



OUR VISION

To be a highly effective and well-supported champion of the environment.

OUR MISSION

To implement high impact environmental and conservation projects which promote public participation in caring for the Earth.

WESSA EDEN Newsletter August / September 2015

Dear Friends of the Environment,
this Newsletter covers 2 months as the compiler is away on holiday and will leave you in peace until early October – latest!

Many of our readers found our last newsletter which concentrated on Alien Invasive Plants particularly useful and even inspiring.....

Many of you have dogs and walk them enjoying the scenery around us...

But Liz Nettlefound's German Shepherd, Valeska, utilises their walks to clear out aliens. She either digs or pulls them out and proudly shows off her work! Perhaps all you dog walkers could also train your dogs to do this too!



The WESSA Committee at "work"

Staff of the Magistrate's Office, George Mandela Day Contribution

The Department of Science and Technology and the South African Agency for Science and Technology (SASTA) will host a second National Science Week in George from the 3rd to the 8th of August 2015.

Participation in National Science Week creates an opportunity to support local initiatives in science and technology. WESSA representatives will participate as facilitators in the schools' programme by donating plants of indigenous herbs for the gardens that will be established at Blanco Community Hall, St Mary's Primary School, Rosemoor, Thusong Service Centre (Thembaletu), Pacaltsdorp Primary School and George South Primary School.



Applicable workshops on sustainability will be done to enforce the reducing, recycling and re- using concepts.

Indigenous herb gardens will be established at the participating schools and the preparation of the beds for the vegetable gardens will be done with the assistance of the learners. The idea is to establish vegetable gardens at the schools so that learners can be fed one decent meal per day at school and to empower the learners to become more self-sufficient.



The staff of the Magistrate's Office George collected money to buy the indigenous herb plants needed to plant at the schools during Science Week. The plants were be handed over to the facilitators on Friday the 17th of July 2015 as part of the Mandela Day celebrations.

Hester Greeff both of the Magistrate's Office and WESSA Committee will also participate in Science Week helping to establish the herb gardens and the preparing of the beds for the vegetable gardens at the participating schools. The idea is to develop a continuous participation in these programmes from the office's side to empower learners from disadvantaged backgrounds.

.... and "play"

Sadly, only a few intrepid mariners took to the sea with **Ocean Odyssey** on our WESSA Eden Special.

We all found it an exciting ride and we enjoyed close encounters.....



Thanks again for this special offer Ocean Odyssey and if you wish to keep tabs on the coastal "traffic".... www.facebook.com/knysnawhalewatching or Twitter on @knysnawhales

WESSA proudly presents

No tours are planned for August as the Committee has been involved in the SAATSA Science Week which will be held at 4 primary schools and a community centre this year. We will report back in the next Newsletter.



National Coastal Clean Up events planned for Groot Brak River and surrounds! – 19 September

International Coastal Cleanup Day is here again and this year WESSA is heading back to Great Brak. Last year was a great success: 47 people came together and collected half a tip full of rubbish from the Great Brak Estuary mouth and the surrounding beaches. This year we would like to top that.

International Coastal Cleanup Day is held every year on the third Saturday of September. It is a drive to have coastal communities all across the planet collect as much discarded plastic, metal, glass, builder's rubble and other unwanted debris from the world's beaches. Some amusing items have been reported over the years including guitars and rubber chickens. It is estimated that more than 7 million kilograms of trash was collected last year by a whopping 560 000 people across 91 countries.

WESSA is once again organising a beach clean-up event for the Great Brak River mouth area. Anyone and everyone is invited to join us on for this year's International Coastal Cleanup day the 19th of September for the event. We will be providing refuse bags and organising the removal of the collected rubbish. WESSA volunteers will also facilitate data collection to report back to the Ocean Conservancy group as a part of their international program. Join us and do your bit to help make the Garden route a trash free zone!

We'll meet at Groot Brak River mouth (Parking area at the end of Suiderkruis Rd.)

@ 8am on Saturday, 19 September.

Make sure to bring along your own:

- Comfortable clothes & shoes that can get wet/dirty

www.oceanconservancy.org/our-work/international-coastal-cleanup.

Repeat of Noetzie Conservancy - October 31st

Contact Annemarie Gebhardt angebhar@telkomsa.net

George Open Gardens Day – 7 November

Make a note in your diary – more details next Newsletter.

now! www.facebook.com/GardenRouteGardens

Kammanassie Geology Tour – 28 November

Make a note in your diary.....More details next Newsletter

News from WESSA S.Cape Project Co-ordinator, Lorraine McGibbon

pronounced that 'the soil is very good'. We measured rows and made holes

communities and intend following up on the vegetable gardens.



Jenola face-painting



Linius and Phumezle gate duty

GCBR more good news World Heritage Site Extension

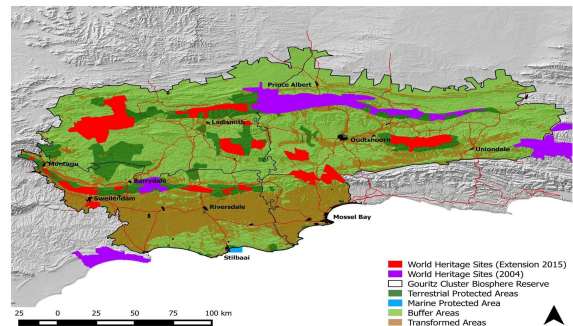
Dear GCBR members and friends

Some more good news ...

UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation) approved the extension of the Cape Floral Region Protected Areas (CFRPA) on the World Heritage List on the 31st In 2004 UNESCO approved the Cape Floral Region Protected Area (CFRPA) World Heritage Site consisting of eight Protected Areas, including the Cederberg Wilderness Area, Groot Winterhoek Wilderness Area, Table Mountain National Park, Boland Mountain Complex, De Hoop Nature Reserve, Swartberg Complex, Baviaanskloof Complex and Boosmansbos Wildernis Area.

This area has now been substantially expanded with the inclusion of more existing Protected Areas. Within the GCBR domain these sites include (see map):

- Anyenberg Nature Reserve;*
- Adding the Klein Swartberg, Paardeberg, Rooiberg, Gamkaberg, Groenefontein and Kammanassie to the Swartberg Complex;*
- Including the Outeniqua Nature Reserve in the Garden Route Complex;*
- Adding Spioenkop, Twistniet, Tygerberg, Witbosrivier, Zuurberg, Marloth, Garcia and Gatplaats Nature Reserves, as well as Bontebok National Park to the Langeberg Complex (with Boosmansbos Wilderness Area).*



World Heritage Sites are areas recognised as being of Outstanding Universal Value and are proclaimed in terms of the World Heritage Convention Act, 1999 (Act 49 of 1999).

Some background about World Heritage Sites (taken from CapeNature press release): The concept of WHS was born out of the international realisation that the cultural heritage and natural heritage assets of the world were coming under increasing threat from a wide range of sources. Countries were not always in a position to manage these assets in a manner that would ensure their persistence in the desired state in the long term. This resulted in the formulation and ultimately the adoption by UNESCO of the World Heritage Convention on the 16th November 1972. South Africa ratified this convention on the 10th July 1997 and has to date served two terms on the World Heritage Committee, which consists of 21 member countries, and hosted the annual meeting of the World Heritage Committee in Durban in 2005. South Africa has also developed and adopted the World Heritage Convention Act 49 of 1999, one of very few countries to have done so.

For the GCBR, this confirms that we live in an incredibly special area which is of global importance ... we are super hot!!!

Please celebrate with us ... and say cheers!!

AnneLise

Dr AnneLise Schutte-Vlok

Regional Ecologist: Gouritz Region

GCBR Annual General Meeting on the **25 August 2015, at the **OUDTSHOORN PROEFPLAAS**, starting **09:30** for **10:00**.**

On the agenda we have the following talks and speakers:

- J4C changing lives in Vanwyksdorp* – Katriena Opperman (J4C Vanwyksdorp)

- ***Death by a 1000 cuts*** – Jan Vlok (Regalis Environmental Services)
- ***Plans for the Gamkaberg-Rooiberg complex*** – Tom Barry (CapeNature)

The minutes of the previous meeting which took place in Mossel Bay on the 26th of July. Kindly let me know whether you will be attending the meeting **before the 21/08/2015**. I need to know for catering purposes. Please let's celebrate the designation of the GCBR together...

You are all most welcome!

All the best, Mooi loop, AnneLise

avlok@capenature.co.za

And further in this vein....

The start of something BIG... And you're invited!

George to St Francis: The Garden Route Biosphere Reserve

The age-old story of man vs the environment is well known. This time though, this article is not bemoaning the presence of buildings, or people. Neither is it finger pointing at the 'greenies' and 'bunny huggers'. Rather, what is proposed is a programme that not only provides a solution to this issue, but that also addresses so many of the socio-ecological problems that we face. This is a positive look at a tool proposed to address this issue: bridging the gap between environment and development.



Biosphere reserves are a fairly well known concept, having been first established through UNESCO in 1976. Since then, the numbers have steadily grown and, today, there are 651 biosphere reserves in 120 countries across the globe. Africa is home to 67 in 28 countries, with 8 biosphere reserves in South Africa and 4 of these in the Western Cape. These numbers alone should imply that something is working.

So while we may have heard about biosphere reserves, what are they in practice and what do they do for the man in the street?

The official definition from UNESCO MAB (Man and the Biosphere Reserve) is: Biosphere reserves are "areas of terrestrial and coastal ecosystems (registered with UNESCO) promoting solutions to reconcile the conservation of biodiversity with its sustainable use. They are internationally recognized, nominated by national governments and remain under sovereign jurisdiction of the states where they are located".

And in South Africa, the official description is: "South African biospheres are special landscapes where socio-ecological land management is practised towards a more sustainable future for all".

Biosphere reserves are tools to address environmental, social and economic sustainability. They definitely do not exclude people, development, towns or farmlands. Rather, they logically define an area that is deemed to be "special" (due to its ecological and cultural areas of significance) into three zones: the core zones, such as national parks, that have legal protection; the buffer zones that adjoin or surround the core areas and where low impact activities take place, such as ecotourism, education, research, etc, and; transition zones where towns are situated and where human activities such as farming, business, etc takes place.

We all know that the Garden Route is special. The Fynbos biome, found here, is the smallest yet most diverse biodiversity hotspot in the world and has thus been declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO. In addition to this magical floral kingdom where we live, we have Afromontane forests, marine protected areas, much cultural diversity and significant palaeo history that dates back to between 120 and 180 000 years ago And all of this without mention of the special species that are found within our magnificent habitats and which range from the largest land and marine mammals to small aquatic bugs that still await classification and that have barely evolved over the past 100 million years.

So, yes we know how special the Garden Route is and, yes, international recognition from UNESCO would be fantastic but how does this affect YOU?

The biosphere reserve concept can support and reinforce projects and programmes to enhance livelihoods.

It can assist in attracting funding from different sources for social, education, tourism, cultural and environmental projects.

Biosphere reserves are ideal places for the implementation of pilot projects, providing lessons to be applied elsewhere.

They provide a platform for stakeholder cooperation

They make room for development and conservation and identify sustainable opportunities for people within their environment

They enable agriculture AND conservation rather than “either or”

They provide a brand name to improve local economies

They reduce the environmental footprint

They assist authorities in addressing social, economic and environmental challenges

They assist local authorities with planning and awareness of zonations

Tourism is one obvious area where benefits for people and the environment can result. For example, a recent study by a German university showed that tourism in biosphere reserves makes a considerable contribution towards the local economy (15 German biosphere reserves welcome 65 million visitors annually, equating to almost 3 billion Euro's). Tour operators and tourists around the world are becoming increasingly discerning about the places they visit, the goods they purchase and the impact of their lifestyles on the environment. The MAB objective of promoting the development of quality economics in biosphere reserves is a similar concept and both of these provide an enormous opportunity for small enterprise and eco-tourism development within biosphere reserves. Furthermore, there are various accreditation initiatives that benefit development and the environment through the resulting shared vision and cooperative practices.

The benefits to communities, governments, enterprises and the environment can be endless. But, to get there, we firstly need to submit our application to UNESCO's MAB programme, highlighting the magnificence of our Garden Route and its inhabitants and requesting registration as a biosphere reserve.

INVITATION

The proposed Garden Route Biosphere Reserve will extend from George in the west to St Francis in the east. The Table Mountain Fund is supporting the application process and this includes a series of public meetings as follows:

DATES AND VENUES FOR ROUND 1

George / Wilderness: 12 August, Banquet Hall, Civic Centre, 10h30 – 11h30

Knysna / Sedgefield: 12 August, Hornlee Hall, 14h30 – 15h30

Bitou: 11 August, Piesang Valley Hall, 10h00 – 11h00

Tsitsikamma / Storms River: 11 August, Boskor Hall, 14h00 – 15h00

St Francis / Humansdorp: 13 August, St Francis Bay Bowls Club, 11h00 – 12h00

The first round of meetings will be information sharing meetings, with the next round focusing on mapping the core, buffer and transition zones. The dates for round 2 will still be publicized. This is a long process but the beginning of potential opportunities for so many and for our beautiful Garden Route.

Published: July 17th, 2015 <http://www.plett-tourism.co.za/news/garden-route-biosphere-reserve/>

The invitation to attend public meetings explaining more about this is attached.

Bee disease 'near full scale epidemic'

GEORGE NEWS FLASH - American Foulbrood (AFB) is near a full scale epidemic in the Western Cape bee industry with infection in almost every commercial beekeeping operation, but George and other towns along the coast from Riversdale to Plettenberg Bay are currently still clear from the disease.

However, with the pollination season upon us, there is concern that local beekeepers who will be moving their hives to areas like Ceres, Worcester and the Langkloof might bring back infected bees upon their return after their job in the fruit orchards are done.

According to Mike Allsopp, senior researcher at the Agriculture Research Council in Stellenbosch, AFB has killed up to 60% of bee colonies in certain commercial operations in the province, and there is a significant likelihood that the same, and even higher losses, will be suffered in the industry as a whole since AFB has been found in almost all commercial beekeeping operations.

This threat to bees is also a threat to humans' food sources as a third of what we eat is dependent on bee pollination. Yet, the government does not have a proper regulatory system in place to ensure adherence to regulations that are aimed at the management of AFB. Source George Herald online 21 July 2015

The photo shows brood frames with a good range of eggs, larvae and capped brood, with not many empty cells, i.e. cells that the queen has not laid an egg in. This is an indication of a healthy colony with a vigorous queen, according to Angus Anthony, local beekeeper.



The objects clause in the Memorandum of Association of **CACH** specifically provides for the power to buy land and run an animal rescue centre, and so CACH is not restricted to animal advocacy. Like childbirth, the birth of a wildlife rescue centre is both arduous and exciting. We'll post a monthly update, along with photos.

Here is Bev's report of our arrival at the new centre, accompanied by CACH Scotland representative Malena Persson, who was in SA at the time:

<http://www.cannedlion.org/blog/the-arrival-at-cach-headquarters>

Garden Route BOTANICAL GARDENS



Garden Route
Botanical Garden

31 August - 5 September
Garden Route
Botanical Garden



ARBOR WEEK
Indigenous Tree & Plant Sale in our Nursery

MONDAY, 31st August 2015
TO SATURDAY 5th September 2015
Daily from 09h00 – 16h00
Saturday: 09h00 – 14h00
49 Caledon Street
George
044 874 1558 / info@botanicalgarden.org.za

Arbor Week is a month away, and as usual, extra help is needed in the nursery during that week, **Monday, 31st August 2015 until Saturday, 5th September 2015.**

The weekdays are divided into 2 sessions :-

09h00 – 12h30 and 12h30 – 16h00.

On Saturday, the session is from 09h00 – 14h00.

People with a working knowledge of trees are needed as this year there will be a bigger variety than ever before.

There will also be a good range of Fynbos, Spring colour, and Botanical books available.

Please join us, good tea-eats guaranteed for the advisers as well!

If you feel like helping, contact :-

Marè Collett Plant Sale Convenor mcollett54@gmail.com / 044 882 1267 / 082 962 4098

SANBI
Biodiversity for Life
South African National Biodiversity Institute



It is time to hear from CREW Outramps again as there are ongoing concerns for conservation of rare species.....

This is an extract from:-

Mad as a Hatter

Peering at a notice on the very securely locked gates on the northern side, we saw a notice advertising a rezoning application for the Reins Private Nature Reserve or Gouriqua. It seems that there are plans to make it a centre which caters for the needs of patients with various forms of Dementia. It seems a most unlikely use for this property, which is covered with magnificent limestone Fynbos with very high levels of endemism. The place is teeming with Rares. Our regular annual monitoring trips over many years have become more and more difficult, with access becoming a real problem. We are now reduced to searching along the road verges for the Threatened and rare plants. We sincerely hope that the Fynbos at Gouriqua is going to be conserved and that we will be allowed reasonable access to check the plants. Anything less, would be a crime against the environment.

Before the 1990's, this land belonged to the Government and was used as a missile-testing site. When it was sold to private clients, there was plenty of opposition. Many felt that the State should have converted it into a Nature Reserve to conserve a very threatened veld type for posterity.

That's history and it didn't happen. As a landowner myself, I believe strongly that landowners are merely custodians of their ground and that they need to look after it and not refuse reasonable access. But am I "banging my head against a brick wall"? Probably, in this world where everything seems to revolve around money.

(EAI under auspices of Hilland Environmental Assessment Practitioners DEADP Ref. 16/3/1/1/D5/4/0055/14 Contact anje@hilland.co.za Portion 15 of Farm 455 Gouritsmond – Ed.).

The gates of Reins were very firmly closed. We looked longingly over the fence at the home of *Erica baueri ssp gouriquae*, but we lacked the guts to scale the fence. Visions of a night spent in gaol were unappealing. So once again, we explored the road verges on both sides of the road along approximately 30kms, travelling east and west. Our primary objective was to check the Critically Endangered *Lobostemon belliformis* or "The Beautiful One". It was in early bud, with just enough mature flowers to give us a preview of the stunning beauty to come. There are probably still about 50 plants in an area of about 500x500m. Counting is difficult. The Fynbos is mature and is fast becoming impenetrable. This is the only known locality of this magnificent plant and it desperately needs to be conserved.



There were frequent stops to look, photograph and do site sheets as we drove along. There were some puzzled looks from passing motorists, as the Bus disgorged a whole lot of (generally old) women on to the road verges. A worrying sign was bulldozer action on a stretch of road, which is full of limestone endemics. The information we gained on this trip is all going to be put on iSpot, so that it is there for all to see in the future. Alien plants and coastal development are stalking the plants between Gouritzmond and Still Bay. Those of you who live there, need to make a concerted effort to guard against their extinction. These are very special plants and their loss will be ours. But that is enough of the soapbox! There are too many Rares to include in the text, so I will list them below.

Gouriqua Rares

Protea susannae- Mrs Muir's Sugarbush (Near Threatened)

Protea obtusifolia – Gouriqua Sugarbush (Near Threatened)

Aulax umbellata – Broadleaf Sugarbush (Near Threatened)

Leucospermum praecox - Mossel Bay Pincushion (Vulnerable)

Phyllica velutina – "Vat Hom Fluffy" Hardleaf (Near Threatened)

Cliffortia schlechteri – Schlechter's Caperose (Near Threatened)

Erica dispar- Disowned Heath (Near Threatened) disowned is the meaning of the Arabic word "dispar"

Euchaetis cf albertiniana – Albertinia Mothflower (Endangered) – only about 5 plants

Lobostemon belliformis – The Beautiful One (Critically Endangered)

Gnidia chrysophylla – Goldleaf Stripper (Vulnerable)

Agathosma ? sp Buchu - Unknown

Leucadendron galpinii – Galpins Conebush (Vulnerable)

Cullumia carlinoides – Coastal Spikedaisy – (Near Threatened)

Carpobrotus muirii – Dr Muirs Sourfig (Near Threatened)

All id's subject to confirmation.

<http://www.ispotnature.org/projects/gouriqua-and-surrounds-west-of-gouritzriver>

<http://www.ispotnature.org/projects/southern-swartberg-foothills>

<http://www.ispotnature.org/projects/crew-site-sheets-for-the-southern-cape-coast-and-the-coastal-mountains>



<http://www.ispotnature.org/projects/the-conglomerates-and-the-area-west-...>

<http://www.ispotnature.org/projects/crew-species> - for all our site sheets for Redlisted plants with status

<http://www.ispotnature.org/projects/northern-foothills-of-the-swartberg-...>

<http://www.ispotnature.org/projects/gouritzmond-to-western-side-of-gouriqua>

<http://www.ispotnature.org/projects/kareedouw-and-surrounds>

<http://www.ispotnature.org/projects/fynbos-nature-reserve-krans-hoek-432...>

<http://www.ispotnature.org/projects/outeniqua-reserve/observations/gallery>

<http://www.ispotnature.org/projects/biodiversity-of-the-western-kouga->

<http://www.ispotnature.org/projects/outramps-crew-site-sheets-for-the-karoo-region>

<http://www.ispotnature.org/projects/project-list/> / See Comments

Life becomes more and more frenetic and challenging, but it is loads of fun.

Hamba Kahle, Groete en dankie

Di Turner Outramps CREW Group, Southern Cape

Reportback 6 July 2015



Meeting open to all to discuss the Summer Show 2015

Sayers Hall, George Museum, York Street - Wednesday, 12 August at 13h00

Amazingly, Kos en Fynbos has grown from 60 participants in 2013 to an amazing 600 for the Winter 2015 competition.

Everyone is welcome to participate in this brainstorming for this summer's activities.

www.facebook.com/kosenfynbos

Forthcoming Activities

TUESDAY, Aug 25th: U3A General Meeting:

Dr George Hughes: "Sea Turtles" 10:30 - 11:30 at Emmaüs, Hope Street, George.

10:00 = Tea, 10:30 = Meeting starts

Launched in the summer season of 1963/64 the Sea Turtle programme on the Maputaland Coast of KwaZulu-Natal was initiated by the Natal Parks Board in response to complaints that turtles were being killed on the beaches near Kosi Bay. The first survey revealed that two species of sea turtle nested in South Africa. Only in 2014 was yet a third species found nesting on this beautiful coast.

Contact Sue: 044 877 1180. Non-U3A members R10.

Wednesday, Sept 30th: U3A General Meeting:

Fred van Berkel: "The Southern Cape's Mountain Ranges":

10:00 – 12:00 at Emmaüs, Hope Street, George. 10:00 = Tea, 10:30 = Meeting starts

Contact Sue: 044 877 1180. Non-U3A members R10.

Interesting websites

Karoo rocks illuminate global mass extinction event

Ahmed Areff, News24 2015-07-08 21:14

Photo credit Duncan Alfred, News 24

Johannesburg - Rocks and volcanic ash from the Karoo have led scientists from the University of Witwatersrand to deduce that a single global mass extinction event 260 million years ago wiped out almost all life on the planet.

"The Chinese picked up a major turnover in rocks which pointed to a marine extinction event of invertebrates round about 260 million years ago. We had a feeling that our rocks [in the Karoo] would cover the same time period," Professor Bruce Rubidge, the interim director of Wits' Evolutionary Studies Institute (ESI) told News24.

It was initially thought by scientists that a land extinction event, that left nearly 80% of species extinct, happened earlier in a specific geological period called the Permian, while the marine extinction happened at the end of that period.

The team found that the traces of a mass extinction on land, and the date of the rocks in the Karoo matched the marine extinction that the Chinese discovered.

Michael Day, a postdoctoral fellow at Wits, who was continuing the work started by Rubidge 30 years ago, said this new discovery suggests that there was one cataclysmic event that led to both extinctions.

"A mid-Permian extinction event on land has been known for some time but was suspected to have occurred earlier than those in the marine realm," he said.

"The new date suggests that one event may have affected marine and terrestrial environments at the same time, which could mean its impact was greater than we thought."

The end-Permian extinction is regarded as being more severe than the extinction of the dinosaurs, which happened at the end of the Cretaceous period 65 million years ago.

The Permian extinction, which National Geographic called "when life nearly came to an end", led to the disappearance of a diverse group of early mammal-like reptiles called dinosauromorphs, which were the largest land-living animals of the time.

"The South African Karoo rocks host the richest record of middle Permian land-living vertebrate animals. This dataset, the culmination of 30 years of fossil collecting and diligent stratigraphic recording of the information, for the first time provides robust fossil and radioisotopic data to support the occurrence of this extinction event on land," says Day.

Rubidge said the mass extinction event also coincided with the time of catastrophic volcanic activity in China.

This, according to him, is the prevalent theory on how the mass extinction happened.

"The volcanic activity might have caused both extinctions [land and marine] as one global event."

He said the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the Smithsonian Institution from the United States of America were also part of the project.

The team's findings are contained in a paper titled: "When and how did the terrestrial mid-Permian mass extinction occur? Evidence from the tetrapod record of the Karoo Basin, South Africa", published on Wednesday in the latest issue of the Royal Society's biological journal.

<http://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/News/Karoo-rocks-illuminate-global-mass-extinction-event-20150708>



As always, feel free to forward to others. And as always, all errors are entirely mine!

If you wish to unsubscribe – just let me know.

Regards, *Christine Ridge-Schnauffer*

Honorary Secretary, WESSA Eden Tel: 044-873-4203 Fax: 086 646 5458