

Conservation Plan

Background

Shannon Vineyards on Dunmanway Farm is situated to the east in the Elgin Valley bordering the Kogelberg Reserve. It is unique in that its west boundary borders the mountainous terrain of the Kogelberg Biosphere Reserve. Its East boundary consists of 1.7 kilometres of river/dam frontage with its own unique habitat.

The management of the farm has realised the uniqueness of its environment and therefore strives to ensure the co-operation between management and farm employee being either permanent or contract workers to safeguard the species resident and passing through the farm. The management communicates with the farm staff regarding the occurrence of certain wildlife on the farm to ensure the long-term survival of the species.

With regard to the years of experience and knowledge of the farm there is a strong emphasis on observation and communication of sighting of different species and conflicting or attributing factors regarding the various species found presently on the farm.

It is obvious that the survival of the certain species on the farm is largely dependent on the availability of optimum habit. These habitats occur more often in isolated pockets and uniquely along the river frontage. It is important to note that these optimal habitats must occur with and even without the presence of animal species. Larger animal species may not be sighted in these optimal habitats today, but may be in the future, be it to breed in, hide in as a safe haven or to be used as a passing point on their journeys.

Conservation Description

Conservation on the farm aims to **1) determine the areas of significance** for conservation and the status of these areas, as well as other areas, which can contribute to the conservation of native/indigenous species. The plan also emphasises the **2) management of these ecological systems** so that conservation of the habitats are ensured and sustained. The necessary **3) environmental education** and the establishment of the areas will be incorporated into daily work to ensure a conservation conscious community on the Farm.

CONSERVATION PLAN:

1. To **witness the presence of the various species within the farm** and how they make use of the various areas known as core areas, buffer areas and farmed areas.
2. To **observe the status** of the species within the farm boundaries.
3. To **establish areas** as safe havens for different species.
4. To have a **conservation aware** work force and community on the farm.
5. To **list sightings** of mammals, birds and reptiles of significant importance.



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The results of implementing the above mentioned would also lead to:

- Protection of habitats under threat and the monitoring of areas and populations of significance.
- The occupation of the various areas by existing populations on the farm or new individuals drawn to the conservation of the areas and therefore enhancing their survival.
- The combined farm/community effort to conserve the animal species on the farm.
- A therefore conservation informed work force/farm community.
- Continuous identification of areas with the occupation of different animal species.
- Ultimately the increase of known numbers of identified species and even the possibility of attracting other native species found in the greater Elgin Valley.

1) Areas of Significance

The farm is made up of different habitats or units. These being the following: **1.1)** The in-orchard/cultivated environment, the **1.2)** orchard boundary or buffer zone, **1.3)** farm residential and work buildings and **1.4)** undeveloped fallow land.

Of the four above indicated areas of significance, a variety of different species will find each area attractive in its own way. Be it for foraging and/or security/breeding reasons or just a useful habitat to lie up in whilst having a break from travelling from one area to another.

2) Management of the Areas

Each different area is not specifically managed due to the presence of a certain species. More likely over the years of farming activities certain species have been attracted to different areas or have adapted to the different habitats provided on the farm.

It is very important to remember that we have a certain status quo present on the farm and this is due to the many years of agricultural activity. The presence of wildlife and the variation thereof indicates that the status quo is a healthy one and therefore no dramatic changes are needed. If anything had to be implemented it would need to be very subtle to prevent drastic knock on effects often felt by wildlife when decisions are made for one particular species with out realising the implication to the food-chain and other species living in balance with the status quo.

At present the largest conservation activity is the irradiation of alien tree and shrub species (Port Jackson, Black Wattle) that have recently invaded our area (in the last 15 years). Many wildlife species have adapted to living with age-old trees/shrubs found on the farm that were planted decades ago. For example the Spotted Eagle Owls using the 60-70 year old Stone Pines for nesting/breeding purposes.



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3) Environmental Education

Farm employees are informed of the benefits of having wildlife on the farm. They are also reprimanded if found destroying nesting sights, catching wildlife and allowing their domestic pests to interfere with the livelihood of the natural wildlife.

Mammals:

Sighting on the farm (residential, seasonal and/or passing through):

Chacma Baboon
Scrub Hare
Cape Hare
Grey Squirrel
Porcupine
Cape Fox
Bat-eared Fox
Black-backed Jackal
Striped Polecat
Honey Badger
Cape Clawless Otter
Large-spotted Genet
Small Grey Mongoose
Water Mongoose
Caracal
Rock Dassie
Grysbok
Grey Rhebok
Klipspringer
Common Duiker

Reptiles:

The list is shorter due to the wet climate of the Cape and is mostly made up of snakes:

Puff-adder
Common Night Adder
Cape Cobra
Boomslang
Olive Grass Snake
Wolf snake
Water Turtle
Tortoises
Lizards

Procedure for documenting sightings: Sightings occur daily on the farm (indicating a healthy environment) and it is only unusual sightings, rarer species or behaviour that is reported to the production office and written up on file.



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