



# Steenbok Nature Reserve News

## January 2013

### Christmas Berry Bush



This delightful shrub (*Chironia baccifera*) normally 450 mm tall, and as wide, produced a mass of pink flowers (3/5 mm wide) over the Christmas period. It grows well in the grasslands in the Park. Watch out for a mass of bright red berries which will now follow

### Change of scene for the Owls

We have been aware for many years of this Barn owl (*Tyto alba*) located in Island Cove across the road from the Bowling Club. We understand that it is one of a pair of Barn Owls that, like the Spotted Eagle Owls, have also recently raised a family.



What is new is a sighting witnessed in December by a number of bowlers of a barn owl (presumed to be the same one) on *Polygala* thicket at the south east entrance to Roger's Way.

This past season the Spotted eagle owls (*Bubo africanus*) nested in one of the large gum trees along the section of Links Drive between Kensington Gardens and Horne Drive. The nest is well hidden in a hollowed out fork, and it was only when the chicks started growing that the mother could be seen more easily.

The father was a regular sentry in an adjacent tree throughout the nesting process and residents learnt not to walk their dogs too close by, as they would be warned off by the father. When the chicks came down from the nest they soon took refuge in the Kay's beautiful, tranquil garden, and spent their days dozing on the Kay's patio as well as the pergola.



The street lights at the top of Horne Drive attract suitable insects for baby owl snacks, and before they could fly properly, they spent their evenings dashing up and down the road, somehow avoiding the early holiday traffic. It was a great relief to all, particularly the Kays, when they could fly properly!



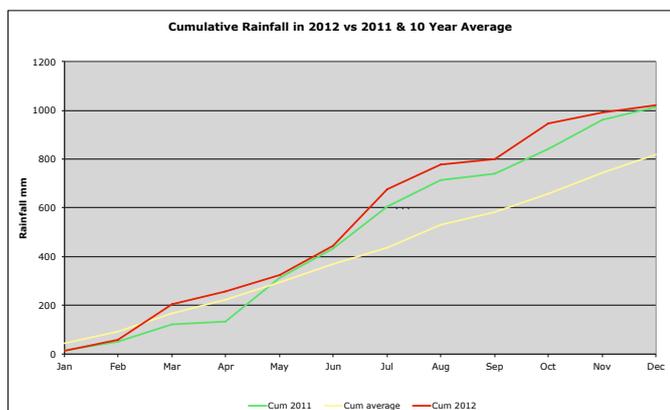
## Moles attack our precious orchids?

It will be seen from the photo that moles have been hard at work in a section of the Nature Walk, west of the tennis courts, in one of the areas occupied in recent years by *Satyrium princeps*.



We will have to wait for a few months, when new foliage normally appears, to see whether the collection of these lovely orchids has been seriously effected.

## Rainfall



Knysna has enjoyed magnificent holiday weather during November and December, continuing into January, with rainfall well down on the 10 year average but at much the same level as last year. Due to heavy mid-year rains the annual figures for both 2011 and 2012 are 20% up on the 10 year average.

## New Display Board



The new display facility at the east entrance to Roger's way is now in place and over the next few months we will be looking for ways of displaying additional informative material. We have also sourced new plastic boxes to enable weather proof display of brochures and newsletters for members and the public.

## Snippets

- The Annual General Meeting of the Friends of Steenbok Trust will be held on Tuesday 5 March at 5:00 pm at the Leisure Isle Boat Club. If you would like to attend please diarise this date now.
- We have enjoyed a magnificent response to our membership renewal campaign, for which we are most grateful, but there are about 15 members who have not yet renewed. If you are one of these, and you wish to continue, please let us have your R300.
- We are busy with the approved action plan and as part of this are currently upgrading four *Aloe thraskii* beds along the southern boundary of the Park.

<http://www.steenboknaturereserve.org.za/>