

Agricultural & Natural Resources Snippets

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Department of Agricultural and Natural Resources Sciences, Polytechnic of Namibia

Evaluating Conservancy Game Guards

Nature Conservation lecturers and Master's students of the Department joined the WWF/ NNF / MET team at Wêreldsend and Opuwo in June to evaluate 50 Conservancy Game Guards from several conservancies in the NW.



Eight different competencies were evaluated, being: knowledge of their conservancy; liaison with stakeholders; game counts and the importance of this for quota setting; the event book system of keeping record; game utilization and working with professional hunters; patrolling; legal aspects including securing a crime scene; reporting and investigation of human wildlife conflict. The ladies in the team were fortunate to see "Master Louis" one of the rhino whose safety depends on the vigilance of these game guards. The experience reinforced the importance of the game guards in the ongoing success of Namibia's Conservancies. Without these dedicated men and women there would be no conservancies, as they said themselves, they are the eyes, ears, hands, backbone and heart of their conservancies.

— Shirley Bethune



Crab hunt

During the June recess, Shirley Bethune joined Kevin Roberts and colleagues from the Dept of Water Affairs to better assess the habitat of a an estuarine crab, a species of *Cardisoma*, that was first noted living in burrows in a reedbed in an isolated pool near the mouth of the Hoanib River. This expedition confirmed the presence of adult crabs in the reedbed section of a shallow pool that is cut off from the sea by a high wall of large pebbles. However, no young crabs were found suggesting that this may be a remnant population that colonized the reedbed when two unusual circumstances occurred together - the warmer current from Angola came down further than usual (the nearest distribution of a crab similar to this one is in tropical West Africa) and the spring tide was sufficiently high to allow the sea to spill over the "wall" or on one of the rare occasions that the Hoanib flowed into the sea the wall was breached from the land side. The larvae develop in the sea and so would have to have entered the estuary from there.

— Shirley Bethune



Franklin Covey workshop

Mr Teofilus Shiimi, who was appointed as a Change Agent in the School of Natural Resources and Spatial Sciences, attended Franklin Covey workshop held on 17 - 18 July 2014 at Polytechnic Hotel School. The workshop was an eye opener especially to the academics with too much workload as well as to the Management as it highlights the 7 Habits of highly effective people. We therefore encourage fellow staff members to also attend similar workshops should the

opportunity arise. It will influence the way you interact with people on a daily basis as well as the way you accomplish your work. The workshop can make you see the world in a different perspective especially on how and why things are happening the way they do.

— Teofilus Shiimi

WIL 2014

Our 3rd-year students recently returned from their WIL attachment and reported back on their projects. Lots of interesting topics: from capturing rhino's which escaped from Etosha NP, to hunting tortoises, investigating the sustainable harvesting of Devil's Claw, checking Windhoek Municipality's Water management, investigating cyanobacteria in the Namib Desert, right down to sampling crustaceans in ponds near Ogongo. Here are some of the memorable moments captured by the students.



49th Annual GSSA Congress

Three NRM Masters students; Elise Nghalipo, Visto Amputu, and Sipiwe Lutibezi, and their supervisor, Dr. Dave Joubert, attended the 49th Annual Grassland Society of Southern Africa which was held from 20-25 July in Bloemfontein, Free State. The congress focused on Advancing Rangeland Ecology and Pasture Management in Africa. The students attended a research skills workshop and a fire management course in addition to the congress. The students presented their project proposal posters and got comments from various delegates on how to go about with their projects, whilst Dave presented the overall SASSCAL project. This was a good networking and learning opportunity. The students' posters were considered of a high standard by the judges.

— Sipiwe Lutibezi



New publications from the Department

Joubert, D., Zimmermann, I., Fendler, J., Winschiers-Theophilus, H., Graz, F. P., Smit, N., & Hoffman, M. T. (2014). The development of an expert system for arid rangeland management in central Namibia with emphasis on bush thickening. *African Journal of Range & Forage Science*, 31(2), 161-172.

Feel neglected, ignored, overlooked?

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

All contributions welcome!