

View From The Top

What a superb month we have had! In fact, the only poor weather was at the African Birdfair held at Walther Sisulu National Botanical Gardens.

Our September is always highlighted by immense "action" at the local mulberry tree. This year was no different, with 17 species of bird visiting in 2 weeks - and we still have mulberries!

As always, the speckled mousebird was the winner in the visibility stakes. I immediately started thinking about "the usual suspects", and realised that it was a very human thing too. Just check your bird club - it will be the same people buzzing around and doing the work. This edition salutes them!

A second salute is to two organisations doing something for Centurion - Hennops Blue Horizon NPC, and the Friends of Doringkloof Spruit. Both are cleaning up and making our small piece of the world a better place to live in.

george@naturesheart.co.za.

Birding Plant of the Month

Sneezewood Tree (*Ptaeroxylon obliquum*)

The tree for October is chosen for a slightly different birding reason. We think it makes a great place for a nesting log or box. Perhaps even for owls if you have a large enough garden to let this tree grow fully. Even so, it is not a very big tree, and is suited to smaller gardens.

All the same, the off-white flowers attract bees and various other insects, and will be of great interest to all your garden birds. Generally the flowering will be early summer

Furthermore, the tree is suited to most parts of the RSA, and will grow well in coastal regions and bushveld.

Finally, this is a pretty tree -

even the soft charcoal colour bark is attractive.



Sneezewood Tree

Nature's Heart

Specials of the Month

These offers are available until 26th October, and whilst stocks last.

1): ALL NEW: Peanut Treats Bulk Box (12) **R160,00**

2): Introductory Offer: Beaded Mealworm Feeder **R60,00**

3): 30 Suet Ball Bucket **R250,00**

Bon Mots (for Cyril Ramaphosa)

Buenos Días, Capitan, Don't let this boat go down. (Mike Batt - Waves)

Environmental Chirps

What makes someone volunteer to clean up a smelly polluted river? It is not the money - they don't get paid. They certainly have better things to do with their time. I believe they do it because they have to do it - somebody has to do it, and they know that if they do not pitch in, no-one will. That makes it a pure labour of love.

I recently bumped into just such a group cleaning the Hennops at Zwartkops Country Club. I had never heard of them before - Hennops Blue Horizon NPC (check out their website). They had a horrible job, but they all looked happy. There are so many lessons for us all:

- 1 The job is thankless, and only a handful of people know or care - you will get no awards.

- 2 You have a vision, and at least it is shared by some, and you are somehow bound together.
- 3 There is very little management hierarchy - everyone has to pitch in.
- 4 Everyone knows that progress is slow. You may not permit yourself to become disheartened.
- 5 There is a kind of "camaraderie in adversity".

With some exceptions it reminds me of stories our fathers told of the Eighth Army in the desert. I was privileged to see that camaraderie of vets myself. And then it occurred to me. This is a war. We had better win it. We certainly will not win without these foot-soldiers. Naturally there are many other similar endeavours. We plead with you to sign up to the one that suits your interests today.

Bird of the Month

White Bellied Sunbird (*Cinnyris talatala*)

We at Nature's Heart love sunbirds, all sunbirds! But we have special love for the white bellied, because it is the most common fellow in our area. It is attracted to the garden by nectar, but also by activity from other birds - so we guess an inquisitive creature. Conversely, we are attracted by the busy flashes of iridescent green, the happy high pitched calls, and the sense of spring rejuvenation. If you want them in your garden, you need to be in the right area, and you definitely need a nectar feeder!

