



THE BARKING GECKO

Newsletter of the NamibRand Nature Reserve



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Photo: Peter Nuugonya

Top: This beautiful leopard was seen at Busman Koppies on 30 October 2014, by SDL guides.

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A few very extreme weather conditions have been encountered the past few months, which has built up the anticipation for rain.

Our CEO, Nils Odendaal have also been away to Sydney, Australia for the World Parks Congress. More about his trip follows on page 2-3.

Over the past few months we worked very closely together with our neighbour Neuhof Reserve. In this issue we also have a special section with Neuhof news, giving us an update on what they have been up to. We are pleased with this development as it will only be beneficial in future partnerships and also strengthening ties with our neighbours and to work together in successfully developing the Greater Sossusvlei-Namib Landscape project.

In other news, a very interesting sighting of a caracal was recorded at the Family Hideout campsite waterhole. This is a very special sighting of a caracal (picture below) being made on the reserve and we thought it deserve being front page news. See page 7 for more pictures.

The year that was

How fast time went by. It feels like yesterday that we entered the year 2014. To summarize this year, here's mention of some of the good, bad, happy and sad things which has happened.

We sadly bid farewell to the late Lydia Kooper, wife of Jakobus Kooper, long time employee of the Reserve, who passed away in August. We continue to wish the family well.

On a more happier and encouraging note, we have had plenty sightings of baby oryx and red hartebeest n the past few weeks. This is also a known phenomenon as an indication for rain.



Photo: <https://onedrive.live.com>

NamibRand Nature Reserve wishes everyone a very merry Christmas and a prosperous new year!



Vanessa Hartung

News from our CEO

World Parks Congress

I was fortunate to be invited by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature's Programme on African Protected Areas and Conservation (IUCN-PAPACO - <http://papaco.org/gb/>) to attend the World Parks Congress in Sydney, Australia from 12 to 19 November 2014 (<http://worldparkscongress.org/>)



22 "Champions" from across Africa were selected by IUCN-PAPACO to showcase their conservation stories under the banner "Africa at the World Park Congress".

We as the NamibRand Nature Reserve are honoured that our conservation work is being recognised on this global scale and made use of the opportunity to present several talks at the congress highlighting some of our successes and lessons learned.

The congress was attended by more than 6,000 people at the Sydney Olympic Park. At a main complex, several international conservation organisations, such as the World Wildlife Fund, had exhibition and information stands. There were also themed pavilions where information about the protected planet, conservation finance, nature based solutions etc. was presented. In the surrounding halls, numerous parallel plenary sessions on one of the eight streams or topics of the meeting, were being held which interested parties could attend. At any point in time there were at least 20 sessions going on and delegates had to choose which workshops or presentations to attend, when not being part of or presenting in a particular session themselves.

The eight streams of the congress included: Reaching Conservation Goals, Responding to Climate Change, Improving Health and Wellbeing, Supporting Human Life, Reconciling Development Challenges, Enhancing Diversity and Quality of Governance, Respecting Indigenous and Traditional Knowledge and Culture and Inspiring a New Generation.

The papers I presented focused on Stream 1: Reaching Conservation Goals and Stream 2: Good Governance and showcased the NamibRand Nature Reserve as a model for private conservation.



Photos: Nils Odendaal

Of particular interest to me and the NamibRand Nature Reserve was the emergence of the newly formed IUCN Specialist Group on Privately Protected Areas. Those familiar with the Aichi Biodi-

versity Targets as set by the Convention on Biological Diversity (<http://www.cbd.int/sp/targets/>) will know that in order to achieve 17% protection of the earth's terrestrial ecosystems (Target 11), the contribution that privately protected areas will provide is of crucial importance. The formation of a specialist group to promote and further the interests of privately protected areas, such as NamibRand, is therefore a globally important conservation step. We have subscribed to this group and I hope that by joining the IUCN, NamibRand will in future become a key contributor and important member of this group.

Attending the World Parks Congress was a productive networking opportunity for NamibRand. It was an interesting event where a lot of new information was gained and a worthy platform for us to promote our conservation model.

The Greater Sossusvlei-Namib Landscape Association

The police station at Sesriem, which was brought into life with the help of the NAM-PLACE funded Greater Sossusvlei-Namib Landscape Association was officially inaugurated on Monday, 17th November 2014. The station was opened by our Deputy Minister of Safety and Security, the Honourable Erastus Utoni. The station is now fully operational and we hope that the presence of this station and its police officers will significantly contribute towards the safety and wellbeing of residents, visitors and wildlife of our area. More on page 9.

Lee and Murray Tindall of the Neuhof Nature Reserve have now been officially appointed as the landscape coordinators of the Greater Sossusvlei-Namib Landscape Association. We are proud to have them on board and are confident that the development and action plan of the Association will now be implemented in a much speedier and focused manner! Lee and Murray can be contacted at gsl@namplace.org.na



Renewable energy

NamibRand has made massive strides towards our renewable energy requirements. We would like to congratulate Tok Tokkie Trails on supporting this policy as they have installed a new solar powered water pump as well as two solar hot water geysers at the Die Duine Homestead. More can be read on page 3 with pictures.

Our last stand alone diesel powered borehole, which provides water to the Horseshoe waterhole, has now been replaced with a solar pump. All of NamibRand's 22 stand-alone waterholes (not including homesteads) are now fed by water that is pumped using solar power! An achievement to be proud of!

Staff

Mr Willem Rooi joined the staff at Keerweder as a field ranger in September 2014, we wish him many happy years of service and welcome him to the team.

(Continued on page 3)

(Continued from page 2)

Congratulations to Elton Vries and Vanessa Hartung for obtaining the vehicle drivers licence. This qualification will certainly help us in getting more work done on the Reserve. Well done!

Season's Greetings

All of us at the NamibRand Nature Reserve would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your ongoing support. Without your help and interest the Reserve would not be the success that it is today. We wish you a happy festive season and all the best for the New Year!



Nils Odendaal

Tok Tokkie Trails went solar

Tok Tokkie Trails is proud of having achieved the next level for sustainable tourism in the desert .

We could install a brand new solar pump in 73 m depth recently, which pumps up to 8000 l per day.

In addition, there are two new 180 l solar geyser on our staff buildings for environmentally friendly hot water.

So let's just use the sun.

Sandra Bahr



Top left : Die Duine residents helping with the installation of the new solar system.

Top right: Testing of the new solar pump.

Bottom: The solar Geyser installed at Tok Tokkie Trails.

News from Keerweder

Summer is in full swing, and the atmosphere is as dry and hot as ever. Even though we are yet to receive our first rains of the season, we remain hopeful and still appreciate the beauty that this landscape offers even in the driest of times. This beauty was captured for the world to see when in October, world renowned photographer, Mr. Antonio Vizcaino, visited the Reserve to photograph the landscape and conservation efforts on the Reserve for an upcoming book called "Global Wild lands Philanthropy" which will feature private conservation areas form around the world started by philanthropists. This work is sponsored by Mr Doug Tompkins who is also the founder of Conservation Patagonia in South America, and will feature 100 private Reserves around the world, of which the Reserve is honoured to have been selected as one.

We climbed up the Losberg on a "coolish" day in October to check on the repeater and at the same time raise the antennae higher on the pole. For that reason we took a ladder with, which we bought for the repeater and left it there on top of the mountain for future use. With the antennae now a bit higher, radio communication has improved a lot around the Reserve. We have also been busy repairing roads and two-track grader to improve the condition of our tracks on the Reserve. We filled up a section of the road from Kwessiegat to Hyena waterhole with gravel to repair the badly eroded track which we use to cart water to Hyena waterhole. Hopefully, we will get some rain soon as this will help with the maintenance of this clay track that has dried out due to the lack of moisture.

Furthermore, we replaced sections of the pipeline from Toekoms to Verweg dam, as this pipeline was in a bad shape after we removed it from the old (now gone) corridor fence line. The improved pipeline, that has been dug in, now ensures that more water is being pumped into the Verweg dam which feeds water to the Verweg waterhole which has now become a very popular water point as a result of the migration of the plains game and the removal of the fence line on Verweg. A lot of the plain's game have now moved closer to the mountains and thus the pressure on the waterholes close to the Nubib Mountains has increased.

On the predator's front, we keep on receiving sighting and seeing coalitions of cheetahs. The most popular group is that of six cheetahs roaming together in the northern parts of the Reserve. Two spotted hyena have also frequently visited Porcupine waterhole. A caracal is caught on a camera trap at the Family Hideout waterhole, which was the first sighting of the majestic cat on the Reserve in years!

I wish all a merry Christmas, and a fruitful new year! All I want for Christmas is rain.

Quintin Hartung



Left: NamibRand staff busy fixing the road from Kwessiegat to Hyena waterhole.



Right: Famous photographer, philanthropist Mr. Antonio Vizcaino in action.

Photos: Tok Tokkie Trails Photo Library



News @ NaDEET

“NaDEET Centre brings the concepts of the schoolbooks into the right place where learners can experience them and are fascinated by the fact that they can understand how the world works. This makes each individual want to participate and do the right thing.”- Mrs. Murangi, Cambridge Primary School

NaDEET Centre continues to deliver. The second half of this year has again hosted numerous school groups. Many of these are regular returning schools that come annually to give their learners the opportunity to learn in the beauty of the NamibRand Nature Reserve. To date over 10,000 Namibians have now come to NaDEET Centre to learn from nature how they can live a more sustainable lifestyle. Most are unsure what to expect when they arrive and do not want to depart when it is time to leave.

Our RUG programme hosted all three communities at NaDEET Centre. The last group of the year departed at the end of November and consisted of mature community members. We even had some 70-80 year old participants! We welcome this as they are the heads of their households and are the ones to make decisions on energy, water and waste. NaDEET staff took time to translate programme content into Afrikaans and Nama to ensure that all can understand and supported participants in all aspects of the programme. One “Ouma” even expressed her thanks and emotion to NaDEET staff by calling our weltwaerts volunteer her “son”. In Namibian culture this is a sign of respect and acceptance. Through personal connections, NaDEET’s approach of learning by doing and living sustainably our programme is most successful.



Viktorija Keding



Left top: Windhoek kids checking out the center.

Far left Bottom: Uibes youth showing off her recycled doll.

Bottom left: Danie Joubert Primary School kids reading the water meter.

NaDEET – an Education for Sustainable Development success story-featured at World Conference, Japan

From the 10-12 November, 1100 delegates from over 148 countries including 74 ministers congregated in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan, to celebrate the end of the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD). NaDEET’s Director, Viktorija Keding, was one of the invited environmental education experts invited to the conference. Japan has been leading the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development as the initial proposers through financial and programme commitments in their own country and globally and therefore was the appropriate venue for the significant event.

NaDEET made several significant contributions to the conference. Twenty-five organisations worldwide were selected as “Education for Sustainable Development Success Stories” and were given space to showcase their work in the atrium of the conference facility. NaDEET’s stand attracted many visitors that wanted to learn more about what it is that we do on the NamibRand Nature Reserve in some remote place in Africa. With little models of our activities and information brochures, Viktorija shared with many NaDEET’s “We practice what we teach” approach that has worked so well over the past 11 years.

After two days of high-level plenary sessions, workshops, cultural events and informal discussions, the conference came to an end with the official Closing Ceremony. In contrast to the Opening Ceremony that was addressed by the Imperial Highness of Japan, the Closing Ceremony gave practitioners of ESD an opportunity to speak. I was one of the closing ceremony speakers and was given the opportunity to share NaDEET’s further commitment to ESD, specifically in regards to our “RUG for Sustainability” programme which is working with three of our Hardap Region communities.

Conferences such as these give the opportunity to reflect on successes and share with others best-practices. Important is that all return home to their respective communities invigorated to continue to work towards a more sustainable future.



Viktorija Keding



Top left: Aichi-Nagoya welcomes the world.

Bottom right: Viktorija Keding sharing NaDEET with the Japanese public.

News from the South

Greetings from the south. Another year nearly over. I don't know where the time goes! It seems like yesterday that we all celebrated New years on Excelsior. At least we can look back and see where the time went when we write our submissions for the Barking Gecko.

My favourite time of year, Spring! I see all the birds showing off their breeding colours, as the summer visitors arrive for their summer holidays, lots of gemsbok calves and springbok lambs, baby ostriches and remarkably quite a few juvenile vultures. Wonderful stuff! All we need now is good rains, but all the signs are there.

The last few months have been busy and constructive, although one big highlight was that Elton Vries passed his drivers license test. Big congratulations go to Elton, great, well done! The water holes have been high on the agenda, with new solar panels being installed at Sonop water, Aandstêr water and Two pumps. The old mono pump at Horseshoe has now been replaced with a new solar installation, so if any of you know someone who is looking for a second hand mono pump with diesel engine, please let us know.

Progress was also made regarding the removal of old infrastructure. The reservoir at Grootpomp has been demolished and buried. The reservoir and the old engine room at Twee pompe have also been demolished, the rubble has been removed. Still to be done are the infrastructures at Straussenwasser, Springbok water and now Horseshoe as well. So lots still to do.

Four kilometres of the fence line between Springbokvlakte and Kumbis has also been opened up, enabling unrestricted movement of game over this border as was also reported in our September issue. The visual difference always amazes me, as though the land itself has been freed. I love it.

The giraffe have settled in here the south remarkably well although they still seem to be expanding and exploring their new home. I even saw two the other day on Saffier, close to the Sonop water hole.

This was a first. Only one of the hartebeest we released has been sighted and on a fairly regular basis. He is a large bull so we can only hope that at some point the females will find him,

or he will find them. Zebras are now a common sight in the south, I think as a result of the release undertaken on Springbokvlakte combined with a natural influx from the north of the Reserve. Several foals have also been seen.

Let me take this opportunity to wish you all a very happy Christmas and all you wish for in the New Year on behalf of Franziska and myself, and all of us here in the south.

Peter Woolfe



Top: The removal of the corridor fence near Toekoms.



Top: Solar panels at Sonop.



Top: New solar panels at Two Pumps.



Left: New solar panels at Sonop.



Top: Giraffe seen on Saffier.

Little Bugs

Little Bugs News!

New Teacher.

After three months spent here, I think it is time for me to introduce myself properly. A few of you met me at the school already since I arrived in September.

My name is Charlotte van Cutsem; I come from a small town in Belgium called Perwez.

I decided to become a teacher after realizing that the law career that I planned was not totally fulfilling me. I needed something more, a job that would help others and in which I could share more than legal advice.

Charlotte van Cutsem



Top Left: Miss Charlotte with Rudolf.

Top right: Miss Charlotte and all the little bugs.



Top: The new kitchen at Little Bugs.



Right: The Little Bugs dining table ready for their meal

Solar electricity and hot water for Little Bugs!

Great news: Little Bugs has solar electricity and hot water provided by a solar geyser! On Wednesday the 26th of November, a team from Solsquare helped us with the installation. We would like to thank everybody involved for their support and kind donations. A special thank you goes to Francois Lamotte, NAMPLACE project, NamibRand Conservation Foundation, Stauch + Partners Architects and Solsquare Namibia.

Ingrid Baas

We Got a Kitchen!

Monday the 24th of November was not an ordinary Monday at Little Bugs. After many weeks of anticipation, the kitchen of Little Bugs opened its doors! From now on, all children will have their meals prepared in the kitchen and eat in the new dining area.

The design was done according to the latest hygiene and catering standards and of course great care is being taken to make it child friendly. Little Bugs provides a meal for each child every day. Inadequate nutrition is linked to delayed brain development and an impaired ability to learn. Hungry children struggle to concentrate in class and may act out. With a balanced menu that has been developed by a dietician especially for Little Bugs we make sure all children are ready for the day.

Now that the kitchen is fully operational, it is time for the fun part! We have already begun to decorate the walls with artwork from the children.

Once a week the children have a cooking class. For many of them it is one of their favorite activities. Making cookies, bread and pasta salad – we have some young talented chefs within our Little Bugs!



Left: The new solar electricity system installed at Little Bugs.



Top right: Solar Panels as donated by Solsquare to the school to supply them with warm water and solar electricity.

News from NamibRand Family Hideout.

Construction of our second and final exclusive campsite in the dunes of NamibRand is about to begin, for which material procurement and transport is well underway



Top: Titus Nangolo from the NamibRand Family Hideout posing next to the newly acquired construction materials.

The existing campsite is proving very popular, being located directly in our beautiful dunes, under an ancient camel thorn tree. The new site will be similarly private and located out of view and earshot of the existing campsite, cosily nestled into the adjacent dune valley (see Google Earth photo).

Each of the two campsites can be reserved for one party of a maximum of eight people at a time. A canvas structure on a wooden platform is provided with a solar-heated hot shower, a flush toilet, lights, kitchen and braai facilities, a permanent shaded area, and space to erect tents and to park vehicles. Water is piped from our borehole near the Family Hideout. Each site has magnificent views over the plains and distant mountains, and a short climb into the dunes behind the site opens up even more stunning vistas over the entire area.

A private water hole and a bird bath are fed from the water tanks, to attract springbok, gemsbok, sand grouse and other interesting bird- and animal life.

Activities include a 4x4 self-drive route through the dunes, dune-boarding and guided nature drives of varying lengths in our vehicle.

See the fun dune-boarding illustration by one of our child guests in our guest book recently.



Left: Picture of a very excited guest about dune-boarding.

The new campsite is due to be open for reservation from 23rd March 2015 at the latest, perhaps earlier, depending on our building manager, Andreas Keding of NaDEET, and on finishing off the last minute touches.

We have chosen astronomical names for the campsites in keeping with NamibRand's Dark Sky status – Campsite Orion for the existing site and Campsite Venus for the new site.

Mandy Brückner

Email: ambruck@afol.com.na



Top: Google Earth image of the location of the campsites from each other

Photos: Mandy Brückner

Caracal sighting at the Family Hideout!



Photos: Lynne Roberts (Camera Trap)

Top and Bottom: Beautiful camera trap pictures of a caracal at the Family Hideout waterhole.

News From Neuhof.

Greeting from us on the other side of the mountain. My husband Murray and I have joined the Neuhof Project! We're 5 months in and loving it! It is amazing how different this side of the Namib is to where we were previously! It is breathtakingly beautiful on the whole of Neuhof.



Top Left and Right: The beautiful Nuehof as photographed during sunset and a cloudy date

As many will know we are in the throes of building base. It is reasonably near completion, well, by building standards anyway. Base is where we will be stationed, the workshop etc. is. Base is the hub of Neuhof. It has been amazing to watch as the buildings have gone up, been finished, changed, redesigned, tiled, painted and then possibly redesigned again. Watching this and being relatively near it, so to speak, has given us an opportunity to learn far more about construction than we may ever have planned. I am beginning to recognize things on the site, tools and such, it's all terribly exciting.

Even more exciting is the building up and continuation of starting a Reserve. We are so privileged to be involved in what is and what will be a continuously exciting and changing project. I have had moments where the realization hit me that this is a tangible legacy to leave for our kids, it is a visible achievement and it's a passion being lived out.



Left: Connor and Grace Tindall, son and daughter of Murray and Lee, enjoying life in the desert.

Right: The Tindall's new home on Neuhof.



Considering the recent bouts of poaching, it is more vital than ever that we as conservationists, wildlife enthusiasts, and nature lovers become involved in any way possible to preserving what Namibia has, not only for ourselves but for our children. It made me question why we thought it is ok to bring children into a very unhinged and less than perfect world, the answer is this: We need to raise our kids, by leading by example, by teaching them kindness, understanding, tolerance as well as allowing them to see first-hand the natural resources that matter, giving them the opportunity to fall in love with nature, wildlife and the people around them. We need to be the ones to teach our kids right from wrong, values and why the natural environment matters. Hopefully these lessons and the few things we do infuse into our kids will filter into following generations and so on, thus raising an intellectually balanced, tolerant, aware group of people who will live by the values we taught and who can look back on the legacies we leave and be proud to continue living them.

Making leaving a legacy a little easier for us, we have also taken over as NamPlace Landscape Co-ordinators. We have done so under the Neuhof flag. It is very exciting and we are fortunate to say that we have many people around us whose advice, assistance and assurance will always be welcomed and whom we can approach for help. We are pleased to announce that the scheduled landscape game count was a success (already we have huge assistance and a lot of encouragement from many people). The NamPlace project has the potential to be life changing for many and we are honoured to be a part of something as monumental as this.

All in all, there are so many wonderful projects and things going on around us that this, despite some of the conservation setbacks, is an exciting time for us. I believe in what we are doing in both our endeavours and believe that both Neuhof and NamPlace could serve as inspiration to others. I certainly hope that they encourage just one person, to get involved, as each person makes a difference. With the end of 2014 looming (how did that happen?) it's always a crazy time of year, filled with last minute frantic activity, financial woes as Christmas approaches and everything triples in cost, the pressures to end the year having done as much as possible in, what really, is a limited amount of time.

We wish you all the best and only the happiest times this silly season! Wishing you so much laughter, peace and family time. With that, I must end off and prepare for the next barking gecko article....in 2015.

Tindall Family





Sesriem police station Inaugurated.



On Monday 17 November 2014, the police station that was built in association with the NAMPLACE project, was officially inaugurated and opened by the deputy Minister of Safety and Security, Hon. Erastus Uutoni at Sesriem.

This was an auspicious event attended by the Deputy Commissioner Kuduva, who was the master of ceremonies, members of the police force and landscape members.

Unfortunately the 17th happened to be one the days where the east wind was blowing gales and whipping sand into little tornadoes, so it was reasonably awkward, with sand everywhere, but everybody present and involved made the best of it and held onto their sense of humour! The new Police Station looked very smart and clean. All buildings are labelled, neat and well air conditioned. The courtyard was great, fully paved and reasonably sheltered from the wind.

Deputy Minister Uutoni, called on all of us to be vigilant, to be aware and to make an effort to assist the police where we could. His speech was lovely, dotted with humour and friendly joking about the ‘kapundas’ (beer bellies) of those men who were happy and comfortable. An important issue that was raised was the happiness/work satisfaction of the people protecting us. It was mentioned that it’s important, that people be comfortable, be heard and be respected in their environment, especially when it comes to placing police officers in a remote place like Sesriem. I speak for myself, for a change, knowing the challenges of living remotely, being removed from ones loved ones, and having to pre-plan ones shopping at all times and that some of the basic comforts which we often take for granted make the bigger sacrifices and ‘losses’ (for want of a better word) more tolerable.

The commissioner was very grateful to all those sponsors who assisted with funding. He thanked NAMPLACE profusely for the donation of the vehicle, as well as their support. Karl-Heinz Oosthuizen and Ivan Phillipson were thanked for being active reservists, (of the men present they were the only reservists) and for protecting the environment and its people.

The keys for the vehicle were handed over amidst much goodwill and laughter. A group photo of the NAMPLACE members and the officials was taken by many, unfortunately not by myself or with any of my cameras. There was much mentioned of sending the photo into the media. Keep a look out!

We are so pleased that this historical occasion has happened, that the Police Station is open and would like to congratulate and thank everybody involved in making this happen, organ-

izing the opening, and hosting lunch for all invited guests. We hope that Sesriem Police Station grows from strength to strength and becomes another source of pride to NAMPLACE—GSNL. Wishing all Police Officers stationed there luck, wind free days and pleasure in their work environment.



Top Left: Hoisting of the official flags.



Top Right: Marching done by the police force marching band.



Left: Deputy Commissioner Kuduva arriving at the police station for proceedings to commence.

Photo: Lee Tindall



Top: The official cutting of the ribbon by the honorable deputy Minister Erastus Uutoni.

Photos: Lee Tindall

Photo: Quintin Hartung

Interesting Camera Trap Pictures



Top: A beautiful picture of this leopard (*Panthera pardus*) snapped at the Porcupine water hole.



Top: Regular sightings of hyenas included this spotted hyena (*Crocuta crocuta*) at the Moringa waterhole.



Top: A baby oryx (*Oryx gazelle*) at the Porcupine waterhole. A lot of baby oryx has been seen on the Reserve.

Photos: Bukeye Camera



Top: A tagged lappet-faced vulture (*Aegypius tracheliotus*) caught on the camera trap at Moringa waterhole.



Top: A kudu (*Tragelaphus strepsiceros*) bull caught on the camera trap at Moringa waterhole.



Top: A klipspringer (*Oreotragus oreotragus*) at the Moringa waterhole.

Photos: Bukeye Camera



Thank you

Many thanks to those of you who have contributed to this issue of The Barking Gecko by providing articles/information: Ingrid Baas, Sandra Bahr, Mandy Bruckner, Quintin Hartung, Viktoria Keding, Peter Nuugonya, Nils Odendaal, Lynne Roberts, Lee Tindall, Charlotte van Custem, Peter Woolfe.

We would also like to thank all those who so generously share their photographs and interesting sightings!

The Barking Gecko is your newsletter and, as always, we invite you to keep on sending us your contributions of news and views, short reports, sightings, artwork and photographs.

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