



KZN

CRANE FOUNDATION

Newsletter 3/2025

Grasslands

Management of the grasslands in the Bill Barnes Crane & Oribi Nature Reserve is a core value to ensure the protection of the endangered biome.

According to the South African Biodiversity Institute (SANBI) Map of 2024 – the KZN Crane Foundation – Bill Barnes Crane and Oribi Reserve falls into the Mooi River Highland Grassland Biome. These Biome classifications are based on in Mucina and Rutherford 2006 Vegetation of South Africa. Grassland Biomes are vital to South Africa's ecology are often underestimated. Grasslands are biodiversity hotspots, supporting an array of plant, animal life and endemic species. They provide habitats for diverse species, support food chains and play a vital role in soil health and water management. Grasslands are essential for water security, acting as natural sponges, absorbing rainfall and slowly releasing it into rivers and underground aquifers, ensuring a consistent water supply. Protecting and sustainably managing these vital ecosystems is not just an environmental imperative, but a necessity for the long-term conservation for future generations. KZN Crane Foundation is cognisant of the significant impacts and threats to the grassland biomes, like urbanization, afforestation, invasive alien species and inappropriate agricultural management (overgrazing, etc.).

Two of the pillars of the KZNCF are; Farming for Biodiversity, Species Protection and Advocacy. With this in mind, KZNCF follows specific grassland management processes, under guidance of the Department of Agriculture and University of KZN. We are then able to be an example to other farmers of what management processes can be followed for long-term protection

of the Grassland Biome. KZNCF has initiated a process for sharing of knowledge and information in the Veld Management Days.



The KZNCF has partnered with UKZN, who will be conducting studies on the grasslands with their students. In 2025 UKZN will have: (1) two Honours students studying grassland grazing and birds in grasslands and (2) two Biological Science students studying veld conditions. They will be supervised by Professor Kirkman and a PhD student studying plant diversity.

We are thrilled to be in collaboration with the Grasslands Society of Southern Africa for an exciting Grasslands Accredited Course, which will take place on the BBCONR in 2026.



KZNCF is organizing a Veld Management Day for beef and dairy farmers. Facilitators will include representatives from University of KZN (Prof Kevin Kirkman, Dr Sindiso Nkuna), Department of Agric (Cobus Botha), John Pitout (local farmer) and Emma Niland (Intelact). We had planned for this to take place in May but have taken the decision to postpone the day due to the outbreak of Foot and Mouth in KZN.

Foot and Mouth is a highly contagious viral disease, primarily affecting cloven hoofed animals like our cattle. We ask that everyone be mindful of the potential of spreading the disease. The virus can be spread through contaminated vehicles, equipment, clothing and footwear. Please be aware of this when travelling as we all need to be extra cautious in order to protect our farmers.

If you would like to join our membership or find out more about what we do at the KZNCF, follow the link: <https://kzncranefoundation.org.za/get-involved/become-a-memb...> or contact Sue on admin@kzncranefoundation.org.za



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KZN Crane Foundation

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