

Latest News and Updates from The Owl Orphanage

Jacques Nel

New Farm, New Year

The latest updates

Welcome to our first official newsletter.

The Orphanage is looking forward to exciting times ahead. We have moved our centre of operations to a new farm in Velddrif and this has meant that we can increase our camps and the size of the camps exponentially.

We applied for and received new permits from Nature Conservation to allow us to care for more species than ever before.

With the extra space available our smallest aviary here is the size of our previous largest aviary. We have several flight training aviaries which are 8m x 24m and these allow the birds to really test their wings before release.

We also have 3 outside camps for the bokies, tortoises and geese. Currently all 11 aviaries are full, we are building 2 more. A further 2 will be erected in the coming months.

It has been an early season for some birds and a late season for others. High season will last another 3 months. Trends change annually and we are seeing less razor wire injuries but more dog attacks on wildlife. We have taken in many more birds and tortoises headed for the muti market. Less birds are coming in due to poison but more orphans are being brought in. Luckily, we have both a hatchery and an incubator – both have been invaluable this season.



Barn owls have very long lgs, toes and talons to help them catch their prey in long grass. They usually hunt at night using their super-sensitive hearing.



The first aviaries at our new centre allow more space for the birds in flight and strength training. This one measures 8m x 24m. The largest aviary in St Helena Bay was only 6m x 4m.

Jacques Nel

Our bird and wildlife count

The latest stats

In our care CURRENTLY:

- 7 kestrels
- 15 barn owls
- 14 spotted eagle owls
- Baby yellow billed kite
- Mousebirds
- Barbets
- Yellow cape canaries
- Baby Steenbok
- Baby Grysbok (just weaned off milk, 4 months old)
- 34 tortoises
- A baby bat
- Starlings and swifts

Wildlife rescued AND released Q3 2022:

- 3 spotted eagle owls
- 9 barn owls, one black harrier
- One goshawk, 5 crows
- Garden birds incl. sparrows, mousebirds, starlings, barbets, and swifts
- Tortoises and geese
- 2 groups of 7 Teals
- Sadly, we cannot save all wildlife. Every year we have to euthanize animals due to the severity of their injuries and zero chance of rehabilitation and release:
- 11 spotted eagle owls, 7 barn owls,
- 1 yellow billed kite, 2 crows, 5 kestrels
- 2 tortoises and 5 bokies

Donations

To give or not to give?

Tania Copeland

How you can get involved and make a difference? How much do we need to stay open? How much do we receive? How can you help raise awareness.

Page 2

Photo gallery

Cute, cuter and the cutest

Jacques Nel

Our photo gallery is guaranteed to please. Turn to page 4 and view our birds. Feast on all the cuteness we could muster for this festive season.

Page 4

2023 and beyond

What’s planned

Tania Copeland

We may have moved and built the aviaries but there is always more to do. Check out our plans for next year and beyond.

Page 4

Tania Copeland

Fund raising and donations

The stark reality of charity work

While everyone agrees our planet and wildlife need saving, there is a lot of talk and very little action. Here at the Owl Orphanage we face a similar battle monthly.

On average we receive less than R3000 per month through miscellaneous donations. Our average food bill during season is closer to R20,000 per month. So how do we make ends meet?

We are very fortunate to have a very special donor, and a very good friend. Our kind benefactor picks up the tab for our excess food bill, vet bills and building costs. Without him, we would not be able to offer the service that we do. So, what can you do to help?

How about a small monthly donation of R100? How about asking your co-workers to match your donation? How about

asking your company to match your donations? What about organizing a fund-raising day? Bake cakes, sell some unwanted goods, offer to clean cars. A little donation goes a long way. No donation goes nowhere. Rather than waiting for the lottery win in order to make a large donation, look after the cents and they will take care of the Rands. I feel a quote coming on.....

Seriously, less than 0.5% of the population actually commits to supporting non-profit organizations. We have seen how private security companies assist our SAPS. SAPS cannot cope without them. Who supports our charity work? The government do not allocate funds, the lottery no longer supports animal organizations.....? Do we just leave our feathered friends to die?

Someone has to take a stand and say, “I will help. Count me in.” Will that be you?

Other fund-raising ideas: donate food or equipment for the birds, sponsor one bird, make and sell things for the NPO, auction special goods, talk to your friends and help us to raise awareness. Share and comment on our Facebook pages. Sitting back and doing nothing should not be an option.



Pantoffels eats by herself now and forages on the farm. We keep an eye on her and bring her in at night.

Jacques Nel

A day in the life of....Pantoffels, a grysbok

I don't know what happened to my mom, I spent a few days on my own in the veld. I cried but Mom didn't come. A kind family rescued me but they took me home and started giving me milk formula, eggs and ideal milk (google was not right). I then got diarrhoea because I am lactose intolerant. Luckily, they saw the folly of their ways and called the Orphanage and surrendered me in the nick of time. The Orphanage said I was lucky to survive. Jacques persevered and eventually I was able to feed from a bottle, every two hours. This stretched to 4 hourly. I have been weaned off now because I am a big girl, I am nearly 4 months old.

I have been moved into a secure camp at the Orphanage and I have a steenbok friend. I forage for myself and hang outside when the weather is good. Jacques no longer brings me indoors at night because I am a big girl.

I wish people would surrender wildlife as soon as possible. We are not pets and we cannot live in your garden and eat your garden or shop bought food. We need specialist care and food. I forage indigenous food. I nearly died, not because I had been abandoned, but because people thought they knew what food and care I needed. They were wrong. The road to hell is paved with good intentions...

Please don't make the same mistake.

Meet the Chairman

Jacques Nel



Jacques is the Chairman of the Owl Orphanage, he is also on the Board of Directors for the Hout Bay Seal Rescue Station.

An artist and landscaper, Jacques draws his inspiration from nature. A lifelong conservationist, he is constantly creating awareness in the local communities of the importance of caring for our fauna and flora

His travels were all focused on the natural world: from diving the Barrier Reef and hiking across Africa, to walking Brazilian forests and exploring countries and continents. It was his father, a “nature addict”, who birthed and nurtured this love for nature, which has flourished and intensified over years of working on game farms, game lodges and sanctuaries, adding to Jacques’ extensive knowledge and experience of and passion for the natural world.

The Owl Orphanage is a dream come true for Jacques. From this idyllic spot, Jacques is following in his father’s footsteps: sharing his knowledge and expertise with local communities to promote love for and understanding of the environment, demonstrating just how important it is to preserve this unique heritage.

Keep the law in mind

Keeping tortoises without a permit is not only illegal, but could also be detrimental to the animal’s well-being. You have to have a permit from Nature Conservation to keep a tortoise in SA.



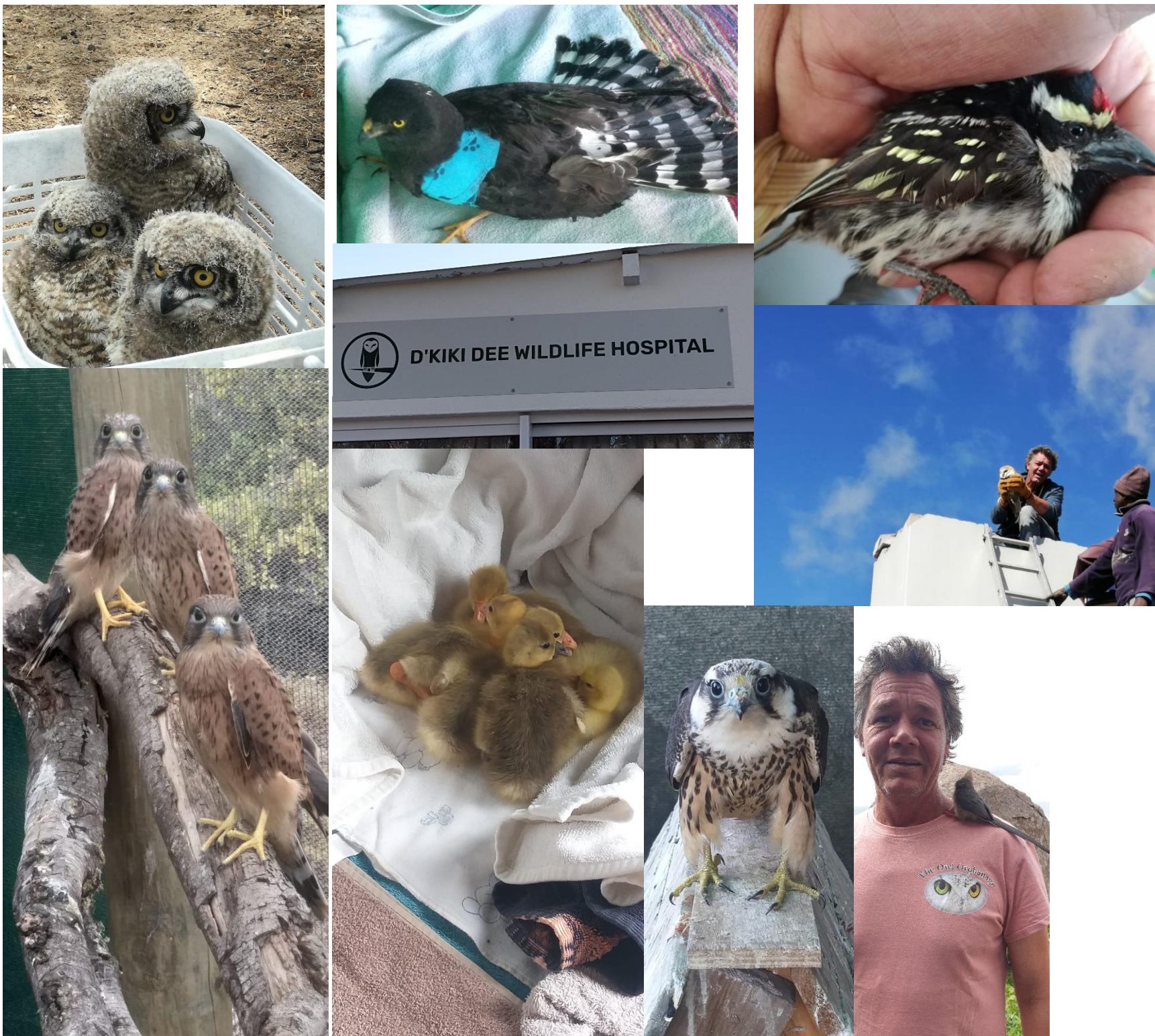
Some of the extremely useful donations have included much needed equipment for the Owl Orphanage.

Equipment that makes our lives easier

We have been gifted some extremely useful equipment in the past few months. We try to run off grid on the farm. We collect all water catchment and we use solar energy whenever possible.

The new chest freezer is essential because it runs at a low wattage for the solar panels, our old freezers were donated to Velddrif Animal Welfare. Funds were donated by D’Kiki Dee for the solar panels, freezer and the new medical centre on site.

Both the hatchery and the incubator have been fully utilized this breeding season with many days seeing the facilities being shared by several bird species. The hatchery was kindly donated by SANCOPP. The generator was donated by the Hout Bay Seal Rescue Station and the water tanks were donated by Oil Response. Not only do the water tanks provide us with our main source of water but we also use them as bird baths and water troughs for the birds.



The Owl Orphanage is not a petting zoo, it is strictly off limits to the public as Jacques releases all wildlife back onto this and other farms. It is not in their interests to become familiar with people.

Babies, babies and more babies

Rescues from dogs, falling out of nests, pellet guns, building work and nests falling through braai chimneys where will it end?



Jacques loves to educate the public and some of the things I hear him constantly repeating are: 1. Keep your dogs on leashes when walking through the wild 2. mesh the top of your chimneys to prevent baby owls falling through. 3. Do not use rat poison EVER 4. Do not be tempted to keep and rear wildlife you find.

We want to set up a network of volunteers who can be the contact point in their towns. Collecting and transporting the wildlife to one central place in order to deliver to the Orphanage. If you would like to get more involved please contact Tania, our secretary on 072 710 3481 to discuss how.

West Coat Environmental Project Fund t/a The Owl Orphanage

ABSA Account: 4098603515 Branch: 632005

The public rarely gets it right with regards to the treatment, diet and frequency of feeding required for baby wildlife. The idea sounds great but do you really want to kill them slowly? Call the Owl Orphanage and give the wildlife a second chance at life.

2023 and beyond we plan to build a few more day camps for the bakkies, geese and tortoises. A small dam on the grounds would also be wonderful for all the water birds we take in.

“In the end, only kindness matters.”