



## News from the Wildlife Sanctuary

There have been many new additions to the Sanctuary this year from the birth of four Lynx kittens to a tame cheese loving crow who was formerly a pet as well as some temporary guests including five black backed jackals and a very naughty baby baboon.



**Murray putting his foot in it**

### Young Murray is Growing Up Fast!

At the beginning of February a young Blue Crane arrived at the Sanctuary. Murray as he came to be known, was found alone on a nearby potato farm by the owners and unable to fend for himself came to stay with us at the sanctuary. Blue Cranes grow to around one metre in height and it seems like Murray has grown up overnight! We have twelve wild Blue Cranes at the sanctuary although they are now very rare in the Eastern Cape and only 25,700 are left throughout South Africa. Murray has always had a weak left leg due to a previous break and so has wobbled around the sanctuary for the last few months, picking off insects and trying to steal meat from the prep room. He was moved out to the aviary where he enjoyed taking in the scenery and

following people around but unfortunately he discovered a fondness for eating tortoises so was banished to another camp! Murray now has most of his adult coat but still has his fluffy baby head.



**Percy and Murray discussing the meaning of life**

### Jackals released back into the wild.

A few months ago we received some black backed jackals. A male and one female were brought into the sanctuary and another three females followed soon after. All had been orphaned and so the two sets of siblings were introduced and lived together. Plans were underway to build a new enclosure for them at the sanctuary however it was decided that as they had not had much human interaction and therefore were not tame, it would be possible to release them back into the wild. Jackals are scavengers and tend to live in pairs but they also hunt for their food, going out in packs. On 29<sup>th</sup> April, Percy and nine volunteers drove the jackals to the release site in the mountains and after some reluctance at leaving their box and a bit of confusion over being released after being in captivity, they ran off to start a new life in their natural environment of open woodland.



**Volunteers Steve Lewis and Claire Graham releasing jackals into the wild**



### The Backpackers has a makeover

New volunteers to the sanctuary will be impressed with the new facilities. The backpackers recently received an overhaul with a new tiled floor and a fresh coat of paint. Some of the beds have been removed so the bedrooms are more spacious and the place has been brightened up with traditional African artwork by our resident artist.

Volunteers have also been busy building a new self contained entertainment area. We hope to have the lounge completed by the middle of May so that volunteers have somewhere private to relax in the evenings and on their days off. The lounge will be a cosy place for volunteers to watch DSTV, put on a movie or play games if they still have a little energy after a hard days work. The cabin will also have a basic kitchen for volunteers to make drinks and snacks after the shop and restaurant close.





**Percy with volunteers and children from  
Jeffreys Bay Primary School**

## **Egrets invade The Sanctuary!**

On 21<sup>st</sup> February the Sanctuary received eighteen new residents. After complaints about the noise and mess being made by Egrets nesting in a Blue Gum tree next to Jeffreys Bay Primary School, municipal workers cut the tree down leaving a number of Egrets and two Herons without a home. Children at the school were traumatised by the sight of the many distressed and even some injured and dead birds, and so the principal gathered up the birds and along with some of the students brought them to the sanctuary. Three of the birds died shortly after arriving at the sanctuary but the remainder are all healthy and are now living happily among our other Egrets and Hadedas.

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## **Elusive Vulture pays us a visit**

Staff at the Sanctuary couldn't believe their eyes when they saw a vulture flying around above the sanctuary at the beginning of April. The Hooded Vulture is found only in the extreme North Eastern part of South Africa and throughout Zimbabwe and Mozambique so has flown a long way from home to visit us in the Eastern Cape, over 1000kms from its usual habitat. This cheeky vulture is also extremely camera shy and has managed to elude several photographers who have made a special trip to the Sanctuary to capture the bird on film. As many of our animals including the cheetahs and Lynx are fed meat on a regular basis, the sanctuary is practically a free for all restaurant for scavengers, and other birdlife not common to the area have also flown in for a piece of the action. Marabou Storks, found only on the eastern coast and up into Mozambique and Zimbabwe have also been frequent diners at Restaurant African Dawn.



**The camera shy White Headed Vulture**

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## **Rare White Lynx born at the Sanctuary**

In early February, one of our lynx was found nursing two kittens. The new mum and her offspring were moved to an enclosure of their own and a week later, she gave birth to two rare white kittens. White lynx are extremely rare and the colour is caused by a genetic condition. Unfortunately white lynx are notoriously weak due to the recessive gene and the two kittens died within a couple of days. The remaining lynx are fighting fit. We will be keeping a close watch on the mother and any future litters to reduce the high mortality risk common with white kittens.



That about covers the highlights from the first few months of the year, but the Wildlife Sanctuary and its inhabitants is forever changing so who knows what is to come!