



Dear Custodians Family,

The past two weeks have been something of a rollercoaster – marked by both heartache and continued momentum. We were deeply saddened by the news of the buffalo incident and the passing of a dear, longstanding friend. In this edition, we've included some heartfelt tributes in their memory.

Alongside these reflections, we're also sharing what's been happening behind the scenes since our previous newsletter. So take a moment, settle in, and catch up on all the latest.

Editorial Team
Adri and Nonkie

ANNUAL CONFERENCE: Only 14 Weeks to Go!

Can you believe it? We are just 14 weeks away from our big conference!

Have you registered yet?

If not, please do so ASAP – it really helps us with planning and preparation, and we don't want you to miss out! We've heard from many members who are planning to attend (some even bringing guests – yay!), but we're still waiting on the **actual registration forms**. If that's you, please take a moment to get those in. It makes a big difference on our end!



Shared Accommodation – What You Need to Know

We've had a few questions, so here's more details:

The shared units include a **fully-equipped kitchen, lounge, 3 bedrooms, and 2 bathrooms** and a "stoep with a braai" for all the "kuiers" that will happen

We totally get that no one wants to share a bathroom with strangers – so if two couples book a unit, you'll each get your own bathroom. Problem solved!



Sponsorship & Auction Opportunities Still Open

Want to get involved as a sponsor or donate something exciting for our auction? We'd love to hear from you – get in touch soon to secure your spot!

All the details and forms you need are available from Nonkie and our website - <https://thecustodians.co.za/events/>
hop over there and take a look!



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"We're calling on our generous supporters to contribute to our upcoming auction!"

Contact Nonkie
admin@thecustodians.co.za



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www.thecustodians.co.za

DSC  **BADGER CARGO** 

"HONOURING THE LEGACY OF AN EASTERN CAPE LEGEND: CHAPPIE SCOTT" – BY CARL VAN ZYL

What a sad day hearing the news of Uncle Chappie's passing.

To many of us EC boytjies it's where so much began for us in our careers.

Noel, Jan and Aunt Marilyn were what you could refer to as the "outfitters" of the PH School, keeping things headed in the right direction while Uncle Chapman was more of the "young PH" who kept the party going. Not always too convincing on the theory side, but extremely convincing on the hosting part of being a PH.



As time passed and one found oneself in that part of your career making a go of things you got to know the other side of Uncle Chapman. The side most junior PH's got caught out with time and again.

You see the thing is Uncle Chapman was perfectly located at Swallow Krantz and if one were to take the beautiful dirt road up the Mankazana and over the top of the Winterberg or up the rugged Bavians River Valley he somehow knew you were passing. He had his informants and he'd be waiting for you on the dirt road at the Poplar Tree forest at the Swallow Krantz turn in. As hospitable as ever he'd insist that you join him for a drink and a visit to find out more about your client and where he was from and IF just maybe he knew the same folks in the horse business. (His 1st/2nd love!)

The usual formalities were covered and this is where most got caught out. While Uncle Chapman explained the importance of a Chappie Scott (The term used for a 6 pack of Castle Lager put into the top of the freezer to be chilled to the perfect temperature which would hurt your throat but not burn it) his tracker would invite your tracker for lunch and kindly remove your keys from your vehicle disappearing to another part of the farm. Needless to say Aunt Marilyn was then notified of the unexpected guests who were staying for the evening for some "fellowship". It was a thing of tradition. An East Cape tradition of hospitality shared with many a hunter from around the world. For those of you whom had the pleasure of seeing this side of Uncle Chappie I have no doubt will remember him fondly for the many laughs and hundreds of stories of how the industry began in the EC.

An East Cape Giant has fallen and the road over the Winterberg will never be the same again, but I bet if you were to pull up to Swallow Krantz in the dead of winter you might just hear Uncle Chapman barking orders in preparation for your arrival.

Privileged to have been a part of it and even more privileged to have been caught out by him on numerous occasions!

Long live the memories of an Eastern Cape Legend!

Carl van Zyl

OUR INDUSTRY

Custodians participated in the annual virtual National Stakeholder Consultation toward the review of South Africa's National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP).

As background:

The **Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF)**, adopted at **COP15 in December 2022**, is a global agreement. It sets **global goals and targets**—including the headline Target 3, which is the **30x30 goal** (protecting 30% of land and 30% of marine areas globally by 2030).

WHAT IS THE 30X30 GOAL?

The 30x30 conservation initiative aims to protect 30% of the world's land and oceans by the year 2030. It's a global movement driven by governments, NGOs, scientists, and communities to combat biodiversity loss and climate change.

Each country is expected to contribute to these global targets through **national strategies and action plans**, specifically their **National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP)**.

It was confirmed at the meeting, that South-Africa's Biodiversity Economy strategy aligns with global targets, emphasizing sustainable use, ecosystem restoration, and community involvement. Our 30x30 target requires expanding protected areas by 1.4 million hectares and other conservation measures by 10 million hectares by 2040 and conserving 100,000 hectares of coastal and marine areas by 2036.

The importance of sustainable use of wildlife species and the role of large companies in biodiversity conservation were emphasized during the meeting. Challenges such as the need for better monitoring, funding, and government intervention in awareness and mobilization were highlighted. The session also covered the importance of inclusivity, particularly for marginalized communities, and the need for a standardized approach to tagging and reporting biodiversity-related expenditures. The meeting discussed South Africa's conservation efforts, focusing on expanding the conservation estate through biodiversity stewardship programs and land reform.

Custodians shared our message at the SABHSSA Best Practice Workshop

The SABHSSA Best Practice Workshop ! This workshop supported by AWEI and Stellenbosch University was a highly engaging event which provided a platform for sharing insights, exchanging perspectives, and fostering collaboration across the wildlife industry.



Attendees included CPA professionals, the Professional Hunters School Director, government representatives, industry stakeholders, and members of the professional hunting community. The sessions covered a range of critical topics designed to enhance standards, ensure compliance with regulatory requirements, and promote ethical, sustainable practices throughout the sector.

SABHSSA Workshop CONT>>>>

Of particular interest were new entrants to the wildlife industry, especially those aspiring to join the Professional Hunting (PH) community. The workshop offered a valuable opportunity for us to share information on the professional hunting value chain, compliance requirements, and industry best practices.

By connecting established professionals with newcomers, the workshop contributed to strengthening the foundations of the PH industry and supporting a future generation of responsible, conservation-minded hunters. Custodians was invited to attend and deliver a presentation at the SABHSSA / AWEI / Stellenbosch University Workshop on Best Practices. The workshop covered a range of critical topics aimed at enhancing standards, ensuring compliance, and promoting ethical, sustainable practices across the South African wildlife sector.

Our presentation focused on the Professional Hunting value chain, as well as the importance of compliance throughout. A key point that drew significant interest was our reference to the inclusion of products made available to organised traditional healing groups as part of this value chain. This aspect of our presentation was met with respect and strong support from delegates, highlighting a shared recognition of the cultural and economic value this connection can offer.



While professional hunting was not the initial focus of the workshop, it generated considerable interest among the delegates—particularly from CPA (Communal Property Association) representatives and others interested in entering the hunting industry. The questions and discussions that followed made it clear that there is a real and growing need for mentorship, skills transfer, and capacity building for new entrants in the South African wildlife sector.

Custodians' participation reflects our ongoing commitment to collaborating with key partners, sharing expertise, and staying at the forefront of best practice developments in professional hunting and conservation.

VIEWS & OPINIONS

Are Big-Game Hunters Really the 'Pantomime Villains' We're Made to Believe?

A provocative piece from The Telegraph flips the script on trophy hunting—arguing that, far from cartoonish villains, these hunters exist within a complex ethical and conservation landscape, with motives and impacts that demand a fairer, more nuanced look.

Read here: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2025/08/09/big-game-hunters-not-pantomime-villains/>

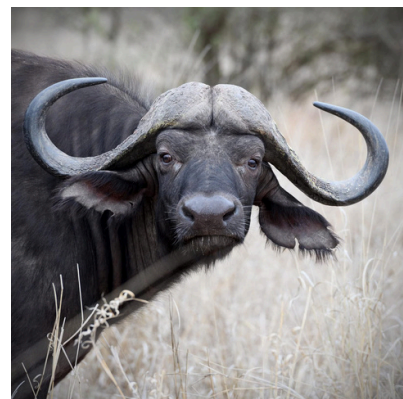


The Misguided Mob: Celebrating a Hunter's Death Ignores the Truth About Conservation

Much has been said following the tragic death of hunter **Asher Watkins**, who lost his life during an unprovoked buffalo charge. It's a heartbreaking incident that has shaken many — not only because of the loss itself, but also due to the wave of harsh, often cruel, comments directed at both Asher and the outfitting company involved — a member of our own community.

Amid the noise, however, some voices have brought clarity and compassion. One such message, written by **Lee Harrell**, offered a balanced and thoughtful perspective that resonated deeply with many of us. With Mr. Harrell's permission, we are sharing his words in this edition of the newsletter — a reminder of the difference between legal hunters/hunting and poaching, and the irony of the internet-mob

Ladies and gentlemen, let's talk about something that's been burning up the internet this past week - a story that exposes the ugly underbelly of ignorance and mob mentality. Asher Watkins, a 52-year-old Texan, a husband, a father, and a lifelong outdoorsman, was tragically killed while hunting Cape Buffalo in South Africa. A man who grew up on the rugged plains of Texas, who understood the land and its creatures better than most, met his end in a sudden, unprovoked charge by one of Africa's most dangerous animals. And what's the response from the so-called enlightened corners of the internet? Jubilation. Glee. People cheering for the buffalo, as if this majestic beast somehow struck a blow for justice. They're calling it karma, folks, and it's sick. It's twisted. And it's dead wrong.



Let me be clear: Asher Watkins was not some reckless thrill-seeker out to slaughter for sport. He was a legal hunter, operating within the strict regulations of South Africa's wildlife management system - a system that, frankly, does more for conservation than the keyboard warriors dancing on his grave could ever dream of. These people, with their hashtags and their sanctimonious posts, don't understand the first thing about how legal hunting actually saves wildlife. They're too busy sipping their oat milk lattes and preaching from their urban lofts to see the bigger picture. So let's break it down, with facts, not feelings, because that's what we do here.

First, let's talk about what legal hunting actually is. Unlike poaching, which is the illegal, unregulated killing of animals - often for profit on the black market - legal hunting is a tightly controlled practice. It's rooted in science, managed by wildlife agencies, and designed to ensure species thrive, not vanish. In the United States alone, hunters contribute over \$1.6 billion annually to conservation through license fees, excise taxes on firearms and ammunition, and direct donations to groups like the Boone & Crockett Club or Safari Club International. That's billion with a B, folks. Since the Pittman-Robertson Act of 1937, hunters have funneled more than \$14 billion into state wildlife agencies, restoring species like the whitetail deer and wild turkey from the brink of extinction. You think those majestic herds of elk you see in national parks just magically reappeared? Thank a hunter.

Now, let's take it to Africa, where Asher Watkins met his fate. In countries like South Africa and Namibia, legal hunting is a cornerstone of wildlife management. Take the Black Rhino, a species once teetering on the edge. Since

2004, when the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) approved an export quota of five Black Rhinos per year from Namibia and South Africa, their populations have surged by 67%. Only 47 rhinos were hunted from 2005 to 2015, a mere 0.26% of Namibia's population, yet the revenue from those hunts funded anti-poaching patrols, habitat restoration, and community programs. In Zambia, 50% of trophy fees go directly to local communities, while in Namibia's Communal Conservancies, it's 100%. That money builds schools, clinics, and water systems. It gives locals a stake in protecting wildlife, not poaching it. Poaching, on the other hand, is a scourge. It's driven by greed, not conservation. The illegal wildlife trade is a \$20 billion-a-year industry, rivaling drug and human trafficking. In 2012, 668 rhinos were poached in South Africa; by 2013, that number jumped to 946 - two per day. Bear gallbladders fetch \$800 to \$10,000 on the black market. Bighorn Sheep horns can go for \$20,000. Poachers don't care about ecosystems or sustainability. They kill, they cash out, and they leave devastation in their wake. Legal hunting, by contrast, creates a system where animals are valued alive, not dead. In Tanzania, 56.8% of lions in protected areas are found in hunting zones, where hunters' fees fund anti-poaching units.

The irony? The same people cheering Asher's death are the ones who cry loudest about endangered species. But they're clueless about how their policies would doom those very animals. Ban legal hunting, as they often demand, and you cut off the funds that keep poachers at bay. You destroy the economic incentive for locals to protect wildlife. In 2020, the US government alone pumped \$116 million into global anti-poaching efforts, much of it tied to programs supported by hunting revenue. In Missouri, hunters funded a Black Bear management plan that boosted the population by 9% annually, with 540-840 bears now thriving. You don't get those results by tweeting emojis of clapping hands when a buffalo gores a man.

And let's talk about that buffalo. The Cape Buffalo, nicknamed "Black Death," isn't just some cuddly creature. It's a 1,900-pound juggernaut that can hit 35 miles an hour and turn a hunter into a statistic in seconds. Asher Watkins knew the risks. He wasn't out there with a death wish; he was participating in a tradition that balances human needs with nature's demands. He was part of a system that ensures Cape Buffalo don't overgraze their habitat, which would starve them and other species. Legal hunting keeps populations in check, preventing ecological collapse. It's not about trophies; it's about survival - for the animals, the land, and the people who depend on both.

Yet the internet mob doesn't see it. They see a dead hunter and a victorious buffalo, and they cheer like it's a Hollywood movie. They don't know that poaching is the real villain, not hunting. They don't know that in 2020, US-supported efforts led to seizures of \$223 million in illegal wildlife products, including 19,000 live animals and thousands of pounds of ivory and pangolin scales. They don't know that hunters, landowners, and conservation officers, 88%, 90%, and 97% respectively, consider poaching a serious problem, one that hurts wildlife populations, hunt quality, and public perception of hunting.

This is the tragedy of Asher Watkins' death - not just the loss of a good man, but the ignorance it's exposed. The people celebrating his demise aren't saving animals; they're undermining the very systems that do. They're not heroes; they're hypocrites, blind to the blood on their hands from supporting policies that let poachers thrive. Legal hunting isn't perfect, but it's a proven tool for conservation, backed by decades of data and billions of dollars. So the next time you see someone cheering a hunter's death, ask them: What have you done for wildlife lately? Because Asher Watkins, and millions of hunters like him, were out there doing the real work. And that's a truth the mob can't handle. - Lee Harell

SATSA NEWS

Tourism Trends: Who's Visiting South Africa the Most?

South Africa's tourism landscape is evolving, with significant growth from both African neighbours and international markets. Zimbabwe continues to lead with over 2.18 million visitors in 2024, while Ghana experienced a remarkable 149% increase, reaching 36,656 visitors, following the introduction of a visa waiver. From overseas, the United States remains the top source market, with 372,362 visitors, up 5.2% from 2023. Brazil saw a notable 94.2% increase, totaling 49,855 visitors, attributed to enhanced air connectivity and targeted marketing efforts. Europe's total tourist arrivals reached 1,258,706, a modest 1.1% increase, with the UK leading at 349,883 visitors.



David Frost, CEO of the Southern Africa Tourism Services Association (SATSA), emphasizes the need for a more inclusive approach to tourism. He advocates for spreading tourist activities beyond traditional hotspots like Cape Town and Kruger National Park to lesser-known regions that offer unique and authentic experiences. Frost's vision aims to ensure that all areas of South Africa benefit from tourism growth, promoting a more balanced and sustainable industry.

For more insights on this, visit [The Citizen](#).



GENERAL NEWS

FMD Cases Confirmed in Free State

The Free State Department of Agriculture has confirmed two new cases of Foot-and-Mouth Disease (FMD) in Viljoenskroon—one on a commercial farm and another in a communal grazing area near the North West border. A 10 km movement restriction zone has been implemented, affected farms are under quarantine, and vaccination is underway. Authorities are urging farmers to follow strict biosecurity measures to curb the spread.

[Read more here](#)



Meat exporters call for urgent review of Foot-and-Mouth Disease policy

South Africa's meat exporters are urging government to urgently review the country's Foot-and-Mouth Disease (FMD) policy, warning that the current approach is limiting export opportunities and damaging the sector's global competitiveness.

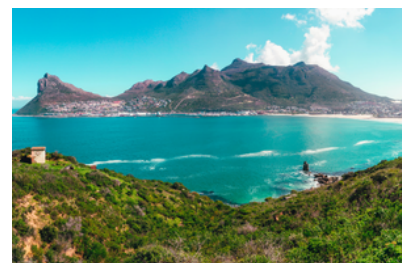


Industry representatives stress that recurring FMD outbreaks, coupled with restrictive policies, are costing the economy millions in lost revenue, threatening jobs, and undermining trade relationships. They are calling for more proactive containment measures, improved vaccination strategies, and streamlined processes to reopen export markets.

[Read more here](#)

Cape Town Steps Up for Nature!

In a big win for conservation, the City of Cape Town has adopted its 2025 Biodiversity Spatial Plan — a roadmap to protect priority habitats, guide smart development, and keep the Mother City's wild spaces thriving.



[Read more here](#)

Under the Radar: Bats Overlooked in Africa's Protected Areas

A groundbreaking study reveals that while most bat species are found within at least one protected area across sub-Saharan Africa, 28 species—among them 5 threatened and 15 data-deficient—have zero representation in any protected reserve. This omission risks silent declines in these key pollinators and pest controllers, especially in biodiverse yet understudied regions like West and Central Africa and the Albertine Rift. Cultural beliefs and lack of monitoring further complicate efforts to protect these vital species.



[Read more here](#)

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ABOUT CUSTODIANS

We've started sharing abstracts from our Constitution in our newsletters, to help members learn more about our Association. Sections 11, 12 & 13 below:

11. RULES

11.1 The Executive Committee may make, amend or repeal any necessary or incidental rules relating to the governance of the Association in respect of matters that are not addressed in this Constitution and that are not inconsistent with this Constitution by giving written notice to each Member.

11.2 The rule shall take effect on a date that is the later of 10 (ten) days from the giving of the notice referred to above, or the date, if any, specified in the rule.

11.3 A rule is binding:

11.3.1 on an interim basis from the time that it takes effect until it is put to a vote at the next annual general meeting; and

11.3.1.1 on a permanent basis only if it has been ratified by an ordinary resolution at the meeting referred to in clause 11.3.1.

11.4 Any failure to ratify the rules of the Association does not affect the validity of anything done in terms of those rules during the period that they had an interim effect as provided in terms of clause 11.3.1.

12 FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

12.1 Finances

12.1.1 All monies raised by or on behalf of the Association shall be deposited in the Association's bank account.

12.1.2 A financial year of the Association shall end on 31 August of each year.

Bank Account

12.2.1 The Bank account of the Association shall be opened with any registered bank within the Republic of South Africa.

12.2.2 The Executive Committee shall appoint bank account signatories at the first Executive Committee meeting immediately following each Annual General Meeting.

12.3 Expenditure

The Executive Committee shall, at the first Executive Committee meeting immediately following each Annual General Meeting, approve expenditure limits of authority which shall be incorporated in the Rules of the Association.

12.4 Financial Statements

The Treasurer must prepare management accounts on a monthly basis.

The Executive Committee shall consider and approve the financial statements for presentation to the annual general meeting.

12.5 Agreements

12.5.1 The Executive Committee shall, at the first Executive Committee meeting immediately following each Annual General Meeting, approve limits of authority to enter into agreements on behalf of the Association which shall be incorporated in the Rules of the Association.

12.5.2 Any legal agreements signed, must be put on the archive of the Association.

13 INDEPENDENT ACCOUNTING OFFICER

13.1 A suitably qualified person shall be appointed as the independent accounting officer to compile the financial statements of the Association according to internationally accepted accounting practices.

13.2 The independent accounting officer shall be appointed by the Members at the annual general meeting, except for the first independent accounting officer, who shall be appointed by the Executive Committee.

Would you like to add your or your company's name to the list of sponsors and donors who have already confirmed their participation and support towards our 2025 Conference:

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