



iKapa Honorary Rangers
“Volunteers in Conservation”

iKapa Honorary Rangers News

Letter from the Editor

Spring is in the air -- well certainly in the northern parts of our country the first of September heralds spring. For us down here in the fairest Cape it might be the official date for the start of Spring, but we all know that we have plenty of winter to still enjoy before it gets warmer and we can pack away our warm clothes. Luckily we can enjoy our wonderful mountain and all it has to offer all year round. During winter the cold fast flowing mountain streams seem to add life to the landscape whilst as spring approaches the additional beauty of spring flowers add a rich diversity of colour to the landscape. The good news is that our dams are full and that bodes well for summer and for the farmers and everyone in the fairest Cape.

Our bi-monthly news letter gives an overview of what iKapa does and keeps all our members and all those interested in HRs in the picture.

John Elford

Committee:

Chairperson	Sue Smith	083 461 9686
Vice Chairperson	Raj Rajkumar	084 223 4001
Secretary	Vito Viglietti	083 395 7295
Johan Noeth	Treasurer	083 299 8474
Training	George Smith	083 443 4910
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PR	John Elford	083 253 9213
Finance	Johan Noeth	083 299 8474
Veterinary Services	Paul van Helden	082 579 1086

IKAPA News Bites

Media releases over the last couple of months.

APRIL: iKapa Honorary Rangers train Cape Grace staff

The front line staff of the prestigious 5 star Cape Grace, situated on a private quay at the V & A Waterfront attended a training course on Table Mountain National Park and its environs hosted by iKapa Honorary Rangers in April

This is part of an ongoing programme by the Honorary Rangers to help educate staff from establishments such as Cape Grace to learn more about Cape Town and Table Mountain National Park.

“With the high number of overseas and local visitors coming to Cape Town and staying at the Cape Grace it is important for our staff to be knowledgeable about our city and National Park that we reside in. Due to our location many of our guests want to visit Table Mountain and Cape Point and it is important that our staff have the necessary knowledge and is able to communicate this.” Commented Dorothy van Hoorn HR Manager at Cape Grace.



Staff of Cape Grace at Silvermine

George Smith, iKapa Honorary Ranger Training Officer led the training programme which was held over 3 weekends at the hotel. The training culminated in a bush walk for the delegates, led by the Rangers, to Silvermine where much of the local fynbos was explained.

Sue presented certificates to the staff who completed the course when iKapa was asked to present another course to Cape Grace staff and invited to be included in the Cape Grace's Corporate Social Investment programme which hotel guests are told about. More about this soon.

MAY: iKapa Honorary Ranger wins National Merit Award

iKapa Honorary Ranger Ruedi Siegenthaler was awarded a prestigious Merit Award at the recent Honorary Ranger Indaba held at Berg en Dal in May in the Kruger National Park.

At a gala dinner held at the annual Indaba and attended by 500 Honorary Rangers the chairperson of the South African National Parks Honorary Rangers, Jansen Davies handed over the award.



**Jansen Davies National
Chairperson HR's
presenting the Merit Award
to Ruedi Siegenthaler**

Siegenthaler has been an Honorary Ranger in the Table Mountain National Park for the past 5 years. He spends much of his spare time in the park working on keeping paths clear and safe as well as cutting down trees that have fallen across these paths. He can also be found on any one of the high visitor area boardwalks ensuring these walkways are maintained. Lions Head at full moon is another area where Siegenthaler can be found looking after the safety of the many visitors that visit the mountain after dark at this time. Over 700 visitors from South Africa and abroad trail up this iconic mountain on full moon. Other tasks include painting of the Cape Point Lighthouse which needs regular repainting to clean off the graffiti that accumulates on the this national monument. As operations officer for iKapa Honorary Rangers Siegenthaler also ensures HR's are focused in the right tasks and projects within TMNP, including visitor safety and information.

JUNE: iKapa Honorary Rangers donate cyber trackers to Table Mountain National Park

iKapa Honorary Rangers has donated cyber trackers valued at R17 000 to Table Mountain National Park. At a function in June at Cape Point to celebrate 10 years of Table Mountain National Park 5 cyber trackers were presented to the park at the same time as Thorp Motor Group renewed its sponsorship of a Corsa Utility for use as a Penguin Rescue Vehicle.

These hand-held PDA's (Portable Data Application) which are fitted with "cyber tracker" software will be used by field rangers to pinpoint locations of game or other important and interesting data within the park. Fitted with an integrated GPS system this equipment can store information which is vital to the management of such an important conservation and world heritage site as Table Mountain National Park. Besides storing information held within each individual instrument it is possible to share data held by similar PDA's and to develop an integrated picture of all of the information gathered.



**Raj Rajkumar Vice
Chairperson iKapa HR,
handing the first cyber
tracker to Monique
Ruthenberg Section
Ranger Simonstown
Section**

Cyber trackers such as these have been used successfully in other national parks and in particular the Kruger National Park where they are used to track game, migration trends and a host of other information. They have become an integral tool in game as well as rare and endangered animal and plant management.

"We at TMNP are very excited to receive this equipment donated by the iKapa Honorary Rangers and are confident it will help us track and manage our game and endangered species data better within the park." commented Paddy Gordon, Acting Park Manager, Table Mountain National Park at the handover of the equipment.

JUNE: Thorp Motor Group Continues Support for Table Mountain National Parks, African Penguin Conservation

In June the Thorp Motor Group supported by Frontline Underwriters (Pty) Ltd handed over a Corsa Utility to Table Mountain National Park. In a deal brokered by iKapa Honorary Rangers Thorp Auto will replace the current Corsa Utility which has been used for the past year to help save the lives of hundreds of penguins that have been washed up on our shores. The vehicle is constantly used to help with all facets of conservation along the shores of Table Mountain National Park.



**Monique Ruthenberg Section
Ranger proudly sits in the new
Corsa Ute supplied by Thorp**

"We at Thorp Auto, the General Motors dealership based in the South Peninsular, are proud to be part of conservation in the Table Mountain National Park. It is up to all concerned citizens of Cape Town to lend support to this our very own national park in a city." Commented Nicky Thorp, Joint Managing Director of Thorp Auto.

Frontline Insurance Underwriters General Manager James Bonner confirmed support for the project. "As a relative newcomer to the Cape we are excited to partner Thorp Auto to continue to support Table Mountain National Park and the Penguin Rescue effort on the Peninsular". "We thank Thorp Auto, our Conservation Partner, for their ongoing support helping with the conservation of penguins. As we go into winter more and more penguins get washed onto our

beaches and need to be rescued and there is growing concerns around the African Penguin populations decline in numbers over the last few years. The Opel Corsa provided will assist SANParks staff in the collection and transport of these birds to rehabilitation centres and release sites as part of a concerted effort to improve the conservation efforts towards this species” commented Paddy Gordon, Acting Manager, TMNP. “Without the support Conservation Partners such as Thorp Auto and Frontline Insurance Underwriters provide we would find it difficult to provide the necessary assistance to protect these animals.”



Nicky Thorp MD of Thorp proudly showing off his Conservation Partner Certificate

AUGUST: Western Leopard Toads

It is the season when these highly endangered toads head out for greener pastures and cross our busy roads, particularly in the Lakeside/ Kirstenhof area and over Ou Kaapseweg. This toad which is the largest in SA is also known as the Snoring or August Toad is endemic to the Fynbos wetlands of the W Cape.



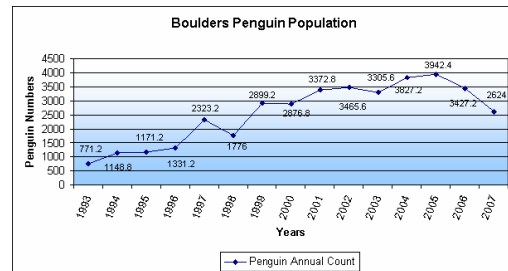
If you come across any of these endangered toads please take pictures of them and send it to leopardtoad@sanbi.org.

If you would like to help to ensure the long term survival of these amphibians contact Ruedi on 083 3023743.

AUGUST: Boulders Penguin Colony

Section Ranger, South, Monique Ruthenberg did a presentation at the August meeting on the African Penguin and the problem of declining populations at the August regional meeting. As part of a programme to help increase populations of this endangered species SANParks is going to source a number of penguin breeding boxes which will be installed at Boulders to help protect breeding pairs.

iKapa has taken this on as a project, so if any of you would like to get involved kindly contact either Johan or Heman.



Boulders Penguin Population Stats

SEPTEMBER: Visitor Safety Plan

Visitor safety is one of Table Mountain National Park’s priorities, and iKapa is assisting at the Visitors Information Centres, as active eyes and ears in the field on patrol, and in training TMNP volunteers. iKapa has a safety plan which includes HRs being trained and briefed by TMNP in September. iKapa’s visitor safety committee “Eyes and Ears” is keeping in close contact with us and TMNP

SEPTEMBER: Tabletop Weekend

It is time for the highlight of the iKapa social calendar. The annual Table Top Weekend. This event has become a much looked forward to function. The HRs who attend will meet near Constantia Nek on Saturday Sept 20 and walk up the back table via Orangekloof, one of the most scenic walks up the mountain. Aply led by Claude the group will pass by some historic sites such as the original tunnel built to funnel water down to the city from the dams at the top. Claude will enthrall the group with stories about the building of the dams in the 19th century. A visit to the museum is also part of the agenda. Overnight will be spent in the hut near the dams. On Sunday after exploring the back table you will return to Constantia Nek via the Jeep track.



HR's en route to the top of Table Mountain

Watch out for more information on this not to be missed weekend.

OUT & ABOUT: Clearing alien invaders

Every weekend iKapa HRs can be seen on the mountain helping with conservation.

iKapa Honorary Rangers Paul and Eileen van Helden cleared a stand of the toxic alien invader species *Datura stramonium* from an area near Olifantsbos in the Cape Point section of Table Mountain National Park. They noticed these plants during one of their many patrols in the Cape



Paul hard at work clearing
Datura stramonium



Point section of TMNP.

This category one invader which must be removed by the landowner is also known amongst others as a thorn apple, devils apple and Jimsonweed. The name Jimsonweed is possibly a corruption of the common name Jamestown weed. That name refers to an incident in 1676 when soldiers in the Jamestown Colony in North America put some of the herb into their cooking pot and spent the next 11 days in a state of incoherence. It is a member of the solanaceae (nightshade family) and is extremely poisonous and may cause death if eaten. (info internet J Haas)

Although most of the plants were removed by Paul and Eileen, many of the seeds from the original stand have spread and ongoing vigilance will be needed to remove new plants once these seeds germinate. Hopefully once the uprooted plants pulled out by the Honorary Rangers have been destroyed the invader will be kept at bay.

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