



OVERBERG LOWLANDS CONSERVATION TRUST

Newsletter 2, January 2014

Herewith, the second newsletter of the Overberg Lowlands Conservation Trust (OLCT) (August - December 2013).

Please remember you can also follow us via our website, blog and Facebook pages.

2013 SPRING SURVEYS

The spring of 2013 was filled with exciting finds: from new populations of threatened species to new farmers interested in conserving their renosterveld. We surveyed a total of 30 patches; 10 of which were completely new sites to the project. Here are some of our findings...

***Polhillia brevicalyx* and *Wiborgiella bowieana* survey**

In October 2013, we got together with a group of CREW volunteers (and their leader, Ismail Ibrahim) and the farm manager, Matthias Streicher, and walked the Freek Botha river course in search of more *Polhillia brevicalyx* and *Wiborgiella bowieana* populations. The reason for this species-specific survey is the critical status of these two plants (the former only known from two sites on a single farm (about 20 individuals) and the latter only known from two populations (<50 individuals). The survey was a huge success, and we found over 50 individuals of each species, as well as a new population of *Gladiolus vandermerwei* (Endangered). We intend to make this an annual survey and to grow our efforts in understanding the real status of these severely threatened species. Please do let us know if you would like to join us on the 2014 survey!



Photographed above (left to right: CREW volunteers (led by Ismail Ibrahim) and Evan Eifler photographing *Polhillia*, *Polhillia* in flower, Flora Cameron (CREW volunteer) with healthy *Polhillia* plants and *Wiborgiella bowieana* in flower.

Animals in renosterveld

It was very unusual to see these beautiful Greater Flamingos in renosterveld near Rietpoel, after heavy rains in early spring. We were also lucky-enough to see Klein Karoo Dwarf Chameleon on three occasions. Our Chairperson saw an Aardwolf in his renosterveld reserve; we are still hoping to catch these on camera! Medium-sized mammals (foxes, cats, etc.) are becoming rarer in renosterveld and we believe this is cause for concern. Anyone interested in doing some mammal research in these fragments?





Extending our knowledge on distributions of rare and threatened plants

Our extensive surveys resulted in the discovery of several previously-unknown populations of special plants, including (photographs from left to right, below): *Gladiolus vandermerwei* (Endangered), *Moraea debilis* (Endangered), *Lotononis villosa* (Vulnerable), *Leucadendron coriaceum* (Endangered), *Moraea tricolor* (Endangered) and several others.



OLCT awarded a NEW vehicle from the Mazda Wildlife Fund

The Mazda Wildlife Fund surprised us in late 2013 by replacing the vehicle they had loaned us with a brand new one! This beautiful BRAND NEW BT50 double cab is a dream to drive and is lighter on fuel than the previous model Thank you again, Mazda!!



mazda Wildlife Fund
The Driving Force Behind Conservation



Funding secured for 2014

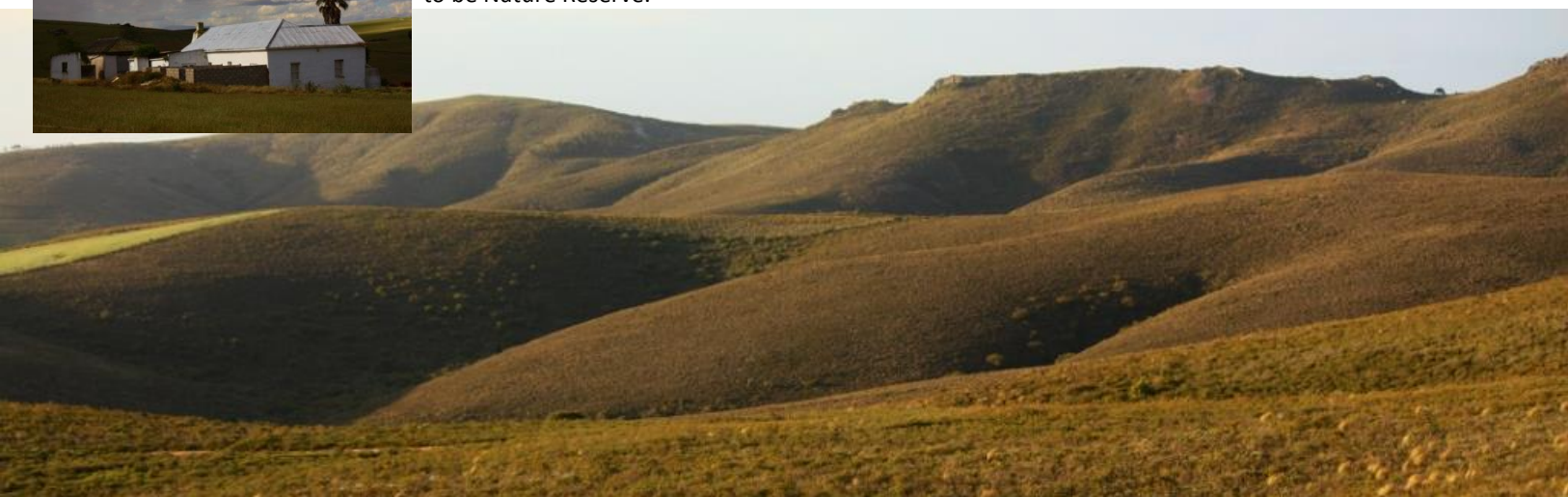
Thanks to the Hans Hoheisen Charitable Trust, Melozhori Game Reserve and Oren Taylor, we have managed to secure enough funding to cover our operational expenses for 2014 and much of 2015. Now we can focus a little more on finding project funding to get our Easement Programme going....

First renosterveld reserve purchased for OLCT to manage

After a substantial amount of groundwork, negotiating, blood, sweat and tears, we have finally secured a flagship piece of veld for conservation, through our partnership with WWF-SA. The renosterveld on Haarwegskloof farm is now owned by WWF and... the OLCT is the Management Authority! This piece of land will be declared a Nature Reserve and we look forward to developing activities on and around the reserve, including expanding the conserved area, setting up a research station, and possibly, in the long-term, linking tourism activities with De Hoop Nature Reserve (which is just south of Haarwegskloof). Watch this space.... ☺



Photographs left and below: House (for research center) and view from Haarwegskloof farm – soon to be Nature Reserve.





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Thank you!



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CONTACT US

www.overbergrenosterveld.org.za; info@overbergrenosterveld.org.za. Tel. +27 83 551 3341

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