



CHAMELEONS ECO-ADVENTURE

19 April 2017

On a warm autumn evening a dozen enthusiasts gathered to search for Cape Dwarf Chameleons under the guidance of chameleon enthusiast Daphne Bayer.

Daphne guided us to a very unlikely-looking spot. All we saw was alien vegetation and a lot of litter. Such was the environmental consciousness of the group that no-one could move to start looking for chameleons until they had collected all the litter!



But soon it was dark and powerful lights were switched on. It took a while to learn where to look, but once the first cry of "Oh look, here's one" went out, others were soon spotted.



To our great surprise they occurred on undeveloped residential land in an urban area. What's more, these indigenous reptiles seemed to prefer vegetation that's not native to the Hermanus area, namely 'dekriet' (*Thamnochortus insignis*) from the Albertinia area and, according to Daphne, Port Jackson willow from Australia.



Everyone was delighted with the many baby chameleons they spotted.

Michael Raimondo captured beautiful photographs of the chameleons.



A lovely 'chubby' female ...



... and a 'skinny' male.



Two territorial males showed evidence of old battle scars.



Morgan Hendricks admired a juvenile.



As they mature they change from brown to green and show the distinctive black eyes of the Cape Dwarf Chameleon.

There was great concern among the group for the future of the chameleons, as the land where they were found is soon to be developed. Everyone agreed that every effort should be made to find a solution to the dilemma.

Photo credits: Michael Raimondo.

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