



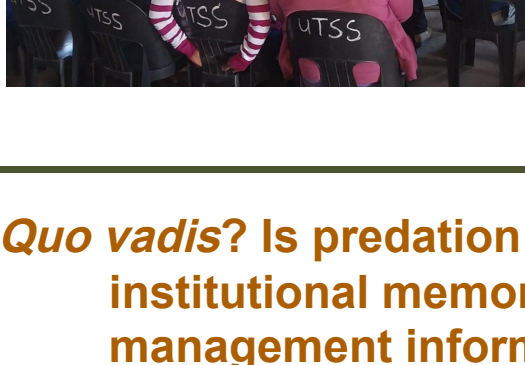
## PLAASLIKE NUUS | LOCAL NEWS

### Predation training in communal areas

Farmers at the Upper Thokwana shearing shed in Mount Fletcher benefited from a one-day predation course conducted by the National Wool Growers' Association (NWGA). Production advisors Lusanda Nteta, Luvuyo Nyamela, and Willem Goosen equipped approximately 35 communal farmers with practical knowledge on identifying different predators by examining their killing patterns.



Given that the Mount Fletcher district is traditionally targeted by jackals during the lambing season, the advisors also demonstrated the correct setting of foothold devices. This training will help communal farmers reduce losses and improve the overall productivity of their flocks.



### Quo vadis? Is predation management informed by institutional memory and an operational management information system (MIS)?

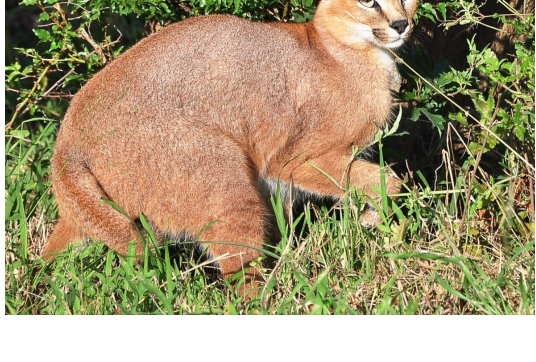
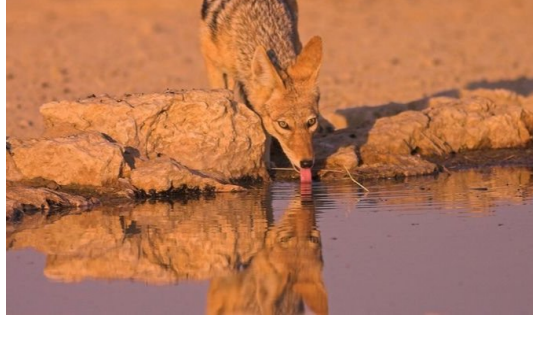
By HO de Waal

South Africa has a long history of predation. There should be no illusion about this daily reality, echoed by calls for help from livestock farmers, wildlife ranchers and producer organisations, namely the NWGA, RPO (Red Meat Producers Organisation), SAMGA (South African Mohair Growers' Association), and WRSA (Wildlife Ranching South Africa).

The African Large Predator Research Unit (Alpru) was founded in 2002 at the University of the Free State (UFS). Initially, the focus was on the largest predator – the African lion (*Panthera leo*) – but in line with the acronym name Alpru, the scope of activities was broadened to include other African predators.

Through active networking with livestock farmers and wildlife ranchers, Alpru was soon alerted to the negative impact of predation, implicating the black-backed jackal (*Lupulella mesomelas*) and the caracal (*Caracal caracal*) for most predation losses. In 2004, Alpru launched the Canis-Caracal Project (CCP) with a specific focus on the two meso-predators, following a three-pronged approach, namely:

1. Collate and interpret all available data and information on the two predator species.
2. Initiate, support and conduct scientific studies on the ecology of the two predator species and their food base.
3. Formulate new or update existing scientific management strategies to regulate the two predator species and relate them to provincial and national policies.



Activities of the CCP included:

1. Restoring institutional memory on predation management by interacting with specialist predation managers, livestock farmers and wildlife ranchers to retrieve historic information located in various repositories, or simply overlooked, or forgotten at sites.
2. Interacting with international conservation authorities to learn and be informed of predation management policies and activities.
3. Initiating research to investigate and broaden the knowledge on predation management.
4. Liaising with provincial and national conservation authorities and politicians to find practical solutions to mitigate the negative impact of predation on livestock farms and wildlife ranches.

Institutional memory was reconstructed and by promoting a system of coordinated predation management. Alpru and the CCP were instrumental in the founding of the Livestock and Wildlife Working Group on Damage Causing Animals in July 2009, comprising the NWGA, RPO, SAMGA, and WRSA. This created a united liaison platform to find practical solutions to mitigate the negative impact of predation. The group revisited their founding goals and, in April 2010, renamed itself the Predation Management Forum (PMF).

In a review of historical information on predation, dating to June 1656 (De Waal, HO. *Predation management in South Africa – historical milestones*, Alpru – Occasional Paper, July 2025, Version 9.1.), the following is important: "Over decades, strategies to mitigate predation losses have been developed, but few were implemented, primarily because of financial restrictions. Moreover, initiatives came and went in a way best characterised as an 'ebb and flow' progression. Despite major advances over decades, important primary challenges remain, and predation management in South Africa is still fragmented and uncoordinated."

[Click here for the full presentation on predation management in South Africa, which provides a broad perspective on recent advances to answer the big question: Quo vadis? \(Where to?\)](#)

### Paws, claws, and Christmas cheer

By Dr Beanelri Janecke

As we approach the end of 2025, I'd like to take a moment to reflect on the diverse topics we've explored together from the desk of the Predation Management Centre in this year's PMSA newsletters.

From the environmental impact of solar energy (February) and the unexpected role of warthogs as allies to predators (March), to how flooding influences predator behaviour and management (May) and a young inventor lighting the way to protect lions and livestock (June) – it's been quite a thought-provoking journey.

We also looked at how collaboration can help reduce conflict in "Joining hands to tackle predation" at the first PMSA workshop (August), explored the balance between "Predators, prey, and progress" at the SAWMA conference (September), examined "Fencing in livestock, fencing out conflict?" (October), and ended the year by discovering how artificial scents are protecting wildlife and livelihoods (November).

Looking ahead to 2026, I'd love to hear from you. If there are particular topics or issues you would like me to explore in future newsletters, please don't hesitate to contact me at [janekcbb@ufs.ac.za](mailto:janekcbb@ufs.ac.za). Your ideas and suggestions are always welcome.

As head of the Predation Management Centre at the University of the Free State, it is my honour to wish you and your loved ones a merry, peaceful Christmas and a wonderful, blessed New Year. Here's to exploring interesting new topics together in 2026!

## INTERNASIONALE NUUS | INTERNATIONAL NEWS

### Rural Greece struggles to cope with predator comeback

Some farmers and residents of rural areas in Greece say they now fear for their livelihoods and, in some cases, their safety.

It was a shocking sight for the farmer — three of his sheep lying dead on the ground, signs of their mauling unmistakable. The large paw prints in the earth left no doubt they had been killed by a bear, a once rare but now increasingly frequent visitor in this part of northwestern Greece.

[Read more.](#)



### Radical 20-year plan to take back Aussie outback from predators: 'Takes guts'

The incredible plan involves changing the behaviour of prey species so they can avoid being eaten by cats and foxes. Unfortunately, not all of them survive.

Researchers are working on a radical new plan to take back the outback from Australia's most pervasive predators. The aim is to breed 'smart' generations of native marsupials that can evade attacks from foxes and cats.

They've focused their attention on western quolls, bilbies and golden bandicoots, all of which were likely driven to extinction a century ago in NSW.

While some scientists are working to genetically engineer 'super species' to repel threats like fungus and cane toads, the team is instead working to alter behaviour.

[Read more.](#)



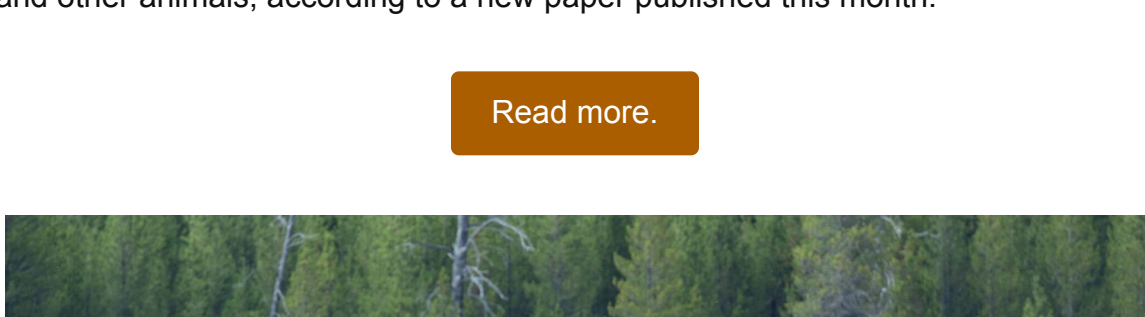
### Reintroduced carnivores' impacts on ecosystems are still coming into focus

Yellowstone has long been a mecca for scientists studying how predators affect everything from elk grazing to vegetation height. They are still debating how to make sense of what they've learned. When the US Fish and Wildlife Service reintroduced 14 gray wolves to Yellowstone National Park in 1995, the animals were, in some ways, stepping into a new world.

After humans hunted wolves to near-extinction across the Western U.S. in the early 20th century, the carnivore's absence likely altered ecosystems and food webs across the Rocky Mountains. Once wolves were reintroduced to the landscape, scientists hoped to learn if, and how quickly, these changes could be reversed.

Despite studies claiming to show early evidence of a tantalising relationship between wolves and regenerating riparian ecosystems since the canines returned to Yellowstone, scientists are still debating how large carnivores impact vegetation and other animals, according to a new paper published this month.

[Read more.](#)



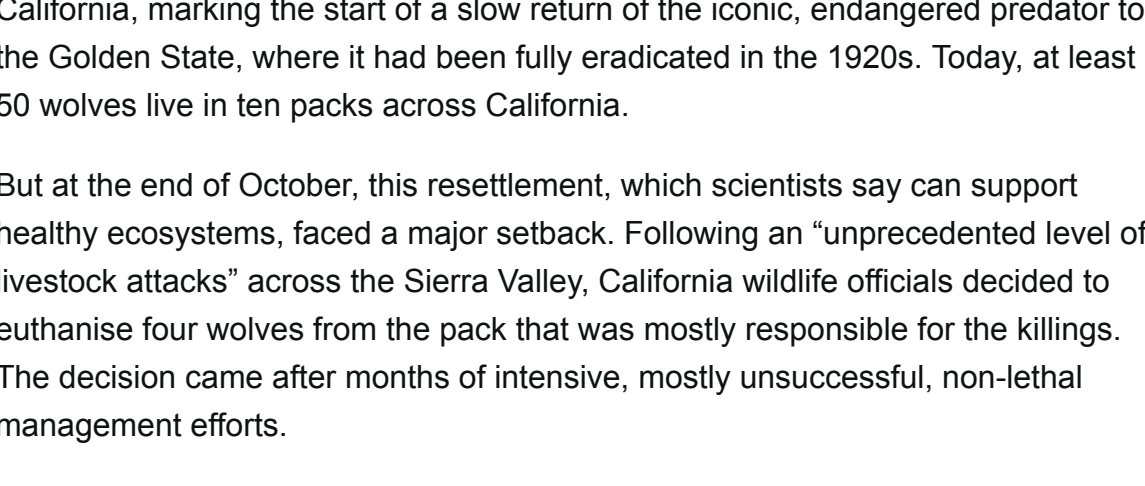
### Amid national wolf debate, California kills four of the predators after 'unprecedented' livestock attacks

Around 14 years ago, a lone grey wolf crossed the border from Oregon into California, marking the start of a slow return of the iconic, endangered predator to the Golden State, where it had been fully eradicated in the 1920s. Today, at least 50 wolves live in ten packs across California.

But at the end of October, this resettlement, which scientists say can support healthy ecosystems, faced a major setback. Following an "unprecedented level of livestock attacks" across the Sierra Valley, California wildlife officials decided to euthanise four wolves from the pack that was mostly responsible for the killings.

The decision came after months of intensive, mostly unsuccessful, non-lethal management efforts.

[Read more.](#)



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