

## Welcome!

Welcome to the first issue of the Nuclear/Eco Connection, a regular publication of the Koeberg Visitors Centre and Nature Reserve.

The purpose of this newsletter is to raise awareness of the wonderful work being done at the Visitors Centre to continuously improve Eskom's image.

Koeberg's nature reserve is rich in biodiversity and the hard work being done by the conservation team will be highlighted here as well.

During October and November the Visitors Centre hosted just over 900 visitors. School groups make up a large portion and coming from as far away as Kuruman and the Eastern Cape.

Interesting groups received were learners from NERSA and a delegation from Poland who visited Koeberg in preparation for construction of a new nuclear plant in Poland.



## Sea turtle rescue

On 19 September 2017 Koeberg's Conservation Department assisted in the rescue of an injured sub-adult green sea turtle (*Chelonia mydas*) from the intake basin.

The turtle was immediately transported to the Two Oceans Aquarium, where it was named 'Nanuk'. Endangered green turtles are not found along South African shores and staff at the Aquarium said that these turtles do not normally move off their customary routes. The fact that this one entered the intake basin was very unusual. 'Nanuk' was treated for hypothermia, dehydration and a minor injury to her shell.

The Aquarium was happy to have a green sea turtle in their rehab-and-release centre and said it was the smallest one they have provided a temporary home for. Nanuk's story featured on the front page of *Die Burger* on 30 November 2017.



Learners from NERSA enjoying the view

'Nanuk' being treated for hypothermia at the Two Oceans Aquarium



# Creature feature

## Angulate tortoise

This unique, hardy little tortoise, commonly known as the **Red-belly** tortoise, is the only member of its genus - *Chersina angulata*.

They are endemic to southern Africa and occur in a wide variety of vegetation types ranging from semi-desert to fynbos and from succulent karoo to thicket. In warmer parts they remain active all year-round. They have been recorded to live for more than 32 years in captivity.

They drink water by sucking it through their nostrils and can weigh up to 2kg, with a maximum length of 25cm. Males grow larger than females.

Their shells have striking patterns with dark grey or black and yellow colours with a regular zig-zag around the edges. Old individuals may become darker and plainer.



## Getting rid of aliens

A large section of the reserve was affected by veld fires in March 2016. Often the seeds of invasive plant species are triggered by fire to germinate.

Since the 2016 fires, invasive plants have spread over nearly 505 hectares of the fire affected areas. To get rid of aliens is a mammoth task. A contract to clear it out was implemented in 2016 and will run until 2018. To date nearly 300 hectares have been cleared already.



Invasive species clearance in fire affected area

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*Scabiosa incisa*

## New flower for Koeberg

On 16 October 2017 a team from the South African Biodiversity Institute (SANBI) - the 'Custodians for Rare and Endangered Wildflowers' or CREW, visited Koeberg Nature Reserve to conduct field surveys

During the visit Koeberg's Environmental Officer, Jurina le Roux discovered a species that has never been recorded at Koeberg. *Scabiosa incisa*, also known as Pincushion Flower or Koringblommetjies attracts many butterflies and is often grown in gardens for their pretty colour.

The visiting CREW team were also very happy to find several specimens of the stunning *Disa draconis*, a flower belonging to the orchid family.



*Disa draconis*

Koeberg bird species count

215