# Newsletter

June 2026



*Image - MB*

## Here's what has happened in the last couple of months and what's to come!

June brings a strong sense of momentum across Raptors View Estate, with important work underway . As we move through the year, the RVHOA management team continues to focus on maintaining and improving the safety, sustainability and long-term value of Raptors View Estate. A number of important projects and initiatives have been progressing, with a strong focus on proactive planning and responsible estate management. From fire preparedness and infrastructure planning to environmental care and memorable community moments, there is a clear focus on protecting what we have while steadily improving for the future. As we move into the second half of the year, I encourage residents to stay engaged with the updates below — each one reflects the ongoing effort to keep the estate safe, well-managed and true to its natural setting.

Raptors team x

In this newsletter you can expect:


- Management Updates
- Ecology
- Statistics
- Nature Articles
- Save the dates

## Management Spotlight

A key focus area has been strengthening our fire preparedness. The drafting of a comprehensive Fire Plan and Procedure is progressing, which will provide clear guidance around prevention, preparedness, response and communication should a fire situation arise. Alongside this, upgrades to our fire-fighting equipment are underway to ensure that the estate remains well equipped and prepared. These initiatives are an important part of our commitment to resident safety, environmental protection and responsible management of our natural surroundings.

We were also proud to have hosted the Pam Golding Properties running event on the estate, which showcased the unique lifestyle that Raptors View offers. It was a wonderful opportunity to bring people together, celebrate an active outdoor lifestyle and share the beauty of our bushveld environment.

Nature continues to provide some incredible experiences within Raptors View, with wild dogs spending time in and around the estate recently. These sightings are a special reminder of the privilege we have in living within such a remarkable natural environment. The presence of these animals highlights the importance of protecting the ecosystem and maintaining the natural corridors that allow wildlife to move through the landscape. Residents are encouraged to enjoy these encounters respectfully and allow these special visitors the space they need.



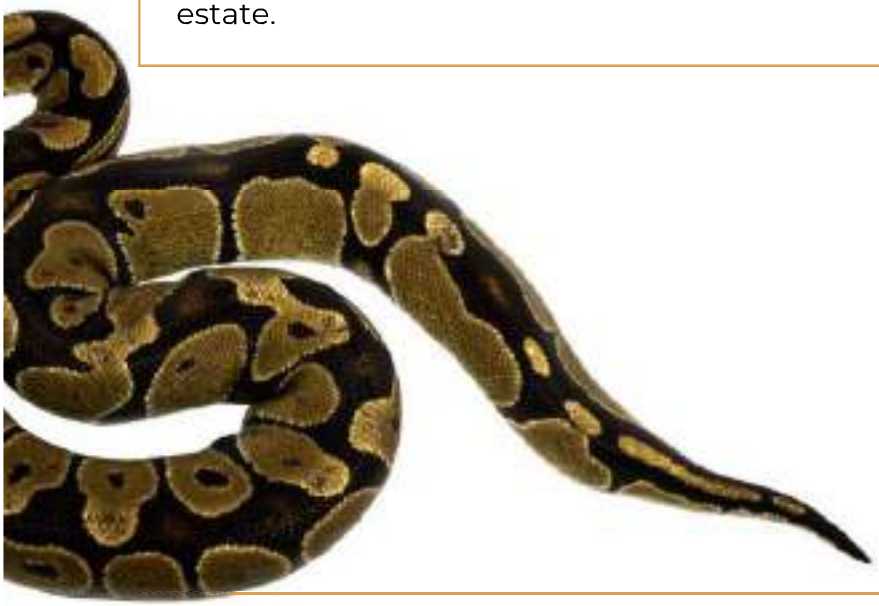
# Management Spotlight

One of the fascinating aspects of life in Raptors View is the opportunity to encounter some of the more elusive species that share our environment. Recent sightings reported by both residents and management include pythons, crocodile, honey badgers and aardvarks, and these have been a wonderful reminder of the incredible biodiversity within the estate and surrounding bushveld.

Our environmental management programme continues, with vegetation thinning and habitat management work progressing across the estate. This work forms an important part of maintaining ecological balance, supporting a healthier bushveld environment and reducing potential fire risks. The approach remains focused on responsible management — ensuring we protect the character and biodiversity of Raptors View while managing areas that require attention.

Financial planning remains a key priority as we continue to balance the immediate needs of the estate with long-term sustainability aligned to our strategy. The RVHOA Board and management team is focused on responsible budgeting and forward planning to ensure that resources are allocated effectively towards maintaining infrastructure, supporting environmental initiatives and improving the overall value of the estate.





# Road Update

The road infrastructure planning process continues, with the focus being on finding a sustainable long-term solution that addresses the estate's needs while protecting the unique character of Raptor's View.

Following resident discussions and management assessments, no final conclusion has been reached at this stage; however, several important themes emerged:

1. There is strong support for addressing the estate's drainage challenges, with recognition that current maintenance methods are not a sustainable long-term solution.

2. At the same time, there was significant feedback around preserving the natural bushveld character of the estate, with resistance to road surfaces and solutions that would create a more urban feel.

3. There is growing interest in exploring alternative options, including engineered gravel and hybrid solutions that could provide improved durability, better drainage management and a more natural appearance.

The board will continue investigating these options, including obtaining more detailed costings and tenders, before any final recommendations or commitments are made.

Further consultation and refinement of possible solutions will continue, ensuring that any future road improvements balance practicality, sustainability, financial responsibility and the character that makes Raptor's View unique.

# Security update

Security remains a key priority for the estate, and significant progress has been made with the upgrade of our camera surveillance system. The fibre network, WiFi infrastructure and camera systems are now fully in place, supported by our own AI monitoring system that provides 24/7 surveillance across the estate. The system is designed to identify activity and send alerts directly to management and security teams, who acknowledge and respond according to the operational requirements and personnel on duty.

The upgraded system has been performing exceptionally well and is already adding significant value to our overall security approach. We will continue expanding and improving this technology to ensure the estate remains proactive, responsive and focused on providing the highest possible level of safety for residents.

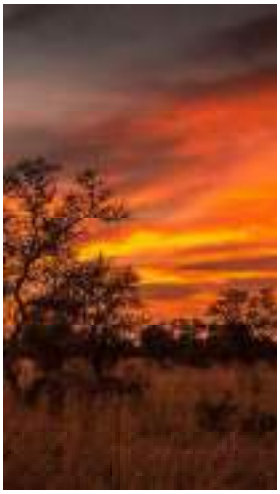
As we continue into the second half of the year, the focus remains on protecting what makes Raptor's View special while steadily improving the systems and infrastructure that support our community.

Thank you to all residents for your ongoing support, involvement and shared commitment to maintaining this unique place we call home.

Ryan









# Ecological Update



*Zebra Trail - Result of bush thinning along the northern part of the Zebra Trail.*

## Bush Thinning Programme: Progress Update

Over the past several years, Raptors View has been developing and implementing a long-term bush thinning programme aimed at maintaining the ecological balance of our savanna ecosystem.

The need for intervention arises from a simple reality: savannas are naturally shaped by fire and large herbivores, particularly elephants. Both of these important ecological drivers are absent from Raptors View. In addition, rising atmospheric carbon dioxide levels are promoting woody plant growth across savanna systems throughout southern Africa. The result is a gradual increase in tree and shrub density, often referred to as woody encroachment or bush thickening.

Without intervention, excessive woody growth suppresses grass production, reduces grazing capacity, alters wildlife habitat, and changes the character of the landscape. For this reason, the Environmental Management Team embarked on a structured programme to better understand the extent of the issue before taking action. This included developing a detailed vegetation map, expanding veld condition monitoring sites, and establishing baseline measurements of woody density across the estate.



*Southwest corner- Result of bush thinning in the south-western corner of Raptors View*

Following these assessments, Dense Woodland communities were identified as the highest priority for intervention. Since the programme commenced, approximately 41 hectares of common property have been selectively thinned along the western boundary adjacent to Zebra Trail. The results have been encouraging, with improved light penetration, increased grass response, and a more open savanna structure beginning to emerge.

Work is currently underway in the south-western corner of the estate, where a further 15 hectares of Dense Shrubveld are being treated. This area was selected not only because of increasing woody density, but also because it remains one of the most productive vegetation communities on the estate. Encouraging wildlife utilisation in this area will help distribute grazing pressure more evenly across Raptors View.

The programme also provides an opportunity for homeowners to participate. Properties located within approved thinning blocks remain eligible for inclusion, allowing ecological benefits to be achieved at a landscape scale rather than on isolated stands. This approach reduces the risk of concentrated grazing pressure on small cleared areas and delivers more meaningful ecological outcomes.
Importantly, bush thinning does not mean clearing the landscape. The process is highly selective, targeting specific species and densities while retaining the diversity and character of the natural vegetation. Cut material is strategically brush-packed to reduce erosion, protect soils, and encourage grass establishment.

The programme represents a long-term investment in the ecological health of Raptors View. Together with wildlife management, environmental monitoring, and the potential reintroduction of prescribed fire, bush thinning forms an important part of our strategy to build a resilient, functional savanna ecosystem capable of supporting both biodiversity and the unique lifestyle that residents value.

## Are you eligible to join the bush-thinning?

Homeowners within or directly bordering this block are once again invited to participate should they wish to include their private properties in the thinning process. The following stands are eligible: 24–32, 134–149, 153–158, and 280–284.
We are now also opening up the following stands 150-152, 159-183, 252-279, and 285-292, as many of them are adjacent to the area previously thinned on the eastern fenceline behind pump station 2.

If you have not already done so, please contact the RVHOA office to confirm your participation.



*Behind pump station 2 - Result of bush thinning behind pump station 2*

# Animal Offtakes: Building a Resilient Future

Wildlife management is one of the most important - and often most difficult - responsibilities of managing a wildlife estate. Our goal is not simply to maintain animal numbers, but to ensure that wildlife populations remain in balance with the resources available to support them over the long term.

Following the completion of the 2025 aerial census, Raptors View's wildlife biomass was calculated at 4,856 kg/km² (before peak birthing season), exceeding both our internal threshold of potential concern and the upper guideline recommended by our consulting ecologist. As a result, animal offtakes have once again been identified as a necessary management intervention.

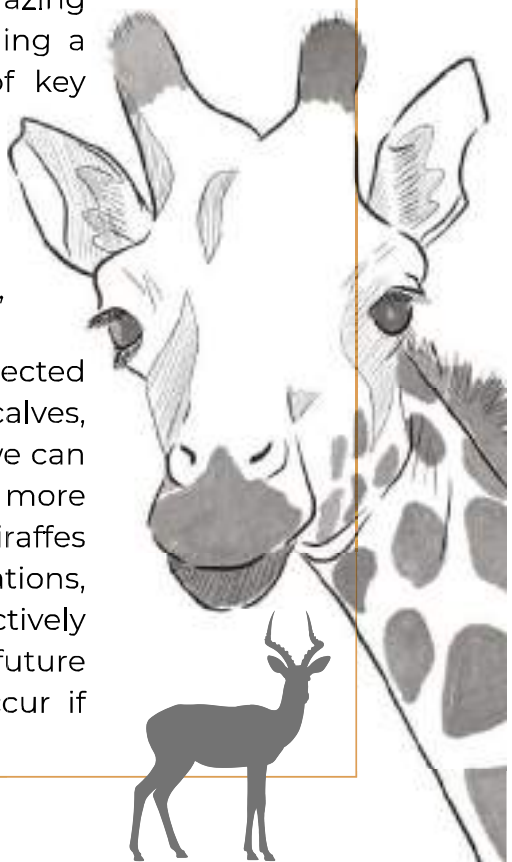
Over the past three years, management has trialled a range of removal methods, including passive capture techniques and large-scale boma captures. While these approaches have achieved some success, they have generally proven costly, labour-intensive, and limited in their effectiveness. In contrast, carefully planned culling operations have consistently delivered the most efficient and humane means of reducing animal numbers to sustainable levels. For this reason, culling will form the primary management tool for the upcoming offtake programme.

## The focus this season will be on Impala and Giraffe.

Impala remain one of the most abundant species on the estate and contribute significantly to overall grazing pressure. Their management is essential to maintaining a healthy grass layer and preventing overutilisation of key grazing areas.

Giraffes present a different challenge. We currently have more giraffes on Raptors View than at any other time in the estate's history.

While these iconic animals are much loved by residents, their increasing numbers are placing growing pressure on several species, including Tree Wisteria and the protected Apple-leaf. Habituated giraffes, especially cows with calves, pose a risk to pedestrians and cyclists - it's a risk that we can manage by reducing exposure, especially as we see more residents making use of our trail and road network. Giraffes are also highly sensitive to environmental fluctuations, nutritional stress, and disease outbreaks. By proactively managing their numbers now, we reduce the risk of a future population crash or large-scale die-off that could occur if environmental conditions deteriorate.



Some residents may understandably question the need for offtakes following the excellent rainfall received so far this season. While it would seem that the rains have improved grazing conditions and provided a welcome boost to the ecosystem, ecological management must be guided by long-term trends rather than short-term events. History has shown that periods of above-average rainfall are often followed by drier years, and it is during those periods that overstocked systems become vulnerable. Our responsibility is to prepare the estate not only for favourable conditions, but also for the inevitable dry cycles that characterise the Lowveld.

The revenue generated through wildlife sales and offtakes will also provide important support to the estate at a time when income from building levies has been reduced due to the ongoing building moratorium. These funds can be reinvested into environmental management programmes that benefit the estate as a whole.

Ultimately, animal offtakes are not about reducing wildlife numbers for their own sake. They are about protecting the long-term health of the veld, maintaining biodiversity, safeguarding animal welfare, and building an ecologically resilient estate capable of withstanding future environmental challenges.
Responsible wildlife management requires us to make difficult decisions today so that Raptors View remains healthy, productive, and sustainable for generations to come.



*Giraffe impact - An example of Giraffe impact on a young Tree Wisteria. Select individuals are used as scratching posts to remove ticks and external parasites. Although this is a natural phenomenon, we have observed an increasing number of trees being impacted in this way as the giraffe population grows. Our concern primarily lies with the impact on young Appleleaf trees - a protected species.*

# BECOME A RAPTOR'S ENVIRONMENTAL *Monitor*

Have you ever spotted an uncommon animal, discovered an invasive plant, or wondered how your wildlife observations could contribute to the management of the estate?

A few years ago, Raptor's View partnered with EarthRanger to develop a suite of estate-specific environmental monitoring tools. These tools allow us to collect and analyse environmental data in a structured way, helping us better understand what is happening across the landscape and make informed management decisions.

We are now looking for interested members to join our growing network of Raptor's View Environmental Monitors. Environmental monitors will help collect valuable observations while enjoying the estate. Examples of data that can be recorded include:

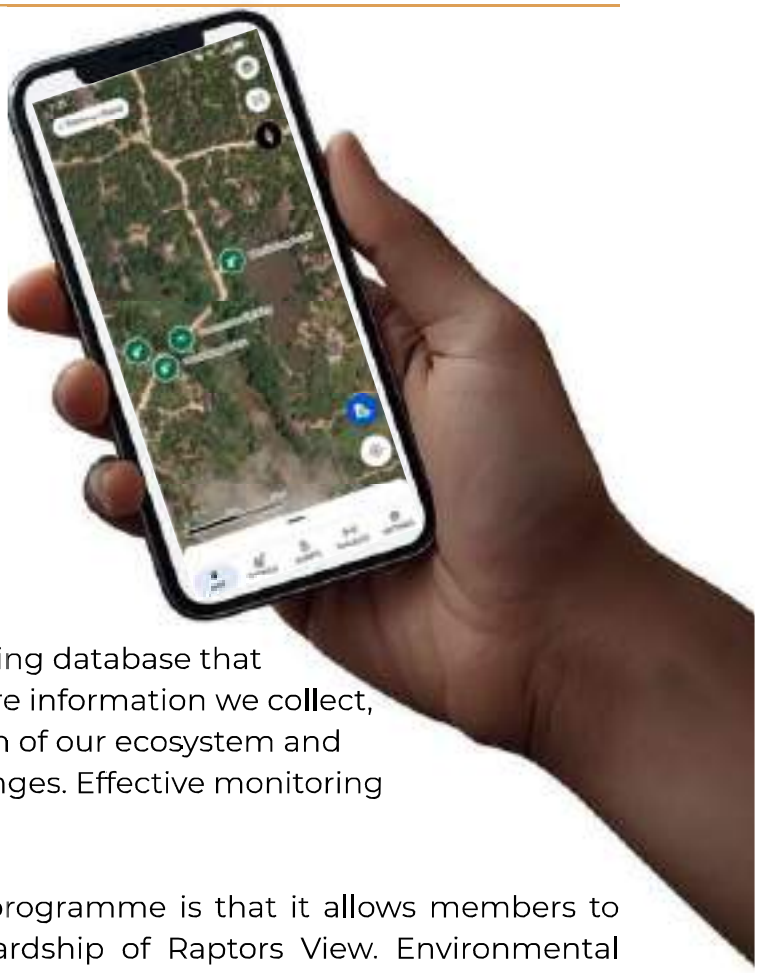
1. Animal condition assessments
2. Age and sex ratios of wildlife populations
3. Nesting sites of endangered bird species
4. Animal mortalities
5. Alien and invasive plant locations
6. Unusual wildlife sightings and
7. Locations of damage causing animals




RAPTOR'S View
Home Owners Association

iNaturalist

EARTHRANGER
A product of Ai2



Every observation contributes to a growing database that helps us track trends over time. The more information we collect, the better we can understand the health of our ecosystem and respond proactively to emerging challenges. Effective monitoring leads to effective management.

One of the greatest strengths of this programme is that it allows members to become directly involved in the stewardship of Raptors View. Environmental management is not something that happens only in board meetings or through specialist reports - it is strengthened when residents actively participate in understanding and caring for the landscape around them.

We particularly encourage the participation of families with children in primary and secondary school. The programme offers a fantastic opportunity for young people to develop observation skills, learn about ecology, contribute to real-world conservation efforts, and deepen their connection with nature.

It also brings us great pleasure to announce that we have now integrated iNaturalist with our EarthRanger App. iNaturalist is a community science platform that helps you to identify plants, animals, fungi, and more while adding to a living atlas of Raptor's View Wildlife Estate.

At this stage, we are simply gauging interest. Once we have established a group of volunteers, we will create user profiles and host a short workshop to familiarise participants with the EarthRanger App and the monitoring protocols.
If you would like to become a Raptor's View Environmental Monitor, please register your interest with the RVHOA office.

Together, we can build a richer understanding of our environment and play an active role in ensuring that Raptor's View remains a healthy, resilient, and biodiverse landscape for generations to come.

# A NEW WAY TO EXPERIENCE *Raptor's View*

One of the great privileges of living on Raptor's View is the opportunity to step beyond our front doors and into a landscape that still feels wild.

Our network of walking and cycling trails allows residents to explore the estate on foot, connect with nature, and experience the bushveld at a slower pace. It is one of the defining features of life here and something that sets Raptors View apart from many other residential estates.

With this in mind, the Board has approved the introduction of a designated sunset picnic site on a three-month trial basis.

Situated approximately 750 metres from the Zebra Trail parking area, the site offers spectacular views of the mountains and the surrounding bushveld. The intention is simple: to create a low-impact space where residents can gather with family and friends to enjoy a sunset, share a snack, and spend time outdoors without compromising the quiet wild character of the estate.



*Sunset view from the designated sunset picnic site. Route from Zebra Trail parking to sunset picnic site (750 meters).*



Importantly, this is a trial project. Its future will depend on how responsibly it is used by residents. The site operates on a booking system, and the following rules apply:

- The site is for residents and their guests only - maximum of 8 persons per booking.
- Users must vacate the site and return to the parking area before darkness falls.
- No music, speakers, amplified sound, or excessive noise.
- No fires, braais, candles, lanterns, or open flames.
- Leave no trace - everything taken to the site must be removed when leaving.
- No littering under any circumstances.
- Please be considerate of other residents and trail users.

The success of this initiative will not be measured by how many people use it, but by how well it demonstrates that residents can enjoy the estate's natural spaces while remaining respectful of wildlife, fellow residents, and the environment itself.
If successful, the concept may open the door to future low-impact recreational opportunities that further enhance the Raptors View lifestyle while remaining true to the values that make this estate special.
We encourage residents to make use of the site during the trial period and to help ensure that it becomes a positive example of responsible access to our shared natural heritage.

## How to make your booking.

An official notice will be circulated once the site has been opened. Bookings must be made through the **HOA office during normal office hours; 08:00 - 16:00 Monday to Friday (015) 793 0267 or admin@raptorsviewhoa.co.za.** This will ensure that use of the site can be monitored and that only one group occupies the area at a time.

# *Fire Season Awareness:* MORE RAIN, MORE FUEL, MORE RISK

As we move into the 2026 fire season, it is important to remember that the risk of wildfire is influenced not only by dry weather, but also by the amount of vegetation available to burn. Following an exceptionally good rainfall season, Raptors View has experienced strong grass growth across much of the estate. While this is positive from an ecological perspective, it also means that we are entering the dry months with significantly higher fuel loads than normal.




*Fire Danger Index (FDI) boards are displayed at both the main entrance and contractors gate.*

# FIRE SAFETY TIPS

## TAKE CARE AND PREVENT FIRE RISK

### FIRE BREAKS




Ensure your property's firebreaks are established and maintained (required by 30 June).

### EMERGENCY NUMBER



Save important emergency numbers on your phone, including the RVHOA Emergency Number: +**27 71 675 2525.**

### TEST EQUIPMENT



Test and maintain your fire-fighting equipment, including hoses and pumps.

### AVOID OPEN FIRES



Avoid open fires and exercise extreme caution on days when the fire danger rating is high or extreme.

As grasses cure and dry out over winter, the potential for fast-moving and intense fires increases. A single spark, combined with low humidity and strong winds, can quickly develop into a serious wildfire.

To help residents stay informed, **Fire Danger Index (FDI) boards** are displayed at both the main entrance and contractor's gate. These boards are updated according to the South African Weather Service Fire Danger Index, which considers factors such as temperature, wind speed, humidity, and recent weather conditions to determine the daily fire risk.

We encourage all members to make a habit of checking the fire danger rating as they enter and leave the estate.

**Wildfire preparedness is a shared responsibility. By remaining vigilant and taking sensible precautions, we can help protect our homes, wildlife, infrastructure, and the natural environment that makes Raptors View such a special place to live.**

# Fire Preparedness from a Management Point of View

When most people think about fire, they think about risk, danger, and destruction. While uncontrolled wildfires certainly pose a threat to lives, property, and wildlife, fire is also one of the most important natural processes shaping the African savanna and an effective management tool in many areas.
Following the exceptional rainfall experienced over the past two seasons, vegetation growth across Raptors View has been significantly above average. While this has benefited the estate's ecology and wildlife, it has also resulted in increased fuel loads in certain areas of the property. As we move further into the dry season, fire risk will become an increasingly important consideration for the estate.

Management has begun evaluating a range of fire management and fuel reduction options to ensure that Raptors View is as prepared as possible should a wildfire occur.

It is important to note that fire remains a largely unknown quantity on Raptors View. While there is extensive research available from Kruger National Park, neighbouring reserves, and conservation areas throughout southern Africa, we do not yet have sufficient information about how fire behaves under the specific fuel loads, vegetation structure and topography found on our estate. Effective preparedness requires an understanding of the risks unique to Raptors View rather than assumptions based on conditions elsewhere.

One area currently being assessed is located in the south-western corner of the estate, approximately 1.5 kilometres from the nearest homes in Phase 3. Veld Condition Assessments (VCAs) have identified this area as having the highest fuel biomass on the estate, although fuel loads still remain on the lower end of what would typically be considered suitable for prescribed burning.

Members may be aware that neighbouring properties routinely conduct prescribed burns as part of their fire management programmes. Given the exceptional grass growth across the region, it is anticipated that fuel loads on neighbouring properties will also be substantially higher than normal this season. In addition, accidental ignitions remain a reality in any landscape.



This means that one of the most significant fire risks facing Raptors View may not originate within the estate itself, but from fires entering from surrounding properties. The south-western section of the estate borders Bloubank and the south-eastern portions of Leadwood, making it particularly vulnerable to an approaching fire front from outside our boundaries.



Unlike wildlife, fire does not recognise fences. The estate perimeter provides no protection against an advancing wildfire. For this reason, understanding the behaviour of fire within Raptors View and evaluating whether strategic fuel reduction can create effective buffer zones are important components of responsible risk management.

As part of this process, professional ecologists and experienced fire practitioners are being consulted to help evaluate the available options. These include controlled burning, mechanical fuel reduction, and other mitigation measures. No management options have been ruled out at this stage.

Should any form of controlled ignition be considered, it would only occur under carefully selected conditions during the early dry season when grass moisture content remains relatively high, temperatures are lower, and weather conditions are generally more stable and predictable. Any such assessment would be conducted with safety as the primary consideration and would aim to improve our understanding of fuel combustibility, fire behaviour, firefighting readiness, and estate-specific risk factors.

The objective is not ecological research. The ecological role of fire in African savannas is already well understood. Rather, the objective is preparedness. By improving our understanding of the risks we face under controlled and low-risk conditions, we can make more informed decisions about how best to protect residents, homes, infrastructure, wildlife, and the ecological integrity of the estate.

As always, we are committed to a precautionary and evidence-based approach. We recognise the importance of balancing ecological management with the safety and wellbeing of all residents and will continue to keep members informed as assessments progress.

# Fire Management and Prevention Plan : Keeping Raptors View Prepared

As part of our ongoing commitment to resident safety, environmental protection and responsible estate management, the RVHOA has developed a Fire Management and Prevention Plan. The intention of this plan is to ensure that we are proactively prepared to reduce the risk of fire, protect lives, property and the wildlife habitat that makes Raptors View so unique.

Living in a natural bushveld environment means that fire awareness and prevention are a shared responsibility. Potential fire risks include lightning during the summer months, veld fires during the dry winter season, household fires from braais, fireplaces and gas installations, as well as electrical fires caused by faulty equipment or connections.

The draft plan provides residents with important guidance on preventative measures, emergency procedures and communication channels.

RVHOA has also invested in upgrading and maintaining the estate's fire-fighting resources. The estate currently has dedicated fire-fighting equipment available on 24-hour standby, including:

## FIRE EQUIPMENT

### RAPTOR'S VIEW

| | |
|---|---|
| 1 | UNIMOG WITH 2500LT FIRE FIGHTER |
| 1 | TRAILER WITH 2500LT FIRE FIGHTER |
| 3 | 600LT FIRE FIGHTERS/BAKKIE SAKKIES |
| 3 | BACKPACK BLOWERS |
| 8 | FIRE BEATERS |
| 10 | SPARE FIRE HOSES |

These resources, together with ongoing environmental management and fire prevention measures, strengthen our ability to respond effectively should the need arise.

A key part of the plan is the establishment of a network of volunteer Fire Monitors across the estate. All Fire Monitors will receive an induction covering basic fire awareness, prevention, communication procedures and the location and use of available equipment.

Residents are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the location of nearby fire hydrants, the fire hazard warning signs at the gates, and the RVHOA whatsapp communication channels used for important alerts. In the event of a fire, the first point of contact remains Estate Management on the 24/7 emergency number: 071 675 2525.

Fire safety is a collective responsibility, and by working together we can help protect our homes, our neighbours and the incredible natural environment we are fortunate to share at Raptors View.

# BECOME A FIRE MONITOR

## Raptor's View

**Applications are now open for residents who would like to become involved and assist their neighbours during a fire-related emergency. Residents interested in becoming a Fire Monitor are invited to contact Estate Management for more information.**

**The Fire Management and Prevention Plan will be issued by management this week. For any queries, please contact the office.**




*Images: Ryan Roodt*






As part of our ongoing commitment to strengthening fire preparedness and response capability, Raptor's View management recently attended the launch of the Maruleng Fire Protection Association's Quick Response Force — an important step forward in improving aerial firefighting support within Hoedspruit region.

The highlight of the event was the arrival of the UH-1H Huey helicopter, a proven aviation platform that will add valuable capability to rapid response operations during veld fire situations. This initiative reflects the importance of collaboration between fire services, aviation specialists, conservation partners, our neighbouring estates and local communities in protecting our residential areas, reserves, wildlife and surrounding areas. Strong partnerships and shared preparedness are essential as we continue working together to improve fire resilience.

# Interesting Statistics April - May 2026



Pending new property transfers **5**



Properties registered **16**



New tenant rental agreements **14**



Existing leases extended **2**



New builds in progress **1**

Pending due to hold on building **4**



Applications for peg moves **0**



Renovations currently underway **5**

# WINTER TREASURES

## Birdlife in Raptors



*Blue Waxbills - (Uraeginthus angolensis)* *Image MB*

Winter in the Lowveld brings a special rhythm to the bushveld. As the summer rains disappear and the landscape becomes drier, many birds become easier to observe as they move through the estate in search of natural food sources such as seeds, fruit, insects and water. For bird enthusiasts, this is one of the most rewarding times of the year to slow down, explore the trails and appreciate the incredible diversity of birdlife that surrounds us.

At Raptors View, we are fortunate to live within a natural environment that supports a wide variety of species. Rather than relying on artificial feeding, the best way to support our birdlife is by protecting and maintaining the natural habitat that provides everything birds need — indigenous trees, shrubs, grasses, flowering plants, insects and natural water sources.

Some of the smaller winter visitors that bring great enjoyment are our seedeaters, including waxbills and finch-like species. These tiny birds are often seen moving through grasses and open areas in small groups, searching for seeds and communicating with soft calls. Their specialised beaks are perfectly adapted for feeding on grass seeds, allowing them to thrive on the natural resources available in the bushveld.

Waxbills are particularly fascinating to watch. Although small and delicate in appearance, they are active and social birds, often found feeding together in flocks. Their quick movements and subtle colours can make them easy to miss, but once noticed, they become a favourite for many birders. Taking time to watch grass patches and open areas around the estate can often reveal these little gems.

Another colourful resident that adds character to our winter birding is the Black-collared Barbet. These striking birds are easily recognised by their bold markings and distinctive calls, which often give away their presence before they are seen. Barbets play an important role in the ecosystem as fruit-eating birds and are often associated with indigenous trees that provide natural food sources and nesting opportunities. Like many Lowveld species, they are closely connected to the plants and habitats around them.

Winter is also an excellent time to appreciate how important healthy vegetation is for birdlife. Indigenous plants provide food, shelter and nesting sites, while insects supported by a healthy ecosystem form an essential food source for many species. A thriving natural environment supports far more biodiversity than artificial feeding ever could.



*Black-Collared Barbet (Lybius torquatus)* *Image : John Kinghorn*

Residents can help our birds simply by allowing nature to flourish — protecting indigenous vegetation, avoiding unnecessary disturbance and taking time to observe the wildlife around us. A quiet walk along the estate trails, a morning coffee outdoors or a moment spent watching a tree or grass patch can reveal an incredible world of activity.
Birding at Raptors View is not only about identifying species; it is about appreciating the small details that make living in this environment so special. This winter, keep an eye out for the little birds — they are often the ones that tell the biggest stories about the health of our bushveld.

Check out the "save the date" page ..... A morning birding walk with John Kinghorn is coming soon !

# SCORPION IDENTIFICATION

## by Jonathan Leeming




***About Jonathan Leeming***

Scorpions of the Lowveld identification And First Response Guide
https://scorpions.co.za/scorpions-of-lowveld/

This regional guide offers an easy to use identification and first response guide to scorpions of the Lowveld. Use is as a reference in your time of need or download the Identification & First Response Guide to Scorpions Of The Lowveld Poster, and share them with your organisation or local community.

Jonathan is Southern Africa's leading authority on spider bites and scorpion stings. His latest book, Essential Scorpion Sting First Response, offers a new and innovative first response framework that is based upon the latest science, is easy to understand and put into practice. Order your copy by emailing Jonathan on mailto:Info@JonathanLeeming.com or visit www.http://www.scorpions.co.za. for further details.

Keep a lookout for details of an exciting  Raptor's residents **scorpion evening walk** with Johnathan at the beginning of October 2026...

When looking at a scorpion, take note of the following:



## Distribution & Shelter

Scorpions are not just found anywhere. They live in places that align to their lifestyles and where their prey can be found. The location of a scorpion plays an important role in identification.



## General Size & Shape

Although scorpions adhere to the same general body plan, their size and shape differ greatly. Southern Africa is home to small species of only 16mm, as well as the longest scorpion in the world at 21cm in length. General size and shape align closely to the scorpions natural history.



## Colouration & Anatomy

Most scorpions are nocturnal, therefore colouration is not as important in their life when compared to diurnal animals. Colouration is constant for a species with a small distribution. For scorpions with wide distributions, colouration may vary from place to place. Anatomy allows the scorpion to be more successful within the context of its natural history.



## Behaviour

Scorpions are animals of instinct, therefore scorpions of the same species will behave in the same way. This behaviour includes how they move, how they catch prey, how they defend themselves from predators, and other aspects of their life history.

Within the context of scorpion sting first response, scorpion identification is of particular value when a high risk species of scorpion is involved or when collecting data for statistical purposes. However, it has to be noted that there are other alternative ways to evaluate a scorpion sting event where the scorpion was not seen, such as if the patient is in a high risk area, location of symptoms, the existence of any red flags or evaluating the scorpion from a vague description according to the venomosity rule of thumb. It has to be noted that a characteristic of a scorpion sting event involving young children and animals, the scorpion was not identified or even seen.

With practice and patience, it is possible to identify many species of scorpion with ease using the identification traits included in this article. There are a few good books on Southern African scorpions available from your local bookshop or online store. Except for some notable high risk species of scorpion, scorpion sting first response should focuse upon identifying scorpions according to the venomosity rule of thumb.



*Images: J. Leeming*

# THE INCREDIBLE HONEY BADGER

## Special Raptor's Residents



*Sketch of a Honey badger* *Image: MB*

Residents of Raptor's View have recently been fortunate to enjoy several sightings of one of the Lowveld's most fascinating mammals — the honey badger, also known as the ratel (Mellivora capensis). These secretive and highly adaptable animals are a wonderful reminder of the incredible biodiversity we are privileged to share within our wonderful estate.

Honey badgers have earned a reputation as one of Africa's toughest small mammals, but behind this reputation is a highly specialised animal perfectly adapted to life in the bushveld.

# Did you Know ?

**Honey is only part of the story**

Despite its name, honey is not its main food source. Honey badgers are opportunistic feeders with a varied diet that includes insects, rodents, reptiles, birds, eggs, scorpions and other small animals. They are also known to climb and raid beehives in search for food, but they are often more interested in the bee larvae than the honey itself.

**They are built for digging**

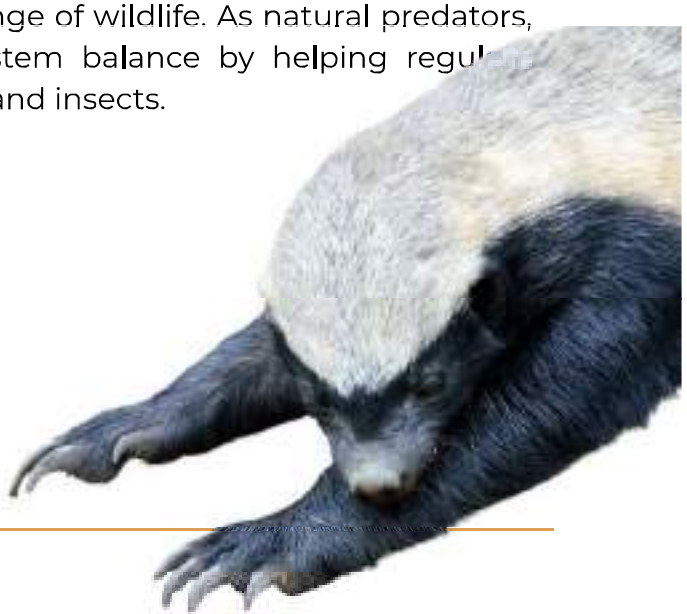
A honey badger's powerful front legs and long claws make it an expert digger. They use these skills to search for food, uncover prey and create shelter. Their digging behaviour also plays a role in the ecosystem by disturbing soil and creating opportunities for other small animals to use abandoned burrows.

**Their famous toughness comes from incredible adaptations**

One of their most impressive features is their thick, loose skin, which provides protection and allows them to twist and manoeuvre when threatened. Combined with strong claws, a powerful body and a determined nature, these adaptations make them highly capable survivors in the wild.

**Their presence is a positive sign for Raptor's View**

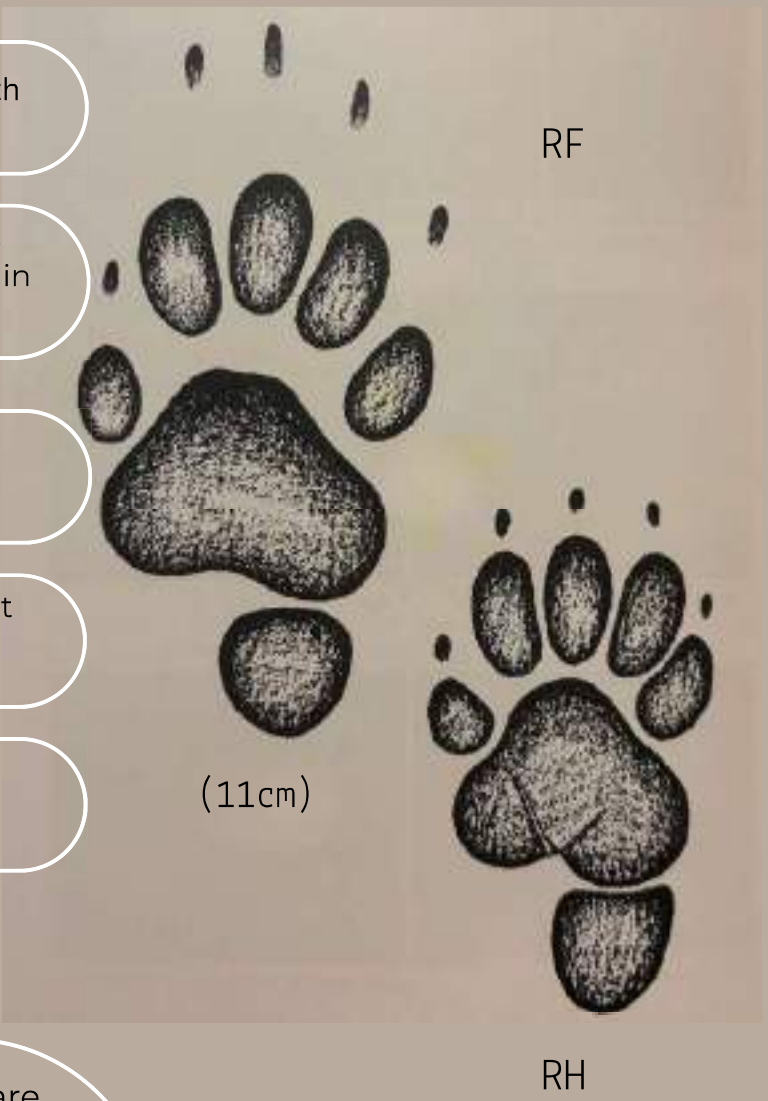
Honey badgers need healthy habitat, natural areas and a good supply of prey species. Their regular appearance on the estate is a reminder that the bushveld environment at Raptor's View continues to support a wide range of wildlife. As natural predators, they also contribute to ecosystem balance by helping regul[illegible] populations of smaller animals and insects.



# HONEY BADGER *Tracks*

## Key features

- Five toes clearly visible on both front and hind feet
- Very prominent claw marks, often the first feature noticed in soft sand
- Broad footprint, noticeably wider than long
- Toe arc shape, forming a neat curved line above the pad
- Large central pad, solid and continuous




## Interesting

On the hindfoot the claws are short, but on the front foot they are very long (showing way ahead of the spoor). The carpal-pad is very deeply triangular in shape with one prominent wrist-pad behind the carpal-pad

*Image and :*
*Tracks & Signs Lee Gutteridge & Louis Liebenberg, 2nd edition*

# RAPTOR'S VIEW HOSTS ITS FIRST *Lowveld Trail Running Event*

On 25 April 2026, Raptors View Wildlife Estate proudly hosted its first Lowveld Trail Running event, welcoming runners, residents and visitors to experience the beauty of our estate from a completely new perspective. The event formed part of the Wildlife Estate Series, showcasing the unique landscapes and natural environments that make the Lowveld such a special destination for trail running.

The day was a great success, with participants taking on the trails through the estate while enjoying the incredible bushveld setting, open spaces and connection with nature that Raptors View offers. The event highlighted not only the suitability of the estate as a trail-running venue, but also the lifestyle experience that comes from living amongst nature.






*Osprey Dam*












The atmosphere throughout the morning was energetic and positive, with runners, supporters and residents coming together to celebrate an active outdoor lifestyle. The routes provided participants with a memorable experience, combining the challenge of trail running with the opportunity to explore the natural beauty of Raptors View.

Hosting this event was also a wonderful opportunity to showcase the estate to a wider community and demonstrate the careful balance between conservation, recreation and responsible estate management.

Events such as these allow us to share the unique character of Raptor's View while creating opportunities for community engagement and positive experiences within our natural environment.

A special thank you goes to the organisers, volunteers, our management team and residents who supported the event and helped make the first Raptor's View Lowveld Trail Running event such a success.

We look forward to the 2027 event to celebrate the special place we are fortunate to call home.

*Great action images taken during the race* *Images supplied*

# celebrating FATHER'S



# CYCLE

# 5KM & 15KM

## RIDE RAPTOR'S



*Thank you to everyone that joined the Father's Day cycle ride around the Estate and special thanks to our management team for leading the peloton.*

# Save these dates

RESIDENTS RIVER BRAAI

25.07.26
note new date
date change due to rugby fixtures

EVENING SCORPION WALK

02.10.26

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

24.10.26

BIRDING MORNING WALK

02.10.26









RAPTORS View

# Riverbed BRAAI

Join us for  our annual sizzling braai that brings friends, family and residents together . We provide the braai set-up, loos, tables and chairs ...
Bring your own food and drinks

**25 JULY 2026 @15:00**
**keep a lookout for the signs to the location along Black Harrier**