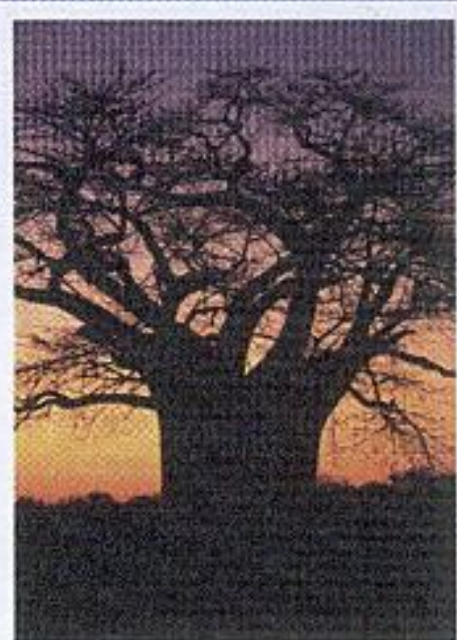


Mpumalanga

# CHAPTER REPORT

By *Gavin Jarman,*  
Chapter Chair



## CRIME AND WHISTLE-BLOWING

The recent tragic and senseless murder of KZN's Dave Rattray serves as a reminder that we potentially remain poised on the edge of an abyss. The world expected mayhem in our beautiful country once the 1994 election results became public knowledge. At that time, with the notable exception of a few, the spirit of nation-building was palpable and we showed our strength of character, which few other areas of conflict in the world have been able to emulate. Regrettably, we need to address our views of "whistle-blowing" or reporting crime and corruption as we still seem to have fear if we speak out or up. Furthermore, we need to hold ourselves, our law-enforcement agencies and ultimately government accountable for our actions and inactions. Please note, I refer to ourselves first as we set the example inside our companies, communities and so forth. At least we should set these examples. I was concerned when Francois Grove told me he had recently heard on SABC Morning Live that OR Tambo International Airport and the Kruger National Park were recorded as the two primary crime hot-spots in South Africa!

The Kruger has International boundaries with both Mozambique and Zimbabwe, vast size with minimal infrastructure and several "law-enforcement" agencies; which range from the SANDF, SAPS, SANParks' Corporate Investigation Services, Anti-poaching units, Section Rangers as well as traffic officers. The gamut of crimes they have to prevent and investigate are also as diverse as their responsibilities. I confess to feeling safe whilst in the Kruger.

## ILLEGAL VEHICLES IN THE KRUGER?

My concerns started with a photograph and letter in a local magazine (the Afrikaans version thereof) which depicted two people game viewing in the Kruger on a pick-up with a bench seat as used by hunting outfitters. The reader alleged this vehicle to belong to a "tour operator", and the KNP spokesperson referred to many tour operators with game viewing vehicles being fined. The depicted vehicle clearly contravenes the Road Traffic Ordinance in terms of use on a public road and for conveyance of passengers and clearly displays a GP registration number.

This means several things to me; this is not a tour operator, this vehicle entered the KNP via an official entrance gate, there were no passengers in these seats (as they would have been told they cannot game-view from there; they probably over-nighted inside the KNP and proceeded on their game-drive without mishap and no further action was going to be taken against them despite their registration number being clearly visible. You may ask what my gripe is? Why compare lemons to water-melons when the only common denominators are that they are classified as fruits?

## THE KRUGER CONSERVATION LEVY SCAM!

Whilst discussing tourism with a Gauteng-based SATSA member, I was horrified to learn of the "latest" scam at our Kruger's gates. Tour operators arriving with International clients are offered the opportunity to have them enter as South Africans, as long as a gratuity (of around R500) is paid to the gate official.

The reason I have probably not been exposed to this is because a passenger's nationality (or status as client/staff) is irrelevant to the private Open Safari Vehicles; we pay the International rate regardless.

As a reputable operator, the guide declined to accept this generous "offer" and duly reported the official to his company, who reported it to SANParks. Unfortunately, it appears no action has been taken and the official is still "managing" the gate and will probably continue to do so until our united refusal to participate in this corrupt and illegal activity may lead to his leaving for greener pastures.

We cannot and will not accept this graft being accepted as a norm and I wish to remind ourselves that SANParks are only the sanctioned Custodians of OUR heritage. An ORCHID to you for bringing this into the open!

## MPUMALANGA TOURISM AND PARKS AGENCY

What a pleasure, without disrespect to the preceding agencies, with which we've also had excellent relationships. The new apparent sense of urgency is a breath of fresh air to us hyper-active operators and the open minded approach bodes well and should see us increase our tourism numbers from the depths now being plumbed.

We must increase the tourism vortex to our country and not only focus on our regions. I always loved the old marketing statement of a "World-in-one Country", and with our diverse cultures and new products believe this to be even more accurate! The new logo (necessitated by the amalgamation of the two boards) and website are to be launched at Indaba 2007.

Recently, Leon Smith and Guy Briggs met with Solly Mosidi (CEO of MTPA) and this resulted in several exciting discussions and proposals. The MTPA want to increase tourism, firstly Domestic and secondly International. All SATSA members have been assured of an open door and may provide Mr Ezrom Sekgobela with marketing material for use in the campaign.

We are surely progressing to a genuine symbiotic relationship and the parameters hereof can only be beneficial to you with your active participation! We have also been assured of regular meetings and exciting opportunities regarding the 23 reserves managed by them. We would definitely appreciate interested parties making themselves known to our Chapter Secretary (Leon Smith).

## FOREVER RESORTS' BRADLEY BROUWER GOES EAST

Bradley's off to Japan in mid-March where he will assume responsibility for SA Tourism's Japan and Korea portfolio. We thank Bradley for his continual enthusiasm and passion for our country and especially our province. Regrettably it also means that Bradley has to resign from many of the boards where he represented us and Tourism, but he has assured me he will strive to work the other side of the coin now. We thank you, Bradley, for your contribution to SATSA and Mpumalanga tourism and wish you all of the best in the little-big country!

Best wishes,  
**Gavin Jarman**