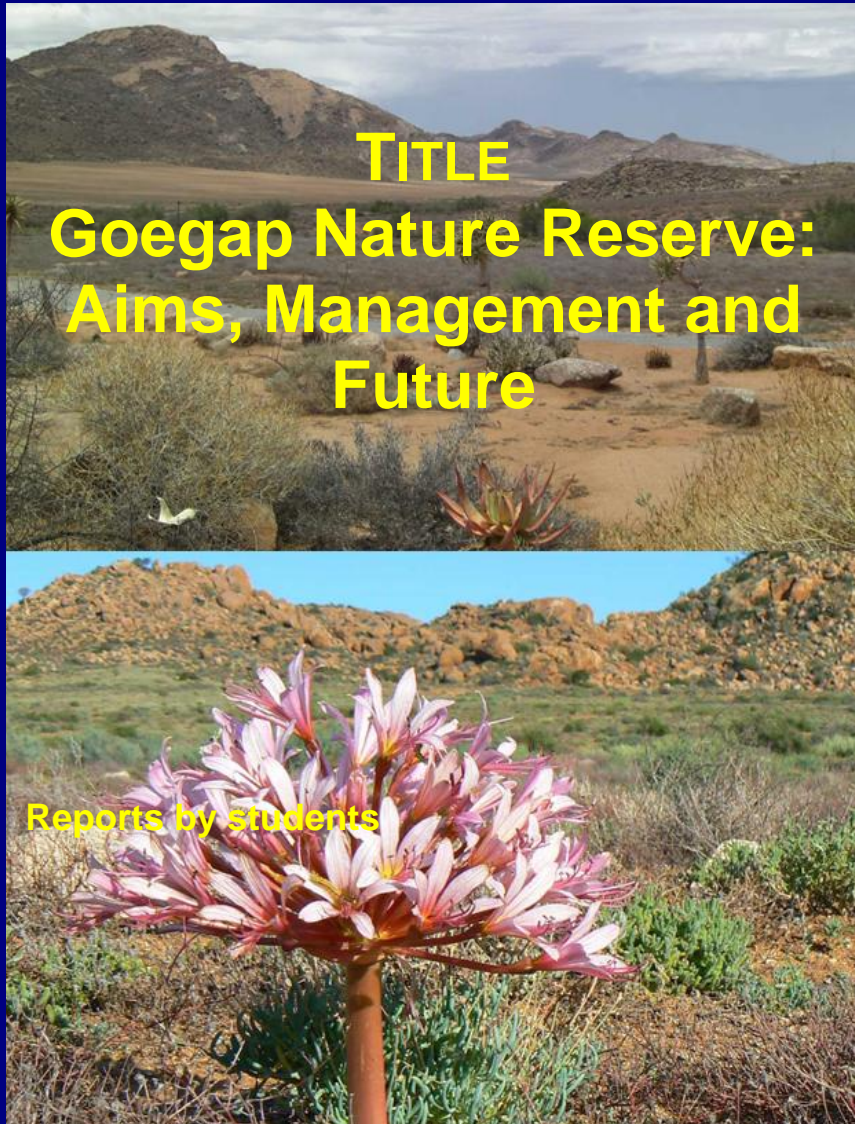


# FSM-TIMES

FourStripedMouse



**TITLE**

## Goegap Nature Reserve: Aims, Management and Future

Reports by students

### IMPRESSUM

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#### PUBLICATION DATES

The FSM-TIMES is published quarterly, in January, April, July and October. The FSM-TIMES is sent as email-attachment in pdf.

#### SUBSCRIPTION AND FEES

To subscribe to the FSM-TIMES, write an email to: [carsten.schradin@zool.uzh.ch](mailto:carsten.schradin@zool.uzh.ch). In the subject field write "FSM-TIMES

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## WILLKOMMEN BEI DER SIEBENUNDZWANZIGSTEN AUSGABE DER FSM-TIMES!



Liebe Leser,

Die diesjährige Trockenzeit war eine der feuchtesten seit langem. Seit Januar regnete es mehrmals. Am 15 Februar kam dann ein Gewitter, innerhalb von nur 2 Stunden 44mm, das sind 25% des durchschnittlichen Jahresniederschlages! Das Wasser quoll von den Bergen und Hügeln, füllte das trockene Flussbett, welches zu einem reissenden Strom wurde, der schliesslich fast den gesamten Field Site flutete. Am nächsten Tag war das Wasser wieder weg. Mäuse fielen dem Unwetter nicht zu Opfer, aber die Flut zerstörte grosse Teile des Field Sites. Seit 2001 war der Busch B18 einer der attraktivsten Nestplätze für die Mäuse, doch dieser

grosse Busch wurde von der Flut zerstört. War er früher von gutem Pflanzenwuchs umgeben, ist es nun ein totes Sandbett, das dort zu sehen ist. Positiv immerhin: Da es mehrmals geregnet hatte, wuchsen wieder einige Pflanzen, die Mäuse konnten eine zweite kurze Fortpflanzungs-saison bewerkstelligen, und die Population wuchs wieder. Da die Fortpflanzungs-saison 2010 wegen fehlendem Regen sehr schlecht war, war dies sehr wichtig. Ansonsten hätten wir im September, zu regulären Fortpflanzungs-saison, nur noch eine handvoll Mäuse gehabt. Doch nun ist es wieder gut bevölkert, das Land der Mäuse!

*Carsten Schradin*

## WELCOME TO THE TWENTY- SEVENTH ISSUE OF THE FSM-TIMES!

Dear Reader,

the dry season this year was very wet! We had rain several times since January, and then an extreme thunderstorm mid February: 44mm of rain in only two hours, 25% of the average rainfall per year. The dry

riverbed became a stream, finally flooding nearly the entire field site. Most mice survived the floods, but there was significant damage to the field site. For example the large bush B18, the preferred nesting site for mice for the last 10 years, was destroyed. At least the rains enabled

the mice to have a second short breeding season. This was important, as the breeding season 2010 was very bad because of lack of rain, and the population would have declined to less than 10m mice until September.

But now the population in the Land of Mice is recovering.

*Carsten Schradin*

## NAMAQUALAND-WEATHER

*By Ed Yuen*

THE LAST THREE MONTHS	January	February	March
MINIMUM TEMPERATURES			
NIGHT	11.7	12.5	10.5
DAY	27.6	29.4	26.8
MAXIMUM TEMPERATURES			
NIGHT	26.6	23.5	22.7
DAY	38.0	36.4	39.1
NIGHTS WITH FROST	0	0	0
RAINFALL IN MM	14.2	129.2	3.3
DAYS WITH RAIN	3	10	5



The dry season in Goegap this year is not that dry at all. We received our first thunder storm during the first week of January, even though it was merely 14 mm of rains, but the rains had fallen so fast and hard that our dry river was once again flowing since the last time in 2008. A couple of weeks after the rains the reserve was already covered by *Tribulus* and its little yellow flowers. Little did we know, all of this was just the calm before the 'real' storm. The river flew again in the beginning of February when we had another 19 mm of rains. Just a few days later a massive 44 mm of rains was recorded at the Station and this was followed by another 66 mm of rainfall over 4 days. A large amount of water was coming down from the hills around us and

joined at the river bed in the field site. Our main road was cut off by the flood water that was at least 8 meters wide and half a meter deep which was coming down from the hills behind our Station. The water rushed down across the field site and down to our water pump then it joined the main river at nest B18. At the main



river, the current in the river was so strong and fast that it dug deeper and deeper on the river bed and washed off dirt that was around the banks some part of it was as wide as 20 meters and up to two meters deep. In total, we had 129 mm of rains within two weeks during February, even though the flood had destroyed countless grass patches and shrubs in the field site (and some of our equipments had been washed away,

too), luckily almost all the mice had survived from the flood. Around a week after the flooding, the field site has already begun to recover, washed over grass began to grow back straight, green leaves appeared on battered shrubs, seedlings emerged from the ground, and we even have a few march lily in the field. With all these rains many annual plants species such as, *Dimorphotheca*, *Gazania*, *Heliophila*, *Mesembryanthemum* and *Arctotis* could be once again found in the field. Unfortunately, due to the lack of consistent gentle rains only a few flowers of these plants can be found. But this is more than enough for the mice to take this opportunity to have an extra breeding season, and this cannot be coming at a better time; with this extra breeding season, both the mice and us can be relieved as the population level recover from a not so good breeding season in 2010. Unlike other extra breeding season we had before, this year due to the large amount of rainfall, instead of just a few females tried to breed, almost all females had become receptive. On top of that, we had a few philopactics dispersed, breeding males left their group to search for extra group copulation and we even have a few roamers. So far, we found females from at least seven different groups had given birth and we had already trapped some juveniles around 2 to 3 weeks old from around 4 groups. It was just like a normal breeding season in spring!

## THE PEOPLE IN GOEGAP

By Ed Yuen

In the beginning of January Ivana returned to Zurich to finish her write up for her PhD. Since her departure there has been a brand new team of people at Succulent Karoo research station. First of all, we had Helen Bellfield from Cambridge, UK and Lisa Schleicher from Konstanz, Germany joined us. Then, after a joyful six months, sadly Nicola had left us and returned to Northern Ireland in mid-January. However, just two week later, in the beginning of February John Maye, an MSc student from Belfast, had arrived to study the

basking behavior of the striped mice for his MSc thesis and along with him he had brought all the Irish rain here. In March, we had two more new field assistants arrived, Daphne Anastassiadi, our first student from Greece, and Thomas Schmid from Zurich, Switzerland. With all the unexpected rains we had received this dry season, it was fortunate that we had quite a few very capable helping hands here to cope with all the extra breeding activity happening here with of our mice.



The group in March 2011: Yogi the dog with Ed, Daphne, John, Lisa, Thomas and Helen.

## AFRICAN BRAAI

By Daphne Anastassiadi

The highlight of the previous week was our veritable African Braai. Johan is a friend of Ed who lives in Springbok and is South African. We had been invited last Saturday at his place for a Braai. Of course, during the week we all had been very excited about this exceptional change of our Saturday's evening. However, as we had to wake up early in the morning to work and then, in the evening, check by radio-tracking where our mice sleep, we were tired before leaving and we were upset for not having the time to take a proper shower. But we were also very very hungry. So, we got in the car, Ed, John, Helen, Thomas who had arrived just two days ago and me. We took with us our meat, some jacket potatoes, butter, salt, some wine and a couple of beers each. We were also very lucky, because there was a bright and clear full moon night.

Surprisingly, when we arrived at Johan's place, we found out that there were other people too. They were friends of Johan and all of them locals. At the beginning, we were sitting kind of apart, but very soon, we started to talk all together, because they were extremely friendly. As we were waiting for the charcoal to be ready, we were discussing about a variety of interesting subjects, ranging from the way the South Africans experienced the World Cup last year in their country to everyday subjects, such as what is the work as manager at a bank or like a girl named Nancy or what food restrictions another girl named Leticia has. Really impressive

during this Braai evening was the friendly and pleasant behavior of Johan's friends, and the fact that we rapidly became a cheerful group.

After dinner and after having tasted a -not so good- king of purple fruity local alcohol, Johan's friends suggested us to go out to the club of Springbok. I was very tired and I would have preferred to go to sleep, but John and Thomas were really excited about having the opportunity to have some fun, do something different, drink a little bit more, listen to some music, dance and hang around with some other people. Besides, even for me it was of great interest to see how the citizens of Springbok spend their Saturday nights. So, we went all together to the club which was a nice place. We hadn't thought about going out, so we didn't have any money, but Johan's friends invited us and paid for all. It was nice, because except of the beers, I tasted some South African alcohol, even though I didn't like it at all, as everything was too fruity for my tastes. We spent the night dancing, we had a lot of fun and we stayed until very late.

The way back home was very long and the wake up of next morning even worse...Fortunately, it was Sunday and we didn't have any work to do, so we could sleep as long as we liked. For me, the best moment of the African Braai was the breakfast on Sunday morning, when we didn't stop laughing for at least a couple of hours, remembering the previous night. The African Braai was a top

moment of our life in Goegap, but we are a great team and we keep

laughing all the time either with or without African Braais.

## GRAZING IN GOEGAP

By Helen Bellfield

Arriving in South Africa and Goegap being a vegetarian I figured that as with a previous field experience that in a worst case scenario I may be living on a diet of cheese sandwiches, this potentially gloomy thought was reinforced by my image of the South African Braai packed full of exotic sounding antelope. Happily, this assumption was wildly wrong; fresh fruit is readily available along with a decent selection of fresh veg and abundant cans- and in fact my vegetarian diet was only limited by my laziness and dubious cooking skills and not by the availability of ingredients.

The research station itself (actually Ed, Lisa, John, Dafni and Thomas) was also very welcoming of vegetarians; my Saturday night braai of quorn sausages (not cardboard as the others insisted), sweet potatoes, sweet corn and onions looked tastier than the meat (well to me at least) and for strict vegetarians - and in my case for meat eaters with a prejudice against quorn sausages - the two could easily be separated. Equally, communal cooking was still attempted - the presence of John, a lactose intolerant masters student (for reference soya milk and butter have been located in Spar), meant I wasn't the fussiest eater there and created the challenge of finding a cheese, milk and meat free national dish that could be cooked with ingenuity on

Spar ingredients. Luckily everyone rose to the occasion, despite the fact most were first ever attempts of home favourites, with culinary highlights including Lisa's Spätzle with corvettes, Dafni's Greek stuffed peppers and tomatoes, tortillas, homemade pizza, my drop scones, John's traditional Irish breakfast and stew and Thomas's Swiss Rösti.

In town, although admittedly with a slightly limited repertoire, eating out was also vegetarian (and lactose free) friendly, with both Nandos and Wimpys the town days lunch venues of choice, offering a vegetarian

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burger. Similarly the steakhouse, for evenings out, offered up both the mysterious vegetarian platter (a giant

baked potato) and pizza – the only missing option being a vegetarian way to get on the golden wall of fame.

## LÁ LE NAOMH PADRIGH SAN GOEGAP – ST. PATRICKS DAY IN GOEGAP

By John Maye

Saint Patrick's Day is a yearly holiday in Ireland. It falls on the 17<sup>th</sup> of March. It is celebrated around the world where ever there is an Irish connection. In Ireland the day usually starts with everyone going to church, followed by watching the parade through your local town. The festivities continue with everyone usually going out to parties or the local pub. The night is rounded off with a fireworks display. However St. Patrick's Day in Goegap was different as I was the first person from the Republic of Ireland to undertake field work at the research station and with the day never been celebrated before, it was up to me to get everyone to turn a little bit Irish for the day.

We had to celebrate it a day earlier to coincide with our town day. Everyone at the station had to wear something

green as is customary. I also made shamrocks out of green card for everyone to wear. The day in town consisted of us doing our normal routine but we stayed later. We had a very enjoyable evening with a few drinks in Inferno (a local bar) before heading to the steakhouse for a delicious meal and lively conversation. The night ended too early for an Irish guy on St. Patrick's but everyone in the research station got into the mood and embraced the Irish traditions. I also told everyone the story of St. Patrick and how he came to Ireland, bringing Christianity and banishing all the snakes from Ireland. It was a wonderful evening with everyone's help I felt like I was at home in Ireland as the research station turned into a little bit of the emerald Isle for the day.

## AKTIV IN GOEGAP

Von Lisa Schleicher

Nachdem Helen und ich jetzt schon zwei Monate in der Research Station in Goegap sind und null aktiv waren außer zu arbeiten musste das jetzt mal geändert werden.

Der nächste Sonntag wurde als Wandertag angesetzt, was nicht nur

die sonntägliche Wanderung zum Telefon am Office beinhalten sollte. Wir wollten die Touristenwanderung machen, die in den Bergen um das Office herum ausgeschildert ist!

Dafür sind wir extra früh, um 10 Uhr, aufgebrochen, damit wir nicht in der Mittagshitze wandern mussten.



Um 11 Uhr waren wir dann auch schon am Office. Dort haben wir dann erstmal wieder die geliebten langen Hosen, die wir auch bei der Feldarbeit tragen müssen, angezogen, um vor Schlangen und allem anderen „geschützt“ zu sein. Da Ed hier noch nie gewandert ist, wussten wir auch nicht, was auf uns zukommt. Ob wir wirklich einen Weg erkennen können oder ob wir uns durchs Feld schlagen müssen, keine Ahnung!

Mit einer vollen Wasserflasche und den warmen langen Hosen gings dann los zur großen Erkundung der Umgebung des Office.

Man kann zwischen einem kurzen und einem langen Wanderweg wählen. Da wir beide noch telefonieren wollten haben wir uns für den kurzen Weg entschieden.

Nach der ersten halben Stunde waren wir dann beim ersten Aussichtspunkt und haben uns schon gefragt, wie langs denn wohl noch sein wird! Es ist ein richtig schöner Weg, den man gut erkennt und nicht befürchten muss auf eine Schlange oder sonstiges zu treten. Die Aussicht

ist klasse und wir haben eine Pause genutzt um Fotos zu machen. Unsere Wasserflasche war schon halb leer und die Hitze war dann doch schon ziemlich...!

„Gut, dass wir nur den kurzen Wanderweg machen“, dachten wir. Nach der nächsten halben Stunde hab ich mich schon gefragt, wie lang dann wohl der lange Wanderweg sein muss, wenn man beim kurzen schon mehr als eine Stunde braucht! Es war ja schön, aber das Telefon hat dann doch gewartet und es hat gereicht. Ich hatte viele Steine gesammelt, die meine Hosentaschen gefüllt haben. Paviane oder Ähnliches haben wir leider nicht gesehen.

Auf einem nahe gelegenen Berg konnten wir einen Weg erkennen und haben angenommen, dass es sich dabei um den langen Wanderweg handeln müsste. Tja... weiteres Laufen hat uns gezeigt, dass es unsrer war. Nach eineinhalb Stunden waren wir dann endlich zurück am Office. Zum Wandern muss man sagen, dass es schon echt richtig schön war da oben aber unerwartet lang. Das Telefonieren haben wir uns auf jeden Fall verdient... und dann mussten wir ja auch noch die Stunde zurück zur Research Station laufen. Fertig vom Aktiv-sein haben wir uns dann auf ein kaltes Bier gestürzt.

Den Mittwoch drauf haben wir von Maxi, die im Office arbeitet, erfahren, dass wir, anstatt den kurzen Wanderweg zu laufen, den langen genommen haben. Der ist ca. 6 km lang. Ob wir zu blöd waren, „short“ und „long“ auf dem Schild zu lesen oder ob sich das Office einfach einen Spaß draus gemacht hat, wissen wir bis jetzt noch nicht!

Vielleicht sollten wir den langen Weg mal ausprobieren....



## Goegap Nature Reserve

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## **TITLE: GOEGAP NATURE RESERVE: AIMS, MANAGEMENT AND FUTURE**

*By Helen Bellfield and John Maye*

The research station is situated in Goegap Nature Reserve within a global biodiversity hotspot. The management and the aims of the reserve are therefore not only interesting in terms of the general ecology of the area but are also relevant to the field site. Goegap, originally founded as a wild flower garden, currently encompasses 23,000 ha across the Namaqualand Hills and is in the process of further expansion.

### **Ecological Importance**

The reserve is situated in the Succulent Karoo Biome, which has been identified as one of the 25 global biodiversity hotspots and the only fully arid hotspot (Myers 2000) due to its highly endemic flora (>1500 vascular plants) and the loss of 70% of its primary vegetation. This biome is characterised by its highly diverse, endemic succulent flora. This is reflected in the high biodiversity of Goegap many species of succulents present. The fauna is also highly diverse with approximately 95 bird species present (with the house sparrow the only exotic species), including the threatened martial eagle which can also be found patrolling the skies. The reserve is also home to 46 mammal species, many reptiles including the black spitting cobra, 3 amphibians and 270 terrestrial

invertebrates (probably a lower boundary estimate).

Goegap has further ecological importance as it encompasses both biophysical components of the Succulent Karoo Biome. These are characterised by different seasonal rainfall patterns and subsequently by different and diverse floras. The Namaqualand Rocky Hills receives winter rainfall while the Bushman land receives summer rainfall creating a rainfall cline across the reserve. This cline is unusual and is associated with animal movements across the reserve (although not on the scale of the mass migrations that can be seen elsewhere in Africa!).

### **Aims**

The main aim of the reserve as stated in the management plan is 'to conserve and protect the biodiversity of Goegap as a benchmark system within the Succulent Karoo Biome'. The management plan recognises that this aim of maintaining biodiversity is also contingent on other factors such as climate change and highlights that on a species level the focus is on both preventing the introductions of exotic species and to prioritise the conservation of species that are threatened on global scale over a local scale.

In working towards conserving biodiversity the management policy is directed on an ecosystem scale and

maintaining and restoring ecological services and processes rather than on the end goal of biodiversity. This is reflected in an auxiliary aim of the reserve to expand. Expansion would allow the reserve to operate on the same large scale of ecosystem services and processes. The reserve is currently in the process of expansion with the incorporation of a tract of bushman land veld.

#### **Adaptive management**

To conserve biodiversity the adaptive management of processes is implemented in Goegap. Adaptive management is dependent on clearly defined aims, monitoring and a method of measuring the aims and so the success of management strategies. Management strategies may therefore be adapted in relation to their success in terms of the aims; this flexibility has been criticised as 'goal post changing' but this criticism is not valid as long as the aims are clearly defined.

The emphasis in Goegap is on minimum management intervention and on the monitoring of fauna and flora in terms of species richness, population density and composition. In an interview with Maxie Jonk, the current reserve manager of Goegap, she emphasised that management is directed towards processes and restoring ecosystem services and the view that biodiversity follows from a functioning ecosystem.

Monitoring of the biodiversity is crucial in determining the fulfilment of the Goegap main aim. A botanist, housed on site, monitors the flora throughout the reserve while grazer levels are also monitored.

The restoration of natural processes and ecosystem services is limited by the history of human intervention in the reserve. This human footprint is seen with the presence of the old Carolusberg Mine Slimes dam of the O'Kiep Copper Mining Company on the road towards the Reserve Office. On the field site it is visible by the presence of the remains of old buildings. This history raises the questions of what are the natural processes and what is the goal of ecological restoration?

Therefore while Goegap is not to be intensively managed, minimum interventions may be used with the emphasis on promoting the reliance of the system on original ecosystem processes. A simple case-study is predator - prey dynamics in the reserve. The reserve currently houses no large predators – with the exception of a rare visit from a male leopard as part of his much larger home range. As a result grazer numbers, such as Gemsbok and Springbok, are high with Gemsbok numbers rising from 50 to over 350 within the last decade. The high population density of grazers leads to the pressure of overgrazing on the veld. Currently the re-introduction of large predators is not feasible and therefore culling as an adaptive management intervention is used to reduce grazer numbers to a level that restores stable predator-prey equilibrium in the ecosystem. In this case, the management plan includes the ability to reintroduce large predators into the reserve (reinstating the natural process), although this is contingent on the historical presence of such predators in the local vicinity and the availability of habitat. Aside

from the need for available habitat with large predators requiring large home ranges, other barriers to the restoration of this natural process include the funding for purchasing the individual animals and new fencing, easing the concerns of surrounding landowners and implementing monitoring. However, small leopard and cheetah populations appear to be potentially viable options for the future.

On a smaller scale management intervention is also seen on the field site with the artificial waterhole maintained by the research station for the use of animals in the reserve.

#### **Tourism**

In looking at the management of the reserve in terms of conserving biodiversity, the impact of tourism, a secondary aim in the management plan, must also be considered. The tourist season coincides with the autumn flower season which lasts for 3 weeks – 3 months. Goegap attracts approximately 18,000 visitors in a season with two car-routes around the reserve, two hiking trails and a

flower garden at the office. Although the management plan specifies that consumptive resource use is allowed in the context of tourism and allows for private development (albeit with minimum impact on the reserve); so far little development is seen. This reinforces the view that currently Goegap is strongly conservation orientated.

#### **Future**

The future of Goegap is aimed at ensuring the conservation of its biodiversity through maintaining ecosystem services and natural processes. This focus on the ecosystem scale means the expansion of the reserve is a key future aim. In terms of restoring natural processes and ecosystem services, future change may include the re-introduction of large - scale predators and the restoration of copper polluted soils. However many of these future plans are dependent on funding and the co-operation of the local community, in any case it will be interesting to see what the future holds for Goegap!

## NEWS AND INFORMATION ABOUT PLANTS AND ANIMALS

### BOOTED EAGLE (*AQUILA PENNATUS*)

By Erwan Chereil

40cm tall, 110-132cm wingspan

The booted eagle is uncommon in South Africa but we are lucky enough to have a nest at the farm site. We found the nest when we were looking for lost emitters because it is also a mouse eater. The male, shown here, is a white form one and we saw him at least two days every week, flying over the field site and sometimes diving to catch a mouse. It is very impressive to see him hitting the ground with a noise of feathers that bang together. We saw the female only at the nest or around it, incubating her two eggs or carrying branches. The female is dark brown and a lot shyer than the male. The nest is on a cliff overhanging the field, it is not very easy to go to the nest but it is possible to go over and see



into it; however, we did not do this often because each time the female was scared and flew away. The nest is made of branches and supported by a bush growing along the cliff. They live in south western Africa, but breed only in the extreme south of Africa and they move in northern regions during winter.

## CONFERENCES, PRESENTATIONS AND PUBLICATIONS

### PUBLICATIONS

Solmsen, N., Johannesen, J. & Schradin C., in press. Highly asymmetric fine-scale genetic structure between sexes of African striped mice indicate alternative male dispersal tactics *Molecular Ecology* 20: 1624-1634.

Sex-biased dispersal is observed in many taxa, but few studies have compared sex-biased dispersal among and within populations. We addressed the magnitude and habitat dependency of sex-biased dispersal in social African striped mice by separating group-related from population-related genetic variance to understand the contribution of each sex to deme structure. As dispersal over unoccupied habitat is likely to be more costly than dispersal within a population, we predicted that individuals leaving the natal population have a lower body condition, being inferior to heavier territorial individuals. Fine-scale genetic structure was detected in both sexes. Female relatedness decreased continuously from  $R = 0.21$  at 25m to zero at 500m. Maximum male relatedness  $R = 0.05$  was constant at distances between 25-75m, becoming zero at 100m. Genetic variance ( $F_{ST}$ ) among seven locations was significantly higher in females than in males, while inbreeding estimates ( $F_{IS}$ ) were significantly higher in males than in females. Assignment tests estimated significantly more migrants among males, while Bayesian clustering estimated only a single genetic unit cluster for males among the seven locations. The mean body mass of migrant males (44g) was significantly lower than for males that remained resident and thus dispersed within their sub-population (48g). Combined, the results showed habitat-independent male-biased dispersal and high female philopatry, and suggested that body condition was more important than kinship in male dispersal decisions. We suggest that locally inferior males are important for gene flow between sub-populations. Thus, males might follow alternative dispersal tactics.

### DAVINA VISITS ZÜRICH

By Carsten Schradin

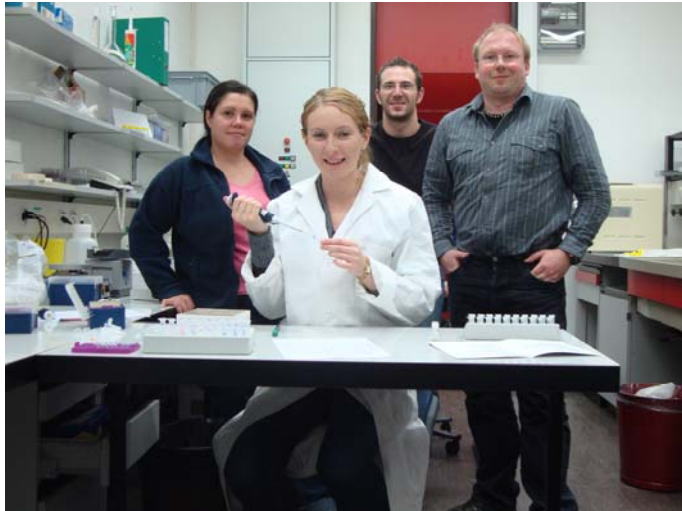
Davina Hill, postdoc from the University of the Witwatersrand, visited in Zurich for 6 weeks in

January and February. Her stay was kindly supported by the Swiss South African Joint Research Program



(SSAJRP). Davina visited two meetings in Zurich and learnt how to do hormone assays. She then analyzed more than one hundred

samples collected by myself for her project on female alternative reproductive tactics.



Davina, Ivana, Julien and Carsten in the hormone laboratory in Zurich.

## CONFERENCES

*By Carsten Schradin*

Altogether 7 presentations on the striped mouse project were given the last 3 months. Davina, Ivana and Julien presented her project on both the Biology 2011 meeting in January in Zurich, as well as during the annual

meeting of the Ethological Society in February, also in Zurich. At the second meeting Carsten was invited to give a plenary talk on social flexibility and the striped mouse project.



## FUNDING OF RESEARCH: CALL FOR DONATIONS

### Subscribers donation

### Account details

We appeal to all subscribers of the FSM-TIMES to donate 80 Rand (10 Euro, 15 dollars) a year for research on the socio-ecology of small mammals in Goegap. Donations of more than 80 Rand are welcome and donors of 400 Rand (50 Euro, 75 dollars) will be mentioned in the next FSM-TIMES.

Donations will be used for the following purposes:

1. Scientific research on small mammals in Goegap, especially smaller research projects such as Diploma and PhD theses, which have difficulties in raising funds elsewhere.

2. Improving the infrastructure of the research station.

In the last issue of the FSM-TIMES of every year we will publish how much we received in donations and how the money was used.

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IBAN: CH51 0070 0110 0001 0959 4  
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Projekt Striemengrasmaus  
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## GRANT FROM THE SWISS NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION

In March Carsten got a grant from the Swiss National Science Foundation for the project: "Evolutionary adaptive physiological processes of social flexibility". This project will run for

three years from April 2011 until March 2014. The grant is CHF 357000 and pays for 1 PhD student, the research station manager, field and laboratory expenses.

## THE MOUSE'S TAIL

### AMBUSHED BY PORCUPINE

The other night I went down to the office to make a phone call and just as I walked around the corner toward the telephone, I was shocked to see a spiny bushy object right in front of my feet. I realized then it was a

porcupine, as it started to run for the bushes. Poor porcupine, must have had the fright of its life and all it wanted to do was to make a phone call.

### TRAP HAPPY ON AN ENTIRE DIFFERENT LEVEL

We all know that most of our mice are trap happy, that is, a little bran flakes with oil go a long way. But one female, F5125 from group 64, she is just a little bit too trap happy, not only that she would come out and wait in front of her nest as soon as she heard

us coming; once we trapped her and took down all her data, as soon as we let her go she would immediately walk right back into the next trap; we often trapped her 3-4 times just in one round!

### PANCAKE, PANCAKE

Apparently, every year on the 8<sup>th</sup> of March, is the Pancake Day (in England). So, what do they do on a Pancake Day except the obvious, eating pancake? We learnt from one of our old field assistant Rachel that apart from eating pancake, they also

run around with a frying pan with the pancake. Since we have another field assistant who is also from England this year, we thought we might follow our tradition since 2010, so there we had it, our Second Annual Research Station Pancake Race.



## GOLDEN MOUSE PRIZE-WINNERS

**2010: VOLUNTEER FIELD ASSISTANTS**

**2009: DR. URS THALMANN**

**2008: KLEIN GOEGAP**

**2007: GOEGAP NATURE RESERVE**

**2006: DR. GUSTL ANZENBERGER**

**2005: JENS SCHRADIN**