



SOME EWT SUCCESS STORIES: FY2016/2017

- The Greater Lakenvlei Protected Environment (GLPE) near Dullstroom was declared in April 2017. This brings the total size of new protected areas, or safe space, we have helped facilitate for South Africa's cranes to more than 93,000 ha over the past four years. The GLPE and surrounding catchment is home to one of Mpumalanga's last remaining Wattled Crane breeding pairs and is also home to South Africa's other two cranes. The declaration represents the culmination of years of tireless work with landowners and our partners to formally protect the natural grasslands and rare peatland within the Greater Lakenvlei area.



- Our carnivore expansion work was directed to Malawi too. Here Cheetahs have been extinct for over 20 years. The EWT safely facilitated the reintroduction of four Cheetahs to Liwonde National Park, representing a conservation milestone, while fostering good relations between the two southern African countries. Considering the vast global decline of Cheetahs through all African countries other than South Africa, the re-establishment of this Cheetah population is an incredibly positive conservation story.

- Riverine Rabbits are incredibly rare. They are about 100 times more threatened than our rhinos, certainly in terms of numbers. They are elusive too. Determined to come up with novel conservation techniques to help with our conservation work, we successfully trained our scent detection dog, Jessie, to indicate on Riverine Rabbit scent. To date, Jessie is able to distinguish Riverine Rabbit scent from other rabbits and hares. While our trials, the signs are good that she will be an important ally in our conservation battle and help us to better map the range of this Critically Endangered species.



Riverine Rabbit

- The EWT's National Biodiversity and Business Network expanded its footprint from Gauteng, presenting its first regional Biodiversity and Business Indabas in Durban and Cape Town.
- Most of South Africa's vulture species are considered Critically Endangered. Their conservation status is a major concern to the EWT. In response to the ever-increasing vulture poisoning incidents throughout southern Africa, we have conducted poisoning intervention training to 335 participants since July 2016, bringing the total number trained to 1,063, reaching six different countries since its inception, including Mozambique, Kenya, Namibia, Lesotho and Zambia. This work has been fundamental in combatting the threat of wildlife poisoning, as it facilitates a coordinated, quicker and more effective response to incidents, with more efficient clean ups of poisoning sites, directly reducing further poisoning of wildlife.
- The Minister of Environmental Affairs gazetted the Biodiversity Management Plan for Species (BMP-S) for Pickersgill's Reed Frog, for which we were a lead author, in June 2017. This is the first such plan for a threatened frog species in South Africa, a real feather in our cap, and provides a legislated means of tracking implementation of conservation interventions for this species. Frogs like this are critical to the protection of our wetlands, which serve nature and people alike. The recent Red List assessments for South African frog species saw Pickersgill's Reed Frog being down-listed from Critically Endangered to Endangered – another big step for the species' protection – and something that would not have been achieved without our dedicated conservation work.



Pickersgill's Reed Frog

- We are in the process of developing a structured education, training and capacity-building approach for members of the police and other law enforcement agencies to create an understanding of the legal implications that relates to poaching with dogs. We carried out a targeted awareness campaign in early 2017 at various police stations, schools and communities in northern KwaZulu-Natal and southern Mpumalanga, attended by over 1,200 people.

- Grasslands are one of South Africa's most poorly protected habitats. To help address this shortfall, the EWT's Gauteng Biodiversity Stewardship Programme has prioritised six potential stewardship sites this year, totalling 12,083 ha, of which 7,700 ha are untransformed. One of these sites has already agreed to become the first Private Nature Reserve, proclaimed under Biodiversity Stewardship, in Gauteng.
- Through our *Wildlife and Power Line Interaction Training Project*, we raised environmental awareness amongst Eskom staff and sensitised the participants to the various interactions between Eskom infrastructure and wildlife. Over the last year, we completed an additional 86 training sessions, attended by 1,455 Eskom employees and 18 Eskom contractors. This brings the number of trainees to approximately 10,000 since 2010.
- The EWT hosted 25 conservation interns through the past year, six of whom have accepted positions within the EWT, five of whom have accepted positions outside the EWT, two of whom chose to return to full-time studies, and 12 of whom remain with the EWT on internship contracts.
- The facilitation of student contracts within the EWT's programmes has been and remains beneficial for both the students and the EWT alike – we hosted 16 students during this reporting period.
- We have been applying innovative approaches to tackling illegal wildlife trade by conducting research to discover whether African Giant Pouched Rats can detect pangolin and timber specimens, through scent detection training. Our rats are undergoing the initial stages of their training right now, to detect these two contraband wildlife specimens.



Feeding of a African Giant Pouch Rat