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Western Cape Primary Science Programme, Edith Stephens Wetland Park, Lansdowne Rd, Philippi 7785

P.O. Box 24158, Lansdowne, 7779 Tel: (021) 691 9039 Fax: (021) 691 6350 e-mail: info@psp.org.za

**Hullo again, dear Colleagues!**

We hope that the RNCS training for the Intermediate Phase teachers during this past July holiday has been useful and that you feel more confident to plan and start implementing our new National Curriculum. Our PSP staff have also participated in the WCED training and we have worked carefully to make sure that our PSP teacher support programmes build on and support the RNCS training.

We are also excited about the work being done on the environmental resources (e.g. the waterbirds) here at the ESWP and hope to feature this regularly in our PSP Newsletters.

We hope this term becomes a rewarding and exciting one for you. The PSP is there to help where we can!

**Mascha, Vagriuah, Nontsikelelo, Rose, Viv, Gcobisa, Nthabi, Zowi and Sandra in the Boland**



**Many Cattle Egrets -and other birds - roosting on the ESWP islands**



**Red knobbed Coots (Unomapemvana)**

**CONGRATULATIONS ROSE!**  
Rose Thomas completes her Masters Degree

We are thrilled to announce that Rose obtained her MPhil in Teaching at UCT with distinction! The dissertation was titled: *How and what are children learning in primary school science? A study with special reference to three primary science classes*. This is a wonderful achievement and we are so proud of her!



**Rose Thomas - PSP's Science Consultant**

**THE PSP ASSESSMENT WORKING GROUP STARTS ITS WORK**

A very successful meeting was held with a group of ten teachers to kick-start a careful exploration into questions on assessment such as:

- Can we give learners more freedom of choice and open-ended questions to show what they know?
- How do we do this with large classes etc?  
What is the best way to ask open-ended questions?
- Then, how do we assess them?
- How can we ensure that our assessment reveals high levels of skills and learners' deep scientific thinking?

Teachers will try out different assessments in class and bring concrete examples to further our thinking. This is an exciting process and we'll keep you informed.

**TEACHERS HAVE FUN WITH SCIENCE INVESTIGATIONS**



**Testing the strength of a magnet**



**Finding the boiling point of orange juice**

Last term, our science courses focused on Outcome 1 (Investigations) of the Natural Sciences curriculum. Teachers experienced investigations for themselves and were able to gain insight into what investigations entail and how much fun they can be.

**Investigations using magnets**

At the first course the teachers investigated magnets to find which materials were attracted to magnets. We found that magnets only attract certain metals e.g. iron, nickel and cobalt. We also tested the strength of different magnets, and then we made electromagnets. We drew graphs to show what we had found.

**Investigations about heating and cooling water**

At the second course, we investigated the rate at which different liquids heat and cool. We took temperature readings every few minutes and drew cooling and heating curves on graphs. We really enjoyed planning and setting up the tests. We found that getting organised, taking readings regularly and drawing graphs was physically and intellectually challenging. We had interesting discussions about how accurate and reliable our results were, when we compared the graphs of different groups.

**WATERBIRD MONITORING AT EDITH STEPHENS WETLAND PARK (ESWP)**

Every month a few enthusiastic people who study birds (ornithologists) visit ESWP to count the number of waterbirds at the storm water retention dam and seasonal wetland. This is part of a NATIONAL WATERBIRD MONITORING PROGRAMME called "Coordinated Waterbird Counts" (CWAC). CWAC, which started in 1992, is coordinated by the Avian Demography Unit at the University of Cape Town. It aims to find out how many waterbirds use the many wetlands in South Africa and to identify what threats they face.

The ESWP is part of an important wetland system for waterbirds on the Cape Flats as many wetlands have disappeared from this area. This makes this site an important link in the network of wetlands sites within the Cape Town metropole. Counts at ESWP started in April 2002 and there are plans to get a local youth conservation group to eventually take over the counts as part of an initiative to build local capacity in biodiversity monitoring.

**What waterbirds are usually found at ESWP and how many are there?**

The storm-water retention dam usually supports around 350-400 birds. The most common birds are: Red-knobbed Coots (Unomapemvana), Moorhens (Kukumezane), and ducks such as Cape Shoveller and Yellow-billed Duck (Idada). When the winter rains fill the seasonal wetland, birds such as Black-winged Stilts and African Snipe (Umnqduluthi) move in and take advantage of the abundant insects and other invertebrates in the muddy and water-logged soils. The retention dam also has three islands with Port Jackson trees and this provides a safe place to roost (sleep) overnight for birds such as White-breasted Cormorants, Reed Cormorants (Ugwid), African Sacred Ibis (umXwagele) and Cattle Egret (Ilanda). Up to 2500 of these birds use these islands during the winter months. We will keep you informed about any changes in the counts in the coming months.

**Doug Harebottle, ADU, University of Cape Town**  
Tel: (021) 650-2330  
email: doug@adu.uct.ac.za

It is wonderful for the PSP to share in this bird monitoring activity. Through the HOEP (Hands-on-Environment Project) the PSP focuses on these birds and provides the opportunities for teachers to bring their learners to the ESWP to get to know and love these birds too.



**Reed Cormorants (Ugwid)**

**NORMA ROAD PRIMARY PARTICIPATES IN A VIDEO CONFERENCE THROUGH THE AIMS-SEC (African Institute for Mathematical Sciences - Schools Enrichment Centre)**

Last term, the Grade 4s from Norma Road Primary School took part in a Maths video conference at the MTN ScienCentre. The theme of the conference was Codes. Toni Beardon, from Cambridge University in England, arranged the event, and was keen that a primary school in Cape Town should participate. The other primary schools that participated are both in England.

The children were set tasks to do before the conference. At the conference, each class had a chance to talk about what they had been learning and doing. Then the children from the other schools in England asked questions. It was a very exciting experience and we at the PSP are proud to be associated with this progressive initiative in primary education.

**PSP'S LANGUAGE WORK**

This year we are focusing on how we can help learners develop their writing skills in our Language courses. During the past two terms we have focused on using story-beginnings as a way to get Intermediate Phase learners to write. We have also encouraged teachers to write in Journals themselves, as well as to get their learners to write freely in Journals. In this third term we intend to look at a different genre of writing.

In the Language courses for Foundation Phase teachers we have also looked at ways to use stories. We asked teachers to bring in samples of their learners' writing. We were really excited to see just how much Reception and Grade 1s know about writing and it's uses!

This term we will be looking more closely at what learners do know, and we will be focusing on helping Foundation Phase learners to write more, and to write at length.

