



U M B A B A T

PRIVATE NATURE RESERVE
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Warden Monthly Report for February 2020

Bryan Havemann

Introduction

During this month, I have spoken with various members of the share blocks and other landowners and they all have said that they cannot recall when last, they have seen the veld looking this lush. The rain has had a very positive effect and entirely bare areas, have now bounced back and are now fully covered with grass, forbs and flowers. It is incredible to think that the seeds lie dormant under the soil waiting for the right conditions to be able to germinate.

This February 2020 being a leap year, I think has great significance for the Umbabat and our future. As we move into the new decade there are going to be numerous challenges to get everyone on the same page in the Umbabat however I am reminded of that saying, “you cannot cross a deep chasm by taking small steps you have to take a giant leap to get safely to the other side”. In this current economic and political climate in South Africa, we cannot afford to have dissension in our internal ranks, as we have enough negative outside influences that we need to fight collectively as a united front. Let us take that leap!



UPNR Management Plan

After various consultations and work on the document, I submitted the 2nd Draft of the Umbabat Management Plan to the Umbabat Chairman and Vice-Chairman. The various GM's are working with Greg Martindale from Conservation Outcomes on the Regional Templates which will form part of the annexures in the document. This information is very specific to the share blocks and the UWCA but needs to dovetail with the overarching Umbabat Management Plan. We are making good progress.

Umbabat Security & Related Issues

Henry Tarr the new manager at Noctuum decided to resign this month. It is a great loss as he knew the Umbabat so well along with having a good relationship with our Kruger neighbours. His post was filled by Hannes Brits a relief manager from Noctuum. The Noctuum field ranger teams were briefed daily and deployed in the field, before being rotated. The estimated distances patrolled per team in February 2020 were as follows:

Team	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Total kms patrolled
N2	71	69	76	72	288
N3	-	-	-	-	-
Total	71	69	76	72	288

The total covered by Noctuum vehicles for February 2020 was **4204 km**.

Total for the Warden vehicle for the month was **1844 km**.

A brand-new **radio repeater** was installed this month at the radio tower on the eastern side of the reserve. See photos. State of the art security has been installed at the tower and surrounds to secure the asset. The radio technician who did the installation also spent a day programming and doing training with the management.

Ecological information and meetings

Rainfall measured in February 2020 was **163.5 mm** at the Wardens house. As a result of this rain that fell mainly in the second week of the month on the 10th, 11th and 12th of February 2020, all the rivers flooded in the reserve. I took photos of the Nhlralumi and Tsiri Rivers which you can see in the photo section of the report. Daily temperatures remained in the upper 30's and lower 40's degrees Celsius however there was a marked cooling in the evening. Humid conditions persisted after the deluge of rain mid-month.

Dr Marisa Coetzee the General Manager: Conservation Management from the Kruger National Park set up a meeting that was facilitated by Greg Martindale with all the relevant Greater Limpopo Trans Frontier Conservation Area (GLTFCA) stakeholders at the Timbavati HQ in the museum on the 12th of February 2020. We discussed the **GLTFCA Cooperative Agreement**

Toolkit, which is a high-level summary of key guiding principles and decision-making processes, linked to the Joint Management Committee (JMC) instruments and objectives of the agreement. **A booklet will be printed**, and this document will be made available to us and the provincial conservation agencies as well, to assist with consistent decision-making processes in the open system. Detailed Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), guidelines and protocols developed by the respective portfolio committees and their coordinators will run concurrent to this process. Greg Martindale from Conservation Outcomes has been appointed through the Global Environment Facility Protected Areas (GEF-PA) programme to facilitate the toolkit and whilst the respective portfolio coordinators will continue to facilitate the SOP's, guidelines and protocols, Greg will however continue to liaise with these portfolio committee coordinators. We also were presented with the approach for the external Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) evaluation by Game Rangers Association of Africa (GRAA), and the evaluation of the Greater Limpopo Trans Frontier Conservation Area (GLTFCA) cooperative agreement. This was a very productive meeting with all our neighbours and government institutions and afterward, I had a separate meeting with Greg Martindale and Dr Mike Peel on finalising the Umbabat Management Plan in its 2nd draft format.

Candice Eb from SANParks met with the APNR wardens on the 18th of February 2020 to **further the Greater Kruger Socio-Economic assessment process**. She was assisted by Michele Hofmeyr, one of the new Greater Kruger Spatial Development Plan (GKSDP) administrators. This is part of the GEF PA – Urban Econ consultancy, and a deliverable to inform the GKSDP and GLTFCA Cooperative Arrangements, but most importantly, to assist reserves with their socio-economic impact monitoring and reporting. Candice provided feedback on the project up to date, ensuring that partners are aware of the process, and her and Michelle went through the template that was established by Urban Econ and sent out to be populated. In the end, the tool should add value to APNR reserves but has a strong focus on commercial operations within the landscape. This will need to be properly populated with the relevant information involving from the EXCO level, warden, GM's to operator level.

Richard Sowry the Kingfisherspruit Section Ranger from the KNP met with all the APNR wardens to discuss **membership of South Africa Hunters and Game Conservation Association (SAHGCA)** at the end of February 2020. There are numerous forums where we do not have representation, whereas if we were a corporate member, we can have a say. This has been recognised as a huge shortfall where decisions are taken by officials who do not have the experience to develop good policies. SAHGCA represents the interests of wildlife custodians, game ranchers, conservationists, responsible hunters and fire-arm owners. It was established in 1949 to promote responsible hunting and conservation of game species and their habitats. Since then, it has grown to become the largest hunting and conservation association in southern Africa and the biggest single organisation representing the wildlife sector. SAHGCA encourage an integrated and sensible approach to biodiversity conservation, mindful of its role as a cornerstone for economic growth and sustainable rural development. To this effect, the organisation conducts relevant research, develops models and facilitates processes and programs in support of sustainable conservation,

responsible wildlife utilization and integrated rural economic development programs to the benefit of people and wildlife. I believe that the Umbabat would be well served in becoming a member and having Lizanne Nel the Conservation Manager informing us of strategic engagements, where we need to attend.

Fundraising and Partner Opportunities

Nkombe Rhino organisation represented by Willem Pieterse donated two 4-man dome tents for the field rangers and staff who spend time in the field. See photo of the handover at “The Great Outdoors” supply company where Willem procured the tents on our behalf. We are very grateful for their continued support of the Umbabat.

Sustainable Utilisation and Animal Control

MTPA Approved OFF-TAKE QUOTA FOR UMBABAT COMPLEX 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021					
SPECIES		CATEGORY			EARMARKED for UMBABAT Participants
		Commercial	Non Commercial	Population Management	
ELEPHANT BULLS	35-40 YEARS : 55 lbs / side	X			1
	30-35 YEARS : 40 lbs / side	X			2
	25-30 YEARS: 30 lbs / side	X			2
BUFFALO	Min 12 yr plus unlimited spread	X			3
	Sub 38' spread min 10 years	X			4
	Sub 34' spread min 6 years	X			7
IMPALA	ANY		X		330
				X	90

The **sustainable off-take table** above was approved by the Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Authority (MTPA) and has been allocated to the entities within the current boundaries of the reserve. The province will then have the final say once all the criteria have been met whether they will issue the hunting permit or not. The income generated from our sustainable utilisation practices is used to fund the conservation, socio-economic developments and security operations on the reserve.

No incidents with damage-causing animals this month.

Kindest regards



Bryan Havemann
Umbabat Private Nature Reserve Warden

Photographs February 2020



Handover of two 4-man dome tents donated by Willem Pieterse from Enkombe Rhino organisation.



Elephant bull enjoying the ample grazing after the rains.



Ingwelala causeway covered by the Nhlalumi River in flood after the good rain event.



Tsiri River in flood at the same time on the farm Jabula wedged between Mansimvula and Ntsiri share blocks.



Stand of prickly pear on the reserve.



Flowers of the prickly pear.



Moon in the clear blue sky with the clouds building before the big rain event this month.



Another angle of the cloud formation coming in from the tropics over Africa that brought the heavy rainfall.



Sac flower *Holubia saccate* found in disturbed areas.



Armour-plated cricket with intimidating spikes seen this month.



Heavy rainfall at the Warden's house this month.



Eastern Bark Snake *Hemirhagerrhis nototaenia* on a leadwood log



Giant land snails were seen after the rain



Greater Kruger Environmental Protection Foundation (GKEPF) Mission Support meeting held at the SAWC.



Elegant grasshopper that is poisonous with its bright colours act as a warning to potential predators.



Green-backed Heron looking for fish, frogs and insects in the pool below the Ingwelala causeway.



Flannel weed *Sida cordifolia* growing on the reserve with characteristic yellow flowers.



Black Stork seen foraging amongst the impala on the Ntsiri airstrip.



Warden with Maans the technician from Verstay who installed the repeater at the tower in the east.



Maans and Johan Marais from Ntsiri helping with the radio repeater installation.



Queen of the night cactus seen at various localities on the reserve.



Strange fruit with long tentacle found on the Queen of the night cactus.



Cream-striped Owlet Moth with its characteristic eyespots on the wings to confuse predators, were very active at night.



The Marula fruit was seen in elephant dung due to the season. This passing through the gut of an elephant is an important part of the seeding process for the Marula tree.



A large stick insect looking more like a branch manager



Meeting held at the Timbavati HQ to discuss GLTFCA Cooperative Agreement Toolkit, booklet etc.



Matambu the collard bull elephant looking fat and flourishing at a mud wallow.



View of the Nhlralumi river looking north from the causeway at Ingwelala entrance.



Part of the wild foxglove family *Sesamum alatum* with bright pink flowers.



Grass Lilly *Crinum graminicola* with plum-sized red fruit in a bunch.



Lilac-breasted Rollers are prolific along the Agyle tar road where they hawk insects.



Impala are looking very healthy in the long grass on the reserve.



Candice Ebb from SANParks explaining the Greater Kruger Socio-economic assessment process to the APNR Wardens.



Purple Vernonia flower growing on the roadsides as a pioneer plant.



Grey Tree Frog waiting for the next rain.



Hammerkop hunting frogs and insects in Nhlalalumi.