

Gowrie Farm

NOTTINGHAM ROAD

From the pastures & fairways of Gowrie Farm

Plans for the introduction of game to Gowrie Farm



ABOVE: Burchell's zebra

PHOTO: ROGER DE LA HARPE

It has long been the intention of the developers of the 360ha Gowrie Farm golfing and fly-fishing estate to introduce additional wildlife to the farm. The hilly grassland to the north has been set aside as a reserved zone, which means that no building development is permitted. The area is already home to indigenous reedbuck and grey duiker, and, should application to and assessment by Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife be successful, it is hoped to introduce Burchell's zebra and the endangered oribi antelope as part of steps to increase the biodiversity of the estate.

'Both Burchell's zebra and oribi would be well suited to conditions found in the grasslands at Gowrie,' says Dave Cook, environmental consultant for Gowrie Farm. 'These zebras are quite commonly distributed across KZN, so we would just need to find a source within the Midlands to ensure that acclimatisation of the animals in terms of local conditions is easier. The zebra are quite hardy creatures, so they should adjust relatively easily.'

Dave envisages seven or eight animals: two males (a sub-adult and an adult) and about five females, which would form a single group that he sees as suitable for the initial introduction nucleus.

Oribi antelope, under threat throughout their range in South Africa, are more problematic. As an endangered species, all movement of oribi is strictly monitored and controlled by the Oribi Working Group, which was set up under the auspices of Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife to protect the species under specific policy conditions. For oribi to be found for introduction to Gowrie, the Oribi Working Group would have to identify a sub

population of the antelope that is at risk, then arrange capture and relocation to an assessed and approved destination. It is hoped that Gowrie will qualify as one of these, as the area lies within proven oribi habitat (the Bill Barnes Oribi and Crane Sanctuary lies next door to Gowrie and supports a healthy oribi population).

Dave believes that the area could sustain about two family groups, with about eleven to fifteen animals in total. 'If there is a positive assessment by the Oribi Working Group, and we are able to introduce oribi to Gowrie, we could even take steps such as removing the bottom strands of the internal fencing so that the oribi have access to the rye grass and kikuyu pastures on the rest of the farm, as well as the golf course, all of which would provide good food sources, especially during the harder winter months.'

There are some species of game that Dave believes would not be suitable for Gowrie. 'The reality of Gowrie is that it is a residential estate, not a game reserve, and the game that we introduce must be species compatible with the prevailing conditions,' he says. Accordingly, he has rejected the idea of introducing blesbuck as they tend to overgraze selectively. And eland, despite being native to the area, are also unsuitable as they are great jumpers, able to clear fences of over two metres, and range widely over extensive areas for their needs. However, two other species with requirements that are at least partly met by the available resources on Gowrie, are mountain reedbuck and grey rhebuck, and the possible introduction of these two species, which are also native to the area, will be considered with the authorities in due course.



ABOVE: The endangered oribi antelope

PHOTO: ROGER DE LA HARPE

Winter wonderland

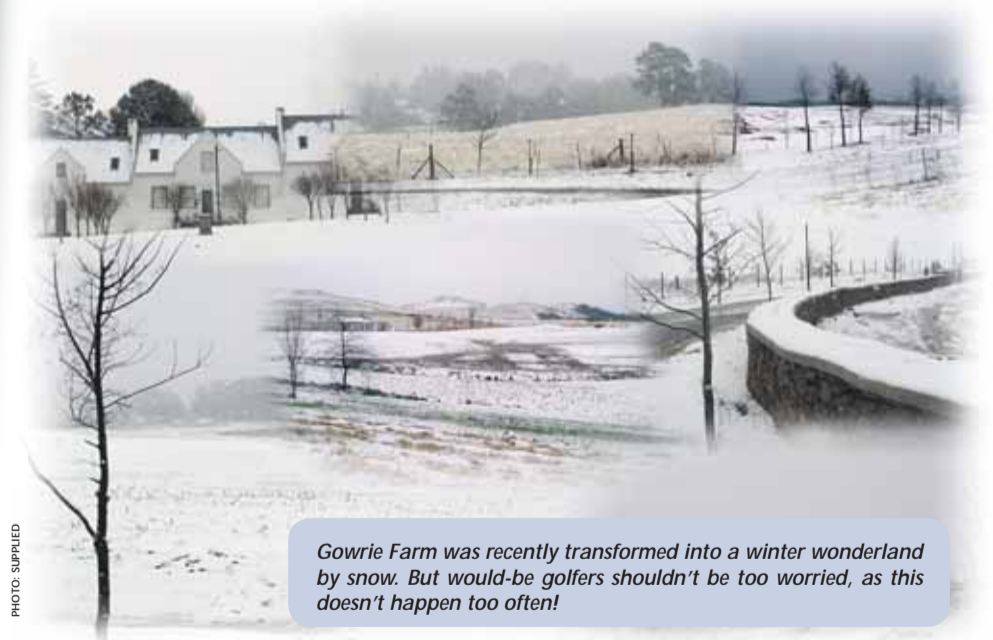


PHOTO: SUPPLIED

Gowrie Farm was recently transformed into a winter wonderland by snow. But would-be golfers shouldn't be too worried, as this doesn't happen too often!

Agents for Gowrie Farm

Peter Greene and Rob Dickson of Meander Real Estates are the Midlands agents for Gowrie and Gowrie Farm. Their main sales office is located inside The Junction, adjacent to Gowrie. They can be contacted for sales queries and brochures, and are also the best people to ask about site placements, the Gowrie architectural code etc.

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Mike Whiting of Winchester Marketing is marketing Gowrie Farm in Johannesburg. He can be reached on 011 327-7620.

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