



# Badger Bulletin

Newsletter of the beekeeper-badger extension program



March 2004

Newsletter 4

## The Honey Badger Friendly Initiative



The Badger Friendly Initiative aims to minimize the conflict between badgers and commercial beekeepers in S.A., and provide positive incentives for 'badger-friendly' beekeeping.



Mr. Tienie van Eerden, of Knysna experimented with various hive protection methods, and found the single-legged hivestand, with the hive well secured to the stand, to be most effective against badger damage.

### Extension Work: Progress Report

- With only a year to go, before this 3-year project comes to an end, we are proud to say that the majority of beekeepers visited, support this initiative and agree that adequate hive protection is the only long term cost-effective solution to badger damage.
- Of the 200 beekeepers/processors visited, 180 (nationally) have signed the badger-friendly declaration (see list of names pg. 5).
- Beekeepers have come up with some innovative and relatively inexpensive methods of hive protection. Where the occasional badger damage still occurs, beekeepers admit to not using adequate protection (e.g. not securing hives to the stand).
- Beekeepers using the 'badger-friendly' label on their bee products are very excited about the positive effect this label has on their honey sales.
- The project was expanded to also include all major fruit producers (using bees for pollination) in the Western Cape. Most fruit producers are already subject to overseas standards (e.g. Eurepgap) and therefore welcome the registration and badger-friendly accreditation of beekeepers.
- Retailers, like Woolworths are still fully supportive of this initiative and even with the present shortage of honey (due to countrywide droughts) stayed committed to the extend, that some of their branches ran out of stock. (continue on pg. 2)



### A badger with a will to survive

By Dick Goulee

We live in a suburb of Knysna known as Hunters Home and are surrounded by houses. The properties are all quite large (about 3000 square metres). We have three dogs and two cats.

We first saw the badger in August 2003 at our back door while feeding the dogs.

Its front foot had been taken off and was very bloody and raw (I assume a gintrap or snare). Its overall condition still looked quite good, but it was obviously very hungry and not at all perturbed by the dogs barking. In fact it even mock charged them and let off horrendous odors, but did not move away from the food bowl. It would eat about a cup or two of Hill's Science Diet dog food, which had not been finished by the dogs. If no dog food was available it would tear open the rubbish bags for scraps.

It came nightly until mid October, then disappear for a few weeks. By the time it reappeared the stump was healed and it got quite tame. I could video it standing about two metres away without it running off.

It has now not been around since early December and I hope it has gone back to its natural habitat and not been caught by someone.



## Beeste en Bye: Dit kan saam werk!

n Probleem wat byeboere gereeld ondervind, is om effektiewe beskermings-metodes teen ratels te vind, waar grootvee (bv. beeste) dieselfde veld benut. Korwe op hoë standers is vir beeste n ideale skuurplek, en korwe word deur die beeste afgestamp, of selfs net skeef gedruk, met negatiewe gevolge vir die byeboer. Gelukkig is daar innoverende byeboere wat oplossings vir meeste probleme kan vind. Mr. Wynand Brandt boer met bye, asook beeste in die Darling distrik (wat as hoë ratel risiko area geklassifiseer word). Hy het na heelwat eksperimentering met n unieke metode vorendag gekom. Hy gebruik n meganisme, wat wanneer die bees teen die korf skuur, toelaat dat die korf 'draai' en dan weer na sy oorspronklike posisie terugkeer. Hierdie metode is reeds die afgelope maande beproef, met geen ratel- of beesskade nie! Wynand is bereid om die verskillende komponente aan belangstellende byeboere te verskaf. Skakel Wynand by 0823518911 vir meer inligting.



Unieke korfbeskeringsmetode, wat die aanslag van beeste kan weerstaan.

### Progress report (from pg 1)

-The general public, as well as conservation NGO's, private landmanagers and landowners still play a vital role in this project. A great deal of the success of this project is owed to their support and commitment to only deal with badgerfriendly accredited beekeepers.

### The Jackson Horizontal Hive

by Crispin Jackson

The JHH is badger friendly because its human friendly. Apart from its beekeeping advantages it has also been designed to be ergonomically compatible with human beings and as we are slightly different shaped to badgers, its is ergonomically incompatible to badgers! One of the primary advantages of being able to suspend a hive is that it can be placed out of reach from the majority of predators which attack bee swarms. These include spiders, ants, beetles, reptiles and mammals. We made a study of the badger and found that 1) he was not able to jump high, and 2) if they stood on their hind legs they could only reach up to about 60cm. This means that the biggest badger could only just touch the bottom of the JHH suspended at waist height of an average human. So when we designed this hive 12 years ago one of the criteria was that it had to be badger friendly. The Badger cannot climb down the suspending wires as they are too thin. Thus we live in harmony with the badger and he doesn't tear the JHH to pieces as he does with hives placed within his reach. So that the JHH apart from being designed by engineers as the ideal habitat for *Apis mellifera* is also ergonomically designed for the beekeeper to be able to manage it with maximum speed and efficiency and minimum hassle. Consult our website for more details on how the JHH system works and how it is better suited to the bees, beekeepers and to environmental conservation. [www.rupertshoney.co.za](http://www.rupertshoney.co.za).



Mr. Dennis Visser van Vermaaklikheid vind hierdie **driepootstaander** uiters effektief om ratelskade te bekamp. Hy vind dat dunner pale (<5cm) dit feitlik onmoontlik maak vir die ratel om by die korwe uit te kom. Hierdie metode verseker ook dat die kis nie deur die ratel afgestoot kan word nie. Koste : R18



Jackson Horizontal Hive suspended out of the reach of badgers

**Byeboer/ratel Voorligtingsprogram:Wanopvatting**

Alhoewel byeboere saamstem dat voldoende korbbeskerming die enigste langtermyn koste-effektiewe oplossing vir ratelskade is, bestaan daar heelwat wanopvattinge oor die projek. **Die volgende inligting behoort meer duidelikheid te gee:**

Ratel-vriendelike **akkreditasie is gratis, behalwe vir die 4c wat byeboere per plakker betaal.** Die administrasie van die plakker word deur SABIO self behartig en die geld word aangewend tot die voordeel van die byeboer self.

Ratelvriendelike **akkreditasie is onderworpe aan gereelde oudits** deur onafhanklike veldwerkers. Hierdie oudits word tans deur die Bedreigde Natuurlewe Vereniging uitgevoer. Informasie wat tydens die oudit ingewin word, word as uiters vertroulik bestempel en word aan geen ander organisasie verskaf nie. SABIO word slegs van die uitslag (positief /negatief) ingelig.

A.g.v die huidige tekort aan heuning wil dit voorkom of sommige geakkrediteerde byeboere heuning aankoop van ander byeboere, wat nie ratel-vriendelik is nie. **Byeboere, asook verspreiders van byeprodukte, wat die ratel-vriendelike verklaring geteken het, is verantwoordelik om al hul sekondêre verskaffers**(persone by wie hulle heuning koop of korwe huur), **tydens die oudit aan die betrokke veldwerker te verklaar.** Dit is ook sy verantwoordelikheid om die Bedreigde Natuurlewe Vereniging op gereelde basis in te lig, indien hy van sekondêre verskaffers verander.

**Volgens wet behoort alle byeboere hul SABIO registrasie nommer op hul korwe te vertoon.** Tydens onlangse inspeksies gedurende die bestuings seisoen op vrugteplase, is daar egter gevind dat meeste korwe geen nommer vertoon nie. Dit maak dit onmoontlik om vas te stel of slegs korwe van geakkrediteerde byeboere op n spesifieke plaas gebruik word. Plaasbestuurders is hieroor ingelig en sal in die toekoms toesien dat die wetgewing geïmplementeer word.

**Biodiversity is life**

With the assistance of Louise Spencer of WCBCB, six schools in the vicinity of the De Hoop Nature Reserve were visited.

More than 400 pupils had the opportunity to learn more about the honey badger. Many of these pupils live on farms where the badger still occurs. Some of them have even seen badgers, usually when they end up in cage-traps set for caracal.

The enthusiasm of these kids were overwhelming and they especially enjoyed the ‘hands-on’ activity in biodiversity. By forming a ‘web of life’, the importance and interdependence of all species in the fynbos ecosystem was explained to them.

Contact Joan Isham ( see pg.1) if you are interested in the EE activities on the honey badger. This activity is also available in Afrikaans.



**Ratel/kleinveeboer konflik**

Sommige byeboere voel dat die byeboer/ratel konflik uitgesonder word en baie aandag geniet , terwyl daar ook konflik tussen ratels en kleinveeboere (bv. skaapboere) voorkom. Alhoewel die projek se doelstelling is om die konflik tussen byeboere en ratels te verminder en veldwerk dus hierop konsentreer, word enige ander konflik met ratels wat aangemeld word, deeglik ondersoek. In hierdie verband word daar nou saamgewerk met Kaapse Natuurbewaring en alle voorvalle word ondersoek, om vas te stel dat dit wel ratels was, wat vir die skade verantwoordelik is. Veeverliese deur ratels kom egter op n baie laer vlak voor as in die geval van skade by byekorwe. Daar bestaan ook nie so n eenvoudige koste-effektiewe oplossing soos vir byeboere nie.



Die RATELS (Voortrekkergroepie van Stellenbosch ) met hul leier Paul Niewenhuis .

## Honey Badger Research

Keith and Colleen Begg have recently been radio tracking a female honey badger in the Northern Mozambique's remote Niassa Game Reserve. The reserve's Miombo woodlands has a high density of wild bees, along with many honey hunters and traditional beekeepers. They hope to compare the Niassa badgers with those of the Kalahari and investigate more about the relationship between badgers and these traditional communities.

Unfortunately the badger in the photograph below (caught for damage to chickens) died of dehydration, before Keith and Colleen got to the scene.



Badger killed in village, Northern Mozambique.

## Special Thank You's

Wildlife and Environment Society (W/ Cape)  
 Western Cape Nature Conservation Board  
 West Coast Honorary Rangers  
 National Parks  
 Overstrand Conservation Forum  
 South African Bee Industry Organization  
 Western Cape Beekeepers Association  
 Southern Cape Beekeeper Associations  
 Zandvlei Nature Reserve  
 Theewaterskloof Conservancy  
 De Draai Conservancy  
 Deciduous Fruit Producers Trust  
 All Fruit producers supporting this initiative  
 All beekeepers spending time and money on protecting their hives  
 Everyone out there giving us their support by only buying 'badger-friendly' honey!

## Nedbank Client Day

Mr. Johan Hurter and his family hosted the Nedbank Client Day held in Langebaan in September last year.

Nedbank clients, through their 'green accounts' contribute to the Green Trust, the main sponsor of this project.

Nedbank clients were treated to real West Coast hospitality and some of the braver guys and girls, had the opportunity to investigate the inside of an active hive.

This Project is funded by the **Carnivore Conservation Group of the Endangered wildlife Trust, Leisure Kitchens, and the Green Trust**, an associated trust of **WWF-SA**, made possible by **Nedbank Green**



Mr. Johan Hurter and some of the Nedbank clients, dressed in their beesuits.

## Calling on all Landowners/Managers

Due to the slow reproductive turnover, with only a single cub born every eighteen months, as well as not being territorial, and with exceptionally large home ranges (few hundred square kilometres), most protected areas are too small to conserve viable populations of honey badgers.

If we want to successfully conserve this Red Data Species we have to involve landowners/managers outside of formal conservation areas.

### If you own or manage land, you can assist by:

- Making sure that all beekeepers on your land are accredited as 'badger-friendly'.
- Conserve indigenous vegetation on your property and thereby providing much needed habitat for honey badgers.
- Educate other landowners on the positive role badgers play in the ecosystem (e.g. control numbers of a variety of species, like rodents), as well as on their conservation status (badgers are listed as 'near threatened' on the SA Red Data Species List)
- Join a conservancy. These areas are established by a voluntary agreement between landowners or landusers to manage and protect suitable habitat for our wildlife.

**Western Cape**

AE Allen  
 CPL Barker  
 PMH Blewitt  
 GM Bradford  
 W Brand  
 C Brink  
 A Brink  
 EW Burger  
 CR Butler  
 JJ Carstens  
 C Claassen  
 PJ Cochrane  
 J Coetzee  
 BA Cooper  
 HJ Cronje  
 JJ de Kock  
 F de la Querra  
 K Dehning  
 A du Preez  
 JPL du Preez  
 FJ du Toit  
 N Esterhuysen  
 JJ Esterhuysen  
 RW Foster  
 JJ Fourie  
 LA Friebus  
 A Goussard  
 A Grobbelaar  
 A Grunder  
 JJ Hanekom  
 CP Harford  
 AS Hayes  
 MC Haupt  
 JJ Hoffman  
 DS Hugo  
 HJ Human  
 E Hunter  
 JP Hurter  
 M Kerr  
 HE Kiesling  
 JNJ Koegelenberg  
 F Kotze  
 MB Kotze  
 MN Langenhoven  
 PL Lawson  
 LG Lewis  
 HG Lofty-Eaton  
 J Londt  
 G Laubser  
 PH Loubser  
 Dr J Lourens  
 J Lourens  
 JJ Munro  
 P Murray  
 W Malan

HG Masureik  
 IM Moodie  
 JD Moodie  
 PN Mountain  
 CS Neate  
 DDJ Olivier  
 R Olivier  
 AJ Pearson  
 PM Poole  
 CAL Runds  
 CF Schmidt  
 JA Slabber  
 JD Smit  
 JJ Smit  
 OV Smuts  
 J Swart  
 G Theron  
 WE Urquhart  
 N Valentine  
 LJB van Buren  
 JPJ van der Merwe  
 J van der Merwe  
 LJ van der Merwe  
 PF van der Walt  
 FJ van der Westhuizen  
 J van Deventer  
 MC van Eeden  
 JS van Eck  
 PA van Mieghem  
 PJP van Mieghem  
 AI van Niekerk  
 LA van Zyl  
 GJ van Zyl  
 SEJ van Zyl  
 RP Veer  
 R Venter  
 D Visser  
 SD Wedlake

**Retailers**

Woolworths (Pty) Ltd  
 Liza's Farmstall  
 Morningstar Foods

**Eastern Cape**

BDC Maxham

**Free State**

JH Jordaan  
 HA Kingsley  
 CJC Lotter  
 BJ van der Merwe  
 J Verdoes  
 K von Delft  
 S Meintjies

**Guateng Province**

RJ Blignault  
 NH Brummer  
 JC Buys  
 CF Calitz  
 IA Cockcroft  
 BG Dawkins  
 MJ de Klerk  
 AP du Toit  
 A Esterhuysen  
 GB Falconer  
 AW Howie  
 JT Hugill  
 C Jackson  
 HS Kelly  
 R Krul  
 M Leitner  
 M Masela  
 E Mathieson  
 E Meiring  
 M Miles  
 K Morgado  
 JS Mostert  
 AJ Mouton  
 CS Nash  
 AHJ Olivier  
 J Paterson  
 CJD Russel  
 S Rust  
 S le R Redelinghuys  
 JA Schehle  
 PJ Smit  
 JG Smith  
 H Steenpoorte  
 MW Swanepoel  
 JJ Swart  
 FJ Tite  
 DP van der Berg  
 HS van der Merwe  
 TD van der Nest  
 WL van Deventer  
 A van Greunen  
 E van Zyl  
 L van Zyl  
 R van Zyl  
 L Viljoen

**Limpopo Province**

MW Mokumo

**Mpumalanga**

K Armitage  
 AJ Bence  
 GR Beverley  
 VR Bohmer  
 JN Boshoff  
 JS Engela  
 L Erasmus  
 M Lutz  
 D Nel  
 PD Mare  
 J Texeira

**Kwa-Zulu Natal**

P Jevon  
 GJ Mitchell  
 CA Reid  
 R Seegers  
 W Westbrook

**Northern Cape**

AJ Anthony  
 T Engelbrecht  
 JJ Hendrickse  
 GJ Marais  
 AP Naylor  
 MMD Hoon

**North West Province**

DL du Toit  
 HW du Toit  
 WHJ Knoetze  
 LJ Schmidt  
 A Slabber

**Retailers**

Patley (Pty) Ltd (Gold crest)

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