Two new Doctorates at DA&NRS

Congratulations to Dr’s Dave Joubert and Morgan Hauptfleisch, who recently graduated at the University of the Orange Free State in South Africa! Dr Morgan’s thesis was entitled “The use of ecosystem parameters in predicting the risk of aircraft-wildlife collisions at Namibian airports”, whilst Dr Dave wrote a thesis on “The dynamics of bush thickening by Acacia mellifera in the Highland Savanna of Namibia”.

New field vehicles for the SASSCAL project

The SASSCAL project recently obtained three field vehicles to be used with the Vegetation Survey of Namibia project (Tasks 062) and the Bush Encroachment project (Task 073). Below are two students associated with the SASSCAL project, Emma and Johannes, with “their” wheels!

The Auas Girdled Lizard

High on top of the Auas Mountains south of Windhoek, on Moltkeblick peak, we found the elusive Auas- or Herero Girdled Lizard (Cordylus pustulatus). Before attempting the steep ascend (which really tested our 4x4s), none of us had ever seen these endemic reptiles, not to mention that most people have never even heard of them. These animals are restricted to the highest peaks of the Auas mountain range and the ooviviparous females give birth to only one or two live young at a time. When approached, they puff-up inside a perfectly fitting rock crevice to avoid being pulled out. Besides that, not much is known about Cordylus pustulatus, which made us all the happier when we actually saw and caught some of this unique Namibian species in an area which is not formally protected or conserved.

— Dirk Bockmühl

NCRST research grant to Dr Mogos

Dr. Mogos Teweldemedhin was awarded a research grant from National Commission on Research, Science & Technology (NCRST) in a collaborative with South Africa National Research Fund (NRF) project joint research between Human Research Science Council-SA and the Polytechnic of Namibia, called “what works’ in HIV and AIDS and the world of work in the South African and Namibian tourism industry”. The project is aiming at examining which ‘conducive environmental’ factors (if any) contributed to the good outcomes of HIV/AIDS management at workplace. This project will provide for six postgraduate opportunities.

New publications from the Department

Research project on the impact of climate change in Zambezi

Dr. Mogos Teweldemedhin completed the first phase project on climate change. The project focusing on the impact of climate change on maize farmers in the Zambezi region forms part of a broader study, namely the Agricultural Model Inter-comparison and Improvement Project (AgMIIP), which covers the whole of Sub-Saharan Africa through three sub-regional studies, i.e. West Africa, East Africa and Southern Africa (i.e. South Africa, Lesotho, Swaziland, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Botswana and Malawi). This project provided an opportunity to one Honours student to complete his study. The team is preparing an application to secure funding for a second phase. This research is sponsored by USDA and UK-AID.

Wisdom from the exams

New definitions:
Exotic: a non-existent species.
Spines can cause the wheel of a car to pop.
Symbiosis = some animals eat their young.
A hygrometer tells you how far you are from the equator.

On the standard of examinations:
Sir, are you assessing us at PhD level?
Sir, I think I got a wrong paper?
Doc M., I like your teaching style in the class, but I am hoping all the time to sit in your class without Exam.

Animals:
The two subspecies of Syncerus caffer are the white rhino and the black rhino.
Small antelope such as eland...
Non-ruminants do not have fur.
Cheetah haunt in open plains.
Lobster-oyster-fish can survive in dried-out ponds and lakes.

Local knowledge:
There are a lot of conspiracies over the name of our capital city.
Windhoek has national vegetation.
The Klein Windhoek is an epidemic river.
We have tired roads in Windhoek.
Windhoek has an immaculated water supply.
Windhoek geology is Schies with quarks.

Climate change is dangerous:
Climate change might cause the oceans to dry out and become a desert.
Plants are dying because of insufficient CO₂.
Most of the species in the North Pole will migrate to the South Pole near the equator.

DA&NRS lecturer and student assist in field training of Land Management students

Mr Willie Adank and Johannes Amutenya, Master’s student in NRM, assisted Mrs Marina Coetzee in May this year with the practical training of second-year Land Management students. The students were taken on an excursion to Klein Boesman near Dordabis to experience field work necessary to determine grazing capacity. From the photos below it is evident that both students and staff had a good time!

Feel neglected, ignored, overlooked?
Send your news snippets and photos to Ben Strohbach, bstrohbach@polytechnic.edu.na.

All contributions welcome!