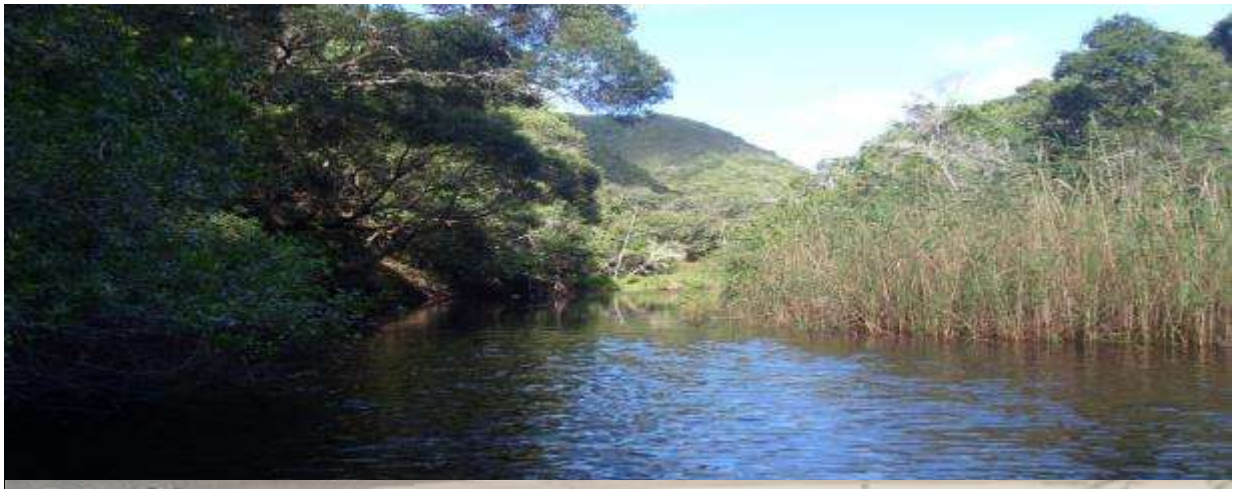


NOETZIE CONSERVANCY OWNERS' ASSOCIATION

Editor – Iona Everett

This is my last newsletter as editor. I believe it is the 50th newsletter I have edited. I am amazed and pleased that the two-page A4 newsletter that I started in 1996, and used to post out to all registered and interested members, has grown and developed into this. My thanks go to other previous editors, namely Marylou Botha and Wendy Dewberry and Good Luck to whoever is elected to take over from me.

Apologies for the lack of pictures but my computer is somewhere on the high seas and I don't have many with me.

NEWSLETTER NOVEMBER 2017

Chairman's Chat

by E J (Robby) Robertson
NCOA Chairman

We are fast approaching the end of 2017, and it has not been a year we will easily forget. The effects of the devastating fires will still be felt for some time, but it is heart-warming to note the revegetation occurring, and indications that fire damaged houses are, or are to be, repaired / rebuilt. A sadness is the news the Chris & Iona Everett will not be rebuilding, but have rather elected to relocate overseas to be closer to their family. Clearly their interest in Noetzie is still very much to the fore, as evidenced by the production of this Newsletter which Iona has compiled despite being out of the RSA. With their parting, we have also lost a valued Committee member.

The NCOA Committee has agreed that the Annual General Meeting will be held on Thursday 28 December. On the agenda is the NCOA Constitution which was reviewed, and the AGM will be asked to endorse some amendments. These will be circulated with the notice on the meeting, and I urge

all to consider the proposed changes. Besides this there are matters relating to access that need to be brought into general discussion, which in turn should guide the direction the in-coming Committee should follow. We look forward to seeing you all, and having your say on the 28th.

TELKOM: (DIS)ENGAGED

by Richard Moultrie

One of the *sequelae* of the devastating June 2017 fires was the damage caused to the Telkom lines in the Pezula area, the consequent loss of all of Noetzie's phone lines and the ensuing bureaucratic nightmare that many faced in seeking to have the means of our external communications restored.

While, for most, our Telkom lines were simply a means of talking by phone to the outside world, others depended on them as part of their security systems. For some, like me, the ability to have data communications for work via ADSL was the difference between being able to come to Noetzie regularly or not. Apart from the occasional interruption caused by acrobatic baboons, the copper cables and ADSL were an effective, relatively low-cost solution for these uses. In many instances, Noetzie households had long-standing relationships with Telkom which meant that their services were "out of contract" and running on a "month to month" basis at the time of the fires.

Once most of the smoke had cleared, Telkom announced that it would not be replacing the damaged copper cables in a number of areas in and around Knysna, including Noetzie. Those who did not have ongoing contracts were summarily advised that their services had been terminated. Those with contracts started receiving weekly SMSs advising that Telkom was offering an "alternative" service. Upon enquiry, this turned out to be a cellular 3G contract and "a free cellphone". Outside the Telkom shop in Long Street, Knysna, a line soon formed of Noetzie residents trying to explain why this would be of little use to them. The lawyer in me clung to the notion that (as one of those who still had a 24-month contract in place) Telkom was legally bound to restore the service that I had contracted for. Instead, they just credited my account. Within days, there was a black market trading in the private numbers of the local Telkom area and regional managers. WhatsApp groups were formed. The NCOA placed the issue on its agenda for discussion and various alternatives, from two-way radios to new cellular towers in Sinclair Nature Reserve, were raised and (rightly) rejected. Letters were written. One enterprising homeowner managed to get hold of a senior Telkom executive in Pretoria and extract a series of promises to come to our rescue and return the beloved copper to its former glory.

Unfortunately, this was all to no avail, as Telkom was resolute that it would only be repairing the fibre optic network that had been installed (but not yet "lit", if you'll excuse the somewhat off-colour pun) only days before the fires started. It immediately became clear that this would result in higher costs than those associated with the copper system. Faced with this sobering reality, the discussions turned to practicalities (would a fibre system require electricity? what new equipment would be needed? were there alternatives to Telkom?) and cost.

The bottom line is this: a fibre connection with voice connectivity requires a small amount of electricity to operate four hardware elements: (i) the cable itself needs to be attached to the boxes located near the houses and "pulled in" to the house; (ii) a modem needs to be installed; (iii) a light-to-analogue converter needs to be installed for the phone; and (iv) a router is required to distribute the signal for data connections in the house. Apart from the once-off costs of these elements and their installation (Telkom waives all such costs for those who have extant contracts with it, and also only charge the installation cost if you are prepared to go for a 2-year contract and not merely a month-to-month arrangement), there is the cost to rent the line (from Telkom) and a further "service provider" cost to connect to the internet. One can choose a different service provider, which will pay Telkom the rental cost and include it in your subscription.

The various service providers offer a dizzying array of products that differ on the basis of the following variables:

Speed: from 4 Mbps to 100 Mbps (sometimes with slower upload than download speeds, which should be fine for you unless one requires access to "cloud" based data storage.

Monthly data bundle volumes: "capped" at various levels or "uncapped".

Contract duration: month-to-month, 12 month or 24-month.

Initial installation costs: some providers don't charge an initial cost if you go for a 24-month contract.

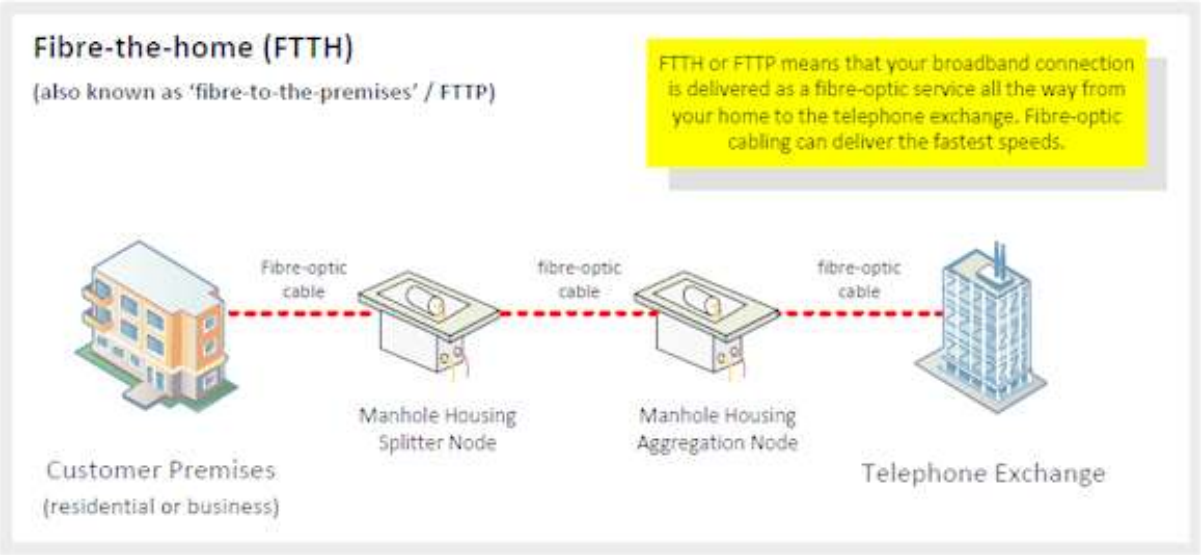
Voice (telephone) functionality: most ISPs offer this option, and most also allow you to keep ("port" – as in the French for "carry") your existing Noetzie (044-384-xxxx) number, but there is also variation as to:

- Once-off cost for the handset (usually a mobile unit)
- Monthly voice "line rental" cost
- Per-minute call costs (sometimes included in your data cost if you choose an uncapped option)
- Monthly free call "bundles"

It is not possible to say which package would be best for all Noetzie residents. People have differing views on the quality of the various internet service providers, both in terms of performance and service, and it is quite clear that the service providers have avoided offering directly comparable services that are amenable to a straight price-based comparison. I chose to go for the most basic all-Telkom option, a 4 Mbps, uncapped line on a 24-month contract for R599 per month. I paid no equipment or installation costs because I am existing in-contract customer and have a modest solar installation which is apparently more than sufficient.

The fibre network was eventually "lit" in late October and, by early November, at least two houses on the river were already equipped with fibre connections, and those on the beach were quickly moving in the same direction.

Apart from the additional costs, a further unfortunate aspect is that Telkom did not concede to the many requests that were made to ensure that the repaired lines would run underground and, as far as possible avoid impeding our uninterrupted natural views. The worst affected in this regard is the Giliomee / Otto house on the river. It is hoped that sense will prevail and that Telkom will re-route at least this portion of the cable underground.



Editor's PS: The reason the fibre lines have not been put underground is because SANParks have refused their approval for this. The lines need boxes which need a hole about 1½m deep. This would disturb tree roots and cause some forest damage. A solution to reroute behind the houses might be possible.

Editor's PPS: After our house was burned down in the fires, we cancelled our long standing phone line. We received an email saying that this was understood and we could apply at a later date for a fibre line should we require one. BUT we still received accounts. On visiting Knysna we went into the Telkom office – again we were assured we owed them nothing and our line had been cancelled. BUT we are still getting accounts and demands for payment. It is not always smooth sailing.

Noetzie Conservancy Report

by Laetitia Nienaber-Oosthuizen

OSCAE Permit

Noetzie is not for sissies. Many regulations direct our development decisions and how we enjoy our properties in this piece of heaven.

The OSCAE Regulations are aimed at controlling small-scale activities undertaken on an individual plot to ensure sustainable development of the coast.

This does not mean each owner of property in Noetzie has to apply for a permit. The NCOA makes this process easier by applying on behalf of owners through the Duty of Care Document. This document lists all the regular activities that happen on Noetzie land, especially maintenance activities, like clearing reeds, keeping forest paths, clearing washed soil and gravel, gardening on existing footprint, etc.

Noetzie is specifically listed in the governmental notice of 1998. The rights, granted after application, for a limited period, are personal rights, i.e. not attached to a property but granted to a natural or juristic person.

On face value, reading the listed activities, one needs wings to not trigger these activities. The OSCAE regulations apply “in respect of any activity”.

- Disturbance of vegetation (trampling, cutting or removal of vegetation);
- Earthworks (excavation, moving, removal, deposit, compacting of soil, sand, rock, or rubble);
- Dredging (dredging, excavation, removal or moving of soil, sand or rock from a river, tidal lagoon, tidal river, floodplain, or wetland); and
- Dune rehabilitation (planting on, or covering of dunes or exposed sand surfaces with any vegetative, natural, or synthetic material, or the erection of structures and walls thereon with the purpose of preventing the sand from being eroded, accreted, or moved by wind or water).

For those planning to landscape a new garden or do gardening renovations, or building a rock garden, a garden deck, a boardwalk, gazebo, garden shed, etc., the activities will trigger an OSCAE permit application.

On the riverside, cutting reeds, a ‘disturbance of vegetation’ activity, is a debatable issue. To cut reeds below the high-water mark, SANParks could be an interested and affected party, and cutting above the high-water mark may require permission from the Knysna Municipality. However, all the present canoe access ways have been in place before 1998 when the OSCAE Regulations were promulgated. This was tested in 2013 and the consensus is that the present canoe access ways are legitimate and tolerated to about 6 meters wide.

At Noetzie, the OSCAE permit applications must go to the Knysna Municipality. That is now over and above plans required by the Knysna Municipality for building structures, and permits from Forestry/DAFF for disturbing, pruning, and cutting of trees and vegetation in a natural forest.

Where property belongs to the Knysna Municipality, the municipality in turn needs to apply for an OSCAE permit to a higher authority.

River Health

“It looks like our river is in healthy shape”, and more words borrowed from Richard Moultrie, the NCOA vice-chairman, the “typical first world standard” for “surface water in watershed for unfiltered drinking” is 50, for “shellfish growing waters” is 70 and for “full contact / swimming is 200”.

A Certificate of Analysis, in September 2017, reads for Chemical (Macro) deteminants: Nitrate as N <0.01 mg/ℓ and Ortho-phosphate as P, 0,3 mg/l. For Microbial issues the results for E.coli on surface came in at the lowest being 10 /100ml and at the highest being 74/100ml.

The first picture that comes to mind, reading these results, is a bed of reeds that is supposed to filter most unidentified objects. But it did not make it easier to understand the results. Richard’s reference to a rather funny piece: http://oasisdesign.net/water/quality/coliform.htm helped tremendously. Have fun.

Peeps into the Past

by Chris Everett

As I write this from my new home in the picturesque village of Chiddingfold in Surrey, England, I hope that you will forgive me for making my last Peep into the Past a personal view of my formal involvement with Noetzie's public affairs, which started in 1989 – 28 years ago.

Although I first came to Noetzie when I was 16 – 58 years ago, it was naturally some years before I became involved in Noetzie's business. The first involvement came through my father John, who for many years ran what was then just called the Kook Kock Group, formed in 1972, and consisting of the riverside owners who employed Koos as caretaker and general factotum. I assisted him from the early 80's and eventually became Chairman of the group in 1993. Now, as Noetzie Home Services Association, it is run by my brother Tim.

For many years Noetzie fell under the Divisional Council, but when these bodies were superseded by Regional Service Councils, which had a rather different function, Neil Metelerkamp initiated a first meeting which led to the formation of the Knoetzie Property Owners' Association in Johannesburg on 29 May 1989, attended by Bill Hedding, Neil and Norma Metelerkamp, Donald and Anita Fabian, John and Pat Everett and myself. On 5 June 1989 Neil lodged an application for Noetzie to become a Local Area, which was approved by the Outeniqua Divisional Council in the nick of time – at their very last meeting two days before the Council ceased to exist.

At the first General Meeting of Property Owners on 18 December 1989 a convening committee was elected under the Chairmanship of Neil Metelerkamp, with Bill Hedding, George Parkes, Nimmo Reid, Ian Henderson and Jan van Gend as members. The first four provisional Local Councillors, Neil, Bill Hedding, Nimmo Reid and George Parkes were elected at the December 1990 General Meeting. Henry Loubser took Bill Hedding's place in 1990 and Kathy Sass and I were co-opted as Councillors after Nimmo Reid's death in February 1992.

The Knoetzie Local Council was formally gazetted on 4 December 1992, the first Councillors being Kathy Sass, myself, Henry Loubser, Neil Metelerkamp and George Parkes. For the first Local Council Elections the KPOA was registered as a political party and its two candidates, Neil and I, were elected unopposed as the proportional roll representatives to the KLC in 1995, with George Parkes and Hub Sandberg as the two ward councillors, representing the Beach and River wards respectively. So Noetzie became a Municipality in its own right as the Knoetzie Transitional Local Council (KLC) came into being, elected by the 44 registered voters. We were the smallest Municipality in South Africa.

A number of projects were initiated, often in conjunction with the KPOA, including the formulation of the Noetzie Town Planning Scheme, regularisation of encroachments, regular refuse removal, beach cleaning, monitoring the water quality of the Noetzie River, signage, improvements to the strip roads and the building of the lagoon-side boardwalk. One which I led, and of which I am personally proud, was the successful objection to the establishment of a Regional Rubbish Dump in the valley to the left of the Noetzie Road just after Hornlee, which would have resulted in all Knysna's refuse being trucked along the Noetzie Road and dumped in the Noetzie River catchment area.

The four KLC Councillors each served consecutively as Chairman, in effect Mayor, but following the December 2000 Local Government Elections, and despite considerable attempts to retain our unique

status as an independent Municipality, Noetzie fell into Ward 5 of the new Knysna Municipality. I can thus claim the title of “The Last Mayor of Noetzie”.

The Noetzie Conservancy Committee was formed in December 1998 with myself as Secretary, and successfully applied to Cape Nature Conservation, (later Cape Nature), for registration of Noetzie as a Conservancy. At my instigation, this later merged with the KPOA to form the present Noetzie Conservancy Owners’ Association. I was a Committee member of the KPOA and NCOA, finally resigning as Chairman at the end of 2005, as I had been posted to a major shipbuilding project in the UK in 2006.

I have thus had continuous formal involvement in Noetzie’s Public Affairs from 1989 to 2005 – 16 years. I have tried at all times to be a moderating influence and to steer a middle course between Noetzie’s sometimes fractious divisions. Others must judge how successful I have been. My final major contribution, other than a few of these Peeps into the Past, was my Illustrated History of Noetzie, and that I hope will be my lasting legacy.

Noetzie has changed greatly over my 58 years, as families have come and gone, many of the older generation have passed on, and new developments have taken place. Following the destruction of our house, I and Iona, (who has also loyally served Noetzie for over 20 years, designed the NCOA Logo and started this Newsletter in 1996), are leaving our property in Noetzie and have moved to start a new life in England.

Noetzie’s beauty, temporarily marred by the June fire, remains and it is now up to the younger generation to preserve it. I promise we will be back on occasions to see how you are doing.

Sunset on my last night at Noetzie before leaving for the UK

Financial Matters

From Margi Dane, NCOA Treasurer

The fire on June 7th has made this an interesting time and now as we start the new financial year on November 1, we look forward to both Noetzie and Knysna rising from the ashes.

As always, we are thankful to those who conscientiously pay their subs each year. This enables the NCOA to fulfil their obligations and the paid up members to vote at the AGM on December 28th.

Of the 50 erven owners, 11 have not paid their subs and the income from those who have paid is now R33,845.00

Some of the Committee's functions are:

To function as a legal entity in preventing bad development decisions and therefore to protect the Noetzie Conservancy.

Water testing: We are particularly concerned with polluted runoff from fertilized fields and also from the informal settlements in the Noetzie River catchment area. Thus, testing of lagoon and river water for E.coli, other pathogens and excessive chemicals that may make the water unsafe for swimming, needs to take place.

On-going communication with Knysna Municipality

Enabling regular Committee meetings so that members can perform their duties as a group.

We also need to have money available to allow us to pay attorneys and environmental specialists whom we may have to make use of from time to time.

Please continue to pay your subs.

Municipal Matters

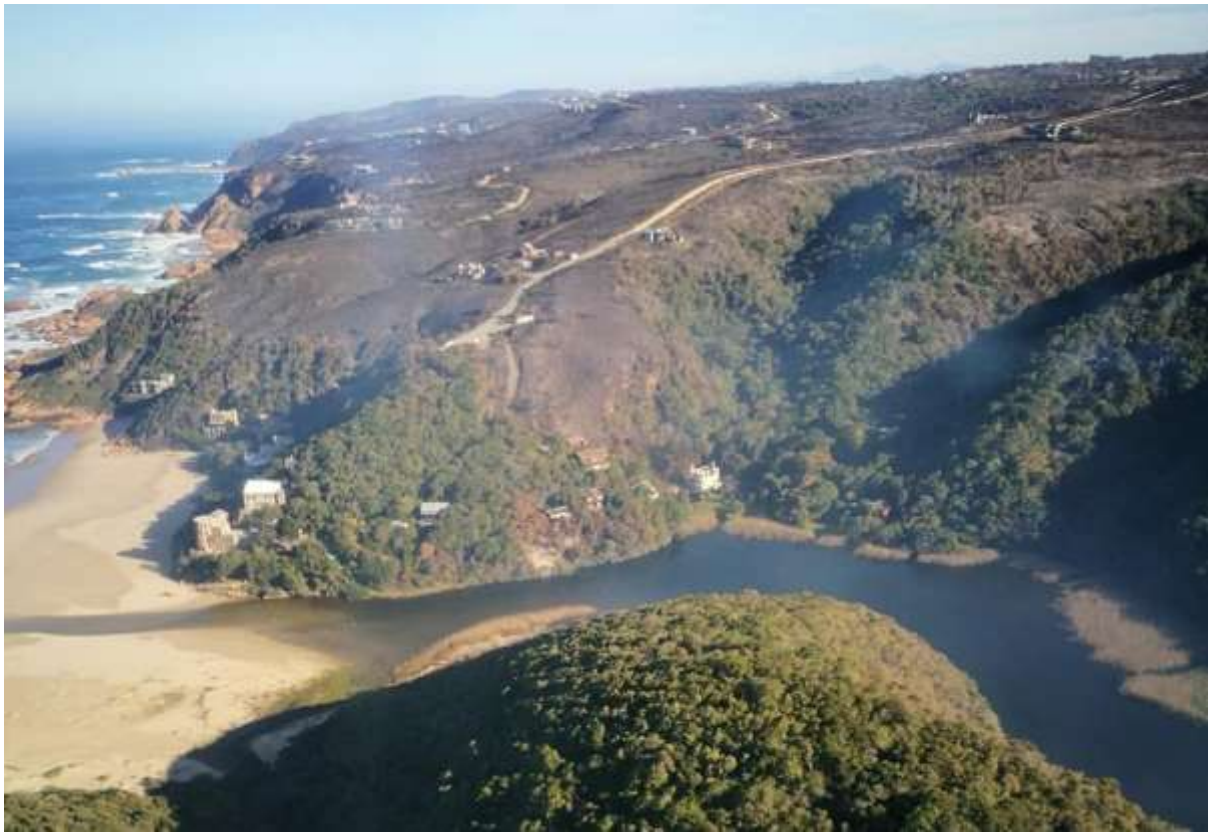
by Julie Gosling

FIRE

The Knysna Municipality says it understands the "profound impact" the devastating June fires have had on residents. As support to fire victims, the municipality resolved that owners of the 564 houses that were completely destroyed by fire will not have to pay property rates for the 2017/18 financial year.

The council had delegated municipal manager Kam Chetty to investigate whether it is legally possible to provide partial rates' relief for those residents whose houses were partially destroyed by fire and not habitable as a result.

The four Noetzie houses destroyed by fire belonged to Tim Everett, Chris Everett, Aubrey Wynne-Jones and Julie Gosling. Others suffered some fire damage, including damage to rain water tanks, water pipes, fencing, roofs and solar panels.



ASBESTOS deadline

Several Noetzie residents have corrugated asbestos roofing or asbestos water tanks. The municipality has said it is concerned about the possible health hazards of asbestos that disintegrated during the fires.

Anyone who suffered fire damage to asbestos should note that the municipality has set a deadline of 1st December 2017 for property owners to dispose of asbestos rubble safely.

Asbestos rubble is classified as hazardous waste.

Property owners are legally required in terms of the bylaws to pay an accredited service provider to collect and dispose of asbestos at a licensed hazardous waste disposal site. This applies to plain asbestos and to rubble contaminated with asbestos.

The municipality may impose penalties in terms of section 23 of the Integrated Waste Management Bylaw if the damaged asbestos has not been safely removed by 1st December. Residents must retain evidence that the asbestos has been safely disposed of.

Anyone who needs further information about this should contact Steven Langlands, the municipality's acting director of community service, on 044: 302-6413 or slanglands@knysna.gov.za

ROADS

Noetzie is in Ward 9, which was allocated the lion's share (32%) of Knysna Municipality's R38.4 million road maintenance budget for 2017/18. However, Noetzie is just one tiny area in Ward 9, so the R12.3 million road maintenance budget will have to be shared with many other larger areas, including Leisure Isle, The Heads, Pezula, Sparrebosch, Thesen's Island and Hunter's Home.

The council said 51% of the roads in Ward 9 were categorized as "very poor" and would require resealing.

The next meeting of the Knysna Council is on 27th November at 8.30am at the municipal offices in Clyde Street. The public is welcome to attend.

Contacts for the municipality's customer services are: SMS: 44453 or email: customercare@knysna.gov.za

Rainfall Graph

No Graph Im afraid – my computer is packed and on the high seas (I hope). The graph is one of the things I forgot to take off before letting it be packed up. Here are Wendy Dewberry's figures for the last six months.

July 2017 :- Mid July – 30 mm, 23 July – 5 mm, 25 July - 2,5 mm

August 2017:- 1 Aug – 1mm, 7 Aug – 14 mm, 12 Aug – 20 mm outdoor classroom/16 / 17 Aug 46 mm ODC, 28 Aug 2mm

September 2017 :- 24 - 18 mm

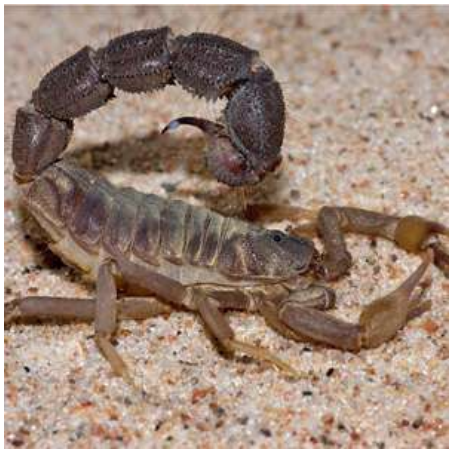
October 2017:- 2 Oct 10 mm, 8 Oct 25 mm, 15 Oct 5mm

November 2017:- 18 Nov 90 mm

SCORPIONS AT NOETZIE

By Iona Everett

If you walk into a dark boathouse, turn over a rock or collect wood from a wood pile, you are likely to disturb a scorpion. They love dark places with cracks they can retreat into during sunlight hours. There are lots of scorpions about and you need to be aware of the possibility of being stung. I have frequently seen scorpions at Noetzie but have only been stung twice in the nearly 50 years I have been spending most of my holidays there. It is still worth not taking any chances with these dangerous looking creatures.

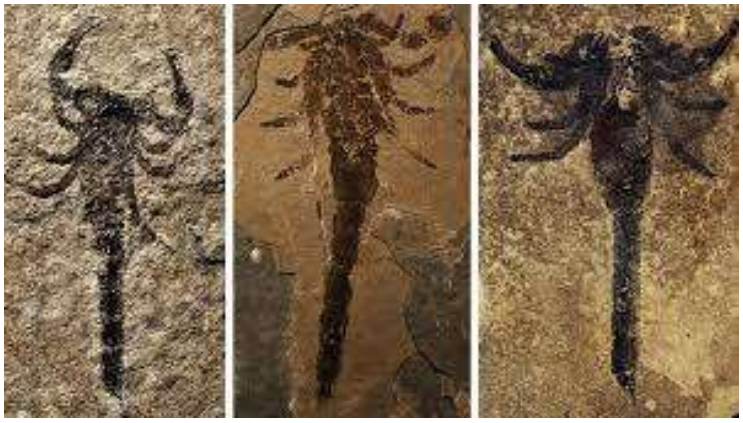


The thick-tailed Parabuthus-genus

There is one infallible rule when it comes to scorpions: If the scorpion has a thick tail and small pincers – it is venomous! The reason is simple: The prominent body parts are the main weapon. Scorpions with thick tails kill their prey with a venomous sting, while scorpions with a big pincers catch their prey with it. (This does not mean that thin-tailed scorpions cannot sting – they can and it will hurt!) Only three of the 160 species of scorpion found in South Africa can cause fatalities. It is interesting to note that the venom from

an Israeli yellow scorpion *(Leiurus quinquestriatus)* is used very successfully to treat brain tumors!

Some Scorpion fossils↓



Scorpions are ancient animals and fossil records indicate that they were already in existence about 425 – 450 million years ago during the Silurian period and evolved from an amphibious ancestor. They occur in habitats ranging from forest to deserts but it is in the arid areas that they are most common and diverse. Like insects and spiders, scorpions all belong to the phylum Arthropoda and like spiders they belong to the Arachnida but belong to a different order, Scorpiones.

The other interesting thing about scorpions is that all scorpions fluoresce under ultraviolet light, such as an electric black light or natural moonlight. They glow a bright cyan-green. The function of this fluorescence is a mystery. The blue-green glow comes from a substance found in the hyaline layer, a very thin but super tough coating in a part of the scorpion's exoskeleton called the cuticle.

The glowing property is surprisingly long-lasting. When scorpions are preserved in alcohol, the liquid itself sometimes glows under UV light. And the hyaline layer is amazingly durable: It can survive millions of years and it's often found in scorpion fossils even when all other parts of the cuticle have vanished. What's more, even fossilized hyaline fluoresces!

The pictures on the right were taken by my daughter Caroline at Noetzie in February 2017 and show the same scorpion by flash and blacklight.

Still, scientists don't know what purpose the fluorescence serves. Some theories:

- It protects scorpions from sunlight.
- It helps them find each other.
- It might confuse their prey.

An article on the news website LiveScience reported another theory, by California State University Arachnologist Carl Kloock. Because scorpions avoid sunlight in general and UV light in particular, he thinks the glow actually helps them figure out whether to come to the surface or stay underground, based on how much UV light shines on them. For example, these nocturnal creatures are less active on moonlit nights and during the full moon.

For humans, one benefit of the scorpion's glow is that it makes these stingers easier to see in the dark with a blacklight, which is perfect, whether you're trying to study them … or avoid them!

Some Facts

Habits and behaviour

Scorpions are mostly nocturnal and they hunt insects, other arachnids and small reptiles and mammals. During the day they can be found under rocks, bark, cow-pats and rock crevices and they are often attracted to insect activity around lights.

When aggravated, scorpions seem to make a hissing sound. This sound is produced differently by differently scorpions. One species scrapes its sting along a granulated area on the upper surface of the first two segments of the tail while another vibrates its pincers together.

Prey capture

Scorpions either ambush unsuspecting prey that come close to their retreats, or they wander about actively hunting for prey. They detect prey by air movement over the trichobothria (long sensory setae) and when the tarsal sense organs detect the prey, within about 150 mm, this induces a dash to capture the prey. The prey is caught with the pincers or chelae. Buthids, the thick tail scorpions, have strong venom and small chelae so they sting almost instantly killing their prey and therefore do not require large chelae to hold onto prey. Other, non buthid species, the thin tail scorpions, have weak venoms but have large powerful chelae that enable them to either secure the prey until it dies from the sting, or to simply crush the prey. The prey is orientated specifically and is eaten head first. Scorpions do not eat every day and even if conditions are ideal, that is warm, windless nights, only a small percentage will feed. Some scorpions can survive for 6 to 12 months without food. Prey includes insects, centipedes, millipedes, snails, spiders, soifugids, scorpions and even small reptiles and mice.

Scorpion reproduction and development

In most species (not all) the male initiates the courting. He grips the female pedipalps (chelae) and leads her in a mating dance that usually lasts about 30 to 60 minutes, but can vary from 5 minutes to 2 days and can cover a distance of about 25 metres. Once a suitable substrate is found, the male deposits a spermatophore from his genital aperture and the female is then guided over the spermatophore that is taken up into her genital opercula. The sperm uptake lasts from a few seconds to 6 minutes.

Scorpions are viviparous (carry the eggs inside the reproductive tract and give birth to live young). After a 3 to 18 month gestation period, up to 100 live young are born, the average numbering approximately 26. The female, in most species, forms a basket with her first or first and second pairs of legs to catch the newborn at birth.

Opistophthalmus capensis female with young

They then climb up her legs onto her back where they will moult for the first time. The birthing rate varies from 1 per minute to 1 per hour and can continue from 12 hours to 10 days depending on the species. The young disperse after 3 to 14 days before they become a meal for their own mother. Food supply and temperature seems to influence the litter size and gestation period and the latter can double in cold conditions. Embryos are reabsorbed if there is a lack of food.

Scorpions moult 6 times before maturity and that varies from 6 months to 8 years. Their life expectancy varies with the different species and ranges from 2 years to as much as 10 to 25 years.