

Agricultural & Natural Resources Snippets

No 2014/1, May 2014

Department of Agricultural and Natural Resources Sciences, Polytechnic of Namibia

Record first intake of Masters in Natural Resource Management

2014 marked the first year for the Masters programme in Natural Resources Management. This programme is purely research-based, meaning that students have to undertake a larger research project and prepare a thesis from the data they collect. Interest in this programme was astonishing high, and we accepted 12 students in the first intake. Topics range from ecophysiology of *Welwitschia mirabilis* to deforestation and forest regeneration in Kavango, to fire ecology and birdstrikes at airports. We wish our students all the best for their projects!

Department involved in five SASSCAL projects

After a rather bumpy start, the five SASSCAL projects of the Department Agricultural and Natural Resources Sciences are now running smoothly. These are the projects: 041 Landscape literacy: Dr Ibo Zimmermann; 062 Vegetation Survey of Namibia: Ben Strohbach; 073 Impact of bush encroachment on ground water resources: Dave Joubert; 148 The impacts of fire on biodiversity and ecosystem processes in woodland savannah: Dave Joubert and 159 Strengthening a regional Biodiversity Observation Network in the region: Ben Strohbach. The project supports six of our Masters students financially.

Peddling from Waste to Wealth

Four students from the Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI), United States of America were hosted by the Department of Agriculture and Natural Resource Sciences. The students carried out a research study on "Peddling from Waste to Wealth: Cleaning our Cities", from March to May under the guidance and supervision of the department.



Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources Sciences photo competition

A photographic competition for students has been launched by the Department with the theme "Sustainable use of natural resources in Namibia". Last day for submissions is the 20th May 2014. Please send your contributions to Morgan Hauptfleisch, email birdstrikenam@gmail.com. The photo below was submitted by Matthew Walters.



Horticultural students show how it's done

Ever tried to grow some vegetables in your home garden? With little success? Ester, Venoo and Karora show how it is done! With a daily harvest of roughly 10 kg tomatoes, as well as parsley, green peppers, spinach and African cucumbers starting to grow, we are looking into a real food-secured future!



Toys for Boys (and Girls) used for wildlife research

eBee is a drone. Or if you want to, a remote-controlled aircraft - a real toy for boys (and girls). But a very special toy - fitted with all sorts of photographic gimmicks, its main application is low-cost aerial recognisance - at no less than 4 cm ground resolution! And for exactly this purpose this toy was tested at Kuzikus Wildlife Reserve, in collaboration with École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL) from Switzerland. The eBee is battery-powered, and can fly for approximately 40 minutes at a time. Through modern GPS-technology, an exact flight path can be pre-calculated, and the drone programmed to fly and photograph a specific area at a specified height. The pictures at the top, next column, show a typical launch of the eBee.

New publications from the Department

- Joubert, D. F., Smit, G. N., & Hoffman, M. T. (2013). The influence of rainfall, competition and predation on seed production, germination and establishment of an encroaching *Acacia* in an arid Namibian savanna. *Journal of Arid Environments*, 91, 7-13.
- Schmidt, L., Domptail, S., Klintenber, P., Gruber, M., Schmiedel, U., Zimmermann, I. & Falk, T. (2013). Transdisciplinary research and stakeholder involvement. A review of the TFO approach. *Biodiversity & Ecology*, 5, 195-212.
- Strohbach, B. J. (2013). Vegetation of the Okavango River valley in Kavango West, Namibia. *Biodiversity & Ecology*, 5, 321-339.

Feel neglected, ignored, overlooked?

Send your news snippets and photos to Ben Strohbach, bstrohbach@polytechnic.edu.na.

All contributions welcome!