DITHOLO
WILDLIFE ESTATE

NEWS LETTER APRIL 2019

Delicious Autumn!

Delicious autumn! My very soul is wedded to it, and if I were a bird I would fly about the earth seeking the successive autumns. George Eliot

The paintbrush of autumn is beginning to slowly but surely work its way through Ditholo. It is, as if the mood is changing in nature from that of spontaneous joy to a more solemn atmosphere.
That, however, can not stop the joy we experience when driving through Ditholo and see the appreciation of nature, after this wet summer. The thick bush stands in contrast to the dry 2017 season.
This fruitful season does not come without challenges. We had to do bush clearance in most areas to eradicate especially the northern hedge spike thorn that was taking over large areas of grazing. Erosion control on the roads was another challenge that will receive our attention now that it is a bit dryer.
The coming winter does not mean that we will relax in our operational activities. Fire breaks, roads, dam cleaning and ecological management is but some of activities our operational team will undertake in this time.
We will not be able to do this if not for the levy income from our owners. We therefore encourage you to pay your levy timeously. This will enable our team to continue the great work they have been doing thus far.
Fire prevention remains a major aspect over this period. We want to encourage our owners to assist by ensuring that your unit is at least 20 meters cleared from any grass and dry branches.
We wish you a pleasant Autumn and winter on Ditholo.

Road Repairs

Due to the significant expense of repairing the damaged roads, the Board of Directors approved the allocation of the R150 000 budgeted to replace a 1.5km fence in this year for the roads. The fence will be maintained. Road repairs are in progress thanks to the expertise of Mr. Andre Becker.

BROWN HYENA

This rare creature was recently spotted on the Estate by Pieter Engelbrecht.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

The forelegs of brown hyenas are significantly longer and more massively built than the hind legs, giving their profile a sloping appearance as if they were constantly walking uphill. The forefeet are also noticeably larger than the hind feet, and the chest, shoulders, neck and skull are heavily built. The teeth of brown hyena are massive, even in comparison to other large carnivores. The upper carnassial tooth is particularly large and well developed as an adaptation for crushing bone.
The most obvious way to distinguish Hyaena brunnea from other members of its family is by the long, shaggy hair, which is usually dark brown to black on the body and tan on the shoulders and neck. The erect ears are larger and more pointed than those of spotted hyenas and resemble those of striped hyenas. The tail is relatively short and bushy, with roughly the same coloration as the body.

DIET

The Brown Hyena is a carnivore which has adapted to a scavenging lifestyle. It will however, supplement its diet with insects, birds' eggs and wild fruits and even occasionally kill small animals. The Brown Hyena is mainly a scavenger, feeding upon carcasses of large herbivores killed by other animals. Their jaw and dentary adaptations allow them to break open the long bones of these large animals and feed on the marrow inside.

BREEDING

Brown Hyenas are non seasonal breeders and have a gestation period of about 90 days. Females give birth to 1 to 4 young. Young are suckled for more than a year and live in the den for up to 18 months. Mother's milk is supplemented with meat from three months of age. At birth Brown Hyena have the same body colouration as adults and reach full size by 30 months.

BEHAVIOUR

They are solitary and nocturnal, lying during the day in thick bush or in deserted Aardvark burrows. Brown Hyenas live in small clans ranging from a breeding pair and their young to groups of several mature males and females. The clan cooperatively defends a territory, but do not forage together.

Meter Mate
Prepaid Electricity

The HOA is on a seasonal rate structure with Eskom. This means that summer rates will apply from September to May and winter rates will apply in June, July and August.
After Eskom's 13.87% increase on 1 April 2019, a fixed monthly charge of R94.61 will be included in the first purchase of every month. The energy charges per unit will be R1.69 during the summer months and R2.15 during the winter months. Rates will be revisited in January 2020

Interesting facts on Giraffes

A week ago, I was lucky enough to be stopped by 7 giraffe in the road next to the buffalo camp on route to inspect the bush camp. The same week I read an article by Hannah Keyser with the following interesting facts:

- Over short distances, giraffes can run at speeds up to 56 kmph.
- Giraffes only need to drink water once every couple of days. They get most of their water from their plant-based diet—which is good considering their height makes the process of drinking difficult.
- Additionally, the jugular veins contain a series of one-way valves that prevent excess blood flow to the brain when the giraffe lowers its head to drink.

- Fortunately, baby giraffes can stand up and even run within an hour of being born.

- Giraffes require over 34kg of food a day—and with a diet of leaves, this means they spend most of their time eating.
- Giraffes' tongues can be up to 20 inches long and are darkly coloured, which is thought to help protect them during frequent sun-exposure.

- Giraffes usually stay upright while sleeping and if they do settle into a vulnerable position on the ground, it's just for a quick six-minute nap.
- Giraffes have hair-covered horns called ossicones—but only males use them (for fighting each other).
- The giraffe's scientific name, *Giraffa camelopardalis*, comes from the ancient Greeks' belief that it looked like a camel wearing a leopard's coat.
- Despite their characteristic long necks, giraffes have the same number of neck vertebrae as humans—just seven. Each individual vertebra is super-sized, measuring up to ten inches long.
- Because of their unusual shape, giraffes have a highly-specialized cardiovascular system that starts with an enormous heart. It's 61cm long and weighs up to 11 kg.
- Male giraffes engage in a ritualized display of dominance called "necking" that involves head-butting each other's bodies.

- Unlike horses and most other quadrupeds, giraffes walk by moving both legs on the same side of their body together. So, the left front and the left hind legs step and then the right front and the right hind legs step.
- Although they're more likely to run from an attack than fight back, giraffes are not completely defenceless. A swift kick from one of their long legs can do serious damage to—or even kill—an unlucky lion.

SERVICES

We would like to remind you that the Estate's staff will be more than happy to assist you with any of the following. :

- General Maintenance R80 (Include first hour, additional hours will be charged at R60 per hour)
- Additional Bush Clearance R450
  (The HOA will do one Bush Clearance once a year as part of fire prevention. It will consist of 20 meter perimeter clearance around houses as required by the insurance)
- Grass Cutting R300
  (Immediate area around the house and lapa.)

Please email your request to gerda@wbpm.co.za. or Contact Dawid (083 432 5542).

SES Anti Poaching

It is almost winter and activity in poaching is picking up in various arias in the Waterberg. The SES Anti Poaching team has been active in protecting our animals on the Estate since March 2018.

They are in the middle of a massive operation involving moving units around and making sure they get those arrests. They deployed a K9 unit in the area as well.

Need assistance during your stay?

Vodacom: 064 838 6916 (voice calls only)
MTN: 078 171 2210 (voice calls and WhatsApp messages).

The staff member at the entrance gate will attend to the phone during the day and contact the correct person to attend to your request. After hours the phone will be attended to by the designated staff member on duty.

Account Payments

Paying your levy or services invoice on time enables the HOA to meet its financial obligations. Delayed payment puts a lot of stress on the cash flow and a restriction on moving forward on any planned and budgeted maintenance and upgrades.
In the light of the above, I would like to bring the following to your attention:

- Levies are payable in advance and therefore invoiced on the 20th day of each month.
- The levy invoice is payable within 15 days of the date of the invoice. This means that the invoice your received for the May levy have to be paid before the 5th of May.

An urgent request goes out to all owners, who have not met their commitments, to bring their payments up to date as soon as possible.

Thank you to all owners who keeps their accounts in good order!