

Dear Members,

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Public talks

As the days grow shorter and darkness falls earlier, we are putting public talks on hold. We would like our speakers and audience to get home safely after the talks.

The first spring/summer talk will be at our AGM on Thursday 17 September. We have lined up a great speaker that everyone who lives in close proximity to wildlife will want to hear.

Report on talk on Wildlife Rescue

We were privileged to have Michelle Watson as our speaker in April. She is co-founder of the Kogelberg Biosphere Wildlife Rescue and Training Centre where injured, sick and orphaned wildlife is cared for, raised, rehabilitated and, in best cases, released back into the wild.

The centre relies heavily on volunteers and donors. Not least are the many local vets who provide their services free of charge. The first vet Michelle approached agreed “provided it was nothing with a bitey end”. His first patient was a boomslang!

Over the past 18 months many different species have been helped – from reptiles and birds to mammals. Sadly, by far the most common reason for their dire situation has been man-made, ranging from habitat destruction through urban development and agriculture, to speeding cars on the R43 and R44. Wildfires kill just about everything in their alien-fuelled infernos. Species like the endangered Blue Crane, which nests on the ground during fire season, are particularly vulnerable. Chicks, unable to fly, are left with no means of escape.

Michelle also runs training courses for people who would like to learn how to best become first responders to wildlife in trouble. She made the point that many bird fledgelings and even young mammals that are seemingly abandoned, are, in fact, being cared for by their parents.



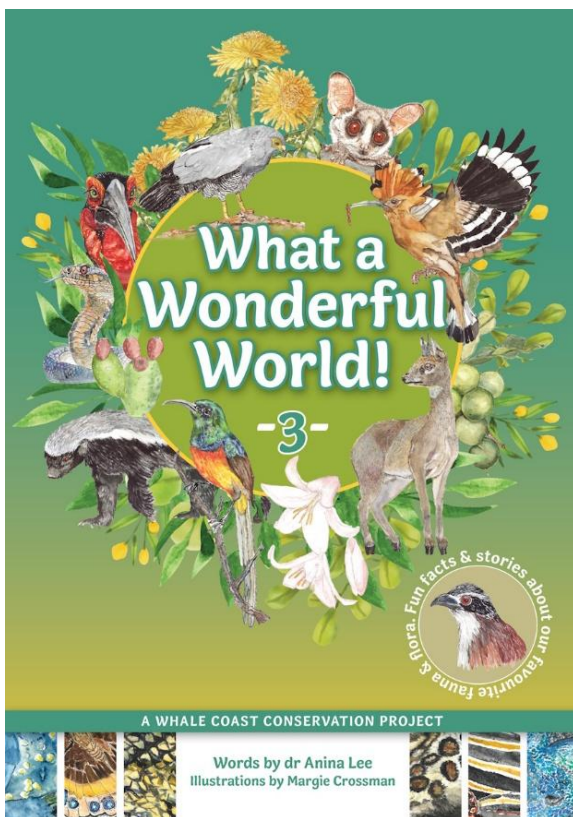
The talk was thoroughly enjoyed by the audience, including Miranda Kruger and twins Francois and Andre, seen here with Michelle (right).

Book 3 needs your support

“*What a Wonderful World! Book 3* continues to celebrate the extraordinary biodiversity of South Africa. Through storytelling and accessible

science, the book aims to foster a lasting connection between readers and the environment around them.”

Donations towards the production costs of *Book 3* will directly support high-quality writing, original illustrations, design, and printing. Every contribution helps bring this project to life and into the hands of readers who may be inspired to care more deeply for the environment.



By supporting this publication, you are investing in education and the power of storytelling to connect people with nature.

Donations can be made directly to the WCC bank account:

Nedbank current account number 1345020716

Eco-Adventures

WCC is also offering some bracing activities in May to raise funds for our book.

Eco-Activities

Raising funds to bring *What a Wonderful World* book 3 to life!

Whale Coast Conservation is launching a series of weekly Eco-Adventures in May to raise funds for the printing of *What a Wonderful World! Book 3*. Each outing is led by knowledgeable (and enthusiastic!) hosts, and designed to be informal, engaging, and fun!

1 May @ 14h30: Cliff Path Geology Walk (Westcliff)

A chance to read the story written in rock along our spectacular coastline—wave-cut platforms, sandstone formations, and the landscapes they shape.

Hosts: Anina Lee, Morgan Hendricks and John Blaine (Overberg Geoscientists Group)

8 May @ 14h30: Walker Bay and Beach Fun

Uncover the mystery behind the name “Walker Bay”, then explore the ingenious feeding strategies of beach creatures like sand mussels and plough snails.

Hosts: Anina Lee and Morgan Hendricks



15 May @ 14h30: Grottoes and Milkwood Adventure

Learn how Grotto Beach got its name, followed by a walk through an ancient milkwood forest to see its remarkable environmental adaptations.

Hosts: Anina Lee, Sheraine van Wyk and Shirley Mgoboza

22 May @ 14h30: Fynbos Under the Microscope

A close-up look at fynbos like you’ve never seen before, including proteas, ericas, restios and geophytes.

Hosts: Anina Lee, Sheraine van Wyk, Shirley Mgoboza and Morgan Hendricks

IMPORTANT! BOOKING IS ESSENTIAL!

R200 adults | R100 children special price for all four adventures: R600

Contact Anina Lee
anina.wcc@gmail.com
 WhatsApp: 083 242 3295

All outings are weather dependent. Postponements will be communicated to those who have booked. Numbers are limited to keep things personal.

Hermanus High School Gr 10 Plant Science Workshop

Whale Coast Conservation presented a plant science programme at Fernkloof Nature Reserve for the Grade 10 Life Science class of Hermanus High School.

The course, run by WCC’s Sheraine van Wyk - with colleagues and volunteers - included both theory lessons and the opportunity to look at plant

cellular structures and flower anatomy through microscopes.

They also had the opportunity for hands-on experiments, learning about not only physiological processes, but also the scientific method.

They studied the cellular anatomy of a plant - and how these structures are designed to perform their functions. They then looked at how fynbos plants adapt their functional parts to survive in the harsh and varied fynbos environment resulting in a unique and biodiverse fynbos vegetation.

The learners studied the four main groups of fynbos and the pollination strategies for the different plants.



The afternoon activities took place at Grotto beach.



Interacting with a few sandy beach animals was fun as it meant digging for white mussels and feeding plough snails tasty fish morsels to lure them from the sand by following the chemical trails of the bait. They studied the feeding mechanisms of these fascinating animals.



Thanks to the I&J Abalone farm for bringing their exhibit all the way from Gansbaai. It was great to see these snails up close.



Shirley Mgoboza explained the ecology and environmental adaptations of milkwood trees while leading learners through the ancient milkwood forest just behind the first dunes.

On the second day Sheraine van Wyk described the water movement through a plant - how several physiological processes work together to bring about this complicated process.



Learners were tasked with setting up the notoriously tricky potometer apparatus themselves. This type of hands-on activity is important to understand the scientific method.

The learners could use the apparatus to conduct experiments to test the effects of environmental

factors such as heat, wind and humidity on the rate of transpiration of leafy plants.

In the process they also learned the critical importance of having a control in any experiment to measure cause and effect. There is great value in doing it yourself in the learning process.

A practical workshop to enhance life- and leadership skills rounded off a successful 2 days.

We thank all the volunteers who gave their time and expertise to make this plant science programme possible and such a success.

Gansbaai Academia Plant Science

Whale Coast Conservation presented a second 2-day plant science programme at Fernkloof Nature Reserve for 35 learners from Gansbaai Academia.

The course included both theory lessons and the opportunity to look at plant cellular structures and flower anatomy through microscopes.



Learners enjoyed the opportunity for hands-on experiments, learning about not only physiological processes, but also the scientific method.



Learners had the opportunity to set up their own experiments using the very tricky potometer apparatus.



Although challenging, learners stuck to their task and managed remarkably well.

This type of hands-on activity is important to understand precautionary measures, reliability and validity with respect to scientific experiments.

The group ended the day with a walk in the rain in Fernkloof Nature Reserve with Sheraine where they could see some of the flowers in the wild that they had studied.

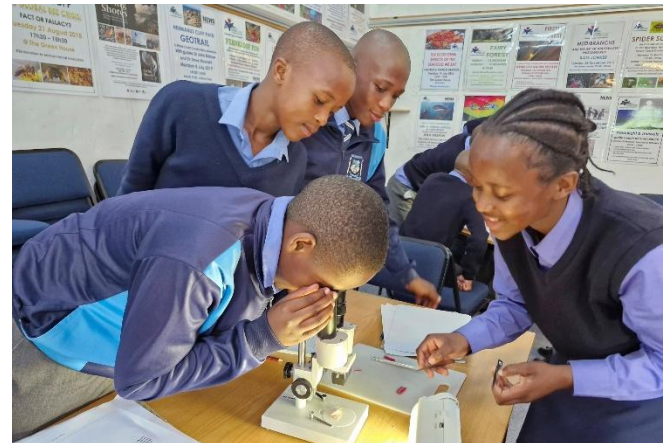
This workshop was sponsored by the AVI Community Trust.

Lukhanyo Plant Science Programme

Three Grade 7 classes each attended a fynbos workshop where they could study the flower anatomy, pollination and other adaptations of fynbos plants under microscopes.



The lessons were wonderful.



Who thought microscopes could be so much fun?





They ended the the day with a hike in the reserve to see the plants as they grow in nature.

The practical exposure to different types of fynbos and the opportunity to observe plant structures closely using microscopes greatly enriched their understanding. The hands-on experience allowed learners to connect theory with real-life examples, which deepened their appreciation of biodiversity and the importance of conserving our natural environment.

We truly value your partnership and dedication to education. Your contribution has inspired our learners and strengthened their interest in science. Mr Nomaya, Natural Sciences Educator

These workshops were kindly sponsored by the Hermanus Botanical Society.

We thank our sponsors



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