Ditholo Wildlife Estate

Summer Newsletter

October 2018

- AGM Notice
- Change to the rules of the game
- Fire threat
- Fire prevention, a joint responsibility
- Relocation of Buffalo
- New arrivals
- Lobo
- Weather

AGM 2018 Notice

Reminder:

AGM 2018 will be held on the:

7 November 2018

Time: 18:00

Venue: ABSA Capital

Please check your notice for more information or contact the managing agent if you did not receive the e-mail.

DID YOU KNOW

Hippos are considered the second largest land animal on Earth (first place goes to the elephant!). Males measure around **3.5m long** and **1.5m tall**, and can weigh up **3,200kg**. That's as much as *three* small cars!

Changes to the rules of the game

As game prices drastically dropped over the past 18 months, it became clear that we had to re-evaluate our model of game management to one that would be more cost effective.

Some of the changes included:

- Releasing most game out of the breeding camps and enlarging the hippo camp to limit the expenses on game feed.
- Removing the current Buffalo herd. Two young bulls will be introduced in the near future.
- Increasing our stake in the Wildebeest.
- Introducing additional species like Eland.
- Increase numbers in some species like Red hartebeest.
- Enhance breeding stock in species like Sable.

This has already proven to be to our advantage as we were able to save a significant amount on game feed.

Fire Threat at Ditholo

On 2 August a runaway fire that haunted the Kromdraai area for more than a week came dangerously close to Ditholo. We immediately brought in the assistance of Working on Fire who assisted in securing our southern border and extinguishing all other possible threats.

Fire prevention, a Joint responsibility

It is fire season, a time when all our senses are focused on anything that may smell or look like a fire.

It is important to think of fire prevention in terms of layers. While Ditholo is focusing on fire prevention holistically, each owner can assist by doing their part in and around their unit.

Home owners can reduce the risk at their homes by looking at **fuels around the house.**

When paired with the right terrain and weather conditions, dense build-up of vegetation (fuels) leads to fires that burn hotter, last longer, and spread faster. These fires become difficult to monitor and control and can threaten houses.

“When considering improvements to reduce wildfire vulnerability, the key is to consider the home in relation to its immediate surroundings”

- Owners and their staff must know the emergency numbers (see emergency numbers)
- Have a clearing of at least **20m** around the house where possible.
- Remove any flammable materials away from the house.
- Have personal firefighting equipment like fire extinguishers and hose reels checked on a regular basis.
- Ensure that access for a fire vehicle is available around your unit.

“Not all house fires are caused by wild land fires and can be caused by nature or human negligence and even faulty wiring”

- Have a certified technician check your electrical wiring on regular basis.
- When making a “bonfire” keep it small and never leave it unattended. Make sure that it’s well extinguished if finished. This applies for normal “braai fires” as well. Don’t throw hot coals into the veld.
- Use LED emergency lights instead of candles/paraffin lamps during a power cut/load shedding.

Emergency Numbers: **Dawid Slabbert 083 432 5542**

Matie Barnard 083 680 1880

Gerda Barnard 083 291 6113

Relocation of Buffalo

As part of the new game management plan, the current group of Buffalo had to be relocated to make place for two young bulls.

Moving Buffalo is a very intensive process, as the animals have to be darted, blood samples taken and send for testing. Only after the test results are back, the relocation process can start. Pieter Engelbrecht and his team did an immaculate job in managing the process.

Unfortunately, one of the cows died during the first phase due to complications.

We are now awaiting the arrival of the new bulls in the new year. This break will allow the grazing in the camps to recover.

New Arrivals

On the 18th of August at around 19:00, we welcomed eight new arrivals on Ditholo. To date we have had only one Red Hartebeest. Four additional animals were introduced.

In addition to the Red hartebeest, four Eland were introduced as well. Staff recently spotted two Eland calves.

Both these species have adapted well in their new environment.

The sable are doing very well and for this reason a new breeding bull was introduced.

His name is Genesis and he measures 44' with a 20' tip to tip at 5 years and 8 months.

We swapped two old Kudus and the current Sable bull for this magnificent breeding bull.

The old bull measured 36', so this is a huge upgrade in genetics and will take our sable breeding projects to the next level.

Lobo, the anti-poaching dog

Pieter Engelbrecht send us the following:

I have been looking into getting a well-trained dog to use in the fight with rhino poachers and the costs of this is about $10 000.00. I have found a very generous gentleman in Ireland that works with a military K 9 unit and he is willing to donate the dog to us to help. We have started a go fund me page to get Lobo to Africa.

My intention is to use Lobo for rhino poachers as well as to help on Ditholo to prevent any loss of animals to poaching. We have raised a considerable amount of money but still have a long way to go.

Hopefully you will all be able to see Lobo patrolling the estate soon.

For more information, please visit:
https://www.gofundme.com/lobo-to-africa-rhino-conservation

High's and Low's

Month	High	Low	Rainfall
January	40°C	14°C	112mm
February	34°C	15°C	113mm
March	34°C	13°C	92mm
April	31°C	10°C	31mm
May	29°C	4°C	15mm
June	27°C	3°C	6mm
July	29°C	1°C	2mm
August	32°C	1°C	0mm
September	37°C	0.2°C	0mm