



Springing into action



CoCT Environmental Education Team on a tour of the nature reserve

Spring brought with it a flurry of activity - flowers are everywhere, animals are scurrying about - and so are people, it seems.

The Visitors Centre hosted 1 660 visitors during September! Of this, 1 352 were from educational institutions, including the University of Limpopo and Hochschule Karlsruhe from Germany.

Three groups of senior citizens visited, including the University of the Third Age and the False Bay Probus group.

The Western Cape Chapter of Mensa visited on 27 September 2018. They were so impressed with Koeberg, they decided to stay to attend the Koeberg Public Safety Information Forum (PSIF) held that same evening. Several of the members said that their minds have been changed about nuclear and that they feel more supportive of it after their visit.

The Environmental Education Team from the City of Cape Town held their quarterly meeting at the Visitors Centre and enjoyed a special tour of the nature reserve.

Weird and wonderful parasites

These three beautiful flowers belong to plants called holoparasites. Unlike other plants, they do not have any chlorophyll and so cannot photosynthesise to produce food. Instead, they attach themselves to the roots of other plants to draw water and nutrients from their unsuspecting



Hyobanche sanguinea

hosts. They do

not have their own roots and will burrow into another plant with a special structure known as a *haustorium*. The structure can grow up to two metres long while searching for an appropriate host plant.



Hydnora Africana

The rhizomes of the plants are covered in modified bracts that can form secondary haustoria. When a host root touches the bract, it will send out another haustorium. A single plant can be attached to different hosts. The only visible part of these parasitic plants are their flowers which push to the surface from underground.



Harveya squamosa



Splitting hares

In South Africa there are two species of hares, four species of red rock rabbit, and the critically endangered riverine rabbit.

Hares are long-legged fast runners and their young are born fully furred, mobile and with all their senses developed.

Rabbits are less fleet of foot, they shelter in burrows or under the cover of rocks and their young are born blind and relatively helpless in fur-lined nests.

At Koeberg, both the Cape Hares and Scrub Hares occur. Cape hare prefer open grassland areas with light scrub, whereas the Scrub Hares prefer denser savanna woodlands with mixed grass and scrub areas. Both species are nocturnal, but will make an appearance on overcast days. During the day they rest in 'forms' - small patches of flattened vegetation or bare soil.

When pursued by a predator, hares will run straight for hundreds of metres until the predator is right behind them, then they will suddenly disappear to the side, confusing the predator.

Their diet consists mostly of grass - preferably short, green, young growth.



International Coastal Cleanup Day



The International Coastal Cleanup Day (ICC) began back in 1986 when communities came together with a common goal of collecting and documenting trash found on the coastline.

The movement was initiated by two women, Linda Maraniss and Kathy O'Hara, colleagues working at the Ocean Conservancy in Texas. They recognised the impact litter will have on our oceans. These two inspirational women reached out to ocean lovers and planned the first coastal clean-up. The volunteers were asked to record each item found on a data sheet to identify possible ways to eliminate ocean trash.

Since then the clean-up initiative has grown internationally. Every year, around September, thousands of people join in to do their part in cleaning up coastlines. Last year 504 583 volunteers joined the ICC worldwide.

On 13 September 2018, Koeberg Nature Reserve and power station staff joined forces to clean-up Koeberg's section of the coastline.

Several bakkie loads were collected and properly disposed of. Various strange items including shoes and parts of furniture were collected. The majority of the rubbish collected were plastic bottles and food wrappers.

