



***Botanical Society of South Africa
KZN Coastal Branch***

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON SATURDAY, 29 JULY 2023 AT
DURBAN BOTANIC GARDENS AT 13H30**

PRESENT : Suvarna Parbhoo Mohan (Chairperson), Muhammad Adamjee, Tanya Basson, John Bradshaw, Frances Callanan, Diana Callear, Virginia Cameron, Mahomed Desai, Ingrid D'Eathe, Lee D'Eathe, Jenny Evans, Megan Goschen, K. Govender, James Hallé, Di Higginson, Siziwe Hlongwa, Ashand Hoosen, Warren Horsley, Barry Lang, Pat Long, Janet Longman, Denise Macpherson, Xolani Maseko, Anele Mbanjwa, Nkululeko Mkhize, Muhammad Nakhrade, Judy Panton-Jones, Allimuthu Perumal, Bertha Pitout, Elsa Pooley, Frances Roberts, Gail Robinson, Jean Senogles, Christine Sole, Jane Troughton, Ashraf Vahed, Sandra Dell (Minutes)

PROXY VOTES : Marilyn Bodasing, Charles Botha, Julie Braby, Margaret Burger, Cathy Capon, Lynley Clarke, Snooks Cole, Louise Colvin, Richard Foster, Kate & Graham Grieve, Phyllis Jenkins, Jill Seldon, Anne Skelton, Bruce Surmon, Coral Vinsen

APOLOGIES : Himansu Baijnath, Jenni Bell, Marilyn Bodasing, Charles Botha, Julie Braby, Gill Browne, Margaret Burger, Cathy Capon, Lynley Clarke, Martin Clement, Snooks Cole, Louise Colvin, Mary de Haas, Errol Douwes, Richard Foster, Kate & Graham Grieve, David Henry, Michele Hofmeyr, Phyllis Jenkins, Hilton Maclarty, Patricia McCracken, Talia Krishanlal Moodley, Monica Ndlovu, Jill Seldon, Anne Skelton, Bruce Surmon, Coral Vinsen

1. WELCOME

The Chairperson, Suvarna Parbhoo Mohan, opened the meeting and welcomed all present and thanked everyone for making the time and effort to attend.

It was confirmed that 24 members present and 15 proxies comprised a quorum.

2. MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON 24 JULY 2022

The minutes of the previous AGM were adopted (Proposed: Janet Longman, seconded: Di Higginson).

3. MATTERS ARISING

The meeting with the Hawaan Forest stakeholders had not yet been held.

4. CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Suvarna's report was in the form of an illustrated MS-PowerPoint presentation.

The Society had turned 110 years old. Suvarna would share on the WhatsApp group the link of a video from BotSoc National. A message from National Chairperson Kyra Lunderstedt was shown; BotSoc had achieved much in the 110 years but there were many urgent threats to our plant world to be addressed. Members were thanked for their support. Suvarna suggested seeing the Botanical Society of South Africa website for the range of activities offered by BotSoc.

National conservation highlights were:

- CREW (the Custodians of Rare and Endangered Wildflowers) which Suvarna managed of citizen science collaboration between SANBI, BotSoc and the Mapula Trust. This year was CREW's 20th anniversary. Please see the Webinar <https://botanicalsociety.org.za/20-reasons-to-celebrate-crews-20th/>
- BotSoc was assisting in tackling the plant poaching crisis especially in the Northern Cape and Klein Karoo. Cycads outside of protected areas had been micro-dotted.
- A medicinal plant pilot project
- Biodiversity stewardship, expansion of protected areas
- Hacking of invasive alien plants
- Funded interns at National Botanical Gardens learning about indigenous plants and their cultivation

Veld & Flora was now published mainly online. The National Editor was based in our Branch. Books had been published on the Baviaanskloof. Our Botanical Education Trust had funded a revision of the plant families.

An EIA course was freely available to members. We are looking for members to assist us with providing EIA input.

Branch Report

There had been 97 Branch members at the end of June 2023. A Branch WhatsApp group for the public was initially created for the City Nature Challenge and had proved popular. There was a Members-only Chat as well. Information was always sent to members first.

Newsletter

Talia Krishanlal Moodley, a youth member, had taken on producing our quarterly newsletter. Talia was doing remarkably well and was getting us to meet our deadlines. The newsletter showcased our Branch's events and activities.

Plant Fair

The Plant Fair was held again in September 2022 after a two year break. It was held at Beachwood Mangroves Nature Reserve. Suvarna expressed our thanks to the North Durban Honorary Officers for hosting us. The 2023 Plant Fair would be held at a new venue, here at the Durban Botanic Gardens, on the second weekend of September.

Greening our 'Hood

A member had asked in the Chat group for help on how to go about greening our own neighbourhoods. This resulted in our visiting inspiring community initiatives. Despite a small committee, Westville Conservancy was successfully rewilding parks and verges.

Bridgevale Park in Durban North was a remarkable walk through a rewilded park. Giffy's paintings had beautified structures in natural areas. The Kloof Project was visited too. This included seeing the railway line cleared of aliens and made an attractive route for cyclists. Beautiful verges outside the shopping centre and a dull bridge invigorated with street art featuring natural subjects were also seen, Conservancies were congratulated on the work they were doing which we could emulate and which inspired us.

JOINT BRANCH CREW FIELDTRIP

The KZN Inland and Coastal Branches met halfway at the scenic Laager Farm in February. Two endangered plant species were seen as well as many others. It was hoped to hold more joint visits there and elsewhere.

HELICHRYSUM WORKSHOP

Kate Grieve shared her knowledge about the various *Helichrysum* species at the Nkonka grassland in April. This grassland is a small gem in the middle of suburbs and industry with amazing views. A workshop like this one helps to draw our members into conservation activities.

EUGENE MOLL WALKS

Eugene Moll held educational and fundraising walks at Sibaya Precinct and Umdoni Park in August 2022 and again this month at North Park, with the focus on tree identification.

INDIGENOUS GARDEN TOURS

Indigenous garden tours were held at Jane and Greg Troughton's Gorgeous Green House in Durban North. Jane and Greg were thanked for hosting us and for the inspiration their beautiful garden provided.

Garden tours were also held at Renishaw Hills Mature Lifestyle Estate, led by their garden designer, Elsa Pooley. Appreciation was expressed to Elsa, the Estate and its staff and the residents for this delightful day.

Indigenous garden tours are not just enjoyable occasions, they are educational, motivating and also raise funds for the Branch. The volunteers who helped were thanked.

CHILDREN'S WINTER HOLIDAY PROGRAMME

A photo presented showed youngsters at their 'give back to the bush' activity at Burman Bush Nature Reserve where the youngsters gathered armfuls of the invasive sword fern and bagged them as part of the Children's Winter Holiday Programme. As one child put it, 'this is our pre-Mandela Day warmup!'

Experienced environmental education guide and committee member Christine Sole put the day-long programmes together with content based on the three venues of Burman Bush, Durban Botanic Gardens and Beachwood Mangroves. Additional places were filled on the programmes with youngsters from care facilities which provided a rare day in nature for them. The children mixed happily together, older ones helping younger ones. We greatly appreciate the generous sponsorship by our members who made it possible to include the under-privileged children. We received excellent feedback from the participants and their parents or caregivers. BotSoc National social media and *Veld & Flora* reported back on the programme, so we received some marketing mileage too. Christine was thanked for her dedication, as were the members, facilitators and guides

who helped. We hope to repeat this programme. It was a lot of work for Christine; if anyone would like to help her they should please contact Christine.

DURBAN BOTANIC GARDENS COLLABORATION

The Gardens are free-entry, unlike the National Botanical Gardens, and are run by the Municipality. We are lucky to have free-entry Gardens in our area.

A tree-planting ceremony was held in October to commemorate plantsmen Tony Abbott and Wally Menne, facilitated by Di Higginson.

We held small workparties at Old Fort Gardens which fall under Durban Botanic Gardens.

Di and all those who supported these occasions were thanked.

AWARENESS ACTIVITIES

The Branch participated in the annual Kloof Open Gardens event in March as well as at the Durban Botanic Gardens Plant Fair in June. The latter event inspired us to change the venue of our own Indigenous Plant Fair for September 2023 to the Durban Botanic Gardens.

PLANTLIFE JOURNAL

PlantLife was first started by the late Tony Abbott in Port Edward in 1989. At the end of 2002 under David Styles' editorship the BotSoc KZN Coastal Branch came on board to offer managerial and admin assistance. The journal evolved to become a free, online journal under the present editor, Graham Grieve. Its content lies between a scientific journal and *Veld & Flora*. This year our Branch arranged for the back issues to be scanned. It would be best to separate the issues into articles, but a volunteer is needed for this task.

THANKS

Suvarna expressed her thanks and appreciation to our members for their ongoing support. She also thanked all of the hosts / presenters who donated their time and shared their knowledge, those who had kindly contributed to our fundraising activities, those who shared images for our publications, Martin Clement and his team and the Durban Botanic Gardens Trust for the use of the office and for other privileges in the Gardens, and the current committee for their enthusiasm, dedication and commitment.

The floor was opened for any questions.

Allimuthu Perumal commended Christine Sole on the children's programme and asked how it could be taken forward.

Christine thanked Allimuthu and said it was a model that could be reproduced. It worked well given the constraints, but more help was needed.

Allimuthu replied that it was worthy of a Kew Gardens programme. He suggested it could be combined with the Plant Fair.

The Chair's Report was accepted (Proposed: Janet Longman; seconded: Barry Lang).

5. CITY NATURE CHALLENGE 2023

Please see Appendix 1. Ethekewini had performed remarkably well, finishing second to Cape Town in Southern Africa.

6. **TREASURER'S REPORT**

Please see Appendix 2.

Janet Longman read out the Treasurer's Report, as Dave Henry had been unable to attend.

Janet commented that Accumulated Funds were built over the years to strengthen the Branch and so that there were reserves if needed, e.g. as a buffer should there be a rained-out plant fair when expenses could not be recouped.

There were no questions from the floor.

Janet and Dave were thanked. The Treasurer's Report was accepted (Proposed: Barry Lang; seconded: Mahomed Desai).

7. **BOTANICAL EDUCATION TRUST REPORT**

Please see Appendix 3.

Christine Sole read out the Report by the Chair of the Trust, Charles Botha, as he had been unable to attend.

There were no questions from the floor.

Christine was thanked for standing in for Charles.

8. **ELECTION OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

The Branch Committee comprised Suvarna Parbhoo Mohan as Chair, Dave Henry as Treasurer, Janet Longman: Information Officer, website and Facebook champion, Christine Sole: Children's Holiday Programme and Durban Botanic Gardens Education liaison, Mahomed Desai: fieldtrips and ecology information, Hilton Maclarty: projects, engaging with estates, and the BotSoc tree labels project. Barry Lang represented both the Durban Botanic Gardens Trust and the conservancies and supervised our work-parties, and Sandra Dell was Secretary. Janet Longman had requested to step aside after many years as Plant Fair Chair. James Hallé had recently taken over this challenging role.

Although not full committee members and they did not attend committee meetings, we relied heavily on the following volunteers: Graham Grieve: *PlantLife* editor, Talia Krishanlal Moodley: newsletter, Charles Botha: Botanical Education Trust Liaison, James Hallé: Plant Fair Chair and Steve Woodhall: City Nature Challenge/Great Southern Bioblitz eThekweni Chair.

Roles needing filling on the committee were Marketing, Social media, EIA commenting, Outings support, and Holiday Programme support

The committee was willing to stand again. There were no nominations from the floor. The existing committee was elected *en-bloc* (Proposed: Di Higginson, seconded Jane Troughton).

Suvarna thanked the committee and looked forward to a good year ahead.

9. GENERAL

Suvarna announced that the Great Southern Bioblitz would take place from 24 to 27 November 2023. She encouraged everyone to participate.

The Branch's Indigenous Plant Fair would take place on 9 and 10 September 2023 at the Durban Botanic Gardens Visitors Centre. Suvarna requested that the poster be circulated widely.

The Chair of the CNC eThekwini committee, Steve Woodhall, was invited to present prizes of CNC cooling towels to the top achievers in the CNC eThekwini region. These were: Muhammad Adamjee: most observations; Muhammad also placed first in the whole of southern Africa - even surpassing SANBI iNat champion Tony Rebelo! Errol Douwes (in absentia) had recorded the most species and Barry Lang: most identifications. Steve was also given a gift of a CNC cooling towel on behalf of SANBI, in thanks for his work for CNC and the excellent eThekwini results.

Christine Sole was presented with a gift of the book, 'Forest Plants', as a gesture of appreciation for her devising and running of the challenging Children's Winter Holiday Programme.

Suvarna invited Steve to draw the winner of the raffle of the book, 'Field Guide to the Succulents of Southern Africa', which had been run on behalf of the Botanical Education Trust. The winner was announced to applause as Sandy Steenhuisen.

Suvarna then invited any questions, suggestions or comments from the floor.

Mahomed Desai suggested that a tutorial was needed on how to take photos for identification purposes showing diagnostic features for iNaturalist. However, there were videos available on this already. Steve mentioned that there was a need for capacity-building in the conservancies ahead of time.

There were no other comments from the floor.

10. TALK

Suvarna then introduced guest speaker, Dr Mahomed Desai, who gave a fascinating and informative illustrated presentation, *Ecological Meanderings – A discussion on various ecosystems in Sub-Saharan Africa*.

11. CLOSURE

The meeting then closed at 15h30.

Minutes recorded by: _____
Secretary



Confirmed by:
Chairperson



Date: 17 July 2024

APPENDIX 1: CITY NATURE CHALLENGE REPORTBACK

Overview of City Nature Challenge (CNC) 2023 results



2 323

people participated in the CNC 2023 event



8 555

species were observed during the 4-day challenge



1 364

persons assisted in identifying species within Southern Africa



Out of 8 555 species observations,

245

were invasive species and

551


were threatened species



City Nature Challenge (CNC) 2023

Snapshot of the favourite species across 31 cities in southern Africa





About


The region of Zululand, South Africa is home to an abundant diversity of species, including home to iSimangaliso Wetland Park - a UNESCO World Heritage Site home to a variety of species. We are participating in the City Nature Challenge 2023, together with cities from across the World.

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City Nature Challenge 2023: Zululand

APR 28, 2023 - MAY 1, 2023

[Leave](#)
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Overview

520

OBSERVATIONS

384

SPECIES

113


IDENTIFIERS

18

OBSERVERS

Stats

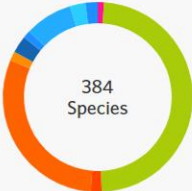
Stats



520

Observations

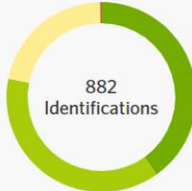
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- Needs ID
- Casual



384

Species


- Unknown
- Protozoans
- Fungi
- Plants
- Chromista
- Mollusks
- Arachnids
- Ray-Finned F...
- Amphibians
- Reptiles
- Birds
- Mammals



882

Identifications

- Improving
- Supporting
- Leading
- Maverick



About


iLembe Municipality residents will be participating in the City Nature Challenge 2023 by observing wildlife across the Municipality. Observations can be made anywhere: the beach, around your neighborhood, parks, reserves, etc. Simply download the app (at the bottom of the page), sign up to iNaturalist and get practicing for

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City Nature Challenge 2023: iLembe

APR 28, 2023 - MAY 1, 2023

[Members](#)
👤 4

Overview

24

OBSERVATIONS

21

SPECIES

18


IDENTIFIERS

9

OBSERVERS

Stats


Stats



24

Observations

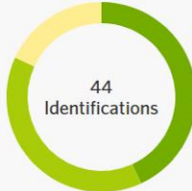
- Research Grade
- Needs ID
- Casual



21

Species


- Unknown
- Protozoans
- Fungi
- Plants
- Chromista
- Mollusks
- Arachnids
- Ray-Finned F...
- Amphibians
- Reptiles
- Birds
- Mammals



44

Identifications

- Improving
- Supporting
- Leading
- Maverick



City Nature Challenge 2023: eThekweni
APR 28, 2023 - MAY 1, 2023

About Members 👤 135

eThekweni Municipality residents will be participating in the City Nature Challenge 2023 by observing wildlife across the Municipality. Observations can be made anywhere: the beach, around your neighborhood, parks, reserves, etc. Simply download the app (at the bottom of the page), sign up to iNaturalist and get practicing for

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Overview

15,104
OBSERVATIONS


2,174
SPECIES

477
IDENTIFIERS

190
OBSERVERS

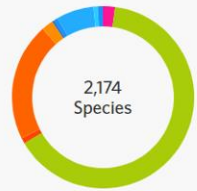
⚡ Stats

Stats



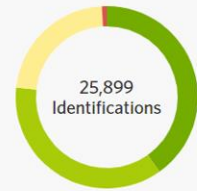
15,104
Observations

- Research Grade
- Needs ID
- Casual




2,174
Species

- Unknown
- Protozoans
- Fungi
- Plants
- Chromista
- Mollusks
- Arachnids
- Ray-Finned F...
- Amphibians
- Reptiles
- Birds
- Mammals



25,899
Identifications

- Improving
- Supporting
- Leading
- Maverick



City Nature Challenge 2023: KZN South Coast
APR 28, 2023 - MAY 1, 2023

About Members 👤 8

KZN South Coast residents will be participating in the City Nature Challenge 2023 by observing wildlife across the Municipality. Observations can be made anywhere: the beach, around your neighborhood, parks, reserves, etc. Simply download the app (at the bottom of the page), sign up to iNaturalist and get practicing for

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Overview

679
OBSERVATIONS

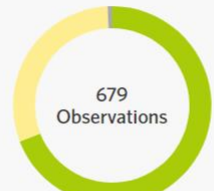
355
SPECIES

96
IDENTIFIERS

12
OBSERVERS

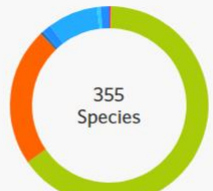
⚡ Stats

Stats




679
Observations

- Research Grade
- Needs ID
- Casual



355
Species

- Unknown
- Protozoans
- Fungi
- Plants
- Chromista
- Mollusks
- Arachnids
- Ray-Finned F...
- Amphibians
- Reptiles
- Birds
- Mammals



1,190
Identifications

- Improving
- Supporting
- Leading
- Maverick



KZN Champions

Zululand: Magda Botha

iLembe: Ayanda Duma

eThekwini: Steve Woodhall

South Coast: Graham Grieve

PMB/ Midlands: Kyle Johnson



Muhammad Adamjee

Most observations



Errol Douwes

Most species



Barry Lang

Most identifications

Appendix 2: TREASURER'S REPORT

Treasurers report - AGM 28 July 2023

Revenue increase from R42 241.12 to R67 650.19 despite reduction in branch allocation.

Interest reflected the rise in rate which will impact favourably again in the current year.

The resumption of the plant sale brought a welcome surplus of R20 089.59.

Purchase of books was offset by increase of book sales.

Expenditure however, matched revenue leaving a small surplus of R512.10.

Office expenses increased offset by the interest increase.

Bad debts written off reflected amounts in prior years.

Plantlife R3000 was the cost of scanning past volumes and will not be repeated.

Travel and accommodation - cost of delegate to branch convention.

Accumulated funds remain in excess of R250 000.00 and are invested on 32 day call.

We are considering investing in 12 months fixed for 80% of the funds to take advantage of interest rate increases.

APPENDIX 3: BOTANICAL EDUCATION TRUST

2022 Awards by the Botanical Education Trust

The Botanical Education Trust made awards last year totaling R123 386. Because all donations received by the Trust are invested permanently, the awards were funded only by income from the investments during the last year.

Applications always exceed the funds available, so this year five were selected from the ten received. The Trustees considered that these would best serve the conservation of our indigenous flora. It is very encouraging that two of the recipients are promising young botanists.

The first, Verona Govender, recently completed her MSc degree at Wits University. She is studying pollination in grass aloes. Of the 26 species described, only three remain safe from timber plantations and invasive species that have spread across South Africa. Habitat changes affect not only plant populations but also their pollinators and disruption of effective pollinator systems can have irreversible consequences for ecological processes. This study will lead to

improved management and hence conservation of these highly threatened grassland aloe populations.

Liam Taylor, also of Wits University, was the second young botanist to receive an award this year. He is investigating the role of baobab trees in supporting entire ecosystems. The very large elephant populations in our national parks are causing a huge loss of large trees, among them the baobab. This is of major concern as these trees provide a unique habitat in the landscape and their loss could induce a negative ecological cascade. The study will identify animal species, including cavity-nesting threatened birds, associated with baobabs. As the threat to baobabs from elephant destruction is an issue that needs urgent management response, it is important to help further justify that this tree species needs protection.

Because taxonomists seldom appear in the limelight of botanical research, they often find it difficult to attract funding. However, this work provides critical basic information about plant groups that can then be applied to many practical aspects such as conservation status, environmental management and environmental education.

Dr Wynston Woodenberg of the South African Biodiversity Institute has been awarded a grant to undertake a taxonomic revision of the genus *Portulaca*. This was last done in 1862 when only three species were reported. Currently there are about nine species in the region, some indigenous and some alien. The study will assist in the conservation of indigenous species of *Portulaca* as well as other indigenous plants impacted by the spread of alien invasive *Portulaca* species.

Willem Froneman of Wits University has received a grant for his project entitled “*Barleria* in South Africa: Waterwise, Sun-loving, Beautiful and Prickly”. Of the approximately 330 species of *Barleria* worldwide, 50 are in South Africa and at least a further 12 are still to be described. This project will result in a book which will include an up-to-date revision of the genus, detailed descriptions, distribution maps and a painting of every species to facilitate identification. It will also cover horticultural aspects and deal with propagation methods of this charismatic group of plants.

The last grant was to the Princess Vlei Restoration Project. This conservation area, on the Cape Flats, is secured in perpetuity in the environmental development plan of the City of Cape Town. Critically endangered Cape Flats Sand Fynbos and Cape Flats Dune Strandveld are found on site, which is surrounded by previously disadvantaged communities. As a result, the project is not only of vital conservation significance, as the area will be restored and rehabilitated, but it also re-introduces people to nature through community involvement and regular hands-on environmental education.

Dr Hugh Glen, who has been a Trustee since the Trust was founded in 2008, is retiring and will be replaced by Prof Glynis Goodman, a botanist at Wits University.

Charles Botha
(Chair of Trustees)