

Bush pigs on Brackenridge Estate

We had an opportunity to chat to Henk Nieuwoudt, who heads up Cape Nature for our region, and find out more about the habits of bushpigs and the role that they play in our ecosystem:

Occurrence and habits of bush pigs

Henk emphasized that the wild pigs, also known as bush pigs, are a part of our ecosystem and have been for a number of years now. Bush pigs are mostly nocturnal animals and generally shy. They

- play an important role in maintaining the balance of the ecosystem,
- are migratory and will remain on the estate until such time as there is insufficient feed at which time they will move to areas where food is more readily available,
- the fence around our estate does not stop them from migrating in and out.

How to keep bush pigs away from your garden

Bush pigs are omnivores and, as most wild animals who come into contact with humans, will become opportunistic – the easier you make it for them to find food in your garden and on your property, the more likely they are to search for it there.

Here are a number of things you can do to keep them away:

- Secure your garden with a fence – although not a solution everyone would like to use, it is the easiest way to keep them out and likely the cheapest in the long-term. Make sure to dig the fence in about half a meter to a meter.
- If you have pets, feed them inside and do not have any food bowls outside during the evening.
- Bird seed can attract them to your garden, if you are feeding the birds try to use feeders that prevent seed falling to the ground.
- Do not plant things that they like such as plants with bulbs and thick tubers, strawberries or things that produce edible fruit that falls to the ground once overripe.
- They do not like citrus peels, so you could place those around the perimeter of your garden.
- Plant things like mint, lavender and garlic around the garden as they do not like those scents.
- Cover your lawn with an ammonia rich fertilizer.
- Remove the plants that are attracting them to your garden.
- If you are experiencing the wild pigs knocking over your bins foraging for food, if at all possible don't leave your bins easily accessible, don't place your bins out on a Sunday night ready for the Monday morning pickup.

Managing the bush pigs on Brackenridge Estate

It is the intention of the trustees to initiate a fauna count during the course of 2025 to determine exactly what animals we have on the estate. This survey will give us a good indication of what wild life, including wild pigs, we have on our estate.

We will not relocate the wild pig herd in their entirety as they have been coexisting on the estate for a good number of years now. However, an option might be to relocate some of the pigs.

In this instance we would only separate the piglets from the mother once they have been weaned off her. In our discussions with Henk, he believed this would be in another two to three months.

The decision to relocate any of the wild pigs would only be done once the Estate has had the approval of Cape Nature and the relocation process would be overseen by Cape Nature.

Kellyn Whitehead, ECO / Chris Meister, Chairperson EMC / Adrian Smith, Trustee

12 March 2025