

WE SAID IT!

Enjoy wildlife viewing safely or stay home

CAUGHT 'red-handed', so to speak, a group of people who harassed a hippo in St Lucia last week were, within 24 hours, ordered to leave the town or face law enforcement proceedings.

As St Lucia falls within the bounds of the iSimangaliso Wetland Park, the governing authority must be commended for such decisive, prompt action.

While the offending party lived to tell the tawdry tale (no one was injured), and the hippo escaped safely, the outcome could easily have been far worse – as has been witnessed in the past.

As one of the main 'attractions' drawing holidaymakers to St Lucia, the hippos that wander around the town under the cover of darkness, grazing the grass verges and even unfenced gardens, are by no means tame animals.

The type of behaviour witnessed last week is akin to people still thinking it's acceptable to ride on the backs of elephants in a circus while the ringmaster orders said elephant to carry out various 'tricks', including standing up on its hind legs.

With so much conservation education carried out by responsible wildlife authorities, ignorance cannot be an excuse.

Play with fire and reap the consequences. Only, in the case of the St Lucia hippo, death or severe injury to any

Comment

of the offending people would have spelt death for the hippo.

These animals are in their natural environments, and it is our great privilege to be able to witness them.

Take photos and videos of them, but be quiet and mindful of their space.

The same must be applied to the hippos in Richards Bay when they're seen waddling around the suburbs or grazing the grass between the John Ross and the uMhlathuze Canal.

Don't stop your vehicle, get out and try to take a selfie within three metres of the animal – that's asking for trouble for both human and hippo.

While this kind of behaviour stems from intrigue and wanting a novel wildlife experience, it is human-wildlife conflict at its core.

When they go wrong, these situations never end happily for the animals involved.

If they are not shot on sight for goring an irresponsible person, they develop such a fear of humans that their future behaviour will be so defensively aggressive that they will have to be shot somewhere down the line.

The message is simple: If you can't enjoy wildlife responsibly, which includes keeping a respectful distance between yourself and the animals, don't go to the bush.

Sudoku Challenge Puzzle 88

		8	7					
	1		4			9	7	3
				3		5	8	
		2						
			5		6	1	4	
6	4	7		1	8	3		
	6	8	1	5		2		7
	9		3			8		
			7			4		6

Solution Puzzle 87

1	9	3	7	4	6	5	2	8
7	4	6	2	8	5	3	9	1
5	2	8	3	9	1	6	7	4
3	1	9	6	2	8	7	4	5
8	6	7	5	3	4	2	1	9
4	5	2	1	7	9	8	3	6
9	3	5	8	1	7	4	6	2
6	7	4	9	5	2	1	8	3
2	8	1	4	6	3	9	5	7

A peek at the past

Taking a look at ZO news headlines of years gone by

10 years ago:

Tongue lashings

Chairperson of the Zululand Tortoise Women's Institute, Shelly Turteltaub, was vociferous in her criticism at the monthly meeting about members knitting their blanket squares for Dice's Winter Warmth project at a snail's pace.



LARRY BENTLEY

20 years ago:

Excitement over Edu-loan tournament

The overall winning team at the Edu-loan tournament, where games were organised at Zululand University.



What goes up must also come down

WRITE this column having just read another of US President without Precedent's outbursts, named 'Operation Skywatch'.

He is seemingly always placing a target on some person, nation or institution's back, and this time it is the aircraft industry, which is reportedly spraying chemicals – aluminium, barium and strontium are specifically named – into the atmosphere.

This in the form of the silver streaks we see in the sky whenever a jet plane passes overhead.

He may have a valid 'very horrible, horrible' target this time; it's not a flight of fantasy.

After all, what goes up must come down; it's not only the aeroplanes that land - it's also the junk residue from the high-octane aviation fuel that exits the engines, that ends up somewhere.

The effect on agricultural land, crops and bodies of water has been documented, and it's not a pretty picture.

He's calling it a crime against humanity, and in his usual bull-in-a-china-shop style, is even gunning for the airline pilots, declaring war on anyone involved in the chemtrail process.

All of which brings me to a recent air pollution incident in Richards Bay, when a problem at a major local industry caused a huge - literal and figurative - stink.

Complaints – and there were

some serious ones relating to respiratory issues – poured in, 171 of which were reported to the Richards Bay Clean Air Association (RBCAA).

Strangely, the blame was in one instance redirected from the offending industry to the RBCAA itself, implying that it should have immediately fined the culprit, but did not because it was, in fact, in cahoots with all the industries.

This is like blaming the speed gun for the car's speeding fine!

Having been involved with the RBCAA since its inception over two decades ago, and well aware of its role and functions (it has no punitive powers), I found this response uninformed and unfair.

The RBCCA would have gathered and sent to the relevant

government departments, not only the list of complaints, but all the scientific data relating to the incident, as recorded at the monitoring stations.

The relevant industry would provide investigation reports.

In order for the Department of Environmental Affairs and/or others to issue a fine, it would need information that could withstand scrutiny.

This would include confirming the source of the emission, the composition of the pollutant (smell is not a chemical), wind direction, the level of emission (measured against WHO and NEMA standards), the duration of the event, atmospheric conditions, mitigation measures taken, etc.

Thanks to its monitoring stations throughout the city, the RBCAA can provide this scientific and empirical data, as it has done on many previous occasions.

Those of us who have lived in Richards Bay for many years will understand the role of the RBCAA and the value of the air quality monitoring network.

Thanks to the RBCAA, industry has had to improve its processes and spend millions of rands on equipment to reduce emissions and thereby the quality of the air we breathe.

And all this on a 'polluter pays' principle, an ingenious means of attaining the best possible outcome.

What do you meme?

Ironwoman competition

Word of the week

Defy - resist or disobey; challenge or dare

Quote of the week

A mind is a fire to be kindled, not a vessel to be filled - **Plutarch**

Life principle of the week

Patience - ability to wait calmly

Meditasie

Met vertroue op hierdie einste, dat Hy wat 'n goeie werk in julle begin het, dit sal voltooi tot op die dag van Jesus Christus. **Filippense 1:6**

Amazwi

Nqiqiniseka ngalokhu, ukuthi yena owaqala umsebenzi omuhle kinina uyakuwuqeda kuze kube lusuku lukaJesu Kristu. **Filipi 1:6**

Meditation

Being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ. **Philippians 1:6**

