



Steenbok News update - December 2014



Current Status

The Reserve is in good condition and attracts a significant number of local and tourist visitors. The Management Committee's main focus is on securing formal nature reserve status and it is hoped that this can be achieved under impending changes to zoning regulations.

The plans to restore more salt marsh by introducing additional pipes in the Steenbok seawall to increase tidal flooding of a limited area have been put on hold pending possible changes in environmental regulations. The website (www.steenboknaturereserve.org.za) is in the course of being re-written and updated and should be launched early in the new year. Some of the signage in the reserve is looking "tatty" and will be gradually replaced.

Unfortunately labour problems involving our two long serving gardeners are currently being experienced and it seems unlikely that they can be resolved. Alternative maintenance possibilities are being examined but in the short term it might not be possible to keep up the standard of maintenance enjoyed in recent years. It is unfortunate that this could extend over the Christmas holiday period.

A more detailed report will be issued early next year for discussion at the AGM to be held in March.

Owls

Whilst in the area from the Bowling Club to the west keep a lookout for the Spotted Eagle Owls. Up until the end of September the sole remaining male spent much of the daylight hours in one of the trees on Links Drive, outside the club house and then seemingly disappeared. However he was then spotted with a mate on a couple of occasions in mid-October in the milkwood trees leading from the "high-ground" across the salt marsh to King Fisher Creek.

The last sighting was on Sunday morning 23rd November when the male was again seen on his own in the tree outside the Bowling Club House. If you spot one or more please update us on info@steenboknaturereserve.org.za.



Praise from a group of visitors



Following a visit from a group of visitors from Herolds Bay we received the following comments:

Thank you so much for your time and trouble on a rather damp morning at Steenbok. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed the visit and we were inspired by your, and your team's amazing achievement . What a tribute to our Garden Route and a legacy for the Islanders in particular - all that hard work and creativity has paid off and you can be proud!

Donations of Clivia Plants

In recent months our collection of *Clivia miniata* plants has grown considerably. Firstly as a result of the efforts of Lindsay Durham who, together with Gillian Wolff, work tirelessly in maintaining the main entrance garden. And then only recently from Mr Louis de Swardt from the Heads who donated 30 beautiful specimens that are being planted in the Indigenous Garden.



In addition Esther Townsend has a very large collection (probably 200) of "one year" old plants that are being potted-up for eventual relocation into the Indigenous Garden. Thanks so much to all of you for assisting so generously in "growing" the Reserve

Friends of Steenbok

Our sincere thanks to our members and supporters for the enthusiastic and generous support we continue to enjoy. The Steenbok Nature Reserve is clear evidence that when communities work together, good things happen! We trust you and your family will have a relaxed, enjoyable and blessed festive season. Finally, we are hoping to increase our support base in the year ahead. If you know anybody who might consider joining "Friends" would you please print this news letter and give it to them. Joining is easily done by emailing us at info@steenboknaturereserve.org.za or via our website.

Most of our annual members have already remitted their subs for the new year and to them we say thank you. If you have still to do this, we have included the banking details below so that you can do it straight away. Thank you !



Banking Details:

Friends of Steenbok Nature Reserve Trust
Standard Bank
Knysna Branch 050-314
Account No 082579342
Annual Subs: R320

Leisure Isle Festival

A new venue, favourable weather and a large contingent of enthusiastic volunteers resulted in a the most successful festival. Our thanks to the ladies of Gardening at Leisure, the local garden club, who raised R11,000 for Steenbok Nature Reserve.

Looking at the overall analysis of the results of the gardening sales at the festival, there is a clear trend towards higher sales of exotic species.

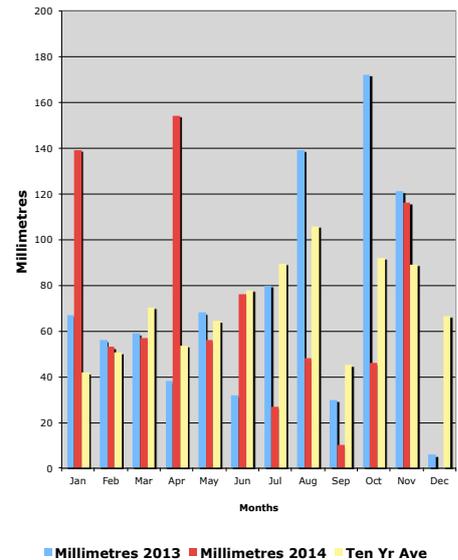
Rainfall in the Reserve

As one can see from the bar-chart, the rainfall for the first eleven months of this year has been very variable, ranging from a low of 10mm in September to a high of 139mm in January.

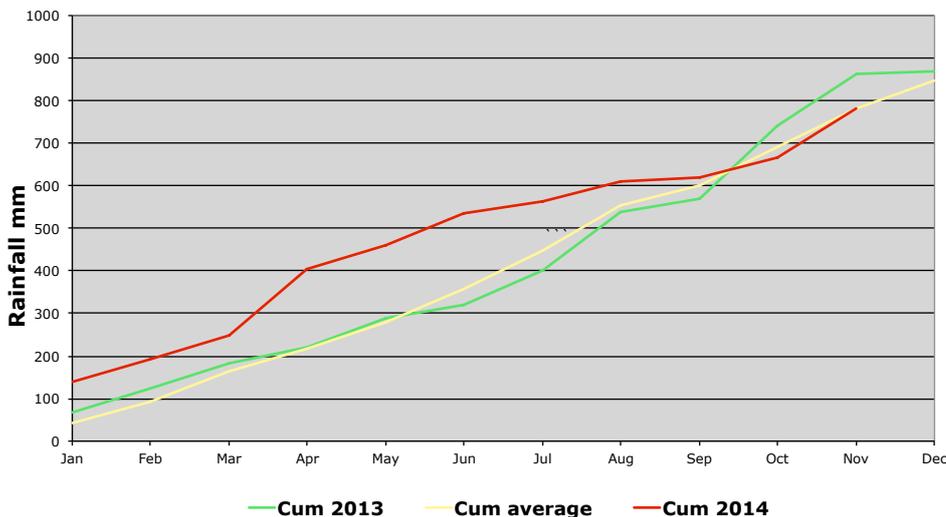
The cumulative graph below shows the year to date rainfall for this year (red line), last year (green line) and a ten years average (yellow line). Our 2014 rainfall so far is virtually identical to the ten year average. We now have over twenty years of rainfall statistics for the reserve and there is also no significant change between the twenty years average and current rainfall.

So, in summary, we have had an average year with above average variability.

Steenbok Nature Reserve Rainfall



Cumulative Rainfall in 2014 vs 2013 & 10 Year Average



Management Committee : Councillor Lizwani, Councillor Hart & Jonathan Mabula nominated by Knysna Municipality, Ricky Maskew and Roger Voysey by LIRA, Peter Godsell by Friends of Steenbok, Maretha Alant by SANParks, James Botha, Dave Edge and Esther Townsend co-opted by Mancom.

www.steenboknaturereserve.org.za