

INTRODUCTION

Co-operation between the University of Pretoria and the National Parks Board of Trustees in many fields of common interest has been forthcoming for many years. Tangible results of this collaboration are to be seen in the research effort directed at the Kalahari Gemsbok National Park (KGNP) ever since 1957 onwards.

During 1981 Professors J. A. J. Nel (Associate Professor in Zoology) and J. du P. Bothma (Eugène Marais Chair of Wildlife Management), both attached to the University of Pretoria, suggested that the time was ripe to evaluate where we stand research-wise as far as the KGNP is concerned. They suggested the convening of an informal symposium with reference to *The Kalahari Ecosystem* of which the KGNP forms an integral part. During a flash of inspiration it was also thought that a commemorative volume, dedicated to Professor Dr. F. C. Eloff, Head of the Department of Zoology (University of Pretoria) and Chairman of the National Parks Board of Trustees, would be a fitting tribute to Professor Eloff who has done so much to stimulate research in the KGNP and who is to retire as Head of the Department of Zoology in 1985 after 42 years of dedicated service.

After consultation with Professor H. P. van der Schijff (vice-principal of the University of Pretoria) it was decided to go ahead with the envisaged symposium. It was held on the campus of the University of Pretoria on the 11th and 12th of October 1983. An organizing committee consisting of Professor J. du P. Bothma, Dr. G. de Graaff (National Parks Board), Professor J. A. J. Nel and Mr. P. van Wyk (National Parks Board) was appointed. An audience of some 200 people attended the two-day meeting.

It is evident that much still has to be learnt about the ecological intricacies of the KGNP and the Kalahari ecosystem in a wider sense of the word. These printed proceedings indicate where gaps in our knowledge are and it is hoped that it will direct the future course that research in the KGNP has to undertake.

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