

# The **WANDERER**

Marion Island Ne

August 2014

interviews:

M71's  
**ECO's &**  
*the* **MEDIC**

**CROZET SHAGS**

**PHOTO GALLERY**

*Penguin Portraits*

**WATER  
TUNNEL  
HUT REVIEW**

**MARION  
SHIPWRECKS**



environmental affairs

Department  
Environmental Affairs  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

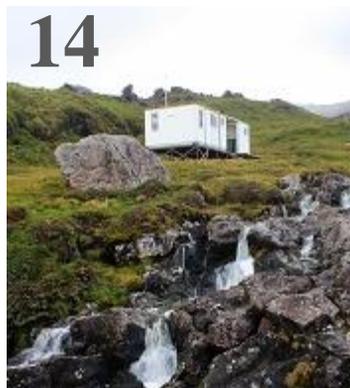


**MARION 71**  
*Expedition* 46° 36' S, 33° 57' E

DANIEL KOTZÉ

The **W**

8



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## Winds of Change

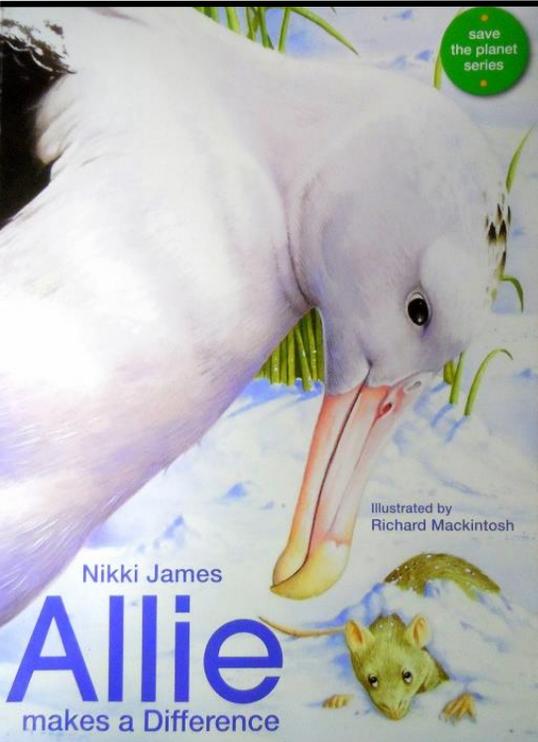
While doing fur seal research at Mixed Pickle hut, I was spoiled with ample free time which I mostly spent in the hut's sunny corner with a cup of rooibos. Besides pondering about life in all its complexity, I saw a Wandering Albatross chick (which I have named Strider) get out of its nest and stretch its wings. A sign of things to come.

Last week on a crisp cloudless day walking back from Kildalkey hut, I also saw gigantic elephant seal bulls arriving for the mating season and even the first Macaroni Penguin to return from a four month ocean safari. Winds of change are blowing on the island and the air is thick with expectation. After a magical winter, the island seems to prepare for a burst of life. Enough to write books about. For now, unfortunately you would have to settle for a 20 page newsletter. Enjoy!



DANIËL KOTZÉ  
EDITOR

# Letter from the editor



## Marion children's book!

TEXT BY LOUISE GADNEY

I was given a delightful children's book as a gift for the expedition. The author, Nikki James, was inspired to write the book during her visit to Marion Island during April 2006. It entails the adventures of Allie the albatross, the characters he meets along the way and how he learns to make a difference. The colourful illustrations by Richard Mackintosh and captivating story urged me to contact Nikki. She was thrilled that a copy has found its way home. She has also been so kind as to make the book available again to order. If you are also interested in a copy you can contact Nikki:

E-mail: [nikki@dninteriors.co.za](mailto:nikki@dninteriors.co.za)

Cellphone: 0829744389

# The Photo Gallery

COMPILED BY DANIĚL KOTZÉ



## Penguin Portraits

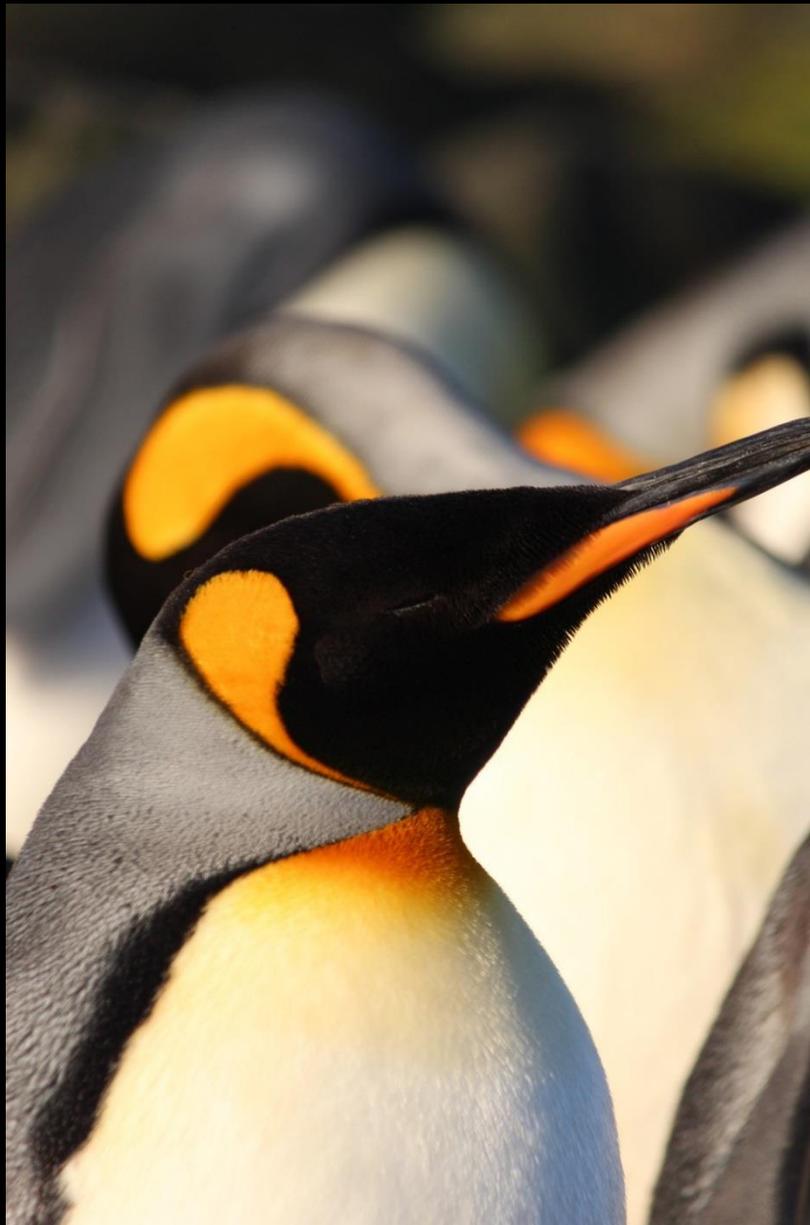
Penguins are the most peculiar birds. They can be both splendidly beautiful and scruffy-looking, depending on the stage of life they are in. Marion Island boasts four species: Macaroni-, Rochopper-, King- and Gentoo Penguins. The former two species have all temporarily left the island to fish the rich waters of the Southern Indian Ocean. For this reason the collection of photos for this edition will focus on the latter two species.

### David Green Dozing King

Amidst the hustle and bustle of the Archway Bay colony, an adult King Penguin catches an afternoon nap in some rare afternoon sun.

#### How?

Canon EOS 600D; shutter speed 1/500 sec; aperture f5.6; ISO 200.





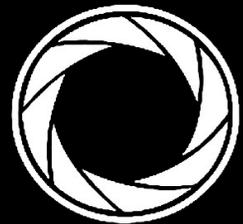
## David Green

### ◀ One Small Step

An adult Gentoo Penguin steps into thin air on its way up from the beach at Macaroni Bay.

### How?

Canon EOS 600D; shutter speed 1/640 sec; aperture f7.1; ISO 200.



## Liezl Pretorius

### ▶ The Perfect Family

While trying to avoid the Gentoo breeding colony at Funk Bay, I unexpectedly stumbled across this small family of Gentoo penguins. I decided to seize the opportunity to take a quick family photo of these endangered penguins. I rate them as one of the most beautiful birds on Marion Island. And let's be honest, the chicks are outrageously adorable!

### How?

Nikon Coolpix AW110; shutter speed 1/400 sec; aperture f4.8; ISO 125.



## Daniël Kotzé

### Ocean Basket ▶

During a visit to the King Penguin colony at Archway Bay, I captured this hungry chick that was more than willing to receive a beak full of fishy regurgitation from its parent.

### How?

Canon EOS 700D; shutter speed 1/250 sec; aperture f5.0; ISO 800.



## Titanic ▼

I was able to snap this pose of a Gentoo Penguin adult and its chick at the Ship's Cove breeding colony.

### How?

Canon EOS 700D; shutter speed 1/1600 sec; aperture f5.6; ISO 400.



## Low de Vries Fluffball

### How?

Canon EOS 700D; shutter speed 1/1600 sec; aperture f5.6; ISO 400.

After a census to Archway Bay, I was standing on the beach on one of the rare sunny days on Marion and could not waste the opportunity to take some photos of the penguins. King Penguins are very curious, and if you are patient, quiet and still they will stumble over to you. Most people immediately aim for the adult birds with their bright plumage, but I decide to focus on the chicks. They might be brown, and thus in the eyes of many very dull, but with their fluffy feathers they make for an interesting subject.

### Parental Guidance

### How?

Canon EOS 700D; shutter speed 1/1600 sec; aperture f5.6; ISO 400.



# Life as an

# ECO

RENDANI

TEXT BY FRANK VENTER



TSHILIDZI

AZORELLA IS A JOKE. The ECO's having a laugh at Mixed Pickle hut after climbing Azorella Kop.

DANIËL KOTZÉ

Although from diverse backgrounds and vocations, every member of M71 shares a common interest – the preservation of Marion Island's unique ecosystem. Leading the charge is the team's Environmental Control Officer (ECO), Tshilidzi Ramagoma (T), and Assistant ECO, Rendani Mikosi (R).

## 1 *What are the ECO's responsibilities?*

**T:** Our job is to make sure that all activities undertaken at Marion are within the management plan. This is achieved by managing waste, controlling pollution, eradicating alien plants and animals, making sure that the team personnel are complying with their permits, inspection of the field huts and assessment of the degradation of the paths.

## 2 *What has been your experience of the island so far?*

**T:** It has been exciting and challenging at the same time. The excitement of being surrounded by the ocean, climbing mountains, walking on the mires, watching different animals such as seals, penguins, killer whales and Wandering

Albatrosses playing in the snow. The challenge is the mode of transportation, driving your own two feet.

**R:** I already feel familiarised with the island. Before the expedition, I had no idea of the landscape here. It was very tough for me to experience conditions such as climbing and walking in mires for the very first time.

## 3 *What lead to your decision to apply for the expedition?*

**T:** Like any other person I was just looking for a job far from home. I like the idea of being missed by friends and family.

**R:** I look forward to challenges and to be well equipped. This expedition is more than an experience because the area has been declared an international RAMSAR wetland site, and a protected area. I am getting very good



ECO WARRIORS. Tshilidzi (TOP) and Rendani (BOTTOM) clearing waste from the island.

exposure, and I am privileged to be on Marion Island, because only permitted people come here for research purposes.

**4** ***What do you miss more? Fresh fruit or seeing more than 18 other people?***  
**T:** I miss going to church, my woman, my family and my friends.

**R:** Family comes first, to stay away from your family for 14 months is too long, although I'm adjusting to the situation. I always told myself, that in order to survive you have to adapt. I keep telling myself that I'm building my career and then everything is fine.

**5** ***Tell us more about yourself.***  
**T:** I am from Fondwe, Nzhelele area in Limpopo Province. I am the second student from Phiriphiri, my former Secondary School to come to Marion, after Takalani Avhasei Maswime in 2002. I studied BEnvM at University of Venda. In my spare time I enjoy watching movies, reading my Bible and

playing gospel music, venrap, Tshikona traditional dance and church sermons.

**R:** I'm from Tshivhulani in Limpopo. I completed a four year Bachelors degree in Environmental Management at the University of Venda. I am passionate about sustainability and environmental management issues and highly optimistic about making a meaningful contribution to the world. You will often find me playing pool or reading *News24* to stay up to date on what's happening in South Africa.

**6** ***Name three people you would like to be marooned with on an island.***

**T:** Mpho Mphago, Rendani Mikosi and Johannes Masinge. We did a round island together. It was great spending hut nights with them. They are crazy, and I can never be bored with these three guys around.

**7** ***What is the best technique to safely cross a mire?***

**T:** There's no technique, I walk fast like am walking on the air or tarred road. The reason people sink is because they are too cautious. When one starts to feel the ground, that is when you start to sink.

**8** ***What is your favourite animal on the island?***

**R:** King Penguins. Their beauty makes me look at them over and over again. They relieve my stress by just taking a photo and looking at them.

**9** ***What are some of the serious issues threatening the ecosystem on Marion Island?***

**R:** Alien species and the risks of introducing even more such species. They can lead to the decrease or even extinction of indigenous island species. They can have a massive effect on the entire natural system. Introduced diseases can also have devastating effects on local species already at risk of extinction. Other threats include pollution of the sea, which have negative impact on the aquatic species.

# MARION ISLAND SHAG PARADISE

TEXT BY DAVID GREEN



DAVID GREEN

**Of all the bird species that call Marion their home, perhaps the most handsome is a cormorant called the Crozet Shag, *Phalacrocorax atriceps melanogenus*.**

**BEHIND BLUE EYES.** An adult Crozet Shag scans the coastal waters for good fishing spots.

In contrast to the mostly drab browns of other cormorants, the plumage of these striking birds is blue-black, and white. Encircling their eyes is a ring of bright blue skin and at the base of their bill sits an orange-yellow nasal knob. They

We could only truly appreciate their beauty when we found them at a roost site while they basked in the afternoon sun. They made for an impressive sight with their blue-black feathers glinting a dark metallic green in the sunlight.

**“Unfortunately, every species has an Achilles’ heel...”**

dress to impress, especially in the breeding season when they even grow a feathered crown. Once you’ve seen one it is easy to understand why the species complex to which it belongs (*Phalacrocorax atriceps*) is commonly named the Imperial Shag.

We first came across the Crozet Shag while approaching Marion, when a few individuals flew past the ship. They were immediately recognisable by their distinct, flapping flight, which is so unlike that of albatrosses and petrels. However, exciting though this first encounter was, I found it didn’t do the species justice.



**SITTING DUCK.** Shags are more comfortable in water than on land.

LOW DE VRIES

## Marion Island: Shag Paradise

Unfortunately, every species has an Achilles' heel, and for the Crozet Shag it is its call – a sound not unlike a bad cough. This isn't surprising when the words, "grunt", "croak", "cackle" and "hiss" are used to describe the calls of its South African cousins.

In terms of appeal, amongst the diverse range of bird calls heard on Marion, a Shag call sits at the bottom of the pile. Similarly, much like other cormorants, they are unlikely to win any prizes for most graceful flier. Whilst most of Marion's flying birds draw elegant curves and loops in the air, shags fly with blinkers on, and only their destination in mind. Of course, they can get some serious speed out of those short wings; but if I had to sum up their flying style in a word, it would be "functional".

In their defence, shags spend a great deal less time on the wing than most other species on the island, and so have little need for the dynamic, soaring flight seen in the Procellariiformes. In any case, I find a few minor shortcomings are more than made up for by this bird's regal appearance. The Crozet Shag is an inshore forager that is usually found within about 400 m of the coast,

which makes it one of a very few species that Marionites can actually observe foraging. They catch their prey by diving from the surface and propel themselves downwards with strong kicks of their large feet. Their diet consists predominantly of small fish, shrimp and cephalopods, which are generally caught near the sea floor. It is actually quite entertaining to watch a shag foraging because it seems like they're capable of multitasking. I watched one feverishly bathing itself while simultaneously swimming around, and repeatedly dipping its head below the surface to see what lurked below.

Despite an unfortunate voice, and a business-like attitude towards flying, this species remains a marvel to see and a great tick for the life-list. Sadly, they are highly susceptible to the effects of the changing availability of prey. Between 1994 and 2003 the number of breeding Shags decreased by a whopping 68%. This decline was probably related to a reduction in prey availability. Although numbers have recovered somewhat, long-term monitoring remains essential to understanding the effects of our impacts on the ecosystem supporting these birds.



68%

**Decrease in breeding Shags on Marion between 1994 and 2003.**

AT THE BAR AGAIN? Two immature Crozet Shags seem to have a quarrel at their roosting spot at Rockhopper Bay.

STRANDED. The bow of the *SS Solglimt*, eight meters below the waters of Ship's Cove.

ANDRÉ BOTHA

The seas around the Prince Edward Islands (PEI's) are notoriously unpredictable. Tempestuous weather, thick kelp beds and dangerous rocks presented a serious obstacle to early visitors. Not surprisingly then that these waters have claimed its fair share of ships and lives. There are accounts of at least eight shipwrecks around the PEI's (five at PE and three at Marion). Information is limited for the most part, but detailed accounts exist for at least three such disasters.

The greatest, single loss of life to have occurred at the PEI's was the tragedy which befell the *Richard Dart*. An immigrant ship bound for New Zealand from the UK, the vessel ran aground on Prince Edward Island on 16 November 1849 in conditions of thick fog. A total of 52 men, women and children perished that day.

Arguably the most famous shipwreck is that of the Norwegian ship, *SS Solglimt*. The 82.6 m steam powered vessel was built in 1881, having originally started her life as a cargo ship. The *Solglimt* was later sold to *Storm-Bull & Co.* and converted into a sealing and whaling vessel. On 16 October 1908 after

successfully hunting elephant seals on Marion Island, she struck an uncharted rock at Ship's Cove (named for the tragedy). The captain, realizing that the vessel was

**8** RECORDED SHIPWRECKS AROUND  
THE PRINCE EDWARD ISLANDS

**52** PASSENGERS: THE MOST TO DIE  
FROM A SINGLE SHIPWRECK

**70** PASSENGERS: THE MOST TO  
SURVIVE FROM A SINGLE  
SHIPWRECK

## A Blast from the Past: Shipwrecks



FRANK VENTER

**GRAVEYARD.** Marion Island's Ship's Cove, the site of the *Solglimt* disaster of 1908. Archaeological divers often visit this wreck.

taking on water, rammed her onto the beach, allowing the 70 survivors enough time to collect provisions from the stricken vessel before she was lost to the waves. They founded a small settlement at Ship's Cove consisting of 18 huts, where they remained until their rescue a month later.

The same year as the *Titanic* tragedy, 22 survivors of the *Seabird* ran aground at Prince Edward Island. The men lived in a cave until they ran out of supplies, prompting the captain and his crew to make for Marion Island. They took up residence in the shelters left behind by the crew of the *Solglimt*. Unfortunately for them, their stay was slightly longer, only being rescued six months later.

# JULY according to the METKASSIES



DANIEL KOTZÉ

MAXIMUM WIND GUST	162 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL	173.8 mm
HIGHEST IN 24 HOURS	21.8 mm
TOTAL DAYS WITH RAIN	22 days
TOTAL DAYS > 1 MM	20 days
TOTAL SUNSHINE	69 hours

**ICY THRONE.** There were no shortage of snow during July, leaving hut toilets like this one at Repetto's almost completely buried.

	AVERAGE	MAXIMUM	MINIMUM	AVERAGE MAX	AVERAGE MIN
TEMPERATURE	3.2°C	10.1°C	-3.7°C	5.8°C	0.6°C
PRESSURE	1000.4 hPa	1025.2 hPa	965.0 hPa	1008.1 hPa	991.4 hPa
HUMIDITY	89%	100%	53%	-	-

A Reader's Round Island:

# WATERTUNNEL

*A little hut over the plain*

TEXT BY LOW DE VRIES



THIS LITTLE LIGHT OF MINE. Watertunnel hut is situated high enough for an ocean view, even at night as the moon rises from above Gazella Plain.

LOW DE VRIES

**“For the man sound in body and serene in mind there is no such thing as bad weather...”**  
-George Gissing-

Clearly George Gissing has never walked past Karookop and over the Feldmark Plateau when the wind is pumping at more than 40 knots and ice pellets, not just plain rain, is hammering you in the face. There are some of my friends who will argue that I am not sound or serene in any aspect (jokingly mostly, I hope), but we are talking about a wind that can knock a lad from P.E. (our very own birder, David Green) to his knees. And to his head. I might be running away with the story a bit though, so let's backtrack to Kildalkey hut and review the route.

From Kildalkey you pass Johnny's Hill, climb over scoria (red rocks) and up the shoulder of Black Haglet Valley (which is the Tristan name for a Great-wing Petrel) to get to Karookop. The climb is long, but it is not that steep. It can take a while to get used to, but after a few months on the island, and once you have learned where to go, it's not that bad. When walking directly from base to Watertunnel, you take the "N1" south past the old mammal lab and towards three hills named Tom, Dick and Harry. Next on the list of hills you pass is Fred's and then Middelrooi, which brings you right up to Black



LOW DE VRIES

THE TUNNELS. These magnificent water tunnels can be found upstream from the hut, hence the name.

Haglet. But here she is a different beast and it becomes clear why she is known by another name (also starting with a B incidentally). Here Black Haglet is steep and you have to climb hard, about 200m up the almost vertical slope. Once you are fit it doesn't matter much, but the winds hit you once you reach the top. The wind is

# Watertunnel Hut

a constant terror at the top and across the plateau. Standing in front of Black Haglet, you change your playlist from the chill walking music to something more upbeat. Even slightly angry music, if you are that way inclined. But not Chumbawamba. Never Chumbawamba. You will get knocked down enough as it is. The hut can be seen from the top of the Veldmark Plateau as a white speck next to a little stream and an expanding plain behind it.

Watertunnel hut, and the stream running next to it, draws its name from another natural marvel found on the island. A short walk upstream the river carves its way through rock to form tunnels. Yes, water tunnels. The river flows through a hole and into a small lake that has formed inside a cave. During winter the waterfall is mostly frozen, forming long stalactites which are also seen along the roof of the cave. It is difficult to do justice to this scene with a mere photo, and I am certain that only Sir David Attenborough could adequately describe it in words.

Gazella Plain is found on the other side of the hut and boasts the largest population of Antarctic fur seals (*Arctocephalus gazella*) on the island. Hence the name. To get onto the plain, you have to walk down Devil's Staircase (although it resembles a staircase, I have never seen the devil there, so I am unsure about this name). Next, you just have to cross an elephant seal moulting site. Be careful not to slip into one, and you will have arrived on the plain. Gazellas have been known to sneak up on you, or just charge you on sight. Be sure to keep an eye on them if you are planning to grab your camera and snap some shots of these creatures. If you are close to the beach, also be on the lookout for killer whales.



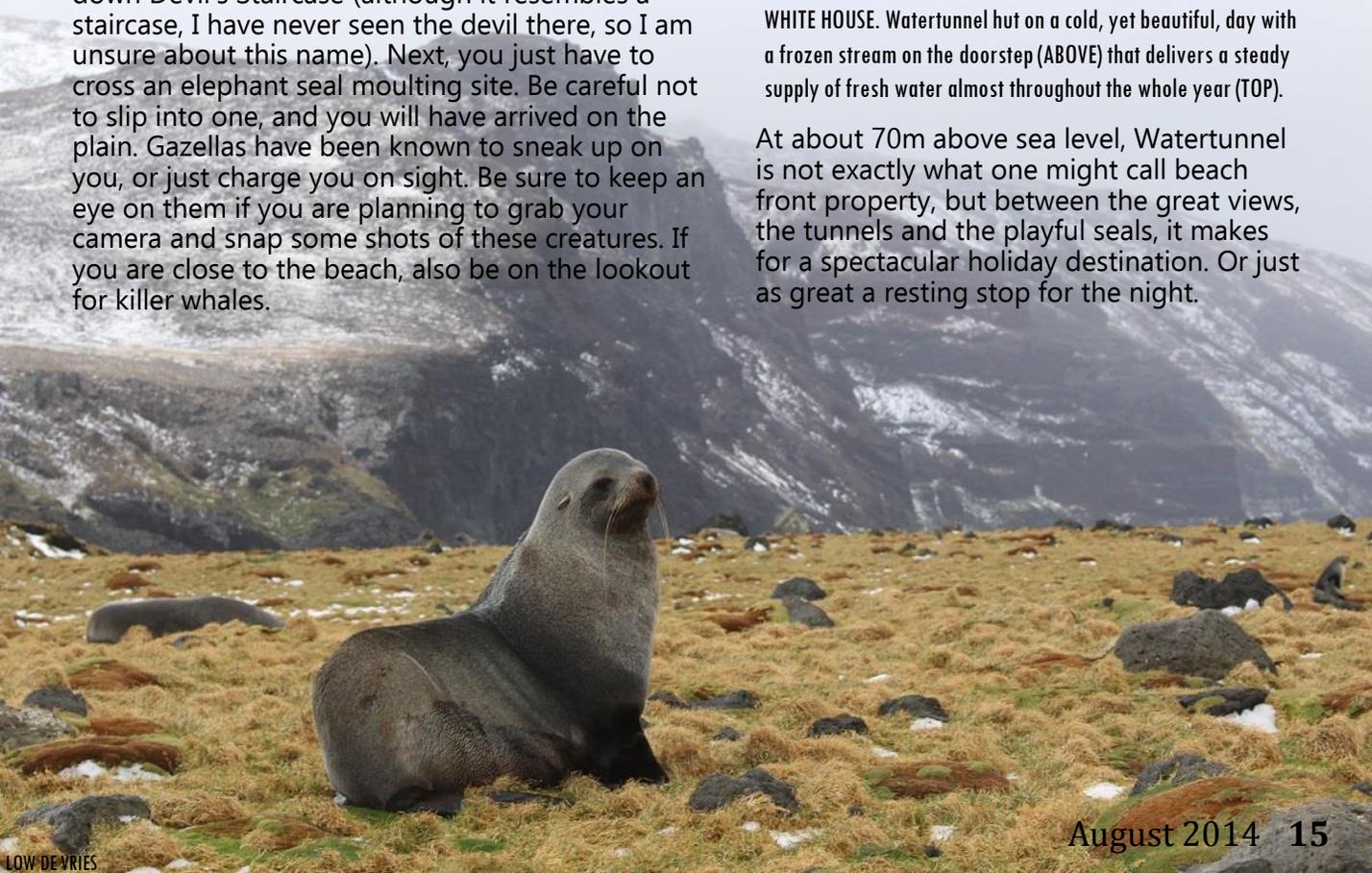
DANIËL KOTZÉ



LOW DE VRIES

**WHITE HOUSE.** Watertunnel hut on a cold, yet beautiful, day with a frozen stream on the doorstep (ABOVE) that delivers a steady supply of fresh water almost throughout the whole year (TOP).

At about 70m above sea level, Watertunnel is not exactly what one might call beach front property, but between the great views, the tunnels and the playful seals, it makes for a spectacular holiday destination. Or just as great a resting stop for the night.



## WATERTUNNEL HUT STYLE PAP AND WORS (SERVES 2-3)

1. Pap, everybody has their own way. Follow yours.
2. Grab tins of tomato and onion mix (if you are lucky there are some of the large ones from previous years), green beans, butter beans and a packet of soya mince from the pantry. Tomato and onion flavour (alternatively steak and chop flavour). It doesn't really matter, they all taste the same. Fry the onions with garlic flakes
3. Hydrate a handful of onions.
4. Fry up the onions in a pan and add the tins of tomato and onion, as well as the green beans and butter beans.
5. Add some soya mince (mixed with water to add some substance and volume) to your sauce.
6. Add a little chutney, marmite, salt, pepper, mixed herbs and garlic flakes.
7. Let the sauce simmer.
8. Since fresh meat, including boerewors, is not allowed at the huts, grab a tin of viennas. It's not exactly wors, but, well, yes.
9. Since it is not wors and just viennas, slice them up and just plonk it into the sauce.
10. Dish up the pap, add a generous scoop of sauce and enjoy with your fellow field workers.

JUST PLAIN BEAUTIFUL. Gazella Plain with Devils Staircase in the background. The hut sits on top of the first ridge with the Feldmark Plateau behind it.



LOW DE VRIES

TWENTY SIX! Genny getting ready to blow out the birthday candles.



LOW DE VRIES

## EVENTS

Mseventyfun

### GENNY'S PIRATE BIRTHDAY

TEXT BY VONICA PEROLD

Geneveive turned 26 on the 17th of August. We organized a pirate themed birthday party for her. The birthday girl was dressed in a French navy outfit, while the rest of the team were dressed as pirates. We made pizza and brownies for dinner and danced the night away. It was a very enjoyable evening which ended off with a game of Kings that produced some interesting and fun rules. The next day (on her official birthday), Geneveive was fortunate enough to go for a spin in the Island Ferrari (forklift). We wish Gen all the best for the rest of the expedition.

# CELEBRATING

*The end of*

# TAPS

TEXT BY DANIEL KOTZÉ

TAPS field work ended this month and the sealers celebrated this by taking the day off and spending some time together for the first time since take-over! The day started off with a tasty brunch at the old mammal lab, to which fellow team members were invited. After a brief meeting discussing the busy elephant seal breeding season that lies ahead, the sealers kicked backed and enjoyed the new Captain America movie. Gen's birthday party was the cherry on the cake, leaving the sealers refuelled for the work ahead.



DANIEL KOTZÉ



DANIEL KOTZÉ

## What is TAPS?

*Tropicalis Attendance Patterns Studies.* It involved the monitoring of two sub-Antarctic fur seal breeding colonies around base and Mixed Pickle hut. Seals are tagged on the flipper and observers can therefore determine their attendance- and behavioural patterns twice a day.

**SEALERS CELEBRATE.** Brunch was a great success (RIGHT); Tagged seal pups that died are commemorated in Mixed Pickle hut (TOP LEFT); A tagged pup poses (TOP RIGHT).



LOW DE VRIES

## MY NEW FAMILY

TEXT BY ALEXIS OSBORNE



LOW DE VRIES

It is already more than four months since we arrived on Marion Island, but it still feels like we just arrived. For many of us coming here, we did not know what to expect. We were only prepared to expect the unexpected. I guess not many of us had any idea of how it would be like living in isolation on a sub-Antarctic island away from friends, family and the things you hold most dear. Being on an island with only 19

**PIRATE FAMILY.** M71 in their pirate attire at Genny's birthday party.

people for 13 months was going to be challenging. I knew I had to have a drastic change of mind and the perception I had about island life, otherwise I was not going to survive. Meeting the team and seeing that we were all from different cultures and scientific backgrounds, I knew it was a winning combination. I was excited to learn from these people whom I was going to spend an important part of my life with.

Living in isolation is not supposed to be easy, but these people make it easy, motivating me to continue this journey. Being so far from family and support structures, we are forced to rely on fellow team members, whom I can now undoubtedly call my family. Being in isolation taught me to be tolerant towards others and appreciate people's differences, after all, we are

here and this is the only family we have.

I have already learned so much about myself and growing spiritually has been another bonus. I have learned a lot from my new family and I'm excited for the next couple of months. These people are the ones that give you a hug when you do not even realize you need one. They are always there to extend a helping hand and to give you direction, even when your GPS's batteries fail.

I can now safely say I have found a home away from home with my new family.

I was inspired by the following Bible verse while writing this article:

**Romans 12:10.** *Be devoted to one another in love. Honour one another above yourselves.*

## SELSO THE CELEBRITY SEAL VISITS MARION

TEXT BY LOW DE VRIES

On the 30<sup>th</sup> of June Marion Island was visited by a celebrity, though maybe not a celebrity in the traditional sense of the word. He didn't rock up in a flashy car, and there were no red carpets to greet him. Should there have been though? After all, he did travel for six months and more than 8000km to visit us. He did however get slightly lost, ended up near Antarctica and only then made his way to Marion, but who hasn't had some sort of GPS malfunction before?

I am, of course, talking about Sello the Southern elephant seal, who found himself stranded on the beaches of KwaZulu-Natal in June 2013 and was taken to uShaka Marine World in Durban, where they were successful in rehabilitating him. After he was fitted with a satellite tag and released in January, he started swimming, aiming for the cool southern waters, and found himself next to the ice shelves of Antarctica. He stayed there for a while and then headed north to Marion Island where he hauled out onto the beach at Bullard South. The Marion paparazzi were alerted and I set out to go find

this celebrity, check on his condition and take photographs for a photogrammetry project to determine his weight. Sello didn't seem to mind the attention much. Instead, he was lying on the beach, posing for the camera while spending some time with his long lost relatives. He didn't stay for long, and why should he? A three day visit is more than can be expected from a celebrity with a full schedule. We hope to see him again, and maybe in the future with his very own harem.



**BRAGGING.** Sello showing off his satellite tag.

LOW DE VRIES

# MEET *The* MEDIC

LOUISE

Back in South Africa, Louise Gadney is a SANParks honorary ranger, mother of three and grandmother. She hates cooking but loves fixing things. Here on Marion she is best known as the Sewing Queen, not only for stitching open wounds, but also torn pants. This is what she has to say about her life.

TEXT BY LIEZL PRETORIUS

## 1 *What inspired you to become a nurse?*

My mum, grandmother and godmother are all operating theatre nurses. It is a discipline I love, so I believe I was "born" into the job.

## 2 *Why did you apply for the this position?*

Honestly, I am embarrassed to say I've never heard of Marion. I have however been a nursing officer on cruise ships and therefore Marion appealed to my sense of adventure and deep appreciation of nature.

## 3 *Tell us more about your children.*

I have a son, two daughters and the cutest two-year-old granddaughter, Ava Jo. My son (Dane), a pilot and skipper lives in the USA and is also married to a nurse. My daughter, Tara-jade (19) is completing a GAP course and loves art, cooking, and travel. Her younger sister, Meagen-shae (17) wants to become a jet fighter pilot! They all share my love of nature.

## 4 *What has been the highlight of your stay on Marion so far?*

Highlights have been many, every day brings some new wonder but I especially enjoy new friends, discovering the fauna and flora of the island and the rainbows.

## 5 *Do you have any favourite animal or bird on the island?*

I still can't choose between the Wandering Albatrosses' crazy walk before take-off, the funny waddle of the Gentoo Penguins or the soft-eyed seal pups. Seeing Orcas swim so close is thrilling but I haven't experienced a towering elephant seal yet. All the birds are truly masters of the air here, flying in gusts of 40 knots is awe inspiring.



**PUP RANGER.** Louise sometimes helps the sealers with field work near base and has established a good relationship with the seal pups.

LIEZL PRETORIUS



DANIEL KOZÉ

**6** *Do you have any pets and what are their names?*  
 Every parent has pets! I'm sure my three cats would've helped with the mice problem here, until they got too fat. Queen-Lizzy, a long haired Chinchilla cross, is a snob if you dare to offend. Gizmo, a gentle chap, is partial to tummy rubs and Smeegels is a fat black and white boy who loves the next door budgies!

**7** *Do you have any aspirations to work on any of the other islands?*  
 Now that I have experienced island life here, I need to visit Gough and the SANAE base. In my spare time at home I volunteer as a Sanparks Honorary Ranger (Table Mountain) and also help with the Junior Ranger programme. If my travels help inspire some of these kids to foster a greater appreciation and love of nature, then any hardship I may encounter will be worth it.

**8** *What are your goals for this year?*  
 My goal is to grow spiritually as a Christian and to land the team home safely and in good health. I want to be someone the whole team can rely on and accomplish at least one round island trip!

**9** *Any advice for the next Marion medic?*  
 The next Marion medic should just thoroughly enjoy the island. He or she should try to be rock solid, calm and be someone the team can always turn too.



GERARD DE JONG

**BANKER:** MA'M COULD YOU PLEASE SIGN THE SLIP HERE?  
**NURSE** (PULLING OUT A RECTAL THERMOMETER): OH DEAR, SOME BUM HAS MY PEN!



LEZL PRETORIUS

**WORK HARD, PLAY HARD.** Louise does not spend all her time behind her desk in Marion's clinic (TOP), but likes to spend her free time walking along the coast. This often involves treading on thin ice (MIDDLE) and some snow of course (BOTTOM).

## I ODE IT TO MY CATS by Louise Gadney

I imagine if you were here, we could have mice crispie breakfasts  
 Marmalade and toasted mousearella cheese squares.  
 Pickled mouse salad with yellow rice and thai-mouse soup.  
 Snack on mousewors, or a mousearoni pasta swallowed down with a swig of sweet mousecadel.  
 And before you curl up on my bed we will share a delicious hot cup of mouseocolate!