



- Tavern of the Seas -

David Biggs



Wildlife is all good and well, but baboons are too much

I AM OFTEN amazed at the amount of wildlife that roams our city streets at night (and I'm not referring to the burglars and garbage bin raiders, either).

I once had a rather fierce genet come right into my house to steal my cats' food. I was almost as afraid of it as the cats were. I left the front door wide open and was happy to see it had left by morning. Have you seen the teeth on those creatures?

I recently saw a Cape mongoose trotting casually along Kommetjie Road here in Fish Hoek, apparently quite unconcerned about the traffic. It was rush hour and the motorists were obviously taking care to avoid the little grey pedestrian.

My neighbour to the south constantly finds porcupine quills scattered about his garden and the porcupines have dug up most of the spring bulbs I planted optimistically on my patio not so long ago.

When my daughter was visiting from Canada she was delighted to look out of her bedroom window one night to see a porcupine's nuf-

fling about in the garden.

I feel rather honoured to play host to wildlife and am quite happy to sacrifice a few lily bulbs for the privilege.

My neighbour to the north recently had all the alien vegetation removed from his plot and now feels rather bad because he's found footprints and droppings of small buck on the property.

He hopes his efforts at destroying Port Jacksons haven't destroyed a bokkie habitat in the process. We don't live on the far fringes of civilisation, either. We're on a busy main highway.

Some months ago I visited a friend in Simon's Town and had to drive very slowly because a penguin was making its leisurely way home, waddling along in the middle of the road, heading home to Boulders Beach and enjoying the last of the setting sun.

He was not about to move to the side of the road for anybody.

After dinner at my friend's house I was again delayed, this time by a large porcupine strolling along the same road, with all his quills erect.

I can tell you with some authority that a porcupine's cruising speed is about 10km/h.

I'm always happy to see these signs of animal life in the neighbourhood. I think it means we haven't entirely destroyed the natural environment and are sharing what's left of it with other creatures.

I do draw the line at sharing my space with baboons, though. They've become just a little too familiar and I think there's plenty of space for them to roam on the

mountain tops. The peninsula's baboon troops didn't take long to learn that those shiny white cupboards in human kitchens were a rich source of food. When I bought my fridge many years ago it came with lock and key.

I wish I'd kept the key.

Last Laugh

A city executive went out for a drive in the country and when he arrived in Elgin he saw a farmer with a herd of pigs in an apple orchard.

The city man stopped his car and watched intrigued as the farmer picked up the pigs one by one and held them up so they could munch the apples on the branches of the trees. Being an expert on efficiency, the businessman could stand this no longer and approached the farmer:

"Excuse me, sir, wouldn't it be more efficient if you knocked the apples on to the ground and let the pigs pick them up?"

"Why would I want to do that?" asked the farmer, puzzled.

"Well, just think how much time you would save by doing it that way," said the city man.

The farmer laughed and laughed. "Oh goodness me," he said, "time means absolutely nothing to a pig."

The Wanderer



I CAN TELL YOU
WITH SOME
AUTHORITY THAT
A PORCUPINE'S
CRUISING SPEED
IS ABOUT 10KM/H

Tel/Fax: 021 782 3180

E-mail: dbiggs@glolink.co.za