

April 2014

## miniSASS Nunu of the month

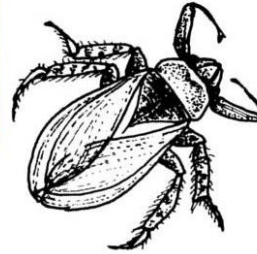
Vol. 1 Issue 1

### True Bugs!!!

Kingdom: *Animalia*

Phylum: *Arthropoda*

Order: *Hemiptera*



### Interesting fact: True Bugs

All bugs have piercing mouthparts. Some use these mouth parts to pierce and suck the juices out of their prey. The water scorpions use their tails as a snorkel whilst the pond skaters and ripple bugs can actually walk on water!

Some families are predators and are carnivorous and other families eat plants in the water. Each family is structurally suited for life in the water, the water boatman and backswimmers have powerful legs for swimming. Breathing mechanisms differ between those that stay on top of the water, which would be similar to those land macroinvertebrates, and those of the families that live below the water, which may occasionally need to come up to access more air.

### What is miniSASS

miniSASS can be used to monitor the health of a river and measure the general quality of the water in that river. It uses the composition of macroinvertebrates (small animals) living in rivers and is based on the sensitivity of the various animals to water quality. (**Note:** miniSASS does NOT measure the contamination of the water by bacteria and viruses and thus does not determine if the river water is fit to drink).



## International Day of Action for Rivers

The 14<sup>th</sup> of March marked the International day of Action for Rivers and our partners from the Duzi Umngeni Conservation Trust (DUCT) hosted an action day for rivers. This event involved Alexandra High School, Epworth High School, WESSA Eco-Schools and GroundTruth, collaborating for the rehabilitation of the Foxhill Spruit.

The group focused on miniSASS, assessing impacts, removal of alien weeds and solid waste removal.

To learn more about the international rivers day of action for rivers visit [www.internationalrivers.org](http://www.internationalrivers.org), remember that Rivers are in **Crisis Take Action Now!!!**

### Get a full miniSASS KIT from GroundTruth

GroundTruth supply miniSASS field equipment as individual items or as a kit. The following items can be supplied:

- miniSASS net - A cost effective but robust version of the SASS5 net developed and tested by GroundTruth.
- miniSASS tray
- loupe/magnifying glass
- tweezers and pipette
- assortment of sample bottles

Get more information on:

[www.groundtruth.co.za](http://www.groundtruth.co.za)



### [www.minisass.org](http://www.minisass.org)



- Download field sheets
- Find out more about your river
- Find projects that involve miniSASS
- Get the latest news on river walks etc.
- Upload miniSASS observations
- See who else is monitoring rivers and where



## A Successful miniSASS Day with Deputy Minister Miss Rejoice Mabudafhasi



South Africa's National Water Week was on the 17th - 23rd of March 2014 and as part of the nationwide celebrations of South Africa's water the Deputy Minister of Environmental Affairs, Miss Rejoice Mabudafhasi went to Tshikali River for a the launch of the Adopt a River Campaign. This event involved the Department of Water affairs, Water Research Commission, GroundTruth Water, Wetlands and Environmental Engineering, Department of Science and Technology and WESSA's Eco-schools. Most importantly was the participation of the Matsila Primary and the community members that were present and were great to work with.

It was with great enthusiasm and amazement that the ladies of Matsila village participated in conducting the MiniSASS on the Tshikali River. They saw little creatures they didn't think existed in the river and gained a greater respect for the story the river told. "We are important scientists for today" was the remark of one of the ladies. Although the ladies were not sure about uploading information on the website, they felt confident enough to conduct a miniSASS on their own again and would seek assistance to upload information in the future. It was a lovely morning of learning and laughter for all involved.



A special thanks to Fatima Cachalia (Limpopo Eco-Schools Provincial manager) from WESSA Eco-schools who facilitated the miniSASS testing. The results are already up on the miniSASS website [www.minisass.org](http://www.minisass.org). We look forward to more initiatives like this one uploaded on the miniSASS database and website.

## Provincial River Day Successfully Launched

On the 7th of March a group of **Groen Sebenza** Pioneers from seven different environmental organisations in KwaZulu-Natal, got together to launch a Provincial River Health Day at uMngeni Valley Nature Reserve.

The day's main purpose, as laid out by the event organisers "GroundTruth" in partnership with Wildlands Conservation Trust and Wildlife Environment Society of South Africa (WESSA), was for all participants to re-connect with our natural resources, i.e. water, through a miniSASS workshop. This was also a way for the organisations to highlight the importance of water as we approached National Water Week commemorated from the 17 - 23 March 2014 under the theme "Water is Life - 20 years of Water Delivery for Social and Economic Development."

It was a great success and we thank everyone who participated!

## *Contact us*

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