Greetings!
Welcome to Newsletter No. 20, February 2017

Conservation KZN looking for more partnerships

Co-operative projects bring progress

A “project” in Conservancy terms is usually defined as any conservation exercise that falls within the general activities of the Conservancies.

Examples are removal of alien invasive plants, river rehabilitation or grassland restoration but, as well intentioned as these projects are, sustainability is often a problem because of the limited resources of the Conservancy.

Now, as the scope of Conservancy activity grows to include a wider range of projects Conservancies are moving towards partnerships – not just for logistical help but for financial support, and to ensure that the project is sustainable.

Municipalities are playing a role in partnerships, particularly eThekwini in its support for the eThekwini Conservancies Forum, but partnerships are also being formed with, inter alia, Dept. of Environmental Affairs, Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife, the Endangered Wildlife Trust, DUCT and the South African Sugar Research Institute.

How to help a Conservancy operate successfully

All Conservancies are involved in environmental work but there are many other activities needed by Conservancies to help them run efficiently.

Helping plan conservation projects, playing a role in marketing, doing walks and talks, getting involved in fundraising, doing secretarial and accounting work, maintaining Conservancy membership and mailing lists, helping arrange events, and running the Conservancy blog, Facebook or website.

Helping a Conservancy means helping a team of dedicated people working for a community.

Conservation KZN plans for 2017

Conservation KZN enters 2017 more experienced, stronger and with more members than in 2016. Plans for 2017 include:

- Encouraging members to engage in planned, sustainable Partnership Projects registered with the Association
- Raising funding from Municipalities and corporate sponsors
- Increasing the size of the Association to include affiliates
- Launching the new website and conducting an ongoing online marketing campaign
- Having a membership of over 100 by the end of the year
Did you know?

That the Atacama Desert of Chile is the driest desert in the world and that some areas do not ever receive rain?

That evidence suggests the hyperaridity in the Atacama may have persisted for the last 200 million years?

The desert is so arid that many mountains in the desert higher than 6,000m are completely free of glaciers?

That some parts of the desert are so dry that no plants or animals can survive?

**Costline dune infestation an ongoing problem**

Elimination of alien invasive plants along the coastlines and estuaries of KwaZulu-Natal is an ongoing problem, playing a low profile role in conservation planning.

This is partly due to the overlapping of private and Admiralty land and ignorance (and enforcement) of the obligations of landowners.

Conservation KZN will be looking at establishing a *systematic coastal vegetation maintenance programme* that is operated in partnerships between local municipalities and Conservancies.

An inevitable consequence of such a programme would be the creation of economic opportunities through job creation, education, skills development and benefits to suppliers.

Once established the programme can be extended to estuarine and coastal wetlands, and climate change resilience activities.

Pickersgill’s Reed Frog

The Pickersgill’s Reed Frog (*Hyperolius pickersgilli*) is listed as ’critically endangered’ on the IUCN Red List.

The small frog is found only in KwaZulu-Natal where it occupies small areas of coastal wetlands.

Juveniles are pale brown to greenish, while adult females and some males become a much brighter green, often with distinctive yellow and white stripes.

**Trophic levels**

No, trophic levels are not the amount of silver cups won on the school sports day.

The *trophic level* of an organism is the position it occupies in a food chain. A food chain represents a succession of organisms that eat another organism and are, in turn, eaten themselves.

Level 1: Plants and algae make their own food and are called primary producers.

Level 2: Herbivores that eat plants and are called primary consumers.

Level 3: Carnivores that eat herbivores are secondary consumers.

Level 4: Carnivores that eat other carnivores are tertiary consumers.

Level 5: Apex predators (no predators) are the top of the food chain.

**PROBLEM? DON’T KNOW WHO TO CALL?**

DUCT has produced a wonderful list of contact information ranging from dead animals to environmental crime, dumping and pollution. It’s all available on the web page: