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CONSERVATION WISE

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QUARTERLY REPORT OF THE MILNERTON RACECOURSE ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

JULY TO SEPTEMBER 2019



Above: *Leucadendron levisanus*



From left to right: *Moraea fugax*, *Babiana tubiflora*, *Ferraria crispa*, *Baeometra uniflora*, *Sparaxis bulbifera*

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Mystery nests found in *Leucadendron levisanus* bushes

Dr. Charles Haddad (Doctorate in Entomology from the University of the Free State) looked at samples from unidentified nests that were sent from Milnerton Racecourse to Bloemfontein on 16/09/2019. He found that the nests were made by spiders belonging to the family Dictynidae. Only a few species are known to live socially and they are mainly known from North America. It is thought that this spider could be a newly introduced species in South Africa (see Figures 1-2 below). In order to identify it properly, its genitalia needs to be analyzed. Dr Haddad listed this sighting in the South African National Survey of Arachnida (SANSA) March - August 2019 newsletter (see Figure 3 below).



Figure 1: *Dictynidae*



Figure 2: , *Dictynidae* spider nest

PLEASE WATCH OUT—STRANGE DICTYNIDAE REPORTED IN THE WESTERN CAPE

Hester Pentz, the site manager of the Milnerton Racecourse at the Table Bay Nature Reserve, came across these mysterious spider nests on *Leucadendron levisanus* and *Mauraltia saturioides*. She opened some of the nests and discovered the presence of numerous small spiders. They were identified as a Dictynidae species by Charles Haddad and Ansie Dippenaar. Hester will send more specimens to be examined.

Anybody seeing this type of nests to contact either Charles or Ansie, please.



Figure 3: South African National Survey of Arachnida Newsletter excerpt

Spring at Milnerton Racecourse makes the heart race

Members of the public were guided on Spring Walks in the Milnerton Racecourse on 15, 16 and 18 September. This was an opportunity to share information on the history, management activities, and monitoring of fauna and flora at the Milnerton Racecourse as well as the importance of protecting critically endangered Cape Flats sand fynbos. Dr. Clive McDowell who did all the original botanical surveys for Milnerton Racecourse joined the Spring walk as well as members of CREW on 18 September (Figure 6).



Figure 4. Walkers on 15 September. (Photo: Charl van der Merwe)



Figure 5. Walkers on 16 September.



Figure 6. Walkers on 18 September.



Figure 7. *Romulea hirsuta*.



Figure 8. *Babiana nana*.



Figure 9. *Orphium frutescens*



Figure 10. *Lampranthus amoenus*



Figure 11. *Crassula flava*



Figure 12. *Moreaea gawleri*.

Buck the Move

Five Cape grysbok (*Raphicerus melanotis*) were translocated from Milnerton Racecourse on the 6 of August and two on 13 August 2019 (see Figures 13 and 14).

The grysbok were captured using a drive line and a net, with the support of a veterinarian. They were translocated to Blaauwberg Nature Reserve and the Table Bay Nature Reserve: Rietvlei Section.

A total of 31 grysbok were removed between November 2018 and August 2019. There appears to be about ten to fifteen individuals left in the Milnerton Racecourse.

A survey will be done to determine exactly how many animals are remaining.



Figure 13. A Cape grysbok on its way to Rietvlei.



Figure 14. The net handlers waiting for the grysbokkies to run into the net.

Some Fauna to see in the Nature Reserve:



Figure 15. Jackal Buzzard (*Buteo rufofuscus*).



Figure 16. Cape dwarf chameleon (*Bradypodion pumilum*).



Figure 17. Mole snake (*Pseudaspis cana*).