



# K Z N CRANE FOUNDATION

## October 2024 Newsletter



### Conservation Report

It's supposed to be Spring, but we've experienced cold, rather wintry weather in the Midlands. Noticeable has been the slow growth of grasses and retardation of insect activity. Last month, brought us three very interesting happenings, within a few days of each other.

#### Observation Beehive

An Observation Beehive and swarm was installed in the Usher Centre. They settled quickly into their new home and are gathering pollen and nectar from the surrounding veld. All of the comings and goings of the bees can be seen from a safe vantage point whilst the workers build beautiful golden comb laden with honey and goodness for the larvae and pupae to flourish. The bees are an invaluable real education lesson about plant pollination and the critically important role they – and other pollinators – play in biodiversity.



Our first school group to enjoy the observation beehive, great excitement!



### **Wattled Crane**

On the Bill Barnes Reserve the resident pair of Wattled Cranes lost their chick which died during the heavy snow late in September. On the 18th of October we were delighted to see them building a new nest at Epsom dam, near to our main entrance/exit road. This picturesque site choice is indicative that this pair has become habituated to vehicles, schoolchildren, walkers and bikers on the Bill Barnes reserve.

### **International Crane Foundation Visit**

On the 22nd of October we were privileged to be visited by a delegation from the International Crane Foundation. Hosted by ICF Chairman Richard Beilfuss and the Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT), they were on a tour of African countries. Although exhausted from days of travel, ranging from excessive heat in Zambia, to a cold, wet, misty Midlands where they joined us for a couple of hours at the



Usher Centre. We presented our history and plans for the future and our successful Education program before enjoying snacks and refreshments.



From left to right: Richard Beilfuss, Pieter Botha, Thomas Leiden, Joanna Sturm , Janet Snow.



Alien vegetation clearing is an ongoing task on the Bill Barnes Reserve. In 2023 the valley area in the foreground – which we cleared of Pine trees 25 years ago – was thick with Bracken and American bramble. Using Brush Off there was a 95%

elimination success rate and this spring the pioneer grasses have already established themselves, leaving just some spot-clearing to be carried out.



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### KZN Crane Foundation

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