



JOIN IN THE CELEBRATION OF THE HOPPIEST DAY OF 2016!

2 February 2016

Start

Today is World Wetlands Day, and the Endangered Wildlife Trust's Threatened Amphibian Programme is embarking on an exciting project to clear alien invasive vegetation from four priority wetlands within the greater Durban area. Sixty four local community members have been employed to work on this initiative, most of whom have started work this week. The remainder will soon complete their training for alien plant identification and clearing methods facilitated by project partner WESSA. This project will assist in rehabilitating key habitats for the Critically Endangered Pickersgill's Reed Frog.

You don't have to be a scientist to save frogs! The Endangered Wildlife Trust invites all animal lovers to join us in celebrating the fourth annual **Leap Day for Frogs**, a national day of awareness and celebration of frogs, occurring on the 27th of February.

Amphibians are among the most endangered species on earth, with 43% of the species populations declining globally.

Around 120 species of frogs call South Africa home, of which many are endangered. South Africa's smallest frog is also one of its most threatened. The appropriately named Micro Frog, which will only grow to a maximum length of 18 mm, is Critically Endangered and our largest species, the Giant Bullfrog which reaches 25 cm and weighs in at 1.4 kg has already lost up to 80% of its habitat, particularly in urban areas of Gauteng. Visit www.leapdayforfrogs.org.za for more froggy facts and how you can participate in **Leap Day for Frogs 2016**

Leap Day for Frogs is an opportunity to increase awareness around the importance of frogs, and to remove the negative stigma and superstitions that have unfortunately surrounded these fascinating creatures for many decades. Dr Jeanne Tarrant, Manager of the EWT's Threatened Amphibian Programme highlights the importance of this initiative.

"Understanding why many South Africans fear or dislike frogs is essential to changing the attitudes towards these animals, and ultimately protecting them. There is a genuine growing interest in 'frogging' and Leap Day for Frogs also encourages learning more about, and celebrating, the amazing diversity of frogs in South Africa, especially amongst our youth".

Frogs are crucial in our ecosystems through their role as both predator and prey. They are also important bio-indicators of the health of the environment, and the fact that almost half

of all species are declining should be clear warning that our global ecosystem is under strain. They also happen to be interesting and lots of fun to observe, as anyone who has been frogging can surely attest to!

Any individual, company, school or organisation can become involved by participating in one of the **Leap Day for Frogs** events organised around the country, or by creating an event of their own. Dr Jeanne Tarrant, the Endangered Wildlife Trust's Threatened Amphibian Programme Manager will be presenting an educational talk at Tanglewood Nature Reserve in partnership with the Kloof Conservancy in Kwazulu-Natal as part of their 'Back-to-Nature' events, followed by a walk and hopefully some frog spotting. We will also be running several competitions with fabulous froggie prizes to be won.

The eThekweni wetland rehabilitation initiative is sponsored by the Department of Environmental Affairs, Natural Resource Management grant, as well as co-funding from RMB, Mohamed Bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund and Disney Conservation Fund.

The EWT is proud to be working in partnership with eThekweni Municipality's Restoration Ecology Branch (Environmental Planning and Climate Protection Department), Mount Moreland Conservancy and WESSA.

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