

The powerful ruling the powerless

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Blanche's website
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CONCERNED
FLAMINGO FAN
Kimberley

SIR - A few comments on the "Development vs Lesser Flamingo" of Kimberley. South Africa is known to the world not only for its magnificent wildlife and parks, but also for the trafficking and exploitation of endangered species. South Africa has the highest species extinction rate of any area on the planet, for big game and development is big business and money and resources are all that count.

Yet, rather than respecting the intrinsic value and rights of animals, or even adopt the "enlightened anthropocentric" policy of "ecotourism" South Africa, or rather the Kimberley Municipality, auction its ecosystems and flamingos to the highest bidder.

This "sustainable use" policy is an unsustainable farce. South Africa inherited and maintain an ugly legacy of domination, a system of exploiting humans and nature, racism and discrimination. Despite the changes that ended social apartheid, nothing changed in the underlying structure of species apartheid. Species apartheid stems from human contempt for non-human species. Just as racism defines one group of humans as superior to another, out of sheer prejudice and ignorance, so speciesism position human animals as superior to non-human animals, and anoint themselves as the end to which all other life forms are mere means.

The speciesist mindset of the Kimberley Municipality devalues and objectifies the Lesser Flamingo by dichotomising the evolutionary continuum into human and non-human life. This speciesism draws from a ma-

lignant human supremacism, namely, the arrogant belief that humans have a natural right to use and disregard animals for any purpose they devise.

Like racism speciesism deploys a "Might is Right" philosophy that sees the ability of the powerful to rule over powerless as its justification for doing so, ignoring the fact that the greater the power the greater the responsibility to use it humanely, democratically and ecologically.

Like social apartheid, species apartheid is rooted in the enslavement of beings exploited for profit and property. In post-apartheid South Africa, one finds the same pseudo-"conservation" policies, the same corruption, the same morass of legal codes and lack of regulation, the same violation of treaties such as CITIES and Unesco, and the same arrogant speciesism that uses ignorance and the past to unconscionably exploit animals for human purposes.

Political regime changes mean nothing to animals and their right to a free and happy life, for whether a regime is Left or Right, Capitalist or Communist, White or Black, Afrikaner or ANC, the same species apartheid mentality and policies prevail. Animals, in this instance the Lesser Flamingo, are being exploited, they are reduced to a burden, hindering human "development" and are disregarded as fellow inhabitants of our country for money's sake.

FOR THE FLAMINGO
via e-mail

Blame ignorance

SIR - It has become the order of the day of people in "leadership" positions to blame their own ignorance and incompetence on racism and not realising how the world laughs at them! When will they ever learn to start taking responsibility and become role models to ordinary citizens?

Lenyibi's conference was "organised in order to bring the controversial flamingo issue to rest once and for all", but rather sparked further uproar due to his inflammatory and contradicting statements.

Racism has absolutely nothing to do with the current row over the Kimberley flamingos. The real issue at hand is the poor management of infrastructure. If the current infrastructure cannot even be maintained how do they expect to maintain the proposed R2 billion "KFC" project after completion?

CONCERNED CITIZEN
Kimberley

Dink net aan hulself

MENEER - Ek het in Kimberley gewoon en ken die flaminke van my kinderdae af. Wat die mense nou daar wil doen is om die natuur heeltetal in sy "glory" te stuur want hulle dink net aan hulself.

Die diere moet maar altyd aan die kortste end trek.

As hulle so aangaan het ons kleinkinders en hulle kinders dalk eendag nie meer die voorreg om na die pragdiere wat die Here geskep het te kyk nie. Almal van ons het 'n reg op hierdie aarde insluitende die diere.

As 'n diereliefhebber is dit vir my onstellend dat die man gesê het dat niks hulle sal keer om aan te gaan nie. Dit is baie duidelik dat hy niks omgee vir sy natuur nie.

Waarheen moet die arme diere gaan? Hulle is nou maar afhanklik van die mens. Dankie vir die wat hulle daar gehou het.

OUMA EVE
Upington

9 JULY, 2008

Why worry about Lesser Flamingos?

SIR - The whole story of the Lesser Flamingos and the Northgate development is getting to be a tiring exercise. My suggestion is to let the builders in, let them get on with their business of uprooting the trees and bushes and let them start pouring concrete.

We are only dealing with birds here. When the close proximity of people and everything that goes with such a development is considered, it will be better if the birds fly away and find another home.

They will in all probability never come back, but that is a small price to pay for the extra income that Sol Plaatje Municipality will earn from rates, water supply and electricity.

If our geysers are put off for longer than the present eight hours per day to accommodate the development, we will have to grin and bear it. Kimberley people don't worry about things like this. They just accept anything that is thrown at them.

Judging by the way that indigenous thorn trees are being chopped down in and around Kimberley, it is safe to say that the citizens of Kimberley couldn't care less about nature anyway.

STENTOR
Kimberley

We all like to see our city prosper . . . but at what cost?

SIR - As a Kimberley resident, I was laughing out loud at the utterances made by our Executive Mayor, Patrick Lenyibi, on Carte Blanche. Is this really the person who occupies the highest office in our Municipality, or does he have a racist comedy double?

He says that the people against the Northgate housing development are only up in arms because the developers are black. How can that be? I understand that most of the directors of this company are white, including its MD, Lionel Koster! We'd all like to see our city prosper, but not at the expense of the environment and especially our flamingos. The Northgate development should be sited at another less sensitive place.

But it is interesting to see who some of the black directors of this development are. Group 1 are in bed with some funny people! Mr Lenyibi clearly does not have the faintest clue about the Environmental Impact Assessment process, which is law in our country. He said that his Council approves rezoning/land-use changes, and that it

does not worry about the EIA process. What a joke!

He then said that his Council have been aware of the water quality and quantity problems at Kamfers Dam for four years and they were now planning to build a pipeline to the Vaal River. Why has this taken four years to decide? Does the Council have the money for the pipeline? Do they think they can dump dirty sewage in the Vaal without cleaning it up first?

Lenyibi also said that the flamingos would not leave Kamfers Dam, because the Council had a meeting and decided so! Quite an influential mayor he is; like Mad Bob saying that only God will remove him from office! Over a million people were watching Carte Blanche - most comedians struggle to get an audience like that, but Lenyibi launched his new career in style.

He should resign as mayor and go work in the comedy clubs of Johannesburg as soon as possible.

RATEPAYER
Kimberley

9 JULY, 2008