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## Contact Us!

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# Wild Things

Winter 2010

## Winter Warmer

An amount of R 43,000 was donated by "The Trust" for the upgrade of our bird room. Renovations involved breaking through to an adjoining room to create an extra and dedicated space for baby birds. The additional room allows for younger birds and fledglings to be kept at a separate temperature to the older birds who are kept in the recovery room. The rooms boast infrared lights, heaters and an epoxy floor that is easy to clean. Some state of the art brooders were also donated.

The centre has admitted a total of 641 birds since the 1st of January, amongst which a some rare species such as a Secretary Bird, an endangered Cape Vulture, various owls, a Comorant, a Cape Ganet, a Spoonbill, a Pelican, a Marshall Eagle and various other birds.

## Baby Porcupine saved off the tracks by Hillary Train Driver

A train driver from Hillary, Willem Delpot, could not believe his eyes when he saw a small baby porcupine with the corpse of its mother on the train tracks outside Ladysmith. When he saw the baby a second day in a row, he decided he would stop his train in advance the next time he passed that section of rail.

On the third day, Willem stopped the train and picked up the tiny baby porcupine that could fit into the palm of his hand. Willem and his family bottlefed the baby, hoping to release it back into the wild. However it grew fast and furiously and soon started nibbling at all the wrong things. "It ate our telephone cords and all kinds

of electrical wiring" says William. This is because unbeknown to most people, porcupine's are South Africa's largest rodent and have to keep their teeth sharp. William brought "Spike" to CROW, the Centre for Rehabilitation of Wildlife in Yellowwood Park.

Spike is now approximately 3 months old and will have winter with us, so that he can be given the best chance of survival. Spike is still a bit young and we are entering our autumn months - when we release animals we try and ensure this is done during a season when food is plentiful and animals can find their way around before the winter. We would like to appeal to the public to bring young animals into a rehab facility as soon as possible after they are found. "Inevitably wild animals are cute and cuddly when they are found, but soon enough they start growing up and become difficult to manage. By this time they have often also become used to human contact and it is so much more difficult to rehabilitate them. It is in the best interest of the animal that they start the rehabilitation process as soon as possible."



**Remember to come and visit us for OPEN HOUR!**

The last Sunday of every month • 11am

June 27th

July 25th

August 29th

September 26th

*See you there!*

## Rare Cape Vulture flying high after recovery at CROW

A rare Cape Vulture has been admitted to the raptor centre at CROW (Centre for Rehabilitation of Wildlife) in Yellowwood Park. The vulture was found on the side of the road by honorary rangers from the Ladysmith area and was first believed to perhaps be suffering from a broken back. X-rays revealed no broken bones and the vulture was diagnosed with having been poisoned. The bird initially had to be hand fed but is now recovering fast and will be due for release back into the wild shortly.

The Cape Vulture (*Gyps coprotheres*), is an Old World vulture in the family Accipitridae, which also includes eagles, kites, buzzards and hawks. It is endemic to Southern Africa, and is found mainly in South Africa, Lesotho and Botswana. The species is listed by the IUCN as "Vulnerable", the major problems it faces being poisoning, disturbance at breeding colonies, electrocution and the muti trade. It nests on cliffs and usually lays one egg per year. Of interest is the impact the Soccer World Cup may have on the future of vultures in general. Trading in vulture parts is rife and according to some muti practitioners, vultures have clairvoyant properties. It is said that wearing a skinned vulture head could assist the wearer with predicting the outcome of horse races, soccer matches and even the Lotto.

The use vulture body parts are believed to be one of the main reasons for the alarming fall in vulture numbers in South Africa and Lesotho. The birds live in large groups called "wakes" or "committees" and often die after eating a carcass laced with a lethal insecticide commonly used on pineapple farms. Users of vulture parts for gambling purposes don't seem to realise or care that the use of insecticides can place them at risk as well.

The vulture currently recovering at CROW will be ringed and fitted with telemetry equipment which will allow the Vulture Working Group to track its movements. This will assist the group with gathering valuable information on the species. It is likely to be released at the Kempenfeldt Vulture Station near Dundee. It is important for us to try and release animals back into the areas that they originated from, whilst taking into account any risk factors. The feeding station at Kepenfeldt is well established and have regular visits from other Cape Vultures, with 63 having been counted on Vulture Awareness day last year.

### *Clover*

Clover, the badly injured vervet monkey featured in our previous newsletter who was rescued by one of Clover's truck drivers, has made a miraculous recovery. She has been joined to a troop of 19 other monkeys and is now being prepared for release.



## Baboons Baboons Baboons

Robbie the orphaned baby Chacma baboon has found a friend. 7 month old Hailey is a new arrival at the Centre. The little baboon's mother was killed by a car and the clinging baby removed and eventually brought to CROW. Hailey is severely malnourished and has to be on a special diet and receive vitamin injections in order to build up her strength. The two will be joined with 8 other baboons presently at CROW as soon as they are big enough.

With the assistance of SASIX, the baboon enclosure at CROW has been extended and enhanced. A new "hill cage" has been incorporated into the existing enclosures in order to provide the baboons awaiting release with better stimulation.

In previous newsletters you would have read about the release of our previous two baboons troops at Luthuli Game Reserve. The last troop released has just recently been seen with a new born baby, congratulations to the new parents!

**CROW is in need of a suitable release site for our baboon troop, so if you can assist or have some ideas, please email us at [info@crow.co.za](mailto:info@crow.co.za)**



## Hands and Rands

CROW runs a very active GAP year volunteer programme for international students. With the assistance of GAP Year provider, Travellers Worldwide, the existing volunteer accommodation has been refurbished with a new kitchen, bathroom and tiled throughout. An additional grant from the National Lotteries Board Distribution Trust Fund has also allowed us to expand our volunteer accommodation and new self catering units have been erected, allowing us to take a total of 13 volunteers at a time. Volunteers are the life blood of the organization, providing both the manpower to be able to complete the daily operational duties, as well as much appreciated project donations which assist with the operational costs.

### *ACSA adopts enclosures*

Thanks to the Airports Company of South Africa, ACSA, the existing mammal block at CROW has been renovated. The donation also allowed us to upgrade our Vervet Monkey enclosures, extending the height and amount of coverage against the elements. CROW is one of the few centre's where our enclosures meet the new norms and standards for primate rehabilitation as set out by the wildlife authorities. These upgrades form part of the CROW corporate "Adopt-an-Enclosure" campaign.

The best cage is an empty cage!