

Newsletter

February 2013

The Baviaanskloof Wilderness Area was incorporated into the Baviaanskloof Mega Reserve in 2000.

It stretches from Willowmore in the West to Uitenhage in the East. The planning domain spans over 400,000 hectares of Fynbos, Valley thicket, Nama-Karoo, sub-tropical forest and Savanna grasslands.

The Baviaanskloof Mega Reserve was awarded World Heritage Status in 2004 as part of the Cape Floristic Region.



Important developments/ issues

- Promotion/ protection of Baviaans
- Co-operation agreement with FROG
- Need for fundraising/ subscription fees
- Improved membership figures
- Increasing our influence
- Revitalising community programmes
- Alien Vegetation Hacks

Informative Evenings

We organize speakers to broaden our knowledge and appreciation of the Baviaanskloof. Speakers cover topics like:

- Botanical Features
- Hike routes
- Birding expeditions
- Rock art in the Baviaanskloof Mega Reserve.



Bee-keepers receiving their certificates

Benefits to members of Fobwa

Representation in matters affecting our reserves

Members of the executive present our interests at meetings of the Honorary Conservators (HC's), Eastern Cape Parks Board and Tourism Agency (ECPTA), Patensie Tourism Board and Baviaanskloof Liaison Forum.

Exciting activities/ training

We offer various training courses and excursions to members.

- Tree identification
- Alien vegetation control
- Bi-annual Riverside Hack



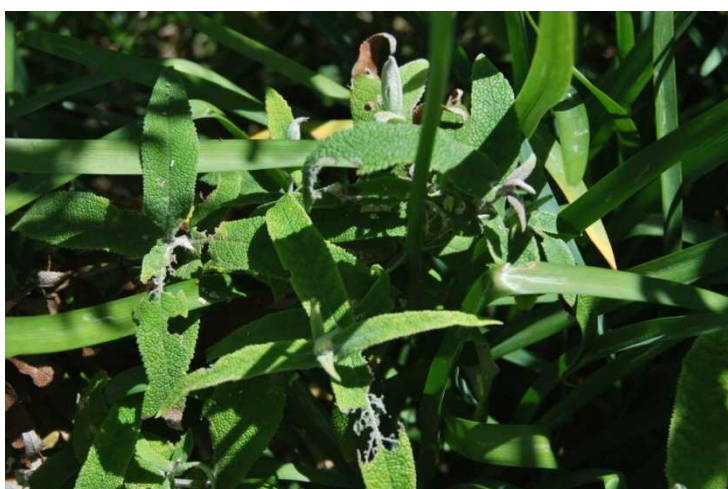
Featured plants of the Baviaanskloof: *Crotalaria capensis*

I am probably stretching it to say this is found in the Baviaanskloof but I have found the *Crotalaria capensis* (Cape rattle pod) fascinating so have included it here. The first plant I observed was in Theescombe and had been donated by the late Wesley Berrington. It took some time to identify it but eventually members of Friends of Van Stadens put me out of my misery.



I harvested seeds from the original plant and now have 5 specimens in my garden. The great thing about having a plant in your own garden is that it allows you to observe it in all phases and for that matter to find out what insects “attack” it. What I found was that initially the numerous seed pods produced many viable seeds. However after the plants were discovered by Blue butterfly larvae, of the family Lycaenidae (blues and coppers), the pods in subsequent seasons became heavily parasitized. The plant became seriously moth eaten by these larvae (caterpillars for us plebs) to the point that now few if any viable seeds are produced.

The heavy predation of the plant by insects suggests to a layman like myself that food sources for butterflies are limited and when a plant like the *Crotalaria* is discovered they welcome its presence to survive. It reminds me of the 3 *Buddleja salvifolia* (Sagewood) specimens in my garden, which are also popular with butterfly larvae. As can be seen in the photo below the leaves of the *Buddleja* are also heavily predated. All this means we must grow more indigenous plants in our gardens.



The ecology of *Crotalaria capensis* (Ref: SANBI)

The *Crotalaria* is a member of the legume family which has a symbiotic relationship with bacteria that live in their roots: these nitrifying bacteria are able to fix atmospheric nitrogen, making it available to the plant that is hosting them. When the plant dies, the nitrogen is released to the soil enriching it, and is then also available to other plants. This is what makes a lot of members of this

family good pioneers and are the first plants to inhabit a damaged or disturbed area, making it more habitable for other plants to also settle themselves. Other species of *Crotalaria* are used as cover crops and in re-vegetation projects for this reason, also to bind the sand and as windbreaks because they grow are fast growing. For more information on the plant follow this link - <http://www.plantzafrica.com/plantcd/crotalcapen.htm>

Mervyn Brouard



*“Many people have lived in this house,
but the mountains are still exactly the
same”*

Henriette Terblanche

Eastern Cape Redfin Minnow (Pseudobarbus Afer)



Fifteen indigenous fresh-water fish species are found in the Baviaanskloof's river system. One of the three species endemic to the Cape, the Eastern Cape Redfin Minnow, is in serious trouble due to the introduction of alien fish, excessive water abstraction and the construction of weirs and dams.

There are around 80 different Redfin subspecies in the Baviaanskloof streams, each of which had developed separately since being isolated from the rest – much like

Darwin's finches. The redfin grows to only about 110mm long and it eats algae and aquatic insects. Besides those distinctive scarlet fins, it is olive brown on top, creamy white underneath and it has a dark band down each flank.

Today, the species faces "very high risk of extinction in the wild". Specifically the problem is the North American small-mouth and large-mouth bass, two highly aggressive fish which prey on the redfin.

General Information

Renewing your membership/ Subs

The Friends Of Baviaanskloof needs to generate funds to be more effective and influential in matters pertaining to Baviaanskloof Mega Reserve.

Various programs will be initiated and driven by Fobwa in 2013

- Promotion of sensitive use of the Baviaans kloof
- Oversight and support of the ECPTA Strategic Management Plan
- Marking of wilderness hiking trails
- Raise awareness of the concept of true wilderness areas

Subscription fees for 2013

The annual subscription fee is R70 per person, R120 per family or R500 for life membership.

Affiliated groups will at this moment not be charged in this regard. We hope to attract 300 individual members and another 700 affiliates

Various fund applications are being drafted and will be presented to private companies and other funding organizations.

Fobwa Committee

The members of the new committee are:

Chairman – Mervyn Brouard

Vice – chairman – Vacant

Treasurer – Mervyn Brouard

Newsletter – Debbie Thomas

Fund Raising – Vacant

Secretary – Mike Wood

New Trustees of Fobwa

The board of trustees :

Japie Buckle, Denis Stigant, Mervyn Brouard, Mike Wood, Debbie Thomas, Martin le Roux and Scott Rollo (HC Representative)

FOBWA BANKING DETAILS

NEDBANK, THE BRIDGE

AC NO: 1214036589

CODE: 121-417

Account Name: Friends of the Baviaanskloof Trust

