



## **Parsons Nature Reserve Newsletter – May 2025 Edition**

### **Between Gold and Silence: Parsons in Transition**

Dear Fellow Custodians of the Wild,

As May unfurls its gentle shift from autumn to winter, Parsons Nature Reserve breathes in a softer, quieter rhythm. The grasses turn to honeyed gold, the bushwillow leaves fade and flutter, and the air, though never harsh, carries a cooler edge at dawn and dusk. The pulse of the bush slows, not in slumber but in a thoughtful, unhurried flow.

This is a season where the land hums a quieter song: the dry rustle of seedpods in the breeze, the slow movement of a journey of giraffes in the distance, the delicate dust hanging in golden light. Here, winter doesn't come with frost, but with a subtle hush—where the earth feels warm underfoot by day and cools just enough to invite a blanket at night.

I invite you to pause and lean into this gentle transition. Look closely at the fading colours, listen for the calls of birds gathering in the trees, feel the softened touch of winter approaching. Whether it's a walk through the bush, a quiet moment on the deck, or simply noticing the glow of a setting sun, let's take this chance to reconnect with the land and each other.

May this newsletter pull you closer to the raw, untamed magic that flourishes in the hidden corners of the reserve. As we step into the shifting season, let's open our hearts to the wild calls, the silent rhythms, and the deep, fierce beauty of this place we're privileged to witness.



**This phenomenal phot of an African Hawk Eagle was taken by Gwenola le Garrec-Cooper**

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## Wardens Report



**Autumn Sky  
(Brendan Marsay)**

### RAINFALL

3.1mm rain recorded for the month in four rainfall events. Total for the season – 461mm.

### SECURITY

- Routine snare sweeps around houses and lodges.
- Regular radio tests done on Monday and Friday mornings.
- Parsons is an active member of Mica Farm Watch and does regular patrols
- After-hours vehicle escort x1 of a lodge's guest.

### ORIENTATIONS

- Member/Staff x1 Isambane
- **Members are asked to contact Joe when they are next down to do a refresher orientation** so that they are aware of the new rules that were adopted at the 2024 AGM. Only a handful of members have done so to date.

### ROADS

- Dragged tyres/metal-frame  
Main Entrance Road x 3, Game Drive A, PlatKlip, portion of Parsons East and Balule River Road.
- Filled in some potholes on the Internal Access Road.

## GENERAL

### PNR FIELD STAFF

Lee Gutteridge from No58, kindly did an introductory tracking session with the Anti-poaching team early this month. While it was only a couple of hours long the wealth of knowledge imparted to the team, Dirk and I was incredible. Follow up sessions will be arranged with the aim of team members being accessed and possibly getting official certification.

Thank you, Lee and Kersey, for this privilege.

### FIRE SEASON

We are heading for the start of the fire season and members are reminded that all fires should be cleared by the warden first, except for cooking fires which must be in a safe designated area. Any spark generating equipment will require a permit beforehand.

The reserve has been clearing around Eskom poles as a preventative measure over the past month.

### KURHULA LODGE EXPANSION

As part of a basic assessment process for the expansion of the lodge, Interested and Affected Parties can register their interest by emailing Chauke Hlahla on [chauke@earthlinkenvironmental.co.za](mailto:chauke@earthlinkenvironmental.co.za) with their name and contact details.

Parsons Nature Reserve policies and processes will be applicable.

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**Fork-tailed Drongo  
(Gwenola le Garrec-Cooper)**



**Dice Moth in grass casing  
(Angela Riley)**



## Latest sightings

### This Month's Wildlife Wonders

The wild is alive with wonder, and once again, the untamed heart of Parsons Nature Reserve beats with awe-inspiring moments! Our mighty resident lion pride (**Panthera leo**) reigns supreme, their playful sub-adults boldly claiming the roads as their kingdom, a reminder that we share this land with nature's true monarchs. Meanwhile, the grand herds of elephants (**Loxodonta africana**) wander gracefully among us, as if paying a neighbourly visit to our homes and lodges, their majestic presence an enchanting nod to the harmony between wilderness and humanity.

A rare and exhilarating sighting at No. 58 - a magnificent nyala bull (**Tragelaphus angasii**), elusive and secretive, emerging from the shadows to grace the lucky onlookers with its presence! Along the winding banks of the Olifants River, the regal waterbuck (**Kobus ellipsiprymnus**) stood proud and dignified, their shaggy coats catching the sun's light. Meanwhile, young hippos (**Hippopotamus amphibius**) splashed and played with boundless energy, like oversized toddlers delighting in nature's water playground.

Under the cloak of night, the wildness of Parsons Nature Reserve revealed its secrets! A magnificent male leopard (**Panthera pardus**) moved with liquid grace through the shadows, while the dominant male lion (**Panthera leo**) basked in the sunlight, surveying his vast domain with regal pride. Nearby, nature's curiosities amazed us - a Dice Moth (**Acontia spp.**), snug in its curious grass casing, left us marvelling at the ingenious wonders of the wild.

Then, as if the wilderness itself conspired to astonish, the rarely witnessed mating dance of the Black Mamba (**Dendroaspis polylepis**) unfolded before our eyes - a breathtaking spectacle of sinuous elegance and primal power!



**Herd of buffalo**  
(Harm Schreurs)



**Waterbuck**  
(Vera from the river)

The earth trembled as a herd of over 60 inquisitive buffalo (**Syncerus caffer**) rumbled through the bush, their hooves kicking up dust and creating a thundering symphony of raw wilderness. Watchful and cunning, spotted hyenas (**Crocuta crocuta**) lingered near the lodges, their eyes glinting with



mischievous, while a graceful journey of giraffes (***Giraffa camelopardalis***) painted the evening sky with their long, elegant silhouettes against the glowing autumn sunsets.

Above, a pair of African Hawk Eagles (***Aquila spilogaster***) soared with piercing cries and unmatched power, while the ever-daring Fork-tailed Drongo (***Dicrurus adsimilis***) showed off its acrobatic hunting prowess, snapping up an unlucky grasshopper mid-flight. Down below, the delicate Garden Orb Web Spider (***Argiope australis***) spun intricate, glistening masterpieces that shimmered in the morning light.

From the kingly lion to the tiniest moth, every creature whispers the story of this wild, untamed land - a place where nature's wonders unfold with each breath, each sunrise, each heartbeat.

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## Guardians of the Skies: The Plight of Vultures in the Greater Kruger



High above the savannas of the Greater Kruger, majestic vultures soar on thermals, scanning the land for signs of death. These misunderstood creatures are **essential to the health of our ecosystems**, acting as nature's cleanup crew by swiftly removing carrion, preventing disease outbreaks, and recycling nutrients back into the land.

But today, these incredible birds face a silent crisis. **Habitat loss, poisoning, electrocution on power lines, and the illegal wildlife trade** have pushed several vulture species to the brink of extinction. Species such as the **White-backed Vulture**, the **Hooded Vulture**, the **Lappet-faced**



**Vulture**, and the **endangered White-headed Vulture** all call the Greater Kruger home, each with its unique story.

Did you know?

- A single vulture can **consume up to 1 kg of carrion in one meal**, drastically reducing the spread of deadly diseases like anthrax and rabies.
- Vultures have incredibly **acidic stomachs**, allowing them to safely digest decaying meat that would be lethal to other animals.
- Despite their vital role, populations have **declined by up to 90%** in some regions due to human activity.

Our skies are growing quieter. Without these winged custodians, the natural balance of life and death in the bushveld teeters dangerously.

**You can help.** By supporting conservation efforts, you can ensure a future where vultures continue their ancient, vital role in our ecosystems. To make a difference, consider donating to initiatives dedicated to protecting these vulnerable species and their habitats.

❖ **Donate here and be a lifeline for the voiceless:** [Donate - Endangered Wildlife Trust](#)

Let's stand together to safeguard the soaring guardians of the Greater Kruger.

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**Proverb:** *"Wisdom is like a baobab tree; no one individual can embrace it."*

– African proverb

**Meaning:** This highlights the vastness of collective knowledge and experience, and the need for community in understanding the world.

With heartfelt thanks and warmest wishes,

Parsons Nature Reserve