



## RESERVE REPORT

January 2018

### Introduction

Thank you to Chris and Auriel Thorpe in Bungalow # 197 for sharing this fascinating world of the Southern White-Crowned Shrike (*Eurocephalus anguitemens*) and Black Cuckoo-Shrike (*Campephaga flava*) with us. The images are fantastic, with thrilling observations.

### **Shrikes Nests**

In November, within a couple of days of each other, we came across two different, but both incredible shrike nests.

The first was that of a flock of Southern White-Crowned Shrikes which we found on a night drive.

About fifty meters from the main road on the Goedehoop/Carlin cut line there are two Knob Thorn (*Acacia nigrescens*) trees on opposite sides of the road. The one tree had the alpha pair of Southern White-Crowned Shrikes with a nest of three nestlings in it, while the other tree had a cluster of the attendant flock of helpers, all huddled together. These birds are co-operative breeders with the dominant pair the only birds in the flock to breed, while the rest of the flock serve as attendants; bringing nesting material for the dominant pair to nest build, and help feeding the chicks when they hatch. The attendants also remove and dispose of the faecal sacs to ensure the nest is kept clean. The construction of the nest is amazing, with the body being woven of fine fibres, and bound together with spider web. The inside is lined with fine fluffy cotton-like material.

Note the display behaviour of the adult, (second picture down) with wings held out, seemingly in response to our presence. We are not sure of the function of this? Within a matter of days of taking these photographs the chicks had left the nest.



*Close-up picture of nesting material and chicks*





*Note: Adult display over the chicks*

Around the same time that we found the Southern White-Crowned Shrikes' nest we noticed a pair of Black Cuckoo-shrikes building a nest behind our bungalow. Both the presence, and nest building of Cuckoo-shrikes were firsts for us at Ingwelala.

Sexual dimorphism in these birds is extreme. The male is pitch black with yellow wing covets while the female is mottled green all over. It was the female that did all the nest building, collecting pieces of lichen and connecting these by using spiders' web. The male was in attendance, supervising, and no doubt passing comment on building standards!

The female chose a cleft in the mopane tree behind the bungalow that already had heavy lichen cover. The nest was so well camouflaged that even though we were able to watch the activity we found it incredibly difficult to locate. In fact, it was so well camouflaged that the best way to identify it was to photograph and zoom in.

Unfortunately, the nest was blown out of the tree during a huge storm. It was a work of art, with lichen and web woven on the outside, and the inside lined with soft cotton-like seed heads.

They did not rebuild and disappeared, and we wonder if our presence and interest did not disturb them.



*The location of the Cuckoo-shrike nest is demarcated in the picture above.*

With the region being exceptionally dry I include a summary of the latest medium-term weather forecasting from the South African Weather Service:

# Seasonal Climate Watch

February to June 2018

Date issued: Jan 26, 2018

## 1. Overview

The El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO) is expected to remain in a weak La Niña phase through to early autumn (Feb-Mar-Apr). This suggests above-normal rainfall is to be expected later in the summer rainfall season which can extend towards early autumn for the far north-eastern parts of the country. Some caution is advised however, as circulation over the equatorial Pacific Ocean does not resemble a typical La Niña phase and as such introduces a minor amount of uncertainty in the current forecast.

Potential flooding events then remain a concern through early autumn. It is advised that early-warning systems from the South African Weather Service be followed throughout the end of the summer season as well as the start of autumn for the north-eastern parts of the country.

Lower temperatures on average are also expected throughout the early autumn period, as consistent cloud cover and rainfall events are expected to be more dominant than usual. In contrast however, the south-western parts of the country are still expected to experience higher temperatures on average during the late autumn season.

The South African Weather Service will continue to monitor and provide updates of any future assessments that may provide more clarity on the current expectations for the coming seasons.

## 2. Discussion: State of Climate Drivers

### 2.1 El Niño-Southern Oscillation

Observations show that ENSO (El Niño-Southern Oscillation) is now in a weak La Niña phase. Forecasts suggest that it is likely for this weak La Niña to continue through early autumn. A La Niña event typically enhances rainfall activities over the summer-rainfall areas of South Africa if the circulation over the equatorial Pacific is strong enough.

### 2.2 Indian Ocean Dipole

The Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) forecasts indicate neutral conditions during the autumn season and is not expected to have any influence during this period. The IOD, both tropical and subtropical, can enhance moisture transport towards the continent during positive phases and degrade this transport during negative phases.

### 2.3 Southern Annular Mode

The Southern Annular Mode (SAM) has been consistently positive the last months and is expected to remain positive for the coming weeks. If the positive trend continues through to early winter, it may cause a slow start to the winter rainfall regions.

## 3. Climate Forecast Details

### 3.1 Rainfall

The forecasting system indicates above-normal rainfall over the far north-eastern parts of the country as well as over parts of the interior during early autumn (Feb-Mar-Apr). It is expected that the total rainfall for these areas would rather be more frequent rainfall events than more intense events. During mid- (Mar-Apr-May) and



late autumn (Apr-May-Jun), the south western interior are expected to experience above normal rainfall, and parts of the Western Cape to receive below-normal rainfall totals.

### **Staff complement**



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### **Staff Movement**

Nil.

### **Staff profile (Meet the team):**



*Joyful Ngobeni*

Joyful Ngobeni was initially employed in the Housekeeping Team on 01 November 2004, and three months later joined the late Merriam as an assistant in the Shop, learning the art of driving a computer. Previous schooling will have helped, as Joyful holds a Grade 12 certificate.

After leaving school, Joyful furthered her academics and training at a catering school in her home town of Welverdiend, a community near the South African Wildlife College near Orpen. At home, Joyful was one of eight children, being third in line with two sisters and five brothers. Her siblings are all currently employed in different walks of life, teaching, medics, guiding and lodge care. Both parents are retired pensioners.

Joyful has two children of her own, a son and a daughter. Her aunty on her mother's side looks after her two children, with two of her nephews.

In discussion, Joyful explained how much she enjoys all the Members and her work colleagues, getting to know everyone better, and hopes that Ingwelala will continue to develop and grow. Her favourite animal is a leopard, simply because it has a beautiful coat. A favourite tree is Nkuhuma (Tsonga) because of its sweet little fruit that is very edible.

Sporting interests when younger was actively participating in ladies' soccer, netball and volleyball.

Joyful has a keen interest in music, enjoying playing the drums, and has a distinguished singing voice, travelling far and wide to sing in church choirs.

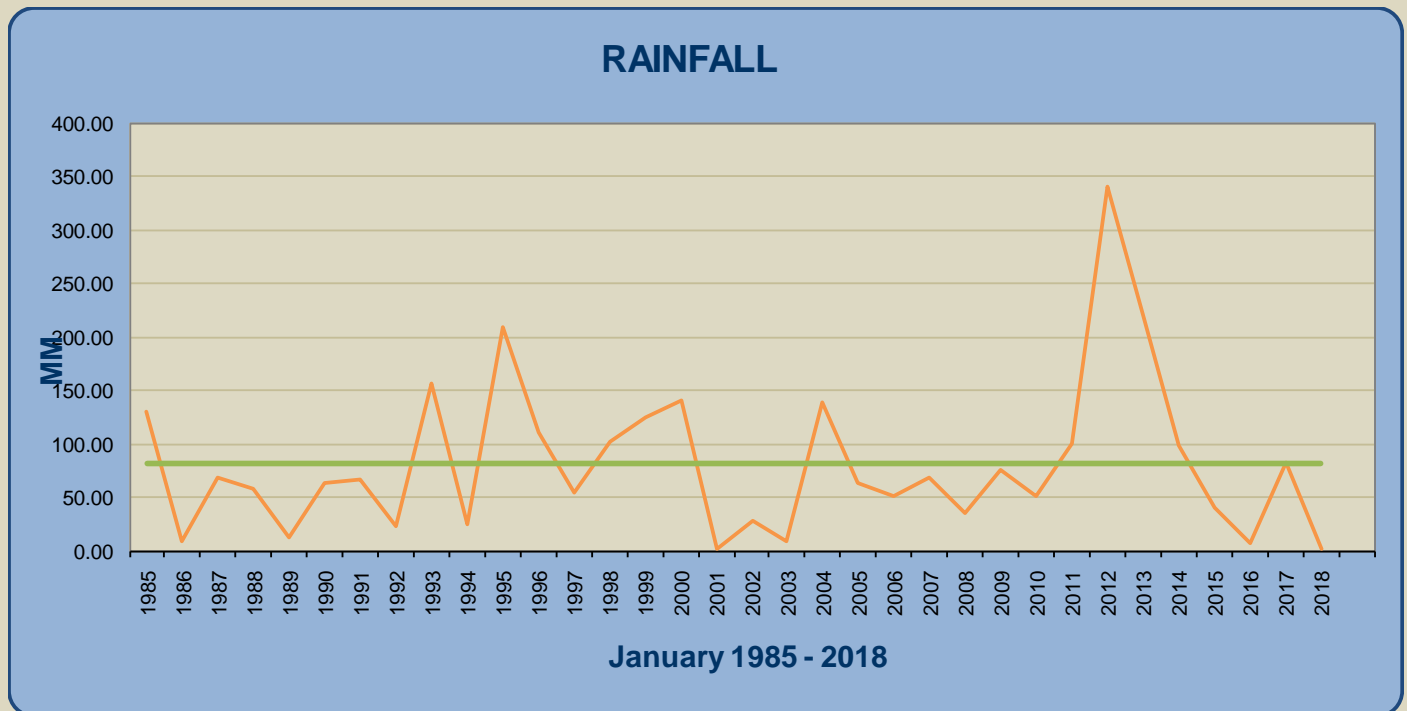
## Bungalows for sale

Nil

## Climate and rainfall (summary)

Rainfall: 1.3 mm  
Minimum temperature: 17 degrees Celsius.  
Maximum temperature: 40 degrees Celsius.

The following graph summarises total rainfall recorded at Ingwelala for the month of January over the past 34 years.



(Note: January 2018: 1.3 mm rainfall is exponentially below the monthly average of 81.6 ml)

## Conservation

### **Alien plant eradication**

Nil.

### **Veld Rehabilitation**

Due to the extreme dryness and bare soils with only 1.3 mm of rain during the reporting period, no veld rehabilitation was possible.

### **Erosion Control**

Mitre drains that suffered heavy siltation after a storm on 31 December 2017 were identified and attended to.

### **Roads and Tracks**

As and when required, surface damage caused by tyre slip at river crossings were repaired.

### **Airstrip**

The airstrip surface was inspected on a regular basis and the general condition recorded in a register.

A reminder please that all airstrip users must complete (once off) an **Ingwelala Airstrip Indemnity Form** before landing. Indemnity forms are obtainable from [reception@ingwelala.co.za](mailto:reception@ingwelala.co.za) Guest pilots must also complete the form before using the airstrip.

## **Fencing**

Five breaches by elephants to the camp fence. Conservation staff repaired the breakages.

## **Bomas, Hides and Picnic Sites**

The wooden benches around the fire pit at Buffelsbed Boma were replaced.

## **Game sightings**

During the reporting period the camp enjoyed higher than usual occupancy levels, for a longer period, when comparing year on year. This resulted in more eyes and ears on the ground, and plenty of sightings written up in the register. It was certainly the month for cats, lions seen almost every day. Several kills were made, one report of a "text book" kill by a lioness, catching a juvenile warthog which she carried to her cubs. The lions were often in camp, seemingly unperturbed by human activity. There were numerous leopard sightings, some with cubs, some with kills, one kill happened when a hyena arrived, stole the kill and devoured it in half an hour, while the leopard darted in and out feeding off scraps!

Elephant activity increased, month on month, more breeding herds ranging on Ingwelala. The largest herd size numbered 50 – 60. No buffalo to speak of, a single bull seen on three occasions.

Wild dogs were active, two different packs sizing each other up on Buffelsbed in an amazing sighting. One pack had 9 dogs and the other 20, with full on confrontation.

A black mamba was seen swimming in the water at Bird Hide. It swam out to the leadwood stump in the middle, slithered up to reach the Red-billed Buffalo Weaver nests to feed on the chicks.

The **scorpions are plentiful this summer**, take care to use a torch at night and wear closed shoes.

General game sightings included spotted hyena, giraffe, genet, hippo and crocodile.

The birders had an excellent month, noting Martial Eagle, Tawny Eagle (pale form), Lesser Spotted Eagle, Verreaux's Eagle-Owl, Pearl-spotted Owllet, African Scops Owl, Lanner Falcon, Red-footed Kestrel, Dark Chanting Goshawk, Ground Hornbill, Black Stork, Saddle-billed Stork, White-backed Night Heron, Levillant's Cuckoo, Eurasian Golden Oriole, Cardinal Woodpecker, Spotted Flycatcher, Dusky Lark, Brown-headed Parrot, Painted Snipe, Plum-coloured Starling and Little Bee Eater.

There is a troop of **baboons** that forage through camp. All food should be kept out of sight to prevent break-ins to bungalows for the food. Due to the dry veld conditions these baboons are spending increasingly more time foraging and roosting in camp.

The **vervet monkeys** that frequent the car park and swimming pool area have learnt to open cooler boxes and picnic baskets left unattended on vehicles. They do not back away from women and children, so please keep a close eye on small children. Members are requested to double check that all used refuse bags are delivered directly to the Dirt Box, and not left on the tail gates of game viewers in the Reception car park.

## **Security**

No incidents on Ingwelala during the reporting period.

## **Road Kills**

X 1 Tortoise

X 1 Yellow-billed Hornbill

## **General Fire Risk Management**

Veld fire and general fire risk in the veld is moderate given the sparse ground cover, but high in camp due to the dry conditions.

Fire-fighting equipment is checked on a weekly basis. Fire tender pumps were serviced.

X 1 tractor available to assist with fire-fighting (x2 water drawn carts).

X 1 "Bakkie-Sakkie" serviceable and responsive on a "first call" basis.

X 20 fire beaters and x4 knap-sack sprays in good working order.

## **Umbabat**

A full time Warden was appointed by the Umbabat Exco. Please welcome Bryan Haveman who joins us from the Timbavati Private Nature Reserve. We wish Bryan every success in his new role as Umbabat Warden.

## **Water reticulation**

Yield data for the boreholes is reflected in the following table, comparative with previous months.

<b>BOREHOLE</b>	<b>JAN 18</b>	<b>DEC 17</b>	<b>NOV 17</b>	<b>OCT 17</b>	<b>SEP 17</b>	<b>AUG 17</b>	<b>JUL 17</b>	<b>JUN 17</b>	<b>MAY 17</b>	<b>APR 17</b>	<b>MAR 17</b>	<b>FEB 17</b>
BH NO 1	189	149	0	150	277	428	0	34	298	188	87	97
BH NO 2	1247	1603	1274	992	1082	959	1113	1043	1000	1141	1005	669
BH NO 3	500	425	682	534	653	531	1176	151	557	681	342	683
BH NO 4	0	0	768	0	0	0	78	181	483	425	322	753
BH NO 5	506	534	517	293	159	151	158	238	467	445	353	245
BH NO 6	481	565	1055	1218	1082	1018	769	367	675	622	683	107
BH NO 7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
BH NO 9	Solar	Solar	Solar	Solar	Solar	Solar	Solar	Solar	Solar	Solar	Solar	Solar
JB	0	0	0	0	58	350	1282	491	278	43	0	0
GOEDEHOOP	842	1297	774	1119	480	664	290	1312	1395	780	0	0

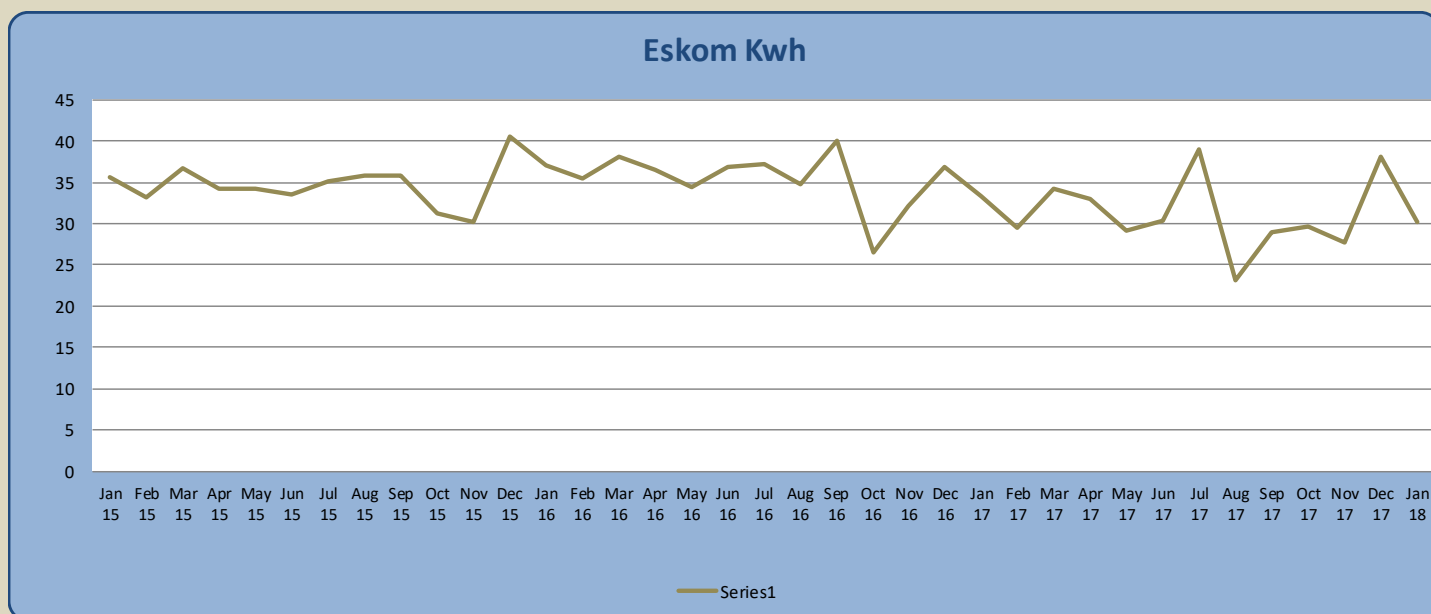
## **Vehicles and Workshop**

<b>WORKSHOP</b>	<b>JAN 18</b>	<b>DEC 17</b>	<b>NOV 17</b>	<b>OCT 17</b>	<b>SEP 17</b>	<b>AUG 17</b>	<b>JUL 17</b>	<b>JUN 17</b>	<b>MAY 17</b>	<b>APR 17</b>	<b>MAR 17</b>
JOB CARDS OPENED	51	64	36	54	36	75	68	48	67	46	55
JOB CARDS CLOSED	49	66	37	50	38	54	53	58	63	57	56
GENERATOR HOURS	1.8	22	1.1	9.3	0	1	2.6	0	6.6	10.9	0
DIESEL TANK (L)	530	80	345	380	430	430	500	575	575	650	850

The general fleet and static plant maintenance is 100% compliant with the servicing schedule.

## Eskom Usage

The following graph shows the monthly Eskom Usage (Kwh) for Ingwelala.



## Building projects

Current (major) building projects are listed below:

Bung No	Name	Work requested	Approval	Builder	% Complete
10-13	Peter Dittberner	New gazebo & internal upgrades	August 2017	Dukes Construction	80%
38	Gordon Pascoe	Demolish & rebuild	July 2017	Dukes Construction	20%
44	Cecil Bodenstein	New patio & gazebo & internal upgrades	June 2017	Owner builder	35%
86	Martinus vd Reyden	New patio & gazebo & internal upgrades	July 2017	Chameleon	85%
185	Weston Dickson	Demolish and rebuild	January 2017	Chameleon	65%
202	Jan Kitshoff	Rethatch & internal upgrades	August 2017	Chameleon Hoffmans Thatching	60%

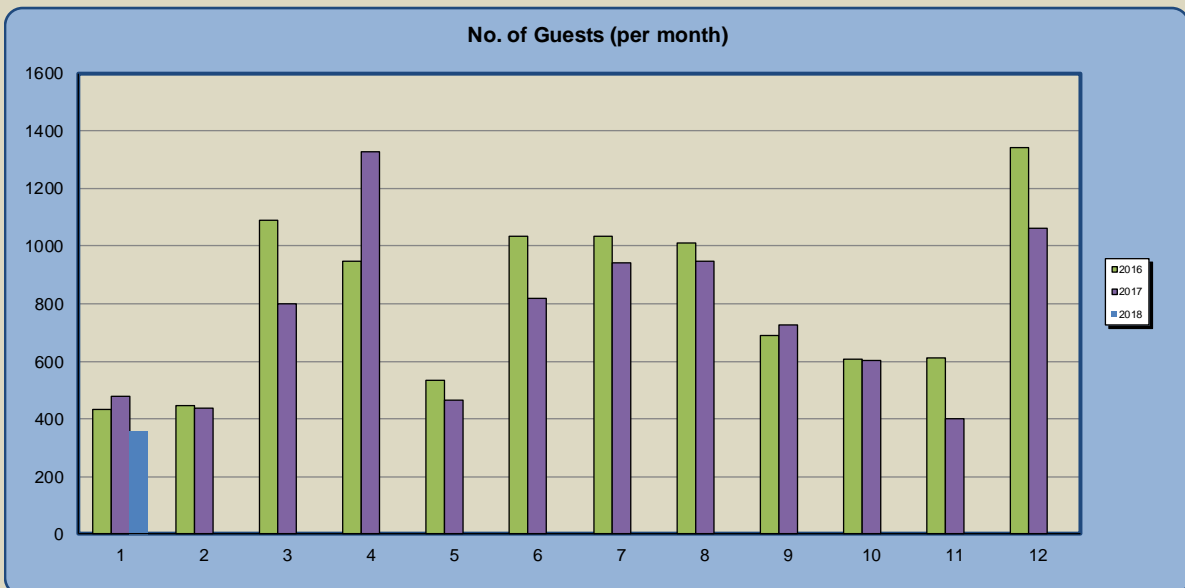
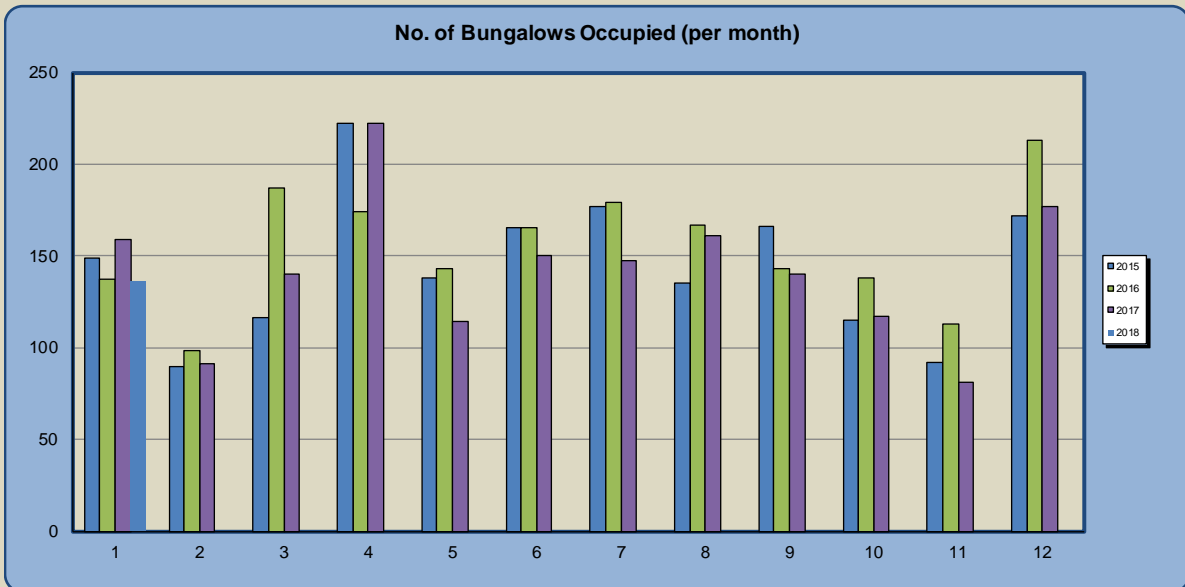
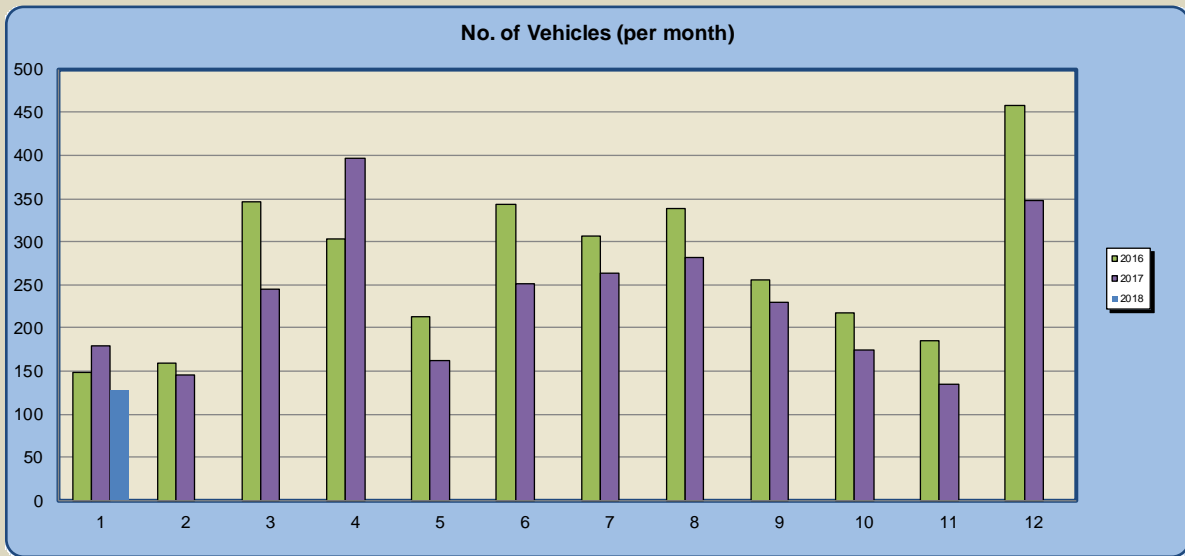
## Reception Statistics

GATE STATISTICS	JAN 18	DEC 17	NOV 17	OCT 17	SEP 17	AUG 17	JUL 17	JUN 17	MAY 17	APR 17	MAR 17
VEHICLES	128	347	135	174	230	282	263	251	162	397	245
MEMBERS GUESTS	357	1060	399	601	727	945	940	818	465	1328	798
UNACCOMP GUESTS	0	7	2	9	7	4	4	3	0	34	0
UNITS OCCUPIED	136	177	81	117	140	161	147	150	114	222	140
AIRBORNE VISITORS	9	1	6	9	4	5	17	16	2	17	3

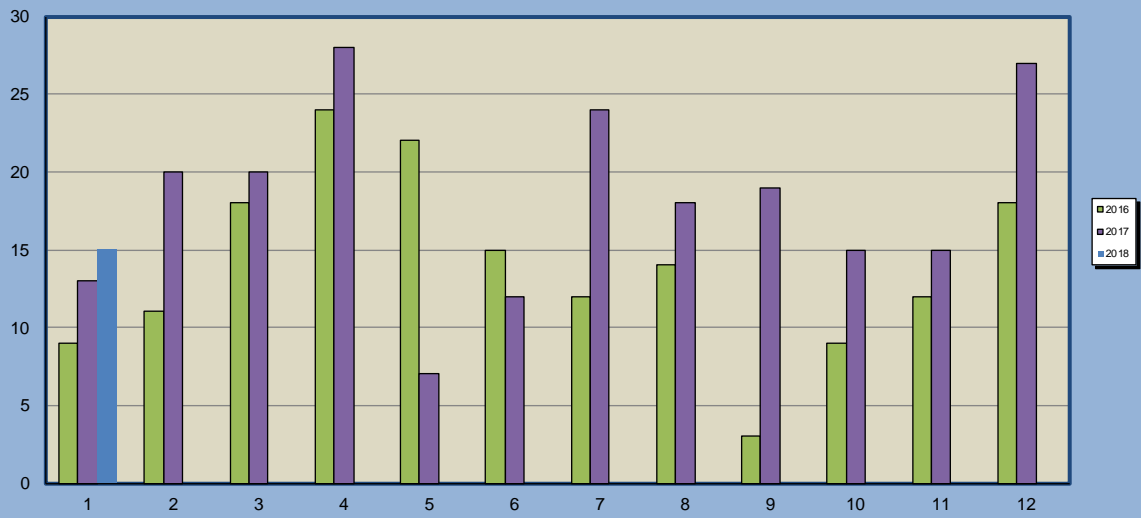
COTTAGE NIGHTS	JAN 18	DEC 17	NOV 17	OCT 17	SEP 17	AUG 17	JUL 17	JUN 17	MAY 17	APR 17	MAR 17
HORNBILL	15	27	15	15	19	18	24	12	7	28	20
FRANCOLIN	10	18	7	12	12	11	26	17	0	19	13
GUINEAFOWL	5	15	3	11	11	20	26	12	6	17	4



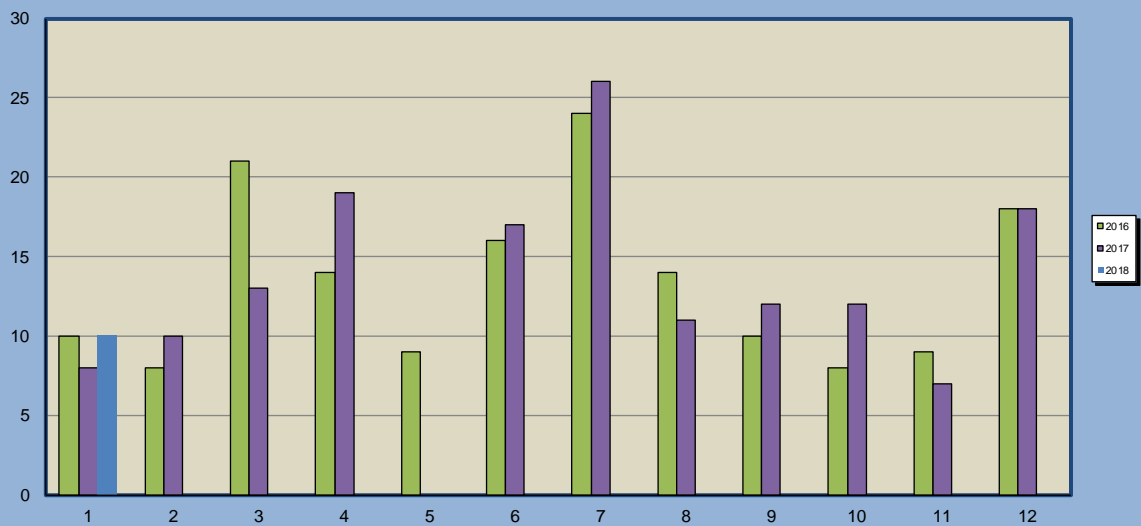
### Annexure 1: Graphs



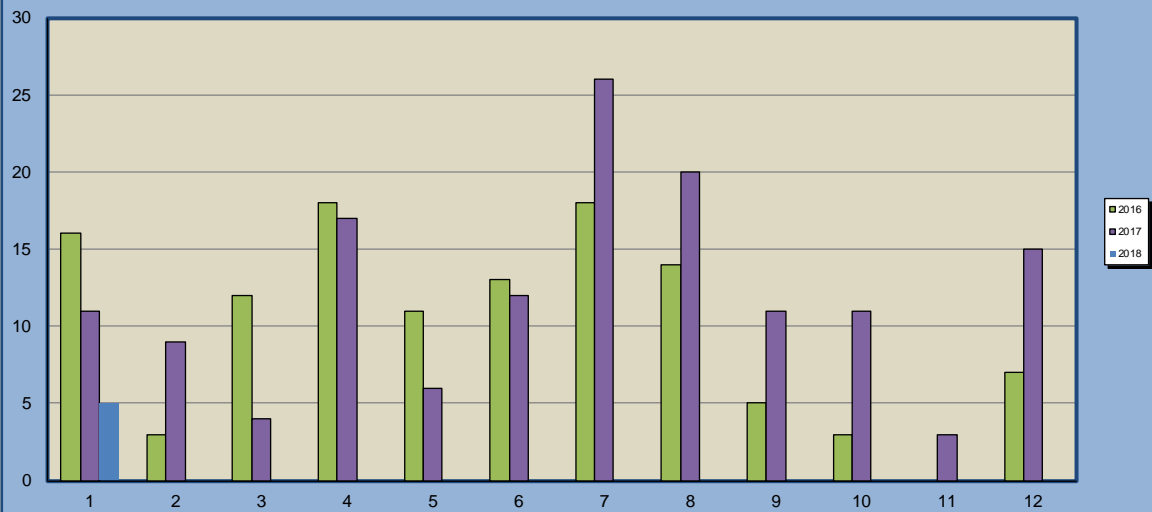
Hornbill Occupancy (nights per month)



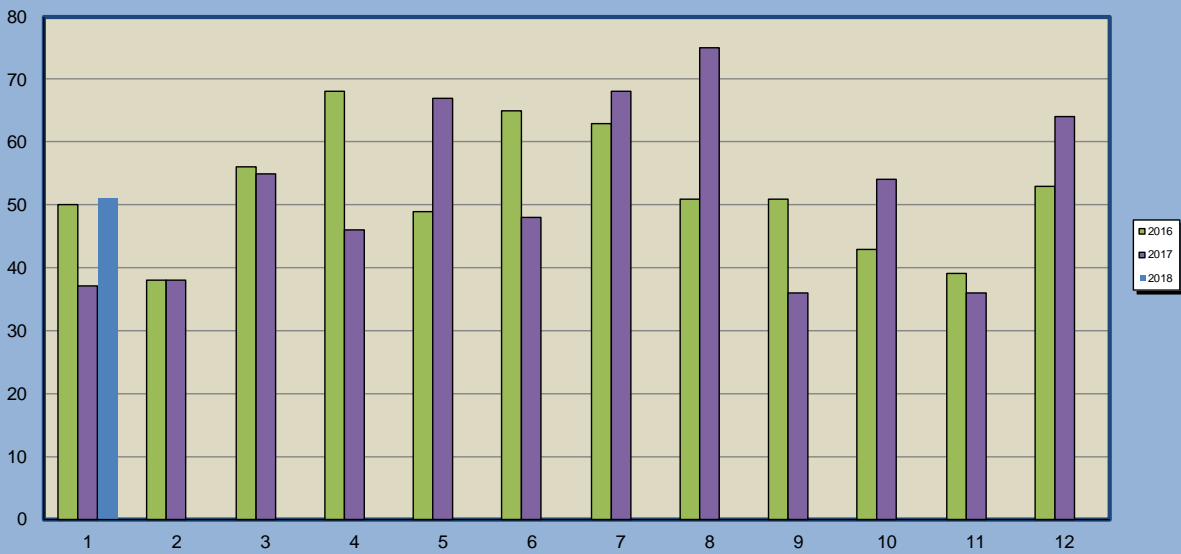
Francolin Occupancy (nights per month)



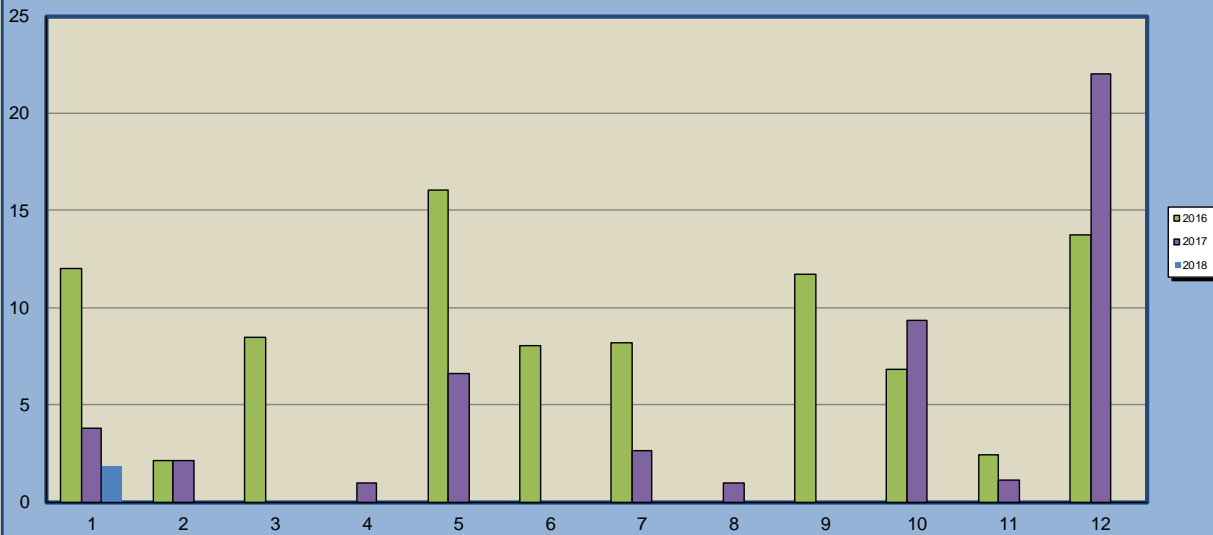
Guineafowl Occupancy (nights per month)



No. of job cards opened (per month)



Generator Hours (per month)



Ground Water Extraction m<sup>3</sup>  
(combined boreholes per month)

