps	Pumori
Aircon	Bushmaster
	Midrand
	Pumori
Consturction & Refurbishment	Designer Air
	Big Five
	Wildebeest Construction
Mechanical	Maruleng Auto
	NTT
	Bushmaster
Gas	Pumori
	Bosbok Gas

CLASSIFIEDS

We have a few units on the market at the moment. This includes a third Share of Unit 22, third Share in Unit 54 a full share of Unit 76 and a full share of Unit 83. Please contact the office should you have queries on units for sale.

A SPECIAL THANKS TO.....

- The anonymous donor of a contribution of R170 000 to support the staff and their families in the wake of the pandemic.
- Members of the SAB old boys group that contributed R14 000 to the planned rehabilitation of the workshop and tools upgrade..
- Tom (3), Maurice (47) and Ally (44) for stepping forward and helping clean up after the baboon invasion of Unit 9 whilst staff were away.. Here is a taste of before and after!



THE LAST WORD

STAFF PROFILE OF THE MONTH

This month we are not focusing on just one individual, but rather on the Lockdown Skeleton crew who have remained on the reserve. The ORGR Anti Poaching Unit has remained on the reserve during the lockdown to ensure our Wildlife, Assets, and Residence remain safe during these unsure times. They have all stood up to the task with honor and determination and without any hesitation. They also assist the rest of the management team with various tasks around the reserve that need some additional hands. To Sipho, Themba, January, Lucky, Derek, Tshepo, Timane and Jabulan, Thank you for looking after us all.

I would also like to thank the Management team for continuing to ensure the reserve ticks over during the lockdown.

Thanks Lourenza, Errol, Callan and Kerry, you are Champions of Epic Proportions!

That's a wrap for now, and we look forward to seeing you all on the reserve once Lockdown has been lifted, until then, look after yourselves and stay safe!.

All the best, Nick and the ORGR team

