



PLAASLIKE NUUS | LOCAL NEWS

Niel Viljoen marks the end of his chapter in predation management

Predation Management South Africa (PMSA) would like to sincerely thank Niel Viljoen, predation management specialist, for his 17 years of dedication in leading the monitoring farm project across the country.

The organisation is deeply grateful for Niel's expertise and the way he exhibited integrity while representing the NWGA, RPO, Mohair SA, and WRSA. He has also made a significant contribution in guiding farmers on the toolbox of management methods that can be applied to effectively implement predation control measures.

After more than twenty years of committed involvement, he has brought this phase of his professional journey to a close. While not retiring, he will no longer be available to provide training to farmers in predation management, as he has decided to focus on his farming operations for the foreseeable future. PMSA will continue to provide predation management training to the industry.



Sustainable predation management solutions

John Hurter, WRSA affiliate-member, represented PMSA at the Farming and Conservation Workshop – Finding Sustainable Solutions, held at Shamwari Private Game Reserve, recently. The workshop was held in cooperation with Vulpro, Shamwari, Agri East Cape and PMSA.

Through his presentation, he elaborated on the functioning of PMSA.

- Statutory members of PMSA – Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFPE), SANparks, and the Livestock Welfare Coordinating Committee (LWCC).
- PMSA represents the landholder members.
- Associate members – Conservancies Management Unit and SA Hunters and Game Conservation Association (SAHGCA).
- Structure of PMSA – Non-profit company (NPC).
- Annual losses exceeding R3,2 billion because of predation or damage-causing animals (DCAs).
- PMSA is collaborating with stakeholders to manage predation without compromising food and job security.
- Three focus areas:
 - Strategic intervention.
 - Research and development.
 - Effective training – provided to members free of charge.
- 27 monitor farms country-wide on best practice.
- Cost of predation management increased dramatically over the last five years.
- Use of poison:
 - Risk on non-target species too high.
 - Use of poison and SSS is increasing – anecdotal evidence.
 - Permitting is a challenge.



Managing the Wild: Predators, prey, and progress at SAWMA 2025

By Dr Beanelri Janecke

The South African Wildlife Management Association (SAWMA) held its annual conference from 31 August to 5 September 2025 near Port Alfred in the Eastern Cape. The event brought together wildlife researchers and managers from across the country to share their latest research and tackle key challenges in wildlife conservation and management.



A significant portion of the conference focussed on predators (lion, leopard, brown and spotted hyena, wild dog, and cheetah) and ongoing efforts were highlighted to monitor their movements, identify predation hotspots, and explore more effective management strategies. An update was also provided on the **Guidelines for Leopard Translocation in South Africa**. While still under development, these guidelines aim to provide a standardised approach to relocating leopards and will be shared with the PMSA for additional input and publicly once finalised.

One of the innovative tools on display was the **Foxlight Predator Deterrent**. This device uses battery or solar power to emit randomised flashes of different coloured lights, mimicking human activity, to deter predators during nighttime hours. According to the manufacturer, it can be installed on a three-sided steel post, or hung on a wire fence or overhanging tree branch. Other showcased technologies included reflective ear tags and sensor-based tags that monitor physiological parameters of livestock (i.e. heart rate and temperature), particularly under stress – providing early warning signs of potential predator activity.

Among the presentations was a talk by Dr Beanelri Janecke from the Predation Management Centre (PMC) at the University of the Free State, titled: "Modern technological approaches to predation management on livestock farms." This talk sparked lively discussion throughout the conference, particularly during breaks where attendees debated practical applications and shared insights.

A challenging question raised during the session was: **How can predation be effectively managed on game ranches?** While livestock farms can implement a range of deterrents, these solutions often don't translate well to game ranches.

Predators are known to significantly impact populations of wild prey species – from springbok and wildebeest to larger game like buffalo, eland, and sable antelope. Some reserves use the concept of 'buffer prey' – maintaining high numbers of fast-reproducing species to reduce pressure on more valuable or vulnerable wildlife – but long-term effectiveness remains uncertain.

The complexity of managing free-ranging predators in large, open ecosystems continues to present a major challenge. Dr Janecke welcomes further input and ideas on this issue. For those with relevant experience or innovative solutions to answer this question, she can be contacted at janeckbb@ufs.ac.za

Predation training for communal farmers

The National Wool Growers' Association (NWGA) continues to strengthen its support for communal farmers through specialised training. Ntabathema farmers recently attended a predation management course, presented by NWGA production advisor Sibusiso Ndwanya.

The NWGA further demonstrated its commitment to practical, farmer-focussed solutions, with Asandile Rasmeni and Willem Goosen demonstrating the correct use of control methods.

The session had 43 participants, among them NWGA national vice-chairman, Zolani Tshoko, alongside key industry partners, including Mr Moshoeshoe (Zoetis), Miss Salmani (OVK), and Ms Ntoni (Department of Rural Development and Agrarian Reform).

This initiative builds on the NWGA's national programme, where all communal production advisors completed an AgriSETA-accredited course under the mentorship of predation specialist, Niel Viljoen. This positions the NWGA at the forefront of empowering farmers with the skills and tools needed to reduce livestock losses and improve sustainability in communal areas.



TLU SA welcomes cooperation in the major illegal hunting investigation in Ermelo

TLU SA can confirm that a major investigation into illegal hunting with dogs on 21 September 2025 was successfully carried out in collaboration with local farmers, the Ermelo South African Police Service (SAPS), the SAPS Stock Theft Unit, and the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA).

The investigation led to the arrest of 24 suspects, who are currently in custody at the Ermelo SAPS, as well as the seizure of 50 dogs. Eight of these dogs have been taken into care by the SPCA, while the remaining forty-two were returned to their owners on the condition that the dogs remain in their possession until the case is concluded. Several vehicles used in the illegal hunt, including two minibus rentals, two dog trailers, and one light delivery vehicle, were also seized.

"This successful investigation is a clear example of how cooperation between farmers, law enforcement, and animal protection organisations can make a significant difference," said Ronnie Schilling, TLU SA's Eastern Region manager. "All parties were fully aware of the requirements and laws governing hunting with dogs, and there were workable structures and procedures in place that enabled the investigation to proceed smoothly. It is an important reminder to farmers and hunters that operating within the law is not only a requirement, but also ensures the protection of everyone's interests."

TLU SA wishes to emphasise that this case is the second major investigation of its kind within just a few weeks. The organisation calls on local communities to act responsibly and ensure that all hunting activities take place within the framework of the law. Structures, procedures, and a thorough knowledge of rules and regulations are not optional – they are essential.

"We see this outcome as proof that when all involved parties cooperate and respect the rules, great success can be achieved. It is also a call to farmers to always ensure that their structures and knowledge of the law are up to date before engaging in any hunting activities," concluded Schilling. – *Press release, TLU SA*

INTERNASIONALE NUUS | INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Victorian farmers search for answers as losses mount from dingo attacks

The Victorian government says it cannot confirm how many sheep and lambs have been killed by wild dogs in the state's north-west since lethal dingo control was banned last year.

The government prohibited lethal control of dingoes on private and public land in the region surrounding the Big Desert Wilderness Park in March 2024, saying the population of the native dog was critically low and needed to be protected.

[Read more](#)



The \$56 000 payoff from better predator control

No stone was left unturned during a recent Producer Demonstration Site (PDS) in north-east Victoria, where producers turned their attention to improved predator management to improve lamb survival. 'Less predators, more lambs' PDS coordinator, Dr Matt Mahoney from Agridome Consultancy, said varied land ownership meant that predator management made it a challenge to coordinate between neighbours.

[Read more](#)

