

Report number 76 for the period 29 January 2014 – 26 February 2014

1 FIELD WORK / CONTRACTS

- **Invasive vegetation clearing (Port Jacksons):** 30 January and 3 February
- **Herbicide spraying of Kikuyu grass:** 26 February
- **Infrastructure maintenance:** 13 February

2 INVASIVE VEGETATION MANAGEMENT

Herbicide spraying of Kikuyu grass was completed on 26 February in the Southern Area. A generic version of Focus Ultra, called Agil was used. The Site Manager confirmed with City of Cape Town staff at the Invasive Species Unit in Westlake that the constituents of this herbicide are identical to Focus Ultra. In order to motivate the purchase of the herbicide, the Site Manager estimated the extent of Kikuyu invasion in the section. The estimated cover in percentage for the Northern Area results was 10-15%, and 15-20% for the Southern Area. Other invasive and alien species were also discovered, such as a Brazilian pepper tree and a Palm tree in the Southern Area.



Figure 1. Brazilian pepper tree found in the Southern Area.

3 FIRE MANAGEMENT

Nothing to report.

4 REHABILITATION

Nothing to report.

5 INFRASTRUCTURE MANAGEMENT

The tourism signage application for Milnerton Racecourse was discussed at the Regional Tourism meeting on 30 January. Adrian Solomons reported that the City of Cape Town has appointed new consultants in January 2014 to do the inspections and recommendations. They will review all applications and provide feedback at the end of March 2014.

Stormwater outlets were all open and functioning.

The boardwalk was maintained on 13 February by two Table Bay NR students by tightening and replacing screws.

A general litter clean-up of the Northern and Southern Areas was undertaken on 30 January and 3 February.

The calibrated measuring point of Wetland 1 was repaired on 13 February. The point was replaced in Wetland 1. The Site Manager recorded GPS coordinates for both measuring points in the reserve.

Removal for old infrastructure in and around Wetland 1 was discussed on 3 February by the Site Manager and a Table Bay NR Conservation Officer. The steel structures in and around Wetland 1 would be removed with a hacksaw and dumped with a truck. The infrastructure includes implements and a pump that were used to pump water out of Wetland 1 in the past.

6 FAUNA MANAGEMENT AND OBSERVATIONS

- **A monthly avifauna census** was conducted on 18 and 20 February by Helm van Zyl in the Northern and Southern Areas. 13 Species were recorded in the Northern Area and 14 in the Southern Area. A Citrus Swallowtail butterfly was also seen.
- **A Cape Grysbok census** was conducted during the evening of 18 February at the Mitchells Plain and Groote Schuur hospitals to determine whether suitable animals can be translocated to Milnerton Racecourse. An additional male and female is required for the reserve. The census did not indicate that suitable animals were available at either sites, and therefore other donor sites will be searched.
- **Other fauna observed** during February can be seen opposite. These include:

- Broad Scarlet female
- Grey Heron
- *Sympetrum fonscolombii*
- Meadow White
- Three-banded Plover
- March Bluetail



Figure 2. Broad Scarlet female



Figure 3. Grey Heron



Figure 4. *Sympetrum fonscolombii*

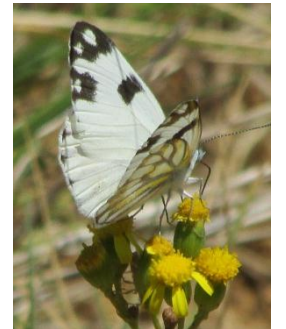


Figure 5. Meadow White



Figure 6. Three-banded Plover



Figure 7. March Bluetail

7.1 BIOPHYSICAL MONITORING – VEGETATION

Figure 8. Flora species observed during February are from left to right:

- 1) *Pelargonium capitatum*
- 2) *Lobelia flaccida*
- 3) *Helichrysum patulum*
- 4) *Muraltia satureioides*
- 5) *Athanasia dentata*
- 6) *Peridinium* and *Zygnema*



7.2 BIOPHYSICAL MONITORING – WATER



Figure 9. Fixed point photography photos of Wetland 1, taken on 20 February 2014 (A) and 21 February 2012 (B).



Figure 10. Fixed point photography photos of Wetland 2, taken on 20 February 2014 (A) and 21 February 2012 (B).



Figure 11. Fixed point photography photos of the Dam, taken on 20 February 2014 (A) and 19 February 2009(B).

Mnth	Wetland 1 - Southern Area (cm)							
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Jan		114	76	67	18	0	23	91
Feb		61	46	44.2	0.5	0	10	38
Mar		53	28	25	0	0	0	
Apr		35	18	13	0	0	0	
May		22	37	35.6	0	0	0	
Jun		59	69	70	14	26	56	
Jul	123	153	143	35.6	61	96	86	
Aug	150+	155	145	123.6	57	133	150+	
Sep	150+	187	161.5	112.5	71	127	150+	
Oct	150+	160.5	143.5	95.5	59.5	117	150+	
Nov	150+	139.5	138	75.5	48	86	150+	
Dec	135	108	91	46.75	24	70	104	

Mnth	Wetland 2 - Northern Area (cm)							
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Jan		31	34	47.5	29	10	11	51
Feb		1	12	29	1.5	0	0	18
Mar		0	0	13	0	0	0	
Apr		0	5	3	0	9	0	
May		1	33	46.6	4	31.6	4.3	
Jun		51	62	71.8	43	61	67.5	
Jul	82	94	102	46.6	50.2	91	85.5	
Aug	101	95.5	107	105	75.5	100	150+	
Sep	97	101.5	150+	93	75	96.5	97	
Oct	83	91.5	150+	84	67.2	94.5	91	
Nov	68	77	92	71	61	73	92	
Dec	52	58.5	69	45	43.5	61	75	

Table 1. Monthly records for water-levels, measured at the calibrated measuring points in Wetland 1 and 2.

Rainfall Data (mm)													
Year	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	TOTALS
2007	0	28	20	65	61.5	111	106	102	18	20	34	24	589.5
2008	3	12	7	18	54	107	175	87	160	15	60.5	5	703.5
2009	3	8	0	44	166	81	96.5	80	67	45.5	82	9	682
2010	2.5	5	8.5	7	121	100.5	62	60.5	14.5	30.5	36.5	10.5	459
2011	13	5.5	5.5	30	47	55	70	101	42	20	31	32.5	452.5
2012	5.75	2.5	18	78	61	81.5	111.5	100	60	36	15.5	3	572.75
2013	7.5	41	26.5	48.5	41.5	148	74	232	64	3	89	2.5	777.5
2014	24.5	4.9											

Table 2. Monthly rainfall records at Milnerton Racecourse since 2007.

Blue-green algae were found to be present in the Dam in the Southern Area during January 2014. In December 2013, three dead birds were found in the area around the Dam. No additional dead animals have been found in the area around the Dam until present. The Site Manager sampled water in the Dam again on 25 February 2014. This sample was handed in at City of Cape Town’s Scientific Services in Athlone. The results will be included in the next EMS report.

8. ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

The Annual Newsletter for 2013 was completed and distributed on 10 February. The newsletter was sent via email to friends, partners and colleagues. Two students from Table Bay NR also distributed copies of the newsletter to local libraries, schools and old age homes.

A volunteer from UNISA and two students from Table Bay NR assisted the Site Manager on 19 February with wetland monitoring as well as recording the fauna and flora sightings for February on the Biodiversity Database.



Figure 12. Students and a volunteer assisting with fixed point photography.



CTEET and CATHSSETA Conservation Learnerships have been awarded to three EPWP workers at Table Bay NR. The Site Manager has been appointed as supervisor and mentor of the three candidates. The Site Manager will utilise the candidates to help with fieldwork and monitoring at Milnerton Racecourse.

Letter drops were done on 7 and 10 February at The Met and Stableyard complexes. Letters focused on informing adjacent residents on the significance of the reserve as well as the Protected Area Act with regards to litter, domestic pets and fires.

Figure 13. The three conservation learnership students, Pamella Mrebe, Ntombesithathu Mathontsi and Viwe Maposa.

9 GENERAL INFORMATION / OBSERVATIONS / MEETINGS

The Biodiversity Database was used to record all fauna and flora sightings for February. The process of cross referencing the reserve’s own species list with the Biodiversity database species list was initiated in 2013 by the previous Site Manager. The present Site Manger completed this process on 20 February 2014.

10 ITEMS TO BE ADDRESSED IN THE UPCOMING MONTHS

- Distribution of annual report – February 2014 ✓
- Spraying of Kikuyu in the Southern Area – February 2014 ✓
- Alien Clearing of Port Jacksons and litter clean-ups – February 2014 ✓
- Maintenance work of existing boardwalk – February 2014 ✓
- Update contact details etc. on Royal Ascot website – February 2014 ✓
- Letter drops – February 2014 ✓
- Replacement of calibrated measuring point in Wetland 1 – February 2014 ✓
- Fauna management plan – March 2014
- Removal of old infrastructure – March 2014
- Investigate data with regards to exclusion plots – March 2014
- Grysbok drive count – March 2014
- Add law enforcement section to management plan – 2014
- Reserve signage – 2014
- Grysbok introduction – 2014
- Tourism signage – 2014