



Nuusbrief / Newsletter

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Rondloperhonde: kommunale landbougrond

Vir die afgelope 15 jaar, bestuur Niel Viljoen, predasiespesialis, 27 monitorplase landswyd, waar aanpasbare predasiebestuurstrategieë getoets en demonstreeer word.

Volgens Niël Viljoen se verslag word die probleem van rondloperhonde heeltemal onderskat en het dringend ingryping nodig. Tisha Steyn het haar waarnemings uit die verslag in 'n artikel vir Pro Agri uiteengesit. Lees die volledige artikel op die PMSA-webtuiste – [kliek hier](#)



NEM: BA Bill

The publication of the draft National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Bill for public comment has been announced by the Minister of Forestry, Fisheries, and the Environment. The public is invited to submit written representations to the Biodiversity Bill within 60 days from date of publication.

The Biodiversity Bill will enable:

- more effective implementation of the provisions and achievement of the objectives of NEM: BA due to a revised regulatory approach;
- greater protection of species and ecosystems through additional provisions relating to:

- o the listing of species and ecosystems;
- o implementation of international agreements; and
- o restriction of wildlife trafficking;
- more flexible management of species and ecosystems;
- more effective achievement of economic benefits in the biodiversity sector, and beneficiation from indigenous biological resources involved in bioprospecting; and
- transformation of the biodiversity sector.

Find the necessary documents on the website of the Department of Forestry, Fisheries, and the Environment: www.dffe.gov.za or click on the link below:

[Publication of the draft National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Bill for public comment | Department of Environmental Affairs \(dffe.gov.za\)](#)



From the desk of predation management centre



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Dr Beanelri Janecke, University of the Free State, wrote an interesting article, unveiling the black-backed jackal as secret gardeners in shaping ecosystems.

How do seeds travel and find new places to grow in the wild? Animals play a vital role in this process and one way of seed dispersal is through endozoochory. This is a fascinating natural process where seeds are dispersed through the digestive tracts of animals. When animals eat fruits or seeds, those seeds can survive the journey through the digestive tract and be deposited in new locations when the animal defecates. This helps plants spread their seeds far and wide, increasing their chances of finding suitable growing conditions and colonising new areas. Birds and big mammals like elephant and rhino often steal the spotlight. However, a recent study by Bianca Favaretto, Craig Tambling, and Graham Kerley from Nelson Mandela University has highlighted the surprising contributions of smaller players, like the black-backed jackal, in shaping our natural world.

Animals like coyotes (American jackals) and red foxes are crucial to spreading seeds far and wide. These omnivores eat fruits along with other snacks, inadvertently becoming seed carriers. But what about the black-backed jackal, the scavenger and hunter prowling large areas of southern Africa? Until recently, its role in this green game has been a mystery.

At the Samara Karoo Reserve (SKR) in the eastern Karoo, researchers embarked on a scatological adventure to uncover the secrets of jackal dining habits. They found a lot of seeds in a good chunk of jackal faeces samples (called scats).

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Apparently, these crafty canines do not eat only meat; they also eat fruits and seeds. This is why one of the trees in Limpopo has the common name of "Jackalberry".

Also interesting, is how the types of seeds varied with the seasons in the SKR. According to the researchers: "Winter scat samples were dominated by Bluebush (also called Star Apple) (51%) and Crossberry (*Kruisbessie* or *Assegaaibos*) (47%), whereas Sweet thorn (90%) dominated in spring and Jacket plum (Indaba tree or *Doppruim*)(99%) in the autumn months". Like humans who have favourite foods for different times of the year, so jackals seem to have a taste for specific seeds, depending on what is ripe or available on the plants. When the trees and bushes are bursting with fruits, jackals eat them, spreading seeds as they go. Depending on the maturity of the jackal, they may move up to 11,8 km per day, allowing for seeds to be spread a great distance from the parent plant.

In the world of seed dispersal, timing is everything, and the duration of an animal's gut passage can make all the difference. Different animal species have varying gut passage times, which can affect the viability and germination of ingested seeds significantly.

Carnivores and omnivores, known for their meaty diets, have speedy gut passage rates. This rapid turnover of the jackal's gut environment might be a challenge for any seed looking to sprout. Jackals process their food relatively fast, with everything passing through their digestive system within two days after ingestion. This may vary though, and the laxative effect of fruit can in fact reduce the gut passage time.

In contrast, herbivores like elephants (21 to 46 hours), blue wildebeests (45 to 75 hours), and white rhinos (\pm 47 hours) take their time digesting. Their gut retention times can stretch from a day to several days, providing a more hospitable environment for seeds to endure and potentially germinate after defecation.



But it is not only about eating. Where and how jackals defecate matters too. They often leave their droppings on high spots like rocks, small shrubs, or tufts of grass. This quirky behaviour might help seeds find the perfect place to sprout, since rain can wash scats from rocks onto soil, where shade and protection is provided for them to grow.

There is still a lot we do not know. How exactly does the journey through a jackal's stomach affect a seed's chances of sprouting? And what happens to those seeds once they are dropped off? It is all part of the mystery waiting to be solved.

But one thing is certain: jackals are doing more than just cleaning up leftovers, preying on livestock, or causing farmers headaches. They are playing a crucial role in keeping our ecosystems healthy and vibrant. This may be a case of the villain becoming the hero, albeit for a short time, in this story of life where they are sowing the seeds of tomorrow's savannas.

Reference:

Favaretto, B.S., Tambling, C.J. & Kerley, G.I.H. 2024. The black-backed jackal as a seed disperser. *Journal of Arid Environments* 220. Available online at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/377879217> **The black-backed jackal as a seed disperser**



A jackal sniffs fruit of the nara melon in the Namib desert to check for ripeness. They are now regarded as seed dispersers of this important fruit. Cattle and donkeys crush the seeds when eating the fruit. But jackal scats have whole seed in them (200 seeds in eight scats) according to a study by Saima Shikesho from the University of Cape Town. <https://www.rfi.fr/en/africa/20240303-how-jackals-taste-for-melons-helps-fruit-flourish-in-namibian-desert>





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