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FSM-TIMES

FourStripedMouse

EDITORIAL

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WELCOME TO THE NINTH ISSUE OF THE FSM-TIMES!

It is great to be back in Goegap and I enjoyed the last months tremendously. Winter brought a lot of rain interspersed by sunny days, resulting in a flower season more spectacular than the last five years. As a result, the mice did very well and many of them survived, resulting in a lot of work for us. Luckily I got highly motivated and hard working volunteers to help me. Other work included many changes and developments at the research station that will improve our working conditions for the future. Last but not least, our amateur video "Namaqualand – in the Land of Mice" is now available as DVD. I have to warn you, that it is really an amateur movie and especially the English commentary is not professional; but also one reason why it can be fun when watching the movie. By purchasing the DVD, you support our research here in Goegap. I wish you otherwise a lot of fun when reading this issue of the FSM-TIMES.

Kind regards,

Carsten Schradin

THE DIFFERENT PLACES AND LOCATIONS

South Africa
As the name says, it is the most southern country in Africa. South Africa lies at the Cape of Good Hope. The population of South Africa (40 million) consists of black South Africans (e.g. the Zulu), which represent 75% of the population. 12% are white, 8% coloured, and some are Indian, Malaysian or descendents of the San (bushman). South Africa is the only industrialized country in Africa with a very good infrastructure.

Succulent Karoo
It describes a special vegetation type. It receives low rainfall in winter and is characterized by dwarf succulent shrubs and an amazing wildflower display in spring. It is a desert to semi-desert environment. Succulent Karoo is found in Namaqualand and southern Namibia. In the FSM-TIMES, the words succulent Karoo and Namaqualand are often used as synonyms.

Namaqualand
It is situated in the northwest of South Africa, between Cape Town and Namibia. Famous for its wildflower display in spring, Namaqualand was one of the world's most important copper mining areas at the beginning of the 20th century. Nowadays the diamond mines are more important. Because of its dry desert like climate, agriculture is mainly absent and population density low. Namaqualand is part of the Northern Cape Province.

Springbok
It is the capital of Namaqualand. Although Springbok has only around 20 000 inhabitants, it has shops for nearly everything, including two well stocked supermarkets. At weekends Springbok is very busy, when all Namaqualanders come here to do their shopping.

Goegap Nature Reserve

Pronounced as "Guchap", this nature reserve lays only 20kms outside of Springbok. In spring it is visited by thousands of tourists that are attracted by its wildflower display. During other times of the year it is very quite and mountain zebra, gemsbok, springbok, aardwolf, mice and mice researchers live in peace.

Field Site
This is the place in nature where the scientist collects his data. So our field site is where we observe the mice

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NAMAQUALAND-WEATHER

By Carsten Schradin

The last three months	July	August	September
Minimum temperatures			
night	-0.1	0.9	0.8
day	13	8.2	16.8
Maximum temperatures			
night	8.8	11.2	16.5
day	27	24.8	36.8
Rainfall in mm	32.2	54.9	1.7
Days with rain	4	9	3

This winter was as it should be: cold and rainy, much better than in the previous years. For example compare the minimum night temperature of July 2006 (-0.1) with July 2004 when it was rather warm 2 degrees, or with 2005 with even 4 degrees. We had 32.2mm this year, but in July 2004 we had only 6mm of rain, and no rain at all in July 2005! As we had such a "nice" winter, spring was very nice as well, indeed it was spectacular: All of Goegap was either green or colorful from the wildflowers, one could nearly not believe that we are in a desert to semi-desert environment. Lots of plant growth of course meant lots of mouse food, and many mice survived the winter, such that population density was very high. And the mice were in very good body conditions. The last years, very few mice weighted more than 40g in

July, this year nearly every mouse made it above 40g, many of them being heavier than 60g!

The flower display this year was spectacular.

THE PEOPLE IN GOEGAP

By Carsten Schradin

I came back to Goegap beginning of July where I was happy to meet Brigitte and Apollo again, who went to South Africa three weeks earlier than I did. It was just before the breeding season of the mice started and as such just in time. Melanie arrived the same time in Goegap to continue her studies on the elephant shrews. While she will stay here until next year, my family and I will have to go back to Zurich middle of October.

Beginning of August Robert Sutcliffe from the UK arrived Robert was supposed to stay here for one year as Research Station Manager and take care of the Research Station and the project once I have left for Zurich (see below). However, Robert soon realised that Goegap was not for him, the place was too lonely. Thus, he resigned and left after one week.

Luckily, excellent replacement was found only few minutes after Robert had resigned. Ivana Schoepf, an Italian from Manchester in the UK, came as field assistant to Goegap beginning of July. Ivana already has an MSc in Biology and is very experienced in work with small mammals and radio-tracking. She worked very hard, precise from the beginning on, demonstrating how motivated she is and always being in a good mood, showing how much she loves the work in Goegap. I was very happy when she accepted the open position as Research Station Manager as it would have been nearly impossible to find someone more suitable for the job.

Beginning of August Tobias Feldt from the University of Oldenburg arrived. He is a hard working student who will stay until end of October as field assistant. He enjoys staying in the field, exploring the flora and fauna.

Beginning of September Edward Yuen from Manchaster (and originally Hong Kong) joined the team. He was the best man regarding the plant surveys. Ed will stay at least until Christmas, maybe even until June, when is long-term girlfriend Ivana will leave.

Edward Yuen (field assistant), Ivana Schoepf (Research Station Manager), Brigitte, Apollo und Carsten Schradin. At the back Tobias Feldt (field assistant)

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

By Ivana Schoepf

I left the UK with a mixture of excitement and dread, not quite knowing what to expect: after all this was my first visit to South Africa – and to Africa for that matter- and the stories of people that had been there (or, in some cases hadn't been there, but insisted on having an opinion anyway) where not the most inspiring. And certainly the fact that I was traveling on my own did not help in making me feel less anxious about the adventure I was about to embark. As it turned out, however, all my fears where completely unjustified.

I arrived in Cape Town in the middle of the night and my first sight of Africa was the Cape Flats – a shantytown that surrounds the airport: a real eye-opener for one that comes from Europe like me. After spending a couple of days in Cape Town, I made my way up to Goegap Nature Reserve near Springbok, the capital of Namaqualand where I was to spend the next six[1] months of my life doing field work.

As the taxi drove me through the reserve towards the research station I had my first glimpse of the African wildlife: a lonely gemsbok was standing perched on top of the rocks looking at us: it was at that point that I realized how lucky I was to be there. After few minutes we arrived at the Research Station where I was greeted by Carsten, who gave me an overview of what I was to expect during my stay.

That very same afternoon I also had my first encounter with the striped mouse, the species I was to work with. And soon enough, the following week, I also discovered that the mice were not only interesting and pretty animals to study, when my hand got up close and personal with one of the creatures' teeth (my first bite! – something that I would have to get quite used to in the weeks that were to come…).

Carsten also explained that I was to be the only field assistant for the first month as the others would join us only later: I did not mind this at all and in fact I was really looking forward to enjoy the research station and the field on my own. After having spent the past eight years of my life among the hustle and bustle of city life this was exactly what I needed: a chance to be alone with my thoughts: finally!

Being the only assistant also kept me pretty busy throughout my first few weeks as there was quite a lot of work to do both in the field and at the research station (I even got the chance to flex my handywoman muscles by painting rooms and doing other small tasks, like sewing curtains, in the house!). Being alone also gave me the opportunity to discover the Nature Reserve at my own pace: during my day off I often walked and cycled around and in this way I got to see quite a lot of the local wildlife (gemsboks; springboks; agamas; bush Karoo rats; elephant shrews… and mice!).

Of course, there were also times when I felt rather isolated and I would have really like to talk to someone familiar. However any prospects of having long phone conversations in the evening after work were not always a viable option as the nearest phone is at the office of the nature reserve, 5 km from the research station and if I wanted to call someone I would have had to cycle on a sandy road: not an easy task for someone as unfit as I am ... it takes me about 45 min each way! Well at least in this way I am going to get fit! But overall I feel that this time has been a positive experience. Thought, soon enough the other field assistants are going to arrive and everything is going to change. This should also be quite interesting!

How to become a field assistant?

Only people with a biological background can become field assistants. These are students of biology, veterinary medicine or related areas. The work of field assistants includes: radio-tracking, trapping and marking of small mammals, behavioural observations, work at the research station, including maintenance, and much more.

People interested in working as a field assistant for 2-3 months write an email to TUinfo@stripedmouse.comUT. Please write a short motivation and attach a CV. You will then obtain more information.

[1] Ivana wrote this a few weeks after she arrived and before she knew that she will actually stay for an entire 12 months as Research Station Manager.

RUN WHEN YOU ARE TRACKING

By Tobias Feldt

Probably every field-assistant has his personal preferences and dislikes concerning the work with our striped mice: Some may not like nest observation very much: sitting motionless for 45 minutes in front of a mouse nest, waiting for something to happen… or what is just not happening. Others would prefer not to do trapping due to the increase risk of injuries (mouse-bites!). And than some may just dislike radio-tracking, i,e, the tracking down of mice equipped with a small radio collar. Especially for the latter, hard times are coming in spring at the start of the breeding-season when the home-ranges of the mice are to be determined. From that moment on, free time is spare, so much so that we could say: `run when you're tracking`!

At first all appears as it always does:: after doing nest-observation and

checking the traps in the morning you take the telemeter-antenna and receiver, put in the individual frequencies of the collared mice and go out to track them always following the clicking sound of the receiver. After the mouse has been spotted its position is saved into the GPS and that's it. It seems to be the same procedure as every day but far from it! In fact, during the time of the home-range tracking it's not only one round per day which takes you between 40 minutes or 1,5 hours depending on the hiding-skills of the small rodents but 6 a day (including the control of the sleeping-sites even 7 in all). Because, on average, one needs to radio-track about 15 mice, during home-ranges determination one will end up doing 105 rounds a day, 5 day a week, 2 weeks in a row. So, anew (again and again) aiming at, getting the signal and following it for a while, then in a sudden loosing it again (because one more time you fell for the so called back-signal), cursing the whole stuff, searching the area until getting the signal again and finally spotting the mouse exactly at that place from which you have originally been started from…

This may not sound very difficult but in fact it can be quite strenuous even if more in a mental way. The first three rounds are still going quite well but after that it's getting tough: again and again the same procedure, the same shrubs and bushes, the same sandy (and regarding the increasing temperatures as well shadow-less) paths, all the time surrounded by hordes of annoying flies and biting horse-flies… After a while you already know all of the six-digit frequencies of your mice inside out and are quite grateful for every kind of diversion like a big snake crossing your way or the yelling of the baboon echoing with the surrounding mountains. Breaks are getting shorter and shorter, are finally completely disappearing and in the end after around 11 hours in the field, tired and exhausted, you just drag on towards the nest-observation in the evening but after all you can say: it's finished soon!

In fact home-range tracking is not a big pleasure at all. But anyway it is quite important because it shows how different ecological factors have an influence on the mice and the size of their home-ranges. Together with the results of the past and following years this will later be summarized in the course of a long-time study.

Then, after 2 weeks of running through the field-site it's done, finally! And so you enjoy your regained `freedom`, take a deep breath and… are directly up against the plant survey which is following after the home-range tracking and uses to be another `leisure-time killer`. But that's another story...

HOMEPAGE: STRIPEDMOUSE.COM

By Carsten Schradin

Homepage Statistics

	July	August	September	**Total last quarter**
Visits of stripedmouse.com	2009	1597	1878	**5484**
Downloads FSM-TIMES, SGM-Spiegel	822	682	850	**2354**

TITLE: NEW DEVELOPMENTS AT THE RESEARCH STATION

By Carsten Schradin

The Research Station improves from year to year (see FSM-TIMES No. 1). Starting from an old farm house that was very much in need of renovation and which lacked most infrastructures such as furniture, we renovated and improved the house every year a little bit. This year the improvements were much more than a little bit, as funds from the Faculty of Natural Sciences at the University if Zurich and funding from different foundations made it possible to invest much more than in the previous years.

New Ceilings

In one room and in the student's kitchen there was the real risk that the ceiling was falling on our heads. Every week another piece was found on the floor. So it was time to replace these ceilings and Brigitte took over that difficult task in February with the help of some casual workers. She also used the opportunity to install a ceiling for the first time in the part of the house where she and I were staying. We use a corridor of about 2 by 8 meters that was added to the house approx. 30 years ago as a garage for the farm vehicles. However, in this part there was no ceiling between the corrugated iron roof and the room. As a result, it was getting very cold in winter, as there was no insulation. In our area it was up to 10 degrees colder than in the student's kitchen next door. But not so in summer, when the sun was burning all day on the corrugated iron and we had the feeling to live in a frying pan. Work was impossible except when I could retreat to the much colder student's kitchen. But now even we have a ceiling and it really helps. Through this July, which was much colder than in the last years, we did not feel so cold in the house.

Ivana paints the large student's sleeping room

Painting of Rooms

Removing the old and installing the new ceilings made quite a mess. Thus it was a good time to paint the rooms after the clean up. The student's kitchen got a warm yellow while our area a nice blue-green. In July, Ivana also painted the large student's sleeping room in a soft violet. Furthermore, the gangway to the student's rooms now shines in a fresh white and the guys painted the bathroom in a warm light blue.

New Furniture

All the years the students had complained about the beds. It was true, that the self made beds from Goegap were not comfortable at all, as they did not meet standards. It was better to place the foam mattresses onto the floor, but also these mattresses were getting old. But now the research station has four new nice beds for students. And this, hopefully should last for a while as I did not buy the cheapest ones, but good quality. Other new furniture includes one cup-board for the students, a shelf for the student's kitchen and two book shelves for the research room.

The freshly painted student's room has now three new and nice beds. On the right hand side, outside the picture, there are two more cup-boards

Solar system: Now we have power in every room!

So far we nearly had no power at the research station. Ok, we had and still have a small solar system that (normally) provides enough power for the 12V lights and in summer even for a computer. But what about the computers in winter/spring, when we do most of our work? We had to

run them with large car batteries. These had to be charged at the office in of Goegap. When carrying them around they were not only very heavy, but often leaked some battery acid creating fashions holes in our clothes. At the research station we connected a small inverter to the batteries, which changed the 12V to 220V. In this way we could run the computers, at least for several hours, before we had to run to the office again to recharge the battery. And it became apparent that the batteries were suffering some form of wear as each time they were recharged they provided power for shorter periods. And often there was no power at all to work.

Large solar panels provide the research station with power.

But all has changed this July. Now we have four large solar panels in front of the house. These charge eight solar batteries on the veranda of the research station. A solar regulator makes sure that the batteries are not getting overcharged. The batteries are connected four in a row, and two rows in parallel, such that they provide 24V. A cable goes from the batteries through the wall into the research room. Here it connects to an inverter that changes the 24V to 220V. From here the cables go into every room of the house, as every room has now one regular power plug with 220V. Here one can easily connect the laptops to the power. This is such a big improvement for us, though for all of our readers it is of course normal to have easy access to power. What will the students of the future think when we tell them how we had to use car batteries?

Of course the solar panels do not provide endless power. But we tested the system and even in winter, when it is often cloudy, we can run laptops for up to 8 hours a day, in summer much longer. The inverter provides only 1000W, so we can't use the power for a hair dryer or a microwave. But in future there will always be power to run the computers to put the data in and analyze them.

The solar panels charge solar batteries on the veranda of the research station. These are connected to the blue inverter on the wall of the research room that changes 24V to 220V. From here power plugs in every room of the house are powered, such as the white one on the left hand side of the picture that runs one of the two new laptops.

New Lamps

Our small solar system so far only allowed 12V lamps, which are sometimes not very strong, especially when the wire has to go a long distance or the room is large. Thus, though we had a light in the bathroom, which I installed in 2004, it was still very dark at night. Now we have two strong lights with energy saving bulbs that are powered by the 220V system and which make the bathroom one of the brightest rooms. However, the brightest room is now the small student's room, which was previously the darkest. This room now also has a strong 220V light. And we have a new big light on the veranda, promising relaxed warm summer nights there, having dinner under the stars (and probably with a thousand of moths attracted by the lights, and their accompanying hunters, the geckos of the research station).

New Computers

I also bought two new laptops fort the research station. I chose the cheapest version from DELL without any extras, and we are very happy with these computers. They can do everything we want them to do. The old laptop is now used by the research station manager. One of the new ones is based as station for all field data. The other one is used also for research but also by the students to watch DVDs and for their Emails. Whenever somebody goes to town he/she takes this computer

to the internet café and sends and downloads emails for the students. The students can have now the opportunity to read and reply to their e-mails at the research station. This makes it much easier and cheaper.

Wendy-House for Animal Keeping

Wendy House is the South African English name for a wooden house used in the garden. I bought one measuring 3x6m in Cape Town. It was not only expensive, but also stressful to have it transported to Goegap. At first, the transport company forgot the roof, windows and door. Once everything had finally arrived, it proved to be more work to get it standing than expected, but it took just over one day to get it done. The Wendy House now offers accommodation to our captive colony of striped mice. Before we had them on the veranda of the research station, which was not the best solution. Now we have much more space for the colony and the mice have a quieter place to stay, as here they are not being disturbed by people using the veranda at night.

Building up the Wendy House was not so easy. We put some insulation under the roof to avoid it getting too hot in summer.

The mice are doing very well in the Wendy House. Already more than 100 mice are born here.

Research Station Manager appointed

The most important change is that the Research Station now has a manager who is appointed for 12 months and stays permanently at the Research Station during this period. This was possible through grants from different societies. The Research Station Manager is somebody with a MSC in Biology or similar, who wants to stay one year in Namaqualand. The Research Station refunds the costs of the flight to South Africa, offers free accommodation and covers the living expenses with a small grant of R 2000/month (250 Euro). The work of the Research Station Manager is hard and demanding: 1. Maintenance and repairs of the Research Station; 2. managing the finances (book keeping); 3. management of the captive colony of mice; 4. keeping track of all mice groups, i.e. conducting field work such as trapping, radio-tracking and behavioral observations; 5. working in and supervising field assistants.

Thus, the job of the Research Station Manager is to keep the station and the projects running while I am away. It is especially important that all the groups are still monitored and that there is a possibility for students to work in Goegap even when I am not there. I am very lucky that I found Ivana, somebody both highly motivated and qualified for the job. She worked very hard the first months and still was full of enthusiasm, proving that she can solve problems of all kinds independently. I would be lucky to have such a Research Station Manager also in the coming years.

Ivana seems to be ready for the challenge of staying 12 months as Research Station Manager in Goegap.

Developments in the Future

Will the students of the future appreciate the improvements we have done at the Research Station ort just take it as granted that there is (only) one power plug in every room? They won't know how time consuming and expensive it was in previous years to write emails only once a week when being in Springbok. Will they instead complain that they do not have easy access to the internet? I hope also in future we will have students that appreciate the loneliness of Goegap and I hope that this place will always keep the flair of being off the track.

Still, we will need further improvements. Especially it might become necessary to build more accommodation for students, when we get funding for PhD projects in Goegap. There are only three sleeping rooms at the Research Station, one for the Research Station Manager, one for my family, and one for field assistants. We might have to erect more Wendy Houses or buy a caravan if more students start working here. We are not allowed to erect permanent structures in the nature reserve. We might also need more power, maybe by a windmill supplementing the solar system.

Most importantly, we would need a decent car. So far we only have a 14 years old Ford Sierra, and my private 10 years old Land Rover. Normally, one of these old cars is in the garage. A reliable new car that can manage the sand roads would be nice, a 2x4 vehicle such as a Toyota Condor, which would offer enough space for students. But the costs of around 33 000 Euro a very high, or do you know a potential sponsor?

NEWS AND INFORMATION ABOUT PLANTS AND ANIMALS

MOUSE PORTRAIT: FEMALE 426

By Carsten Schradin

Mother: F102	**Father:** ?
Born: Middle of November 2003	**Died:** 30. März 2005
Age: 1.3 Jahre	**Cause of death:** Predator, probably jackal
Partners: M427, M407,	
Children: approx. 7, 15 with other females of the same group	**Grandchildren:** Approx. 10

F: Female = Weibchen, M: Male = Männchen

F426 was born in November 2003, her mother was F102. The bond between mother and daughter was strong and lasted a life time. Both were the matriarchs of group 8 in 2004. While F102 gave birth to her first litter already end of August 2004, F426 gave birth to her first pups the 18th of September, four days before F102 gave birth to her second litter. While F426 remained in the group's main nest to give birth, F102 left the nest to give birth and returned with her young ones a couple of days later, From that day on both females raised their young together in the nest S5 and we were not able to say which young were from which mother. When F102 disappeared end of October for unknown reasons, the group consisted of 5 mice. One of them was F530, either the daughter of F102 or F426. The relationship that developed between F426 and F530 was very similar to the one that existed between F426 and F102. Both females remained in Group 8, but F530 left the group nest to give birth to her pups to return with them when they were about 10 days old and not yet weaned.

F426 gave birth to three litters during the breeding season 2004: end of September, end of October and end of November. She always staid in S5, the main nest of the group, while the other females (first F102 and later F530) left the nest to give birth elsewhere.

January is summer in Namaqualand and the dry season. Often no rain falls at all in January. But not so in 2005, when exceptionally strong thunderstorms occurred and even the normally dry riverbed was full of water for a short time (see FSM-TIMES No. 3). Instead of further drying up, the land became green again and wildflowers and young succulents offered protein rich food for the mice. Thus, an unusual extra breeding season occurred in the summer of 2005. F426 gave birth to her fourth litter, again at S5. F530 gave also birth, but once again she left the nest for the delivery.

F426 was exceptionally well habituated to the presence of observers. During nest observations she immediately jumped on the scales. Thus, an unusual relationship developed also between her and the student Christina Keller. Obviously F426 did not only get well along with other mouse females. End of March 2005 I found the transmitter of F426 in the field. A predator, probably a jackal, had made an end to an unusual mouse life, She had given birth to four litters and lived a long life When she died, she left a group of 13 mice behind at nest S5.

The nest S5 (S stands for „Sleeping Site"), the main nest of Group 8. The mice are sleeping in the shrub in the middle of the picture. A few traps lie in the dry riverbed below the nest.

INSECT PORTRAIT: CREAM-STRIPED OWL (*CYLIGRAMMA LATONA*)

By Stella Miranda Treffler

Family Noctuidae (Agrotidae) – Owlet moths

One evening we had a big insect in the research station fluttering around the kitchen-light. We thought it was a butterfly, because its size and nice wings. But it was a moth, the cream-striped owl. The wingspan is 75mm and both wings are transacted by a cream stripe, and a prominent eyespot on each fore wing. The rest is brown-colored. The caterpillars of this moth feed on the leaves of *Acacia* trees. Some *Acacia* trees stand around the research station. Adults are attracted to lights and the smell of alcoholic drinks or over-ripe fruit.

CONFERENCES, PRESENTATIONS AND PUBLICATIONS

PUBLIKATIONS

Von Carsten Schradin

One scientific and one popular science article have been published. In the Swiss weakly magazine an article by Volker Sommer and myself about animal and human fathers was published. And finally the proceedings of the African Small Mammals Symposiums in 2003 have been published, officially with a publication data of 2005, but in fact it was only published this August.

Sommer, V. & Schradin, C. 2006. Ach, Männer (Oh Men, the Biology of Fatherhood), Weltwoche 26/06 (available at **www.weltwoche.ch**).

Schradin, C. 2005. When to live alone and when to live in groups: ecological determinants of sociality in the African striped mouse (*Rhabdomys pumilio*, Sparrman, 1784). Belgian Journal of Zoology 135 (supplement Proceedings of the 9th African Small Mammal Symposium): 77-82.

One aim in animal behaviour is to explain why and when animals live in groups. The main approach has been to compare closely related gregarious and solitary species. Here, I discuss data of a medium sized, diurnal muroid rodent, the striped mouse, which demonstrates a high level of intraspecific variability of its social system. In the arid Succulent Karoo, the social structure of the striped mouse is best described as a territorial group living solitary forager with communal breeding and helpers at the nest. Groups can consist of up to 30 adult mice, i.e. four breeding females, one breeding male and their adult offspring. In contrast, the striped mouse is solitary in the mesic grasslands of South Africa, with females inhabiting intrasexually exclusive territories and male territories overlapping those of several females. Association between the sexes is limited to mating, and offspring leave their mother's territory as juveniles. Home ranges in the grasslands are much larger than in the Succulent Karoo. I suggest that the main ecological reasons for these differences in social organization are food abundance, the availability of suitable nesting sites, and the possibility of sun-basking. Whether these ecological differences acted as selection pressures in the past that caused genetic differences and finally speciation (as proposed by a recent study), or whether these ecological differences lead to behavioural differences via an ontogenetic pathway, remains a topic for further research.

VISITORS

By Carsten Schradin

In July Prof. David Ribble from the University of Trinity, USA, visited us. David is a world leading expert in the research on monogamy in small mammals. He just came from a project on rock elephant shrews in KwaZuluNatal (South Africa) and he was part of a team (together with Galen Rathbun) who discovered a new species of elephant shrews in Tanzania. He is also involved with our elephant shrew project here in Goegap. In fact the paternity analysis that Melanie needs to do will be carried out in his laboratory. David's visit was short, only three days, but we had a good time and his visit was very beneficial for both Melanie and myself.

David was lucky to get to Goegap when the wildflowers were in full display.

PARTY AT THE RESEARCH STATION

By Carsten Schradin

End of August we had our annul party for the workers of Goegap at the Research Station. In contrast to the previous years, we did not have a BBQ but a Poiky, a traditional South African dish. A Poiky is simply a big black pot that is first filled with several kgs of meat that are cooked directly on the fire. Once cooked, a lot of vegetables are added. More cooking, then the sauce is added. After about three hours we had a delicious lekker dish that everybody enjoyed.

We just added all the veggies to the Poiky.

Both managers enjoy the meal: Left Ivana, the Research Station Manager, next to her Maxi Jonk (with cap), the Reserve Manager.

FUNDING OF RESEARCH: CALL FOR DONATIONS

SUBSCRIBERS DONATION	*Account details*
We appeal to all subscribers of the FSM-TIMES to donate 80 Rand (10 Euro, 15 dollars) a year for research on the socio-ecology of small mammals in Goegap. Donations of more than 80 Rand are welcome and donors of 400 Rand (50 Euro, 75 dollars) will be mentioned in the next FSM-TIMES. *Donations will be used for the following purposes:* *1. Scientific research on small mammals in Goegap, especially smaller research projects such as Diploma and PhD theses, which have difficulties in raising funds elsewhere.* *2. Improving the infrastructure of the research station.* *In the last issue of the FSM-TIMES of every year we will publish how much we received in donations and how the money was used.*	*South Africa* Standard Bank Branch: Braamfontein Account name: Wits University Foundation Account No.: 002900076 Branch code: 004805 Swift code: SB ZAZ AJJ 00480502 **Please state L.2112 as reference.** *Germany* *Carsten Schradin, KSK Esslingen, BLZ 611 500 20, Konto Nr. 7434686* *Switzerland (deposits in Switzerland)* *Postkonto 80-643-0* *Finanzabteilung der Universität Zürich, 8001 Zürich* *Reference: Kreditnummer 37202508, Projekt Striemengrasmaus* *(it is very important that you state the Kreditnummer)* *Switzerland (deposits from abroad)* *Zürcher Kantonalbank, Hauptsitz, CH-8010 Zürich* *Account No: 1100-0109-594 (BC 700)* *Finanzabteilung der Universität Zürich, 8001 Zürich* *Swift-Code: ZKBKCHZZ80A* *IBAN: CH51 0070 0110 0001 0959 4* *Reference: Kreditnummer 37202508, Projekt Striemengrasmaus* *(it is very important that you state the Kreditnummer).*

SPONSORS

We are looking for a sponsor for a car for the research station!
At the moment the research station only has a 14 years old Ford Sierra. When this car is in the garage, the private car of Carsten Schradin, a 10 year old Land Rover, can be used. Most often one of the two cars is in the garage and a new car would be quite a relief.

A 2x4 car which can easily manage the rough terrain and has enough space for several students would be great, such as a Toyota Condor. Costs: R 250 000, Euro 33 000 or US dollars 38 000.

If you want to become a sponsor, please write an email to:
info@stripedmouse.com

THE MOUSE'S TAIL

MOUSE-TV IN GOEGAP

I forgot to mention one new thing in Goegap above: We now have a TV, even when it is only a mouse-TV. A large glass tank with a family of mice offers program around the clock. In the morning little Apollo is watching mouse TV for an hour or so, giving some rest to his parents.

SWISS CUSINE IN GOEGAP

Living in Switzerland, Brigi and I had to bring some Swiss custom to Goegap. To be more precise, we brought some cheese fondue. Luckily, we even found a small fondue set in the Spar of Springbok. And fondue was just the correct meal for a cold winter evening in Goegap.

FLIES, EVERYWHERE FLIES

Every year we have a lot of flies in Goegap, but this year was a record year. It was nearly unbearable to work in the field with all the flies flying around ones head and inside mouth and ear. When it got hotter, the flies were joined by biting flies, such that we had to wear long leave shirts during the hot day.