



Look out for snakes



Conservation staff measuring a Spotted Skaapsteker (harmless)

There have been several snake sightings at Koeberg since the start of warmer weather. Warmer conditions heat up their bodies and accelerate their metabolism, requiring them to hunt more often.

Koeberg is home to a variety of snake species, fortunately, most are not venomous. Snakes produce venom primarily to kill or disable their prey. If left with no other option, they might defend themselves from danger. Fortunately they do not consider humans as prey. The only reason for an envenoming bite from a snake is in self-defence.

Please note the Conservation staff will only collect and relocate snakes posing a direct threat to staff or visitors inside a building. Studies have shown the survival rate of relocated snakes are very low. They know their home ranges very well, when relocated they need to expend energy to explore the new territory. Energy conservation is critical for snakes, therefore the more time they spend moving, the less energy they will have to find prey, reproduce and compete against predators or competition. They fulfil an important ecological service by keeping rodent populations in check.

Contact Central Alarm Station (CAS) on **021 550 4600** for any wildlife emergencies or to report injured animals.



Visitors Centre

During the last few months of the year the number of groups visiting the Centre declines. However, some interesting visitors were spotted, nonetheless.

All the way from Sterkspruit in the Eastern Cape, learners from Khiba Primary School were showing their exuberance at being at Koeberg.



A group of grades 5 to 7 from Khiba Primary from the Eastern Cape

On 29 November 2018 four lecturers from TÜV in Germany visited, as well as a truly cosmopolitan group of learners doing training via the IAEA.



Lecturers from TÜV, Germany

One of the students from Cameroon had the following to say after his visit: "I hope you will share your knowledge with us on the African Continent"

Learners from 12 African countries, undergoing training via the IAEA



A 'sticky' situation

There are about 50 species of stick insect in southern Africa - varying from tiny to huge. This one, spotted at the Visitors Centre recently, measured 24cm!



Conservation Officer, Jurina le Roux, holds her cellphone next to the insect to show scale

Stick insects are nocturnal plant eaters, and they all have the same anorexic appearance. They are all masters at the art of camouflage, closely resembling twigs, leaves, plant stems or the grass on which they lurk. Some can even alter their colour to improve their disguise!

Deception is essential, as stick insects have hardly any defences. They are slow-moving with a jerky shuffle. If they feel threatened they might feign death, falling to the ground and remaining rigid. Even their eggs mimic seeds of the plants on which they feed.

A close-up of the amazing camouflage of the stick insect

New look



The registration area for cyclists and hikers is sporting its new look. A new and improved map of the nature reserve, showing the mountain bike and hiking trails was installed recently.

Milkweed locust



In the insect world, bright colours are aposematic: that is, they serve as a warning sign to possible predators. These colourful critters are plentiful at the moment.

When threatened they produce a repulsive smelling, yellow fluid. They are generally slow moving as they are so well protected chemically.



- DO NOT recklessly dispose of cigarette butts.
- DO NOT make open fires close to natural vegetation.
- DO NOT use fire for land clearing.
- DO NOT deliberately set fire.
- NEVER allow children to play with matches/lighters etc.
- EDUCATE children about the risks of fires.
- DO NOT improperly dispose of ash.
- DO NOT litter.

Help prevent wild fires

Cape Peninsula Fire Protection Association

24 Hour Emergency Number

021 480 7700 107