

SAWMA Council 2008-2010

At the Annual General Meeting in September 2008, a new executive council was elected to manage the matters of the Southern African Wildlife Management Association until the next election of council in 2010.

Julius Koen has taken over as the president of SAWMA from Christo Marais and Brian Reilly was elected as vice-president. Louw Hoffman is the newly elected Treasurer. We welcome two new members on the council: Jan Venter (general councillor) and Kelly Marnewick as student representative. The other current members of council are members who also have been serving on council for the past two years: Daan Buijs, Paul Grobler, Antoinette Kotze and Pieter Nel. The current Scientific Editor is Michael Somers and the co-opted secretary is Elma Marais.

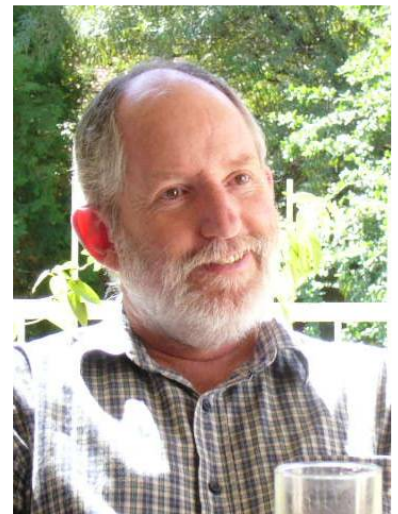
President:

Mr. Julius Koen

Julius is currently employed as Deputy Director: Scientific Investigations and Authorisations of the Department of Tourism, Environment and Conservation in the Northern Cape Province.

He studied for a B.Sc. degree at the University of Pretoria and a B.Sc. Honours degree at the University of Stellenbosch. He completed an M.Sc. degree at the University of Cape Town. His work experience includes research on plant-animal interactions in the indigenous George-Knysna-Tsitsikamma Forests and rare species/populations i.e. Knysna Elephants and Cape Mountain zebras in the Kamanassie Mountains. Other research experience includes management of game populations.

Julius has been a member of SAWMA since 1978 and was Scientific Editor for the South African Journal of Wildlife Research from 1997 to 2001. Since then he stayed on as council member and was appointed as Treasurer in 2004. In 2005 he was also elected as vice-president and fulfilled both functions for SAWMA until 2008.



Vice- President

Prof. Brian Reilly

Brian is Currently Associate Professor at the Department of Nature Conservation, Tshwane University of Technology, Pretoria and Adjunct Associate Professor at the Department of Fisheries, Wildlife and Conservation Biology, University of Minnesota.

Brian spent two years with South African National Parks (1982-83) as a wildlife biologist. He functioned as a wildlife biologist with the Transvaal Directorate of Nature Conservation (*Later called Gauteng Directorate of Nature Conservation*) from 1984 to 1994, when he was promoted to Principal Scientist: Operations Research. Under the new political dispensation he was automatically transferred to the Gauteng Directorate of Nature Conservation where he resigned in 1998 as Head: Scientific Services. Brian attended the University of Pretoria where he



obtained a B.Sc. degree and a Masters Degree in Wildlife Management. He obtained a Ph.D. in Nature Conservation at Stellenbosch University.

As a biologist he has published widely with over 40 authorships and co-authorships. He serves on 11 specialist bodies related to conservation, wildlife management and the practice of ecology. As a partner in a consultancy, Ecofin Consulting Ecologists since 1984, he has consulted widely in southern Africa on related issues to Government Departments, NGO's and private concerns. Brian has a wide experience in lecturing at tertiary institutions both nationally and internationally. Brian is nationally recognised as an expert on the monitoring of wildlife populations.

Brian became a SAWMA member in 1999, was appointed as honorary Secretary of the association from 2001 – 2002, and remained on council since then. He was also one of the associate editors for the South African Journal of Wildlife Research during the editorship of Prof. Michael Cherry.

Treasurer:

[Prof. Louw Hoffman](#)

Louw is employed as Meat Scientist in the Department of Animal Sciences of the University of Stellenbosch since 1998.

He attained his B.Sc., Honours and Masters degrees in Animal Science at Stellenbosch University. Thereafter he spent eight years as a researcher in Aquaculture at the University of the North. His research focused on the production of warm water fish species. During this period he completed his Ph.D. which focused on the meat quality attributes of the African Sharptooth catfish.

Since 2000, he has published over 85 peer reviewed scientific papers and has presented numerous papers and posters at National and International conferences. At the end of 2004, he was awarded the prestigious Rectors Award for Research at Stellenbosch University and in 2006 he was awarded the Silver Medal by the South African Society for Animal Sciences for his research contribution.



Presently his research focuses on the factors that influence the quality of exotic meat types and has become one of the world leaders in this field. The past four years he has read plenary papers on game meat at five international conferences. Included in this category are ostriches and game. More than 18 post graduate students have completed their studies under his guidance on game or ostrich meat and its related quality attributes.

He has been a life member of SAWMA since 1993. He has been on the SAWMA council since 2002. He was also scientific co-ordinator and host of the 2004 symposium.

Councillors:

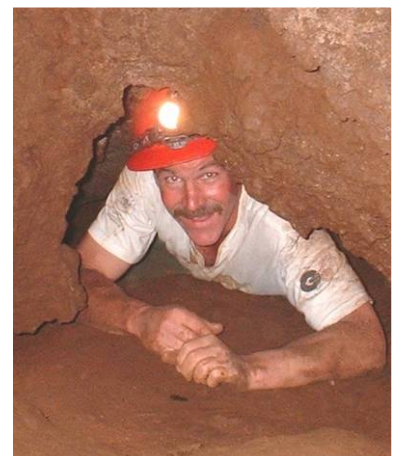
[Mr. Daan Buijs](#)

Daan is Assistant Director: Scientific Investigations, Directorate Biodiversity Management & Conservation with the North West Department of Agriculture, Conservation & Environment in Mmabatho.

He completed all his studies to M.Sc. level, as well as an MBA degree, at the University of Pretoria.

His work and research experience has mainly been on large mammals such as white rhinos and eland, but he has also contributed to the SA Bird Atlas and does fish surveys for the National River Health Programme in North West.

He started his career as research scientist on game production in the Dept. of Agricultural Development in the Eastern Cape and later at the Range and Forage Institute of the Agricultural Research Council at Roodeplaat. From there he moved to Gauteng Nature Conservation as a regional ecologist and has been in his current position in the North West Province since 2004.



Daan has joined the association in 2002 and has been a member of council since 2004.

Prof. Paul Grobler

Paul Grobler has been a professor in the Department of Genetics at the University of the Free State since 2006. Previously he was attached to the Department of Biodiversity at the University of Limpopo since 1993, after completing his undergraduate and post-graduate training at RAU.

He lectures genetics at 3rd year and honours level but also trains junior students in basic biology, and has a regular core of postgraduate students. His main research interest is the identification and management of geographical genetic structuring within species, in line with the ESU (Evolutionary Significant Unit) concept. This question is studied using various organisms as models, extending from large ungulates and primates down to invertebrates (freshwater mussels).

As an extension of this interest, he is also involved in an ongoing research program on genetic structuring in freshwater mussel populations in the USA, in collaboration with researchers from the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife Sciences at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University in the USA. Following several research visits, he was recently elected to adjunct faculty member of the latter department. Other research interests include hybridization between blue and black wildebeest, conservation of genetic diversity in isolated wildlife populations and forensic application of molecular markers.

Paul joined SAWMA in 2004. During 2005 he hosted the annual symposium and was the scientific co-ordinator of the event. In the same year he was elected as council member for the association.

Prof. Antoinette Kotze

Antoinette is currently the director of research and scientific services at the National Zoological Gardens (NZG) of South Africa, a National Research Facility of the National Research Foundation. She has established and is developing a Centre for Conservation Science (CfCS) with a strong focus on conservation biology and conservation medicine. The CfCS will specialise in scientific issues relevant to biodiversity conservation of animal species, animal health and their habitats. Conservation sciences perform a critical role in understanding natural processes, health, human societies and actions that positively and negatively affect biodiversity. The aim is to exploit the status as a national research facility of the NRF by advancing science and the conservation of the earth's biological diversity. It also adheres to one of the criteria of being a national research facility in that it is dedicated to the training of under and post graduate students. Strong links are fostered with several universities and this strengthens collaboration and the success of the CfCS.

She obtained her B.Sc. (Botany and Zoology) in 1981, B.Sc. Honours 1983, M.Sc. (Zoology) 1990 and Ph.D. in 2002 at the University of Johannesburg. She was appointed in 1981 on the research team of the then Animal and Dairy Science Research Institute at Irene and held the position of principal agricultural researcher in the Animal Genetics Section of the ARC Animal Improvement Institute, Irene until the end of 2005. Her research focused on biochemical and molecular genetics in farm animals. During this period, she was an active collaborator on the global programme of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations for Farm Animal Genetic Resources in the SADC region and participant in the SADC Animal Agriculture Research Network. She established a species identification laboratory in 1996 and rendered a national and international service to the red meat, fish, poultry and game industries including forensic investigations. This was the only laboratory of its kind in Africa at the time. She also specialised in the genetic characterisation of indigenous farm animals.

In 2003 she shifted focus to wildlife population genetics using DNA technology. She has an extensive list of scientific (+30) and popular publications (+ 50) and has reported on her research at several national and international conferences. She also holds a position as Associate Professor in the Genetics Department at the University of the Free State, Bloemfontein.

Antoinette has been a member of SAWMA since 2000 and was elected as council member during an interim election in 2005. She has a passion for nature and strives towards "nature and humanity in balance", the new vision of the NZG.



Mr. Pieter Nel

Pieter is currently employed with the North West Parks and Tourism Board, as manager of the Ecological Services Division.

He has graduated from the University of Potchefstroom in 1984 with an Honours degree in Zoology. He has been in conservation since 1987, when he joined Transvaal Directorate of Nature Conservation as a regional ecologist. While employed, he enrolled for a Masters degree in Wildlife Management at the Chair of Wildlife Management at the University of Pretoria. His study investigated the relationships between various abiotic variables and vegetation in the then Rustenburg Nature Reserve, now Kgaswane Mountain Reserve. He is currently finishing a Master degree in Business Leadership at Unisa's School of Business Leadership; His main interest is vegetation ecology.

Pieter became member of SAWMA in 1991 and has been serving on the SAWMA council since 2006.



Mr. Jan Venter

Jan Venter started his career in formal conservation as a district services nature conservator with Northern Cape Nature Conservation in the Namaqualand region. He then moved to Doornkloof Nature Reserve (Colesberg) where he served as reserve manager for seven years. He left Northern Cape Nature Conservation and worked as a research technician at the Aquaculture Research Unit, University of Limpopo for two years. He started working for Eastern Cape Parks Board in March 2006 as an ecologist in the Scientific Services section. He is responsible for providing ecological advice and scientific support to the Commandodrift, Mkambati, Dwesa-Cwebe Nature Reserves as well as the Hluleka, Pondoland and Dwesa-Cwebe Marine Protected Areas. He is currently registered for a Ph.D. in Biological and Conservation Science with the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

His interests are large herbivore ecology, spatial ecology and marine as well as freshwater ichthyology. Jan was the host of the 2008 SAWMA Symposium at Mpekweni Beach Resort.



Ex-officio council member:

Dr. Christo Marais

Christo is currently Head: Operations in the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry, Natural Resource Management Programmes.

After his initial studies at Saasveld and Stellenbosch University in Forestry (Nature Conservation) he worked as a Nature Conservation Scientist in the then Cape Nature Conservation. His main responsibilities were reserve management and later as co-ordinator of monitoring and fire management. He became involved in watershed management and later started specialising in invasive alien plants management.

With the inception of the Working for Water Programme in 1995 he managed the Western Cape projects until 1999 when he was transferred to Working for Water head office as head of scientific services. He completed his Ph.D. on the economics of invasive alien plants in watersheds. He has authored and co-authored a number of papers and book chapters on the economics of mountain catchments and invasive alien plant management.

He joined SAWMA in 1990 and served as council member since 1993. From 1994 until 2004 he was appointed as honorary treasurer, when he was elected as vice-president. He automatically assumed the position of president of SAWMA in October 2005, after Johan du Toit stepped down as president due to his move to the United States of America and stayed on as president of SAWMA until the election of the new council in 2008.



Co-opted Student member

Ms. Kelly Marnewick

Kelly Marnewick works for the De Wildt Wild Cheetah Project where her main job is research on cheetahs outside conservation areas. This includes camera trapping, collaring, scat analyses and liaising with landowners. She is currently registered for a Ph.D. with Dr. Michael omers at the Centre for Wildlife Management, University of Pretoria.

Her favourite part of her job is working with her scat sniffing dog, getting photos back from camera traps and seeing data start to make sense. She finds the problem animal aspect of the work very challenging. She is a member of the IUCN Cat Specialist Group as well as the Shashe-Limpopo Predator Research Group and the National Cheetah Conservation Forum. Kelly is married for four years to Daniel who heads up BirdLife South Africa's Community Conservation Division.



Kelly lives in Johannesburg and spends her spare time mountain biking and keeps threatening to return to her once successful fencing career. She also enjoys training her Staffordshire Terriers in agility and dog jumping.

Scientific Editor: South African Journal of Wildlife Research

Prof. Michael Somers

Michael Somers, of the Centre for Wildlife Management and Centre for Invasion Biology, University of Pretoria, was appointed at the end of 2006 as the editor for the period April 2007 to April 2010.

Michael Somers studied at Universities of Natal, Pretoria and Stellenbosch and did a post-doc at the University of the Western Cape. After some time working in the field he spent nearly four years in the Department of Zoology at Walter Sisulu University. Since then he has been appointed lecturer in the Centre for Wildlife Management at the University of Pretoria. His research interests cover carnivore ecology, re-introduction biology and invasion biology. He is a member of numerous IUCN-SSC Specialist Groups and is a Core Team Member of the DST-NRF Centre of Excellence for Invasion Biology. He has published nearly 50 research and 30 popular articles and edited a book.



He has been a member of SAWMA since 1992 and was previously its Newsletter Editor. He is currently an Academic Editor of the journal *PLoS ONE*.

Co-opted Secretariat

Mrs Elma Marais

Elma has been involved with the administration of the association since 1997.

She studied at Stellenbosch University and attained a B.Sc. degree in 1983 and B.Sc. (Botany: Eco-physiology) Honours degree in 1984. After she completed a Higher Education Diploma, she taught biology at a high school for three years. In 1988 she was employed by Cape Nature Conservation and first worked in the Environmental Education and later in the Communication Section until 1997.

Since 1999 she started organising the annual SAWMA symposiums in close co-operation with the hosts and scientific co-coordinators. At the end of 2001 she was formally co-opted as secretariat and Newsletter Editor for the Association. Since the end of 2005 she has also been appointed as the assistant to the Scientific Editor and administers the review process.

