



MARCH 2021

SOUTHBROOM CONSERVANCY UPDATE

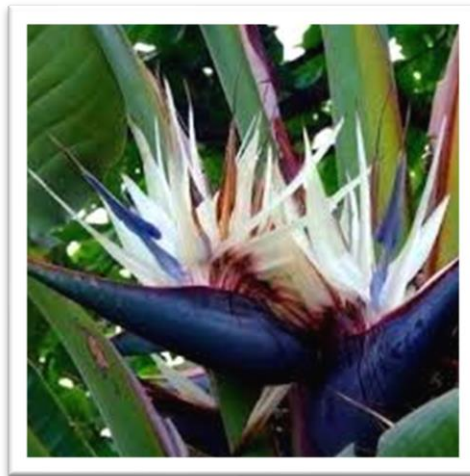
Recently we sent out a Special Appeal Letter to our Founding Members and Life Members to consider recommencing their annual subscriptions, this in an effort to bring in very much needed funds as our planned awareness and fund-raising events have been brought to a halt due to Covid-19.

The response was, for our small team, a wonderful boost of encouragement and appreciation for the work we do, as well as gave our coffers a shot in the arm. We would like to extend our sincere and grateful thanks to all the individuals and families who have so generously and willingly rallied their support in this drive.

If anyone else would like to join up as a member, our subscription form can be found here: http://southbroom.org/newsupdates_conservancy.htm.

Please remember that the SRA and the Conservancy are two separate entities with different bank accounts. Conservancy bank account details are on the subscription form. Please email P.O.P.s for donations or annual membership fees to: alfredhayter@gmail.com.

STRELITZIA FLOWER PICKERS



STRELITZIA NICOLAI FLOWER (WHITE BIRD OF PARADISE)

Our beautiful indigenous **Strelitzia nicolai** are becoming a hotly debated issue! What is encouraging is that our efforts to raise awareness around what is becoming an absolute pillaging of our local flora, is paying off. For those of you who are unaware of their importance to our ecosystem, **Strelitzia nicolai** are a source of food for birds (particularly sunbirds who love the sweet nectar!), pollinating insects such as bees, monkeys and blue duiker, who wait below for the petals to be discarded by the monkeys above. These trees, commonly known as wild banana's, are also home to genets, bats, birds (from sunbirds to eagle owls), duiker (both common and the petite blue duiker), and snakes.

They are synonymous with our coastal forests and the harvesting of their arils has become indiscriminate, with pickers trespassing on private property and chopping down the trees to reach the flowerheads.



Why is this detrimental? Apart from the impact on our wildlife, the often-collected immature seeds are non-viable for the purposes they are sold, i.e. to the cosmetics industry in countries such as Belgium, China and the United States. The mature seed is bright orange in colour and this is used as a pigment for lipstick. These immature seeds have only one fate: to be discarded. The seed-pickers earn per kg of viable seed, so their effort goes unrewarded.

- Trees chopped down mean that future crop supply is cut off (pun intended)
- Haphazard felling blocks foot paths for both human and animal and presents an increased fire danger risk as fire belts are breached and fire fighter access is impaired



STRELIZIA NICOLAI SEEDS

What is being done to curb this?

This is a sensitive and complicated issue and there are various bodies with whom it is necessary to liaise. Please be reassured that the Conservancy (and other conservancies along the coast) have been working towards a solution which will protect our strelizia's for both our creatures who feed and make them home as well as to ensure that there will be a source of revenue for seed-pickers going forward.

Various points still need to be finalized so this is an on-going matter. Please bear with us!

- Pickers will need to apply for and be issued with a permit.
- Training will be conducted, in Zulu, upon collection of the permit, with an emphasis on the permit conditions.
- The concept of 'grow your own', where seedlings could be planted close to their areas of residence for harvest (3 – 5 years, depending on their husbandry efficiency), has also been introduced to pickers.

Important to know for both home/landowners and seed pickers:

- Access to private land is not granted by the permit. This **MUST** be obtained from the home/land owner. Trespass will still hold despite permit, if no access has been requested and agreed upon by the home/land owner.
- RNM is the landowner of roads and public parks, unless they are under lease to clubs, eg. golf, tennis and bowls clubs. A permit would be required from RNM for roads and public parks.
- The Frederika Preserve is an absolute no-go as it is a protected area.
- Should you notice seed-pickers on private property or along the roads and public park areas, please call this number: **076 152 4930**

This is the **Police Reaction mobile number** for Disturbances. The police will respond and check for permits.



LOGGERHEAD TURTLES



How lucky are our south coast beaches to have recently had two sightings of nesting **Loggerhead turtles!** One at Munster and 3 weeks later, a second nesting female in our very own backyard!

Some interesting facts about Loggerheads:

1. **DID YOU KNOW?** The collective noun for a group of turtles is a **BALE!**
2. **Loggerheads** are named for their **exceptionally large heads** and are the world's largest hard-shelled turtle, with adults weighing in between 80 and 200kg!
3. These ocean-dwellers are **omnivorous** and enjoy a varied menu, including sea snails, bivalves (mussels), sea sponges, corals, sea anemones, barnacles, sea urchins, sea stars, fish, jelly fish, squid and blue bottles. They have **very strong jaws** which enable them to eat some of their hardier meals!
4. They rarely come ashore, other than when females nest. The female may **travel 1000's of kilometres to return to the beach** where she was hatched.
5. She leaves a **wavy track called a 'crawl'** whilst looking for a spot to make her nest.
6. The **hatchlings do not have sex chromosomes** so their gender is determined by the temperature within the nest – a warmer nest (30 degrees) hatches females and slightly cooler (29 degrees) hatches males.
7. When hatchlings begin to **'pip'** (break out of their shells), they use a small temporary tooth called a **caruncle**.
8. Everything from footprints to driftwood and crabs are obstacles as they make their way to the sea. Birds and fish are just a few of the predators these vulnerable creatures face; some experts say **only one out of a thousand** will survive to adulthood under natural conditions.
9. Very importantly to note, should you be fortunate to see the hatchlings embark on their first journey, is that they use the **natural light horizon**, which is usually over the ocean, along with the white crests of the waves and **reflection of the moon and the stars**, to reach the water when they emerge from the nest. **Any other light sources such as beachfront lighting, street lights, light from cars, torchlight, camp fires, mobile phone lighting, can lead hatchlings in the wrong direction!**

Please DO NOT attempt to assist them to the water! As difficult a path they must follow, it is necessary for their strength and survival.

10. These creatures have been on Earth **110 million years!**
11. They are on the **International List of Endangered Species.**

