

Information of Interest

Wahlberg's Eagles



While the photo credits above go to Gordon Breetzke, taken of a breeding pair of Wahlberg's eagles at Jack's Causeway, the year started off with more excitement after a call was received from a resident, Lionel Bisschoff informing estate management of a Wahlberg's chick that was found on the Lion trail.

The chick was lying on the ground not too far away from the nest. The possibility of it trying to leave the nest was considered, however it was not trying to fly off or back to the nest and rather moved and hid away. Without too much interference, it was decided to rather monitor the situation and see what transpired. The chick moved around the area overnight and was found on the ground under the nest.



At this point estate management received a call from a home owner, Steve Benbow who had been observing the chick from when it hatched and his view was it was too young to fly. Over these few days it started to weaken and was then captured and taken to Moholoholo where it was found to be underweight and dehydrated. Moholoholo recommended that estate management should contact John Davies from Environmental Wildlife Trust (EWT), who not only is a specialist in raptors but also happens to be a member of the Association.

John was extremely helpful and most obliging to assist. After an initial meeting, the area around the nest was inspected and his recommendation was that as opposed to hand rearing the chick, the best course of action would be to return it to the nest where the parents could raise it in preparation for the migration season. Moholoholo at this stage confirmed the chick was doing well, keeping food down and the next morning before it was returned to the estate, it was fully fed to fill its crop.

From this point, so began the interesting and rather exciting process of getting the chick back to the nest!

While John climbed the knob thorn to the nest, his partner Lindy Thompson proceeded very cautiously to gather data and ring the chick for tracking purposes. Steve Benbow was also a great help in this process.

Getting the chick safely back in the nest was not the only objective, but the task of ensuring that it stayed there would prove the overall success of these efforts. John, already up the knob thorn hoisted the chick up in a bag, which needed to be carefully opened so the chick could be carefully and safely placed in the nest. A process all in all but what a great success this proved to be for John once safely on the ground and the chick once it was safely home!



We are happy to report that Steve Benbow also went past the nest over the next couple of days and was happy to report that the parents were back and looking after their chick.

What a fantastic start to the new year this was and a huge thank you to everyone involved for their efforts!

Estate Management

Workshop and Storeroom

This project commenced early December 2023 as previously reported and we are pleased to report that the workshop build is currently at roof height, with the concrete floor already thrown and the flat roof underway. Specialist contractors have been appointed for electrical, plumbing and aluminium works.

Water Storage & Usage

Discussions have been held with the neighbouring properties to ascertain whether there were any objections to the new reservoir location. A home owner had an objection and the concerns raised are being addressed. In the interim, site meetings have taken place with the recommended supplier regarding the pending installation.

On the point of water storage in general, this is a matter that is carefully monitored by the Association. Tony Patten reported that water consumption in December 2023 was notably higher than the average month which was expected, given the increased number of visitors and residents over the festive season. However, significant water leaks at several homes exacerbated the situation. A summary of the observations in this regard were as follows:

- The average usage per stand was 25 000 litres;
- 77 stands (30%) used more than the average 25 000 litres accounting for 66% of the total usage;
- 183 stands (70%) used the average 25 000 litres or less, accounting for just 34% of the total usage.

RVHOA will engage with super-users in an effort to reduce the wasteful and unnecessary water consumption.

Security

K9 Conservation

The security contract with Canyon Risk Services (CRS) was terminated in early January, following various material breaches of the agreement by CRS. These breaches resulted, amongst other things, in the guards downing tools and replacement guards having to be brought onto the estate.

K9 Conservation was approached to replace CRS on a short term basis and have been appointed for three months with an option to extend on a month by month basis.

A tender process for a longer term replacement will be run.

New Access System

A proof of concept (POC) access system has been installed at the Contractor's Gate. Should this system meet our requirements and prove successful, the installation will proceed to the rollout at the Main Gate. The system makes use of the OneSpace platform.

The additional new security camera hardware installation is complete. The camera monitoring service provider is notifying management and security of possible breaches, which are then investigated. Residents are requested to remain at least a meter away from the fence line where security cameras are installed to avoid interfering with or, activating the security alarms.

Ecology

Bush Management

The three sites identified for Melhania removal have been completed. These sites are now being monitored for new grass growth and to determine whether additional grass planting will be required.

The 8 casuals appointed in November, started with bush thinning at Pump Station 2 in January 2024. This is a slow process which involves the cutting of the small trees/shrubs and then applying poison to the cut stump. A vegetation monitoring transect was completed by James Cary, Gordon Breetzke and Wilna Mew prior to the bush thinning and 2 more transects are to be done.

The “Bushveld potholes” at the sodic site on the southern fence line were excavated, seeded and brush-packed. Following the earlier rain in January, the sites have shown good grass growth.

Alien plants, including *Sesbania*, Rough cocklebur (*Xanthium strumarium*) and Black Jack’s (*Bidens pilosa*) have been removed from Southern Cross Schools and Osprey Dam as well as near the two causeways.



Photographs taken of the bush thinning initiative and Melhania removal is accredited to Gordon Breetzke.

Sewage Update

After the matter appeared to be under control, with no spillages recorded since October 2023, a recent shredder malfunction at the municipal sewage plant, caused spillage onto the estate. Contact was made with both district and local municipal officials and the problem was addressed.

New tests were done and although Osprey Dam is showing continued improvement, the school dam has taken a step back as a result of the recent spill and residents are urged to rather continue treating the water as harmful until further notice.

The board remains deeply concerned about the possibility of future spills and their effects on the environment and residents. The board is actively looking at solutions to either avoid or mitigate the effect of further spills. Residents will continue to be kept up to date as these evolve.

Rainfall Figures

The rainfall figures were recorded as follows:

RVHOA RAINFALL	OCT 23	NOV 23	DEC 23	JAN 24
Contractor’s Gate	46	37.5	157	23.75
Pump station 2	48	35.5	168	31
Phase 3	60	43.5	151.5	46.5

Baboon Patrols

The collared baboons have mostly been on Khaya Ndlovu and across the RV40 since July 2022, however they have been seen on the estate on a few days in the last two months. Minor incidents of thatch damage have been reported, as well as a few pot plants that were disturbed.

Estate Administration

Communication

The Board has implemented a suggestion scheme available to home owners and residents alike, who wish to raise points that may contribute to the overall improvement of the estate management as a whole. Your opinions and proposals are welcome and the Association looks forward to these valuable suggestions.

Kindly refer to the template attached for completion and submission to Management and the Board using: suggestions@raptorsviewhoa.co.za.

Finance

While we welcome foreign transfers for the payment of levy and utility accounts, home owners are to please ensure when sending these funds from an overseas bank that the relevant bank charges are included in the payment transaction.

Bank fees for overseas transactions that are billed to the RVHOA Standard Bank account will be recovered from the respective home owner making the foreign bank transfer.

Monthly Statistics

Some statistics for the months of December / January that may be of interest to home owners and residents:

Three site visits were conducted with one home undergoing a pre-sale inspection;

One alteration plan was approved and an application was received to move a building peg;

Alterations are currently being done on three houses;

Three new houses are being built on the estate; and

Five building projects have been handed back and alterations are now complete.

There are currently 68 rental properties registered on the estate for 30 days or more of which seven new rentals registered, three leases were extended and five rentals vacated over December/January.

Rental Residents

Rental properties and residents are welcomed on the estate and home owners are reminded of the administrative process required for the registration of their rentals with the Association.

Property Practitioners are aware of these requirements in order to enable access to the estate and to your property.

Should you wish to rent your property, kindly contact Vanessa Berlein at admin@raptorsviewhoa.co.za to assist you in the process of meeting all your rental administrative requirements.

Contractor and Domestic Access

Residents are urged to ensure that their domestic and gardener SAPS screening is updated annually before the date of expiry.

Should you have any queries relating to any contractor that requires access to the estate, including domestics and gardeners, kindly contact Wilna Mew at info@raptorsviewhoa.co.za for assistance.

Waste Collection & Contractor's Gate

Waste is collected from 07h00 on a Thursday and waste is to be placed in the secured location/cage before this time and ready for collection.

Alternatively, you can take your own waste to the yard at the Contractor Gate. The detail of the number of bags delivered will be captured by security and the bags placed in the relevant domestic or recycling waste skip. You will be billed accordingly at month end.

Red refuse bags are available for sale from the HOA for R40 for a pack of 20 bags. The coloured recycle refuse bags are separated from the standard black refuse bags that should be used for general waste disposal. These bags are then separated into skips at the Contractor Gate where Skipgo collect from the recycling skip and the Maruleng Municipality collects the general waste.

At present the area is a building site and once construction of the new workshop and storeroom is complete a full clean-up of the waste yard at the Contractor Gate will be under taken.

Residents are reminded that should they wish to deliver their waste to the Contractor Gate or not have this collected for whatever reason, the administration office is to be contacted on or before a Wednesday by emailing admin@raptorsviewhoa.co.za for this arrangement.

Medical Emergencies

As a reminder, Raptor's View Wildlife Estate has medical emergency response services available to its residents and their visitors. This service is provided by Hoedspruit Medical Rescue, Pieter Papsdorf who can be contacted on 072 170 0864.

Your stand number and road name, possibly supported by a location pin drop will assist in response times.

During the month of January 24, HMR attended to four (4) medical incidents on the estate.

Essential Scorpion Sting First Response – Free Short Course

Jonathan Leeming, author of the newly released book "Essential Scorpion Sting First Response", is offering a free short course aimed at educating the public about scorpions and scorpion stings. The course, aligned to scorpions of Southern Africa, offers an overview of the key points of scorpion sting first response and consists of 10 short modules followed by an online assessment and certificate.

The link to follow to enroll is: <https://scorpions.co.za/scorpion-sting-first-response-short-course/>

Hoedspruit Farmwatch

As members of the Hoedspruit community we would like to thank the Hoedspruit Farmwatch and those involved, for their efforts to monitor and minimise incidents of crime in the surrounding area. We noted that Hoedspruit Farmwatch and Townwatch have now merged and in this regard, we attach the annual report as at 31 December 2023 of these combined entities.

Crinum Blooms on Tawny Eagle



In closure, a number of residents may have noted the flowering Crinum, commonly known as River Lily or Veld Lily that budded overnight on Tawny Eagle road into beautiful candy-striped blooms during December.

These bulbous plants grow best in sandy soil at low altitudes and love the full sun. A single plant can bear up to 30 of these distinctive flowers.

Any comments on the newsletter would be welcomed, as well as any interesting articles that residents may want to include.