

Douw/Swannie 'Mandhevhu' Swanepoel (Information provided by Louisa Swanepoel)

Douw Swanepoel better known as 'Swannie' to most joined the Kruger National Park during 1982. For the next four years he was heavily involved in the training of all new and already employed Field Rangers whenever the need arose.

He became a Wilderness Trails Ranger in the beginning of 1983 until he was promoted as Section Ranger to Mooiplaas during December of the same year. In 1987 he was transferred to Kingfisherspruit until 1994 when he was sent to Olifants where he remained until his career ended in 2001 when he was declared redundant as a result of operation prevail.

During his time in Kruger, he attained the National Diploma: Nature Conservation in 1986 by part time studies. In 1995 he completed the Higher Diploma. He received his MSC in 1999. His thesis was: The ecology of the Nile Crocodile in the Olifants River, KNP.

Because of this unique study and subsequent intense knowledge on crocodiles, Swannie was invited to address the International Crocodile Specialist Group in Australia during 1996. In 1997 he and the late Tony Pooley, the only South African's ever, were invited to join the IUCN Species Survival Group on Crocodiles. He also appeared in four TV documentaries based on the Nile crocodile.

Swannie was by far the most knowledgeable Ranger with the use of computers. When the Honorary Rangers kindly donated a PC to each KNP Ranger during 2000, Swannie introduced all the Rangers in the KNP at the time to the necessary and basic PC skills, which are still used by them to this day.

However, the biggest legacy, which Swannie had left KNP Conservation Services, is called Cyber Tracker. He recognized the value of the palmtop computer way ahead of anyone else in the organization at the time. He strongly motivated for them, acquired the hardware and subsequently trained the rangers in its use. His worthwhile effort has put and kept KNP way ahead of any similar organization worldwide.

After leaving SANParks, Swannie became instrumental in the translocation of the first elephants into Limpopo National Park. The successful occasion was attended by dignitaries such as former State President Nelson Mandela and the late Mr Anton Rupert.

addo elephant
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bontebok
golden gate highlands
karoo
kgalagadi transfrontier
knysna lake area
kruger
mapungubwe
marakele
mountain zebra
namaqua
table mountain
tankwa-karoo
tsitsikamma
|ai-|ais/richtersveld
vaalbos
west coast
wilderness



At a gala function towards the end of 2005 he received the Phalaborwa Chamber of Commerce's Award as newsmaker of the Year. Swannie was loyally supported by Louisa ever since they married in 1981. They have two children Jirah-Mari and Wessel.

Douw Swanepoel sadly passed away on the 11th September 2007 after a long battle with cancer.

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