



# OVERBERG LOWLANDS CONSERVATION TRUST

## Newsletter 5, January 2015

Herewith, the latest newsletter of the Overberg Lowlands Conservation Trust (OLCT)  
(Sep 2014-Jan2015).

Please remember you can also follow us via our Website, Blog, Twitter and Facebook pages.

The year 2014 was a fantastic one for the OLCT and we look forward to greater things in 2015. We would like to thank all our followers for the great support that we have received till now. Without you, we would not be where we are today. In April, we will be three years old! In this newsletter, we share with you some of the most exciting findings / happenings at our Renosterveld Reserve and Centre, as well as a few other highlights. We will soon be launching the Centre as a self-catering guesthouse to be made available to visitors who would like to see our reserve and perhaps combine such an outing with a visit to De Hoop and Sijnn Wines at Malgas. So watch this space for an update on opportunities to come and stay at our Renosterveld Visitor & Research Centre...

### Updates from our Renosterveld Reserve (Haarwegskloof) and Centre

#### **Camera trap updates**

We discovered some gems on our reserve, through the careful placement of camera traps by our recently - appointed manager, Jannie Groenewald. Highlights were: Aardvark, Aardwolf, while we also got some nice shots of Water Mongoose and Small Grey Mongoose (the latter feeding on a road-kill hare). I think finding the former two termite-eating critters on our reserve has been one of the greatest thrills we have experienced on this special piece of land this far. Most importantly, these findings speak volumes about the importance of protecting these remnants and corridors, as they provide critical refuges for important species which are unable to survive in a transformed matrix of croplands and lucerne fields.



#### **Our Reserve & Centre Manager is welcomed**

We managed to secure short-term funding to get a reserve manager for Haarwegskloof until May 2015 and hope that we will be able to make this critical position more permanent within the year.

Jannie Groenewald has been doing an excellent job of caring for the Reserve and Centre, while collecting important data in the veld. We have therefore been able to start a detailed Species Inventory of the Reserve, which is already very impressive. We will make this available on our website soon. The OLCT looks forward to a long-term relationship with Jannie, who is an extremely competent and passionate ecologist and conservationist, whose knowledge of all things natural is never-ending. Jannie just received his MSc (Stellenbosch University) on the Biodiversity and Ecology of Rûens Silcrete Renosterveld in the Buffeljags area near Swellendam. Welcome Jannie! 😊



## Bioblitz at Haarwegskloof reveals several surprises

After making a fairly thorough start on the species inventory of the plants and birds occurring on Haarwegskloof, we decided it was time to bring in some help from fellow ecologists and carry out some surveys on the smaller critters. Help arrived in bucket-loads, in the form of six enthusiastic, knowledgeable and passionate ecologists: Keir & Alouise Lynch, Cliff & Suretha Dorse and Barry & Rozelle Rose. Jannie and I (Odette) were privileged to spend a weekend at the end of November with these wonderful people, who brought with them trap-arrays and sherman traps (all live traps – no animals were harmed!) and helped us discover things we didn't yet know occurred on our reserve. We are excited to share these wonderful finds with our followers...



Above: Cape Rock Elephant Shrew, Cross-marked Grass Snake, Klein Karoo Dwarf Chameleon.



Above: Klein Karoo Dwarf Chameleon, Owl Fly, Small-Spotted Genet, *Parabuthus* Scorpion, Denham's Bustard



Above: Cape Rock Elephant Shrew, Namaqua Rock Mouse, Rain Frog (*Breviceps rosei vansoni*), Burrowing Scorpion



Above: Team Bioblitz in action at Haarwegskloof



Above: Klaas's Cuckoo pair, Long-tongued Fly, Puffadder, Steenbok, Klein Karoo Dwarf Chameleon

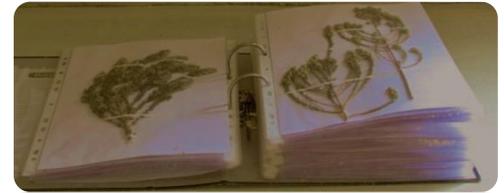
All photographs by Odette Curtis, except for *Parabuthus*, Puffadder, dark Dwarf Chameleon and Genet, by Jannie Groenewald

## The Centre: visiting scientists, donors & other friends of the OLCT

Since the Centre has opened, we have had so many wonderful visitors. We were thrilled to be able to show the Centre to several of our donors, including Dr Rob Brett from FFI (Fauna and Flora International, UK), Peter Krcmar (Germany), Oren Taylor (a very generous donor from UK, who also purchased the naming rights to the new *Hesperantha* in 2013) and Kathrin Succow (Germany). We also had a few students and collaborating scientists spend some time on the reserve, including Zoe Poulsen, Luke Gallant and Prof Charlie Stirton, while several friends and family made use of our special offer to use the Centre as a self-catering guesthouse at a greatly reduced rate and to give us feedback in order to help us develop the Centre in this direction.

Kathrin Succow's lovely daughter, Leevke and her friend Olga (both 16 years old) came to volunteer at the Centre for a few days and made a significant contribution towards getting our Herbarium started - thank you girls!

*Below: Sundowners at Haarwegskloof with special friends: Peter Krcmar, Odette, Jannie and Oren Taylor, Maarten Groos from Farm 215 (Private Nature Reserve on the Agulhas Plain), researchers making use of the workroom at the Centre to press herbarium specimens and Kathrin Succow with Leevke and Olga visiting and volunteering at the Centre.*



## Marketing funds and other funding

At the moment, we are running low on funding and have therefore had to put our marketing consultant, Dr Louise de Waal, on hold while we find additional funding. Louise helped us grow on Facebook significantly, and we are currently on nearly 700 Likes... we hope to grow this to 1000 soon! Louise also wrote some useful Blogs (see our website) and launched the Sponsor a Petal Campaign, whereby you can help contribute towards the costs of running our Reserve and Centre, with an annual donation of only R450. Please consider supporting us through this campaign! <http://overbergrenosterveld.org.za/sponsor-a-petal/>



## OLCT receives Ford from the new Ford Wildlife Foundation

When Ford and Mazda split, there were concerns as to who would carry the Wildlife Fund. Luckily, Ford stepped in and set up the Ford Wildlife Foundation. We were one of only 15 projects country-wide to be privileged to receive a vehicle through this initiative: a Ford Ranger 2.2 double cab 4X4! We are thrilled to continue our relationship with B&M Ford in Bredasdorp, who give only the best, friendliest, most efficient and helpful service ever! Thank you Danie, Venessa, Theresa, Angela, Martin, Graham, Hadley and the rest of the team at Ford for going the extra mile for us always!

*Photos below: smiles all-round as we are given our vehicle: with Danie Horne, Venessa Nel (B&M Ford Bredasdorp) and Oren Taylor, one of our most important donors from the UK, who was visiting the OLCT at the time.*





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Photo: Kathrin Succow

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