

whatsUp!

Waterberg News, Happenings and Events October 2020

Academy introduces progressive Environmental Conservation Program



While maintaining its emphasis on high scholastic standards **Waterberg Academy Head, Vernon Rorich**, recognising the importance and relevance of environmental education has developed an advanced curriculum incorporating conservation and is currently implementing this programme.

The Waterberg, with its many game and nature reserves providing ready access to the natural wonders around us, is the perfect place for this programme and Vernon is in advanced discussions with various reserves to make their marvelous facilities available to Academy students. A step ahead for the Academy which will undoubtedly attract students interested in conservation from around the country.



With no international travellers, tourism to the Waterberg, and the rest of South Africa, is suffering badly. However, throughout the lockdown, Waterberg Tourism has continued its efforts to promote and market the area and now with the opening of provincial borders many Waterberg destinations are adjusting prices to attract locals, taking advantage of the urge of locked-down Gautengers desperate to get away for a break. They're finding a 'new' market and some local lodges/B&Bs, now have bookings through to the New Year. Maybe this is a lesson for our industry, do not ignore our local travellers, A mere two hours from Gauteng the Waterberg has a lot to offer.

Lapalala Earns Status as Vulture Safe Zone (VSZ) in the protection of vultures
Essentially a VSZ is a large geographical area which the landowner commits to manage in a way that is safe for vultures. The VSZ is managed by Birdlife SA.



Eyes in the Rump - now here's an interesting thing. Predation of cattle by lions is a major problem in Botswana, so an experiment was carried out to see if the painting of an eye on the rump of a cow might stop predators attacking - read more - go to

<https://theconservation.com/lions-are-less-likely-to-attack-cattle-with-eyes-painted-on-their-backsides-14248>

Maybe this is something breeders of rare game could consider doing?

Richard Wadley



Pangolins are not rare, but are rarely seen. WNC member **Andrew Eagar** spotted this specimen while out cycling recently, the first one seen on **Izintaba** for thirteen years. It apparently stayed put, feeding on termites for more than an hour, allowing for good sightings for the Eagar boys.

The Lapalala Wilderness School held its annual World Rhino Day celebration with a scaled down attendance of just 20 learners debating rhino poaching and the use of pangolin for traditional medicine. As always a very successful event with high quality debating from all the participants.



JOAN THE TORTOISE

Yes, I know it's not really done to name animals in the wild, but I think I have good reasons. One, my late Mom, Joan, loved tortoises – she had a collection of various sized tortoise ornaments. Secondly, over the years here at Homefarm a tortoise, we recognise because of its damaged shell, has appeared annually, hanging out near the house. Because it is a regular it had to be named - Joan was the obvious choice.



Three weeks ago, with warmer weather, very close to the verandah Joan slowly peeked out from under a rock, literally staggering tentatively exploring around. Possibly the wobble meant it was Joan's first venture out after cold weather hibernation.....just a guess! Joan was out and about for a few days particularly enjoying the nearby spekboom. Then suddenly next to a rock near the verandah steps, Joan halted, tucked its head in

and didn't move. We were concerned. Was it okay? 36 hours later the first very big seasonal storm cracked the sky open. Huge amounts of loud thunder and lightning with 50mls of rain in 6 hours. When the storm was over and all was peaceful again, Joan had gone! Presumably and hopefully to explore the big wide world once again, just getting on with tortoise like things. Is Joan a weather forecaster? We'd like to think so.

Sue Walker

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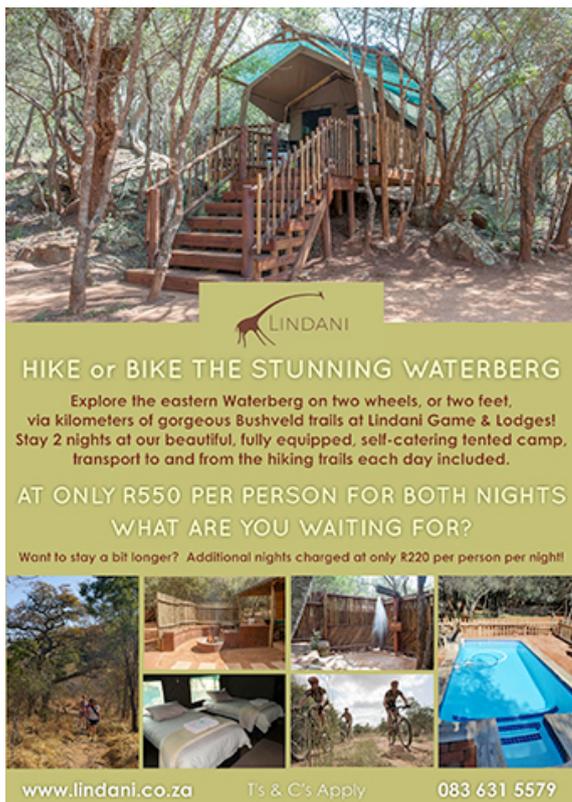
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- Your donation of only R550 to the Friends of Tintswalo Fund will put you in the draw.
- Each donation of R550 will count as 1 entry.
- Stand a chance to WIN a 2 Night Stay at Tintswalo Lapalala for 2 people.
- Includes: Accommodation, all meals and game drives. Excludes all alcohol beverages.
- All the funds go to the support of the Lapalala Wilderness Covid19 community relief fund.
- Competition closing date is 31 Oct 2020. Price validity is 12 months from date of issue.
- Winner will be notified by email. T's & C's apply.
- For more information: Judi@waterbergtourism.com or Caren@design@tintswalo.com

A rhino veterinary conservation experience is included for the prize winner

The exercise will entail the immobilization of 1-2 rhinos over a 3-day period. The veterinarian will be darting from a helicopter. Guests can assist during the operation, for example to monitor breathing, temperature and/or to capture data.

How to donate and enter:

- 1) Make your donation by Credit Card, state reference WATERBERG - **Click on this flyer.**
- 2) Once you made your donation, please email your contact details with your proof of payment to Judy@waterbergtourism.com





WNC meeting and AGM November 12

Covid 19 protocols will be followed

Programme with full details will be sent

We are always looking for articles for 'whatsUp!'- please contact the editor>

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