



Editor – Iona Everett

Newsletter

Winter 2013

Chairman's Chat

by Cathy Shimmin

Thank goodness Noetzie is a place where apart from seasonal changes and those brought about by natural occurrences, not much changes. It is one of the reasons that we all love to go there, to be there.

It is with this in mind that the committee has spent time developing the **Duty of Care** documents which are nearing completion and will document the current environmental *status quo* and define permitted methods of maintaining spaces around the developed areas of Noetzie without damage to the environment and without attracting the legal requirements of extensive applications. The idea was originally suggested to us by SANParks and the Knysna Municipal representative for conservation, as a collaborative effort.

The document covers, for example, minor maintenance or emergency work required after flooding or high seas. The draft document was created by Chris Everett, and our thanks go to him for a well illustrated and practical document. In the last newsletter we requested that the community supply issues for inclusion. Sadly none was received, but the document has been reviewed by your committee and is under review for final signing by SANParks and the Municipality. Thereafter it will be distributed for general use. Please note this will be for maintenance purposes only, and all new builds, changes and renovations will still need to go through the current legal channels.

Along similar lines, the slimmed down version of the old Environmental Management Planning **EMP** document, now known as the Draft **Noetzie Conservancy Owners' Guidelines for Environmental Management** is taking shape. This consists of useful guidelines for home owners. This also will be distributed shortly and we are again looking for comment. We are hoping that all of you will comment and contribute as we very much want all at Noetzie to be interested and involved in the issues affecting us all.

The level of participation in the rates issue by Noetzie residents was really heartening. We hope that Knysna will consider our appeals and reassess the rates within the community.

We are looking for options to provide safe pedestrian access to the beach. This has been a problem since the high seas destroyed the end to the Old Waggon road. We feel that whilst the Municipal steps can be used, easy safe access from the Old Waggon road should be maintained or improved.

We have always sent our reminders electronically for payment of NCOA membership fees, however we would like members to indicate whether they wish to receive a hard copy invoice, either posted, in which case please inform us of the address that you wish it posted to, or as an emailed .pdf. In addition we have always only required one payment per property, with 2 being the maximum for ownership fees, as a prerequisite for voting rights. We do encourage multiple payments of ordinary membership of interested parties either associated with a particular property or just as an interested and concerned Noetzie person. Should you wish to become an ordinary member we would love to hear from you. We do need confirmation from each property as to who is the owner member as opposed to ordinary member.

There is a slightly more urgent aspect to the payment of fees, and this is the issue of the Southern Cape Fire Protection Association cover. We are, as a community, protected by the NCOA membership. However this requires paid up membership of the NCOA. In this regard we need to update our records and would like everyone to ensure that we have the latest physical addresses / contact details for the Southern Cape Fire Protection Association.

We urge all members to ensure that their membership is paid. Fees are payable in advance for the year which runs from November to October of the following year.

Finally, we would like the Noetzie community to report any issues that they feel are important to address during 2013.

Peeps into the Past

Chris Everett tells me that he has various items of interest that did not make it into the Noetzie History and he has offered to provide an occasional Peep into the Past. Here's the first one – Ed.

Strange Rocks

by Chris Everett

We are all familiar with the golden-yellow sandstone that makes up our rocky shore, and of course our fine beach sand. This is Table Mountain Sandstone and the formation accumulated in a marine delta environment exposed to wave action on the margins of pre-Pangaeian South Africa about 450 Million years ago (Ma). The massive beds of sand have hardened to become an extremely weather-resistant sedimentary rock that is some two thousand metres thick in places. In the area of Noetzie, considerable folding has taken place, resulting in the strata being tipped up at an angle of about 70 degrees.

However if you walk to the Eastern end of the beach at low tide after the storms have scoured the sand away from the beach, you may see these interesting formations. They are dark reddish-brown and clearly have normal water rounded and tumbled sandstone clasts embedded in them, which for a start proves that they must be much younger than the surrounding sandstone.



This consists of particles of sand, gravel and sandstone pebbles or cobbles, cemented together by a dark substance into a rock, called Ferricrete. This is a hard, erosion-resistant material, usually at or near the land surface, formed from sediments from older materials, often transported from elsewhere, for example by erosion in the rivers that carved the valleys of our Noetzie River, cemented together by iron oxide. The iron oxide cements are derived from the oxidation of percolating solutions of iron salts. The iron forms "rust" that fuses surrounding particles together. The word ferricrete is derived from the combination of ferruginous and concrete. It is generally agreed that ferricrete formation requires rainfall above a certain minimum and seems to indicate climates that were wetter than those of to-day.

In geological terms, this deposit is very young – dating from the Pleistocene – less than 2.6 Ma and very probably even younger. Its geological youth - about 1/500th of the age of the surrounding rock - explains why it is unconsolidated - it simply hasn't had time and the right conditions of heat and pressure for its particles to fuse into rock - the sand to form sandstone and the pebbly gravel to form conglomerate. So the material in the pictures is an exception to the usual rock-forming process. It's a locally produced, very young rock. The usual rock-forming process, called lithification, consists of being buried deep underground with tremendous weight squeezing from above over long periods of geological time, or else melting in the proximity of molten magma or lava, and cooling into hard

rock. Our rock could form so quickly because it has lithified by a different process. It became a rock through chemistry. Basically, the sand and gravel particles "rusted together", just like a can of nails left standing in water in a shed for a few years.



Ferricrete is used widely in South Africa to create roads in rural areas. It is better known in these regions by its Afrikaans name "Koffieklip" (coffee stone). Other synonyms are ferruginous duricrust, hardpan, ironpan, ouklip gravel or ngubane.



Noetzie River Monitoring Program

by Marina Devine

As an extension to the Outdoor Classroom Project, Marina Devine and Wendy Dewberry have begun a River Monitoring Program. The program was the bright idea of Marina who, after a meeting about the health of the river water with Dr Ian Russell of SANParks in Rondevlei, suggested that we embark on our own regular monitoring process

It was pointed out by Dr Russell that it would be far more valuable and indicative to plot regular data and watch for trends and spikes in the results. We were spending a lot of time and money on *e.coli* measuring and Dr Russell pointed out that simple tests like pH, salinity and turbidity would yield an even clearer picture of river health than *e.coli*, at relatively little cost. NCOA has access to a fabulous new suitcase full of digital instruments. On the 3rd June 2013, the first monthly test was carried out with much contemplation, consideration and not a little goading by Marina to go the extra mile. The monthly program includes aspects like rainfall, water temperature, salinity, pH, turbidity and dissolved oxygen. Also, bird and mammal counts are included along with photos of reeds, flora

spirogyra and prawn holes. A beach recce of the river flow, bird count and spoor is also recorded.



Should you see something that would be valuable to record or monitor please let Marina know.

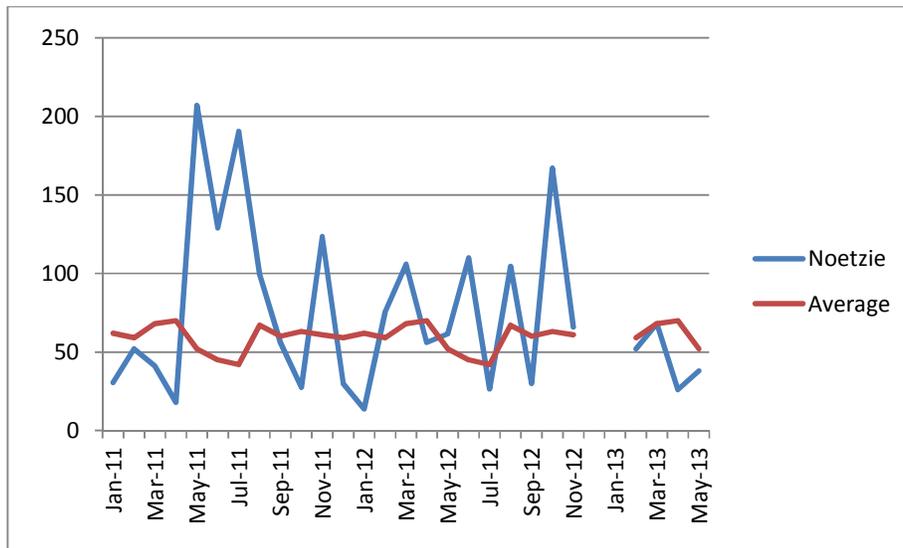
Southern Cape Fire Protection Association (SCFPA)

by Wendy Dewberry

FPA's are growing institutions all across the country, mostly because of the changed laws regarding fires, but also because of the escalating fire risk due to urban sprawl and changing weather patterns. The NCOA is a member of the SCFPA, but it may be prudent to consider private membership for the added benefits it affords. Currently there is a once-off joining fee of R200 and the annual subscription of R220.

What do you get? Legal protection - If a fire can be traced back to your property under any circumstances, you could be legally liable for all the damage it causes which could run into financially crippling amounts. Belonging to an FPA can protect you and reduce risk in many ways, including your compliance with legislation, being a first fast respondent to fires, offering vast resources like helicopters and trained fire fighting teams for low cost (this can cost millions in itself) and being part of emergency co-ordination and a risk management program. For more information please visit the website : www.scfpa.co.za or contact the local Regional Manager Mr Dirk Smit managerfpa@gmail.com.

Rainfall graph



Thank you Wendy for these. There are no figures for December and January as Wendy didn't have the rain gauge up because of building works - Ed.

Knysna Municipality

by Julie Gosling

Noetzie Ward 3 committee member, Neil Metelerkamp, and the NCOA municipal and environment representatives met with the Knysna Municipal officials in February and May this year to discuss new and outstanding issues related to Noetzie. These included pedestrian and vehicular access, rates rebates, repair of steps to and maintenance of public lavatories, the upkeep of the Noetzie road and the Land Use Departure Application for the use of Montrose castle as a Function Venue and Beach Access point for Conrad Pezula Hotel Guests.

Pedestrian Access

At present the only registered pedestrian access to Noetzie beach is down the municipal Old Wagon Road. The municipality has yet to secure and register the access from the public carpark across



private land to the municipal steps. According to 18.(1) of the Integrated Coastal Management Act of 2009, each municipality whose area includes coastal public property must, within four years of the commencement of the Act, make a by-law that

designates strips of land as coastal access land in order to secure public access to that coastal property. The four year period ends in December 2013.

Vehicular Access to Beach Properties

Since early 2012 when heavy rains and high seas eroded the bottom of the Old Wagon Road, there has been no vehicular, and very difficult pedestrian, access to the beach properties. Last year the NCOA environment representative, Wendy Dewberry, met on site with SANParks and KM to discuss installing a new pedestrian boardwalk and vehicular access. It was decided that a new access would be too costly and would trigger listed activities. In mid May a temporary emergency exit road was made by flattening some soil to make a diagonal ramp to the west of the concrete slab, so that the owner of erf 28 could drive his stranded vehicle off the beach for the first time in 12 months. Knysna Municipality is discussing the way forward in repairing the access, at least for emergency vehicles.



Rates Rebates

On the 6th May the NCOA committee sent the following letter to the Knysna Municipality in support of the application for a Rural Rebate by a number of Noetzie residents.

"The Noetzie Conservancy Owners' Association (NCOA) committee supports the applications submitted to you by its members, regarding the 50% rebate which, in accordance with paragraph 8.7 of the Knysna Municipal Property Rates Policy of 20th April 2004, is afforded to Rural Properties which fall outside of the Urban Edge as defined in the Knysna SDF. This includes all properties within the Noetzie Township.

The NCOA has been advised that, in terms of section 2(3)(c) of the Local Government Property Rates Act 6 of 2004, the Municipality is bound to comply with its duly adopted Rates Policy. We therefore request that, in accordance with paragraph 17 of the Rates Policy, you correct and credit the rates levied on all Noetzie properties with the applicable 50% rebate".

On the 13th May a response was received from Grant Easton, Director: Finance, to say that the matter was with the Municipal Legal Department and that we would have a response in two weeks. That time has lapsed - but, with the law on our side, we are hoping for a positive response.

Public Lavatories

The repair of the wooden access steps is on the Municipal "to do" list. Wendy Dewberry had the septic tank treated with a product - "EM" (Effective Micro organisms) obtained from Biowise, which put a stop to the foul smell.

Noetzie Road DR 1771

The Noetzie road has been in a very poor state for many months. Eden District Municipality is responsible for the maintenance of the stretch of road from the N2 to Pezula's Northern boundary, while the rest of the road down to the carpark is the responsibility of the Knysna Municipality. Because the two sections are graded separately and at different times, Neil Metelerkamp suggested to Knysna that, to save costs, they liaise with Eden District Municipality to have the entire stretch graded at one time and that the cost of the grader be shared. The road has since been graded and is in a relatively good condition.

Proposed Upgrade for Hlalani Settlement

The committee has welcomed and supported an application for the upgrading and formalisation of the settlement, Hlalani, at the N2 Noetzie road junction. The supply of water, proper sanitation and waste removal will not only create healthier living conditions for the community but it will also improve the water quality, biodiversity and environmental health of the catchment area which drains via the Bigaai River into the Knysna Estuary and also into the Noetzie River.

There is also an application in terms of the 'Roads and Ribbon' Development Act (21 of 1940) to allow vehicular access to Hlalani off the Noetzie Road. Robbie Robertson very kindly compiled a comprehensive comment dealing with the transport/ traffic aspects of this application on behalf of the NCOA

Land Use Departure Application - Montrose Castle and Pezula Castle

Good news - the Knysna Municipality took all public comments and objections into account when the following was adopted in a Council Meeting on the 30th May. The complete document will be available on the Noetzie Conservancy website www.noetzie.co.za.



A. That approval be granted in terms of Section 15(1)(b) of the LUPD, 1985 (Ordinance 15 of 1985) for a temporary use departure to utilize Portion 35 / 394 (Montrose Castle) as a temporary base point for guests of the Conrad Pezula Hotel to gain access to Noetzie Beach subject to certain conditions which include inter alia that;

- the approval is valid for 5 years
- no vehicles transporting tourists / visitors to the two Castles shall be allowed to use the Old Wagon Road
- no meals may be prepared or served on the premises with the exception of pre-packaged picnic baskets
- the serving of alcohol in picnic baskets is prohibited
- the beach must be safeguarded from pollutants and contaminants leaching from the sewage systems, and the sewage disposal system must meet the standards required by the Department of Health and in conjunction with the Director: Technical Services.
- The upgrade of the sewer system shall be conducted in conjunction with the Director: Technical Services
- the Hotel shall take responsibility for cleaning after their visitors and all waste will be returned to Pezula Estate for recycling
- the approval will lapse if the applicant does not comply with any of the conditions as imposed by Council
- the castle on portion 34 (that's the old Pezula Castle above Montrose) shall not be used for the purpose of the application until the necessary restoration to make the building safe for human use has been undertaken.

B. That the application to utilise the castles on Portion 34 and 35 as function venues be refused on the basis that no vehicular access to these properties is allowed by the Department of Traffic Services and that limited access along the Old Wagon Road is relatively narrow and will create unsafe conditions for the visitors.

White Backed Night Heron

by Wendy Dewberry

Behaviour The movements of this species are very little known, although it appears to be sedentary, possibly making partial seasonal migrations related to the onset of the rains. It breeds in solitary pairs, the breeding season varying geographically, but usually coinciding with the rains or the early dry season when floods are at their highest. The species feeds singly or in pairs and is strictly nocturnal, requiring secure day-roosting spots such as high trees or very dense marsh and forest vegetation.

Habitat The species inhabits densely vegetated forest, frequenting tree-fringed streams, mangroves, islands in large rivers and lakes, the wooded margins of marshes and occasionally reed-beds.



Diet Its diet is little known, but may consist of small fish, amphibians, molluscs, crustaceans, flying ants, flies and other insects.

Breeding site The nest is a stick platform, usually well hidden and built low over water in trees or bushes, occasionally away from water in trees, bushes, reed-beds, mangroves, or on rocks, rock piles on islands or in caves on rocky shores, but very rarely in exposed positions.

Threats The species is threatened in southern Africa by habitat loss and degradation. Overgrazing, increased water off-take, soil erosion and poor river management are leading to siltation, reduced river flows, and increased water turbidity, and riparian vegetation is being cleared for agriculture.

Utilisation This species is hunted and traded at traditional medicine markets in Nigeria.

References

- del Hoyo *et al.* 1992,
- Kushlan and Hancock 2005
- Brown *et al.* 1982
- Hockey *et al.* 2005
- Barnes 2000
- Nikolaus 2001

Note – This species has recently been spotted at Noetzie – Ed

Documents for your perusal and comment

As mentioned in the Chairman's Chat, the committee has been hard at work on two very important documents. The first is the Duty of Care document (DoC) which has the approval of your committee, SANparks and the Knysna Municipality. The second is the Noetzie Conservancy Owners' Guidelines for Environmental Management (NCOGEM) which is a short (20 page) document giving people guideline of what the correct legal environmental procedures are. It gives summaries of things like fishing regulations, gas regulations, septic tanks, fire, useful phone numbers, etc and what the legal requirements are in each case. Both documents should help the property owners at Noetzie to know what they can and cannot do and where to go for appropriate advice. We would like people to comment on the documents which are available in draft form on the Noetzie website. www.noetzie.co.za. Comments by e-mail to me at iona.everett@iafrica.com to reach me before **31 July 2013**. The committee will then finalise the documents.

Treasurer's Report

by Lauren Shimmin

Collections of subs for the year have been fair thus far, with R21,600 having been received, compared to a total of R26,400 last year. This however only equates to 21 out of 51 erven having contributed, which is a disappointingly low proportion. If you have not yet contributed, please do so as soon as possible. The bank account details are included below, and the subs for the 2012/2013 financial year (ending in October) are R500 per member.

Noetzie Conservancy

Standard Bank Branch code: 004205

Account Number: 001898493

The funds are used for various activities that the NCOA committee performs on behalf of all Noetzie residents. The main activity for the current year is the testing and monitoring of the water, although there are a multitude of tasks that the committee undertake, some which have small costs attached to them. See Wendy's section on Fire Protection, and the cover you get as a paid up member of the NCOA, as an example. We therefore ask that all those of you who get to enjoy the magic of Noetzie play your part and make your contribution so that the activities that are performed to maintain this beautiful place are able to be afforded through your subs being up to date.

Many thanks to those of you who have already paid - and to the rest, please make your contributions today!

Social News

Please let me know if you have anything to add to this page - Ed

Congratulations to both the Wynne-Jones and Robertson families, who have had weddings and births in the family!

Helena D'arcy Hunter, sister to Hadley and daughter to Briony and Gary, granddaughter to Fern and Robbie Robertson was welcomed with great joy on 12 June 2013. She is the great-niece of Julie, Melanie, Sabrina, Sharon and Charles Gosling.

Josephine Lily (right) was born on 5th April to Mark and Fiona Gill.

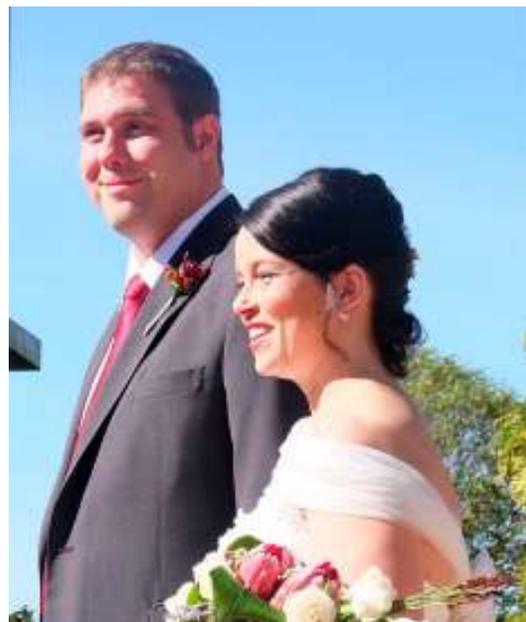
Fiona is the daughter of Liz and Aubrey Wynne-Jones



Left - Catherine Wynne-Jones and Gareth Duggan were married at Noetzie on 2nd March 2013.



Below - Rowan Robertson, son of Fern and Robbie Robertson, married Cara Bothma in Philadelphia, Western Cape on 11 May 2013.



THE HONEY BADGER (RATEL)

By Iona Everett



A number of people have asked why we call the path up the Glen “The Badger Trail”. The answer is simple – on one of our first family excursions up the trail there – (about 25 years ago) – we all saw a badger. I last saw one there in 2012. He was at the foot of the path, actually on the beach. My first reaction was that I must go and fetch that plastic bag – but on closer inspection it was the flash of pale grey on his back that I could see! Consequently this edition of the newsletter has some information about the badger.

The Honey badger is listed as **Near Threatened** in the most recent South African Red Data List (2002). In the Cape Province, badgers are a schedule 2 protected wild animal in terms of the Nature & Environmental Conservation Ordinance, 1974 and a permit is required to kill or move honey badgers. However they are essentially unprotected outside game reserves and National Parks. In South Africa, the honey badger is now thought to be absent from large portions of the North West, Gauteng, Mpumalanga, southern Kwa-zulu Natal and areas of the Northern and Eastern Cape Provinces



Kingdom:	Animalia (animals)	Phylum:	Chordata (animals with a notochord)
Sub- phylum:	Vertebrata (mammals, fish, reptiles, birds)	Class:	Mammalia
Order:	Carnivora	Family:	Mustelidae (otters, martins, weasels, polecats)
Subfamily:	Mellivorinae (honey badgers)	Genus:	Mellivora
Species:	capensis		

The honey badger has an extensive historical range which extends through most of sub-Saharan Africa from the Cape of Good Hope, to southern Morocco and south-western Algeria, and outside of Africa through Arabia, Iran and western Asia to Turkmenistan and the Indian peninsula. It lives in a wide variety of habitats from the dense rain forests of Zaire to the arid deserts on the outskirts of the Sahara and pro-Namib, from sea level to the afro-alpine steppes in the Bale Mountains of Ethiopia.



Honey Badgers are about 250 mm high at the shoulders and weigh 12 kg. Their coats have a broad and coarse saddle of grey hair running from above the eyes to the base of their tail, which contrasts starkly with their black under-parts. They have a low slung body, with tiny ears and stout legs, and



have massive claws. The latter is an adaptation for digging and spending time underground, but they are also formidable weapons. It is primarily terrestrial but can climb, especially when attracted by honey. It travels by a jog-trot, but is tireless and trails its prey until the prey is run to the ground.

Honey badgers are generalist carnivores with an extremely wide diet. More than sixty species of prey were recorded from the southern Kalahari alone. Badgers eat a host of smaller food items like insect larvae, beetles, scorpions, lizards, rodents and birds.

They will catch the larger reptiles like leguans, crocodiles (up to 1 meter) and pythons (up to 3 meters) and include the highly venomous adders, cobras and black mambas in their diet. Larger mammals like the springhare, polecat and particularly juvenile foxes, jackals, antelope and wild cats, are also caught.

They locate their prey predominantly by their acute sense of smell and catch most of their prey through digging. As many as fifty holes may be dug in a single foraging period and badgers may cover distances that exceed 40 kilometers in a 24 hour period. Honey badgers are accomplished climbers and can easily climb up into the uppermost branches of trees to raid bird nests or bee hives. In the Kalahari they have been seen raiding various raptor nests, including the Pale Chanting Goshawk, which is frequently seen in association with badgers.

As their name suggests, badgers have always been associated with honey, yet it is the highly nutritious bee brood they eat. While bee brood does not form a necessary part of their diet they will go to great lengths to raid honeybee hives in search of bee brood when it is available. Badgers will also dig out the larvae belonging to solitary bee species.

Honey badgers generally hunt alone. They find food by walking slowly, continuously smelling mouse and small reptile holes and scent trails. In the southern Kalahari, honey badgers switch from being predominantly nocturnal in summer and diurnal in winter. However, in areas where honey badgers are affected by human activities they are usually nocturnal. They have a two-peaked activity pattern with two active periods of 2-8 hours each during a 24 hr period and prolonged resting in burrows or under bushes.



Honey badgers are solitary carnivores with males and females only meeting up to mate, before going their separate ways again. Males will sometimes travel in pairs but females will be solitary unless accompanied by young. Honey badgers do not form pairs and males play no role in rearing young. They do not have a fixed den (unless they have a very young cub), but constantly move through their home ranges, often sleeping in a different hole each night, or day. In areas where badgers are not disturbed by man, they will forage during the day, particularly during cool conditions.

Males are known to have a home range of up to 500 square kilometers while females have a smaller range of 100 to 150 square kilometers. These ranges will often overlap with other badgers. Males use latrines, which are usually placed at a prominent landmark in their area, as communication places. From visiting these latrines they are able to determine which other males are in the area as well as find receptive females who only use latrines when in oestrus. Males do not defend their large home ranges and are therefore not territorial, but they will guard a particular female for the short time she is in oestrus by sequestering her in a burrow and physically preventing her from leaving for up to three days while mating takes place. Paternity analysis has revealed that more than 50% of the cubs in an area are fathered by the dominant male.

In southern Africa, honey badgers do not have a breeding season and cubs are born throughout the year. Badgers seldom have more than two cubs at a time and in the Kalahari, badgers raised only one cub after a gestation of six to eight weeks. The cubs are born naked and blind in a hole prepared by the female and she will typically move the cub to a new den every two to five days, by carrying the cub in her mouth. The cub develops slowly with its eyes only opening after two months, and will emerge from the den and accompany its mother on short foraging bouts at three months of age, by which time it has the adult's black and white colouration. The cub's mantle is usually far whiter than its mother. Cubs stay with their mothers for a minimum of 14 months.

