

RV SPECIAL BULLETIN

Ecological Matters

13 JULY 2016

WINTER FEEDING 2016

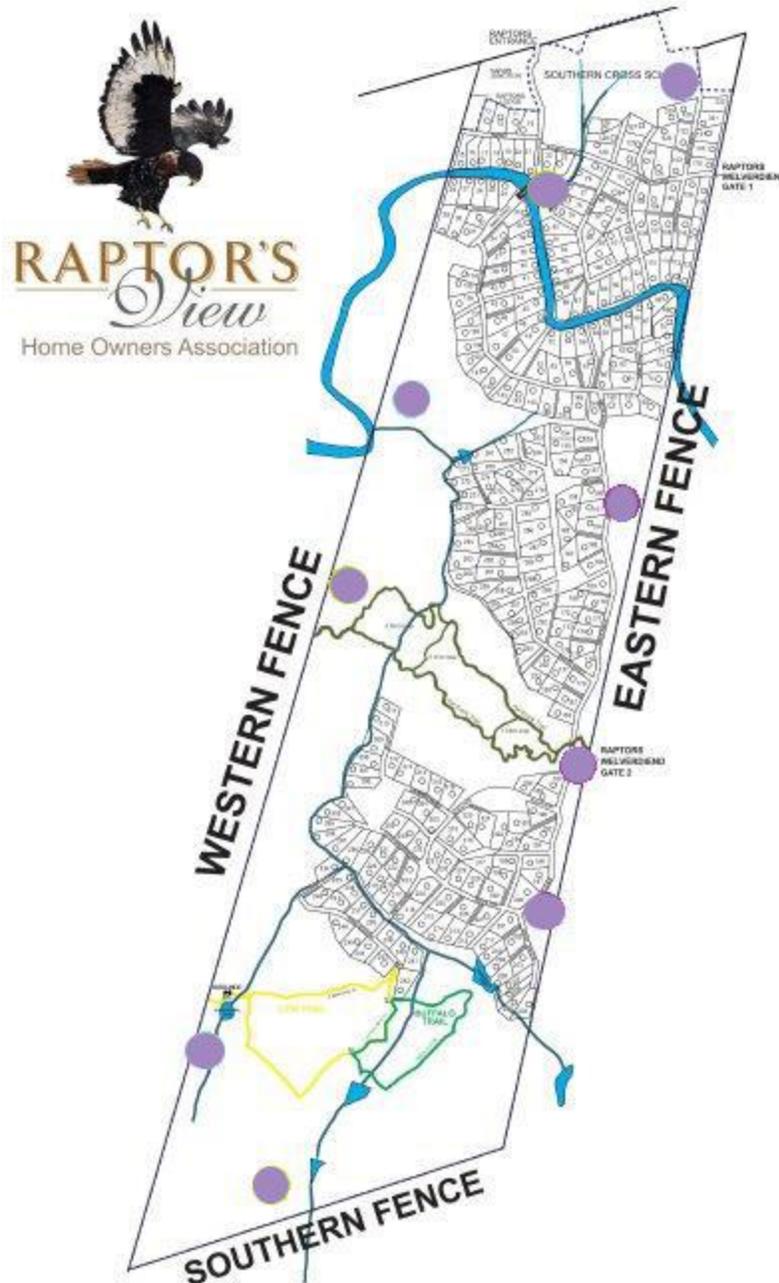
Introduction

This special bulletin has been compiled to explain the winter feeding program on the estate and hopefully alleviate some of the concerns raised by residents regarding the welfare of our wildlife.

As most residents would have noticed, we started a supplementary wildlife feeding program at the end of May and this is an ongoing project.

The feeding locations

We have selected 9 different feeding locations on the estate in order to limit the impact on the surrounding areas, rather than having fewer feeding points and areas becoming over-utilised. Some feeding points are in eroded or sodic areas and in this case the animal traffic will actually assist to loosen the soil, add manure, and improve water infiltration. This in turn will promote future germination and growth of vegetation.



The feeding frequency

The feed, a mixture of lucerne and grass, is put out every other day. Initially 3 of the feeding points were supplied with bales every other day in order to encourage movement of animals through the estate. 5 weeks after the start of the feeding program the number of feeding stations supplied with feed every other day was increased to 6; and it is anticipated that all 9 feeding stations will be supplied with feed every alternate day in another few weeks. Animal conditions are continually assessed and the amount of feed put out will be increased as and when required.



Supplementary feeding time line

Feeding will stop once we have good rain and sufficient regrowth of vegetation has occurred.

Feeding at Homes

Feeding at homes is strongly discouraged for the following reasons:

- a) This interferes with the especially designed estate feeding program.
- b) Over utilisation of the surrounding veld at homes will occur creating larger areas that will require rehabilitation once the rains come and this in turn will compromise the otherwise good nutritious grazing that should be accessible next season.
- c) Animals become more habituated to humans; we have already had some incidents where warthogs and nyala are behaving aggressively toward residents.
- d) The placement of licks and other food supplements directly onto the ground allows salts to leach into the soil, which can have a negative impact on the soils.
- e) Incorrect food does more harm than good, no matter how good the intention of the feeder, and activities such as feeding bread to porcupines, nyala and other animals can cause discomfort and even death.

FOR THE SAKE OF THE ANIMALS PLEASE DO NOT FEED THEM

Drought and related diseases

Old, weak or diseased animals will always show signs of stress before healthy animals during adverse drought conditions – please notify estate management immediately if you see any animals in distress.

During drought there is always an increased chance of diseases occurring. Anthrax is of particular concern with the dormant spores becoming more easily exposed during drought conditions. This is a highly infectious disease and an outbreak will have a very serious impact on our wildlife. It is therefore very important to have the animals only at set feeding locations so that management can supervise them on a

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regular basis. Rabies is also known to appear more readily during drought times, yet another reason why we need to contain the feeding areas as a control point.

These are two of the more important reasons why feeding animals away from the set locations would be detrimental to the wildlife and the estate as a whole.

Please report any dead animals found and do not touch the carcasses.