

Limpopo-Mpumalanga mop up following floods

South Africa again showed why it is a land of extremes when parts of Limpopo and the Mpumalanga Lowveld flooded in January. The flooding followed unusually heavy rains caused by Tropical Cyclone Dando off the Mozambican coast. The town of Hoedspruit, for example, recorded as much as 400 mm of rain in a few days – almost its entire average annual

rainfall. Scenes of raging rivers overtopping bridges and roads as well as dramatic rescue attempts made national news headlines. The Hoedspruit area as well as five municipalities in Ehlanzeni district, in Mpumalanga were declared disaster areas, with damage to road, water and agricultural-related infrastructure estimated at hundreds of millions of Rands. Around

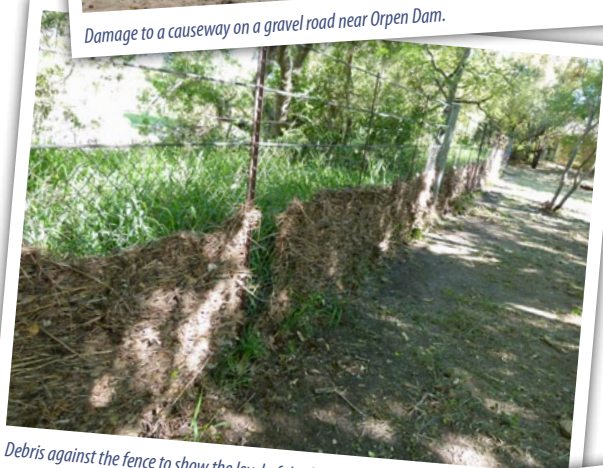
80 people, mostly tourists, had to be evacuated by helicopter from the Kruger National Park (KNP) after camps and roads became inaccessible. Several large rivers, including the Olifants, Crocodile, and Blyde burst their banks, with normally dry streams turning into wild torrents of water. Drinie Janse van Rensburg of the WRC visited the KNP shortly after the floods.



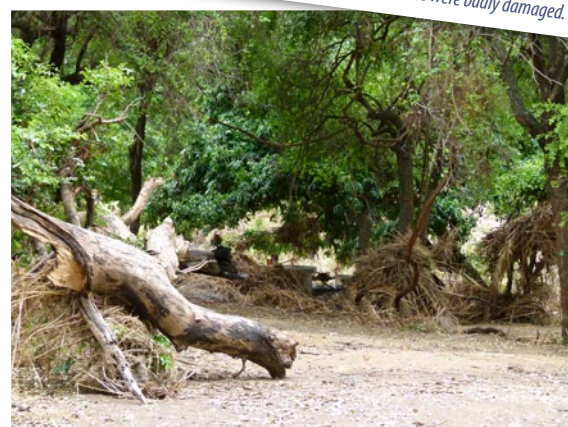
Damage to a causeway on a gravel road near Orpen Dam.



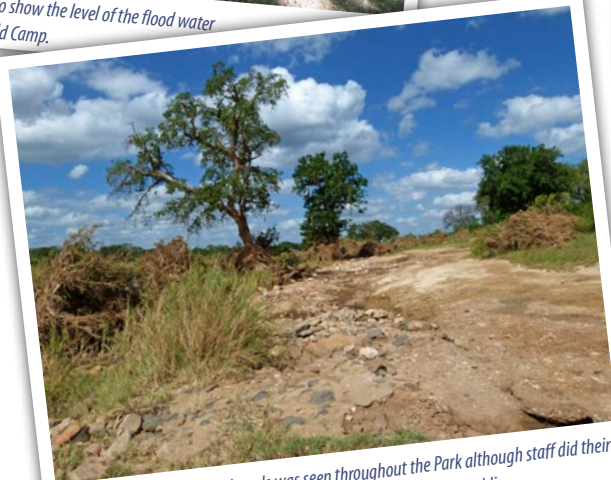
The steel railings of the high water bridge near Lower Sabie were badly damaged.



Debris against the fence to show the level of the flood water through Talamati Bushveld Camp.



Flood water went through the Tshokwane picnic area at a height of more than 2 metres. This popular picnic area will be closed for a few months for repair.



Extensive damage to gravel roads was seen throughout the Park although staff did their utmost best to repair and open roads as soon as possible for the public.



The causeway over the Olifant River at Balule.