Predation Management South Africa

September 2026 newsletter

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PMSA ANNUAL REPORT 2025/26

How has Predation Management South Africa (PMSA) progressed in its training, research, and collaboration efforts, as well as communication? See the infographic for more information.



Cape Nature identifies the need for predation management training

Cape Nature approached independent predation management trainer Jaco van Deventer to conduct training for communal producers in the Riebpoort area of the Kwenyskate Nature Reserve. Jannie Fourie, production advisor at the National Wool Growers Association (NWGA), accompanied Jaco to assist him in assessing his knowledge and skills to offer services to the community.

The Riebpoort community is experiencing small-stock losses from caracal and black-backed jackal, stray dogs, and stock theft. The community requested training in how to trap and deal with these predators. The practical setting of trap cages was not presented, as the community requested a detailed follow-up training session in this regard.

Many participants requested follow-up training and caracal trap cages in all regions where the training was presented. Jannie Fourie is sourcing funding to build trap cages to control caracals and stray dogs.

Predasiebestuursopleiding in Brandfort en Trompsburg

Johannes Pienaar, PMSA-gekontrakteerde predasie-opleier, het meer as 20 produsente en plaasarbeiders by Brandfort en Trompsburg ingelig. Die Brandfort-sessie het 'n goeie besprekings behels oor kuddebestuur wat in plek moet wees voordat predasiebestuur begingas kan word.

Die voorsitter van die Predasiebestuursforum (PMF) in die Vrystaat, Anton Marx, was deel van die groep produsente wat die opleiding bygewoon het. Hy was baie tevrede met Pienaar as kundigheid en ondervinding.

Aangesien talle ander skaduveroorsaakende ongediertes soos bosvarke, vlakvarke en otters in die Trompsburg-gebied voorkom, het die besprekings en opleiding ook op spore, vanggetrou en dagsorge gefokus. Hierdie soort inligting is belangrik vir die regte besluitneming ten opsigte van predasiebestuur

Phasing out lead ammunition in Southern Africa

The report, *A Regional Strategy and Transition Roadmap (2026–2035)* has been circulated for review and inputs.

The report covers the eight vulture species found across the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region. These birds are among the most ecologically important and conservation-pressured birds on the African continent. Their population trajectories are declining across all species and all countries. Driven by preventable poisoning events, this decline represents one of the most rapid biodiversity collapses over the past two decades in Southern Africa. Lead ammunition is not the only cause of that failure, but it is a primary cause; it is also the most addressable, with proven intervention within a defined timeframe.



The report has established the normative framework. The science is settled. The international precedents are documented. The alternatives exist. This report has assembled the evidence, diagnosed the barriers, mapped the actors, and designed the roadmap.

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Mobi-kraal: A tool to promote farmer-predator co-existence

The Cape Leopard Trust (CLT) has released an open-access blueprint, build guide, video and field-evaluation report for the 'Mobi-kraal' – a portable predator-proof kraal (a livestock enclosure) designed to safeguard livestock against predators.



In many agricultural areas, sharing the space between people and predators presents logistic challenges. When wild prey is unavailable or livestock is accessible, predators may opportunistically hunt livestock, sometimes causing significant economic damage to both subsistence and commercial farmers. Retaliation may follow, but the reduction or removal of predators is not a viable nor sustainable solution. Often, the most vulnerable livestock owners rely on secure fundamentally worsen as their most vulnerable, but for many farmers building a permanent structure is not a practical option.

After lengthy discussions with farmers in leopard conflict areas, the Cape Leopard Trust identified an opportunity to design a mobile, predator-proof kraal that could function effectively across diverse landscapes. This desire to find a workable and flexible solution to protect livestock led to the design, build and testing of 'Mobi-kraal' prototypes, with the ultimate aim of developing and piloting an open-access blueprint for livestock farmers and conservation organisations worldwide to add to their depredation mitigation toolbox.

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Predator research highlights at SAWMA

The Southern African Wildlife Management Association held its annual conference in the first week of September at the Cradle Moon Conservancy, near Johannesburg. Several wildlife-related topics were covered in the 78 presentations delivered. There were a few sessions on predators, and the key takeaway message for some of these are listed below.

Herbivore responses to predators: Lions can influence herbivores through fear, which can be seen and heard, or only through predation. Comparing landscapes with and without lions will help to reveal these wider ecological effects and inform predator reintroductions.

A cost-effective lens on carnivore habitats: Routine carnivore monitoring data can be leveraged to produce habitat models at minimal added expenses. Thousands of geotagged 360° camera images from routine tracking are being used to improve habitat maps and understand carnivore movement and connectivity.

Lions and mesopredators: A mesopredator is a medium-sized predator, preyed upon by larger apex predators. Lions influence the spatial behaviour of smaller predators, which also avoid similarly sized competitors. Responses vary between sites, demonstrating that predator communities are shaped by complex, context-dependent interactions influenced by the simple presence or absence of an apex or top predator.

Vegetation, lions and cheetahs: Cheetahs changed their prey preferences seasonally and used denser habitat for hunting while lions did not, which may be due to differences in morphology and prey selection. Management that creates increasingly open habitats could therefore reduce important hunting opportunities for carnivores.

Free-roaming cheetah census: Large-scale census reveals significant cheetah range contraction and fragmentation in South Africa. Researchers confirmed fewer than 100 mature individuals in each of two separate regions, highlighting the need for connectivity and reliable monitoring.

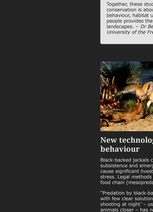
Sympatric jackals in Zimbabwe: Black-backed and side-striped jackals are mainly nocturnal but reduce their temporal overlap (activities during the same time period) during the wet season. Seasonal separation may help these two competitors coexist.

Brown hyenas in Northern Namibia: Brown hyenas show strong adaptability in protected landscapes, with high prey densities, small home ranges, and stable clan territories. Evidence of active predation management is limited, but the results suggest that well-managed protected corridors remain important for dispersal.

African wild dog metapopulations: Managed metapopulation strategies have greatly increased secure spaces for wild dogs and their genetic connectivity across Southern Africa. However, the human conflict remain major challenges requiring integrated, long-term solutions.

Waterberg wild dog diet: DNA metabarcoding and observations showed that wild dogs mainly consume medium-sized ungulates and did not include livestock in their diet during the study. Sharing this local evidence may help address perceptions of livestock predation and improve tolerance.

Together, these studies demonstrate that effective carnivore conservation is about more than counting animals. Understanding behaviour, habitat use, predator interactions, and relationships with people provides the knowledge needed to manage changing landscapes. – *Dr Rewardi Jencke, Predation Management Centre, University of the Free State*



New technology sheds light on jackal behaviour

Black-backed jackals continue to pose a major challenge for small-scale subsistence and emerging producers because they prey on sheep and cause significant livestock losses as well as financial and psychological stress. Legal methods for controlling these real-ranking predators in the food chain (mesopredators) do not appear to be having the desired effect.

"Predation by black-backed jackals is a difficult problem for producers, with few clear solutions. Even the widely used method of 'calling and shooting at night' – using recorded jackal and prey distress calls to lure animals closer – has not solved the problem," says Meagan le Roux, a PhD candidate in Wildlife Ecology and Management at the University in the Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering at Stellenbosch University (SU). The DSP laboratory is managed by Prof Riaan Wolhuter and Prof Thomas Niesler.

"Ecologists also believe that culling jackals disrupts their complex social system, often resulting in younger females breeding and more likely because of habitat loss and a related decline in natural enemies.

As part of her recent master's degree in electronic engineering at SU, Le Roux developed a biotelemetry system that remotely monitors wildlife in agricultural areas and collects video footage and environmental data about their behaviour. "Since black-backed jackals are opportunistic and highly adaptable, understanding exactly how they respond to human-made changes on the availability of food, the system could help producers and environmental and wildlife biologists to better understand their behavioural patterns," she says.

Comprising a network of wireless sensor nodes, the system includes a video recorder, environmental sensors, an online data storage platform (*Google Drive*) and an access point node that provides Wi-Fi connectivity to the system. Only the access point node requires internet connectivity via LTE, the technology behind most 4G mobile networks. This enables deployment of the system in areas with low network coverage.

Le Roux says the system may potentially contribute large quantities of video data on the hunting, feeding, and breeding patterns of black-backed jackals and other mesopredators in agricultural areas.

"This additional research material could, in the long term, support the development of more ethically acceptable and ecologically sustainable practices to manage problem animals." – *Media release, Stellenbosch University*

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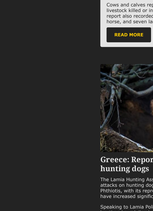
US: Wolves kill or injure dozens of farm animals across California

California's growing number of wild wolves killed or injured dozens of farm animals across the state in 2026, so far, according to the latest report from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW). The CDFW's *Livestock Depredation Investigations and Determinations* report on 21 September 2026. Of the 137 livestock depredation investigations performed this year, CDFW officials determined that 66 were wolf-related.

"The goal of livestock depredation investigations (LDIs) is to determine the cause of the animal's injury or death," the CDFW said. "LDIs involve assessment of physical and circumstantial evidence. Trained investigators examine the carcass or injured animal and search for signs of an attack (e.g., premortem bites and tissue damage), evidence of a chase and struggle, etc.), as well as conditions potentially unrelated to predation, such as disease or prior injury."

Cows and calves represented an overwhelming majority of the depredations, with 58 cows and 51 calves killed or injured. Since the report also recorded wolf attacks that involved four alpacas, one horse, and seven lambs or sheep.

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Greece: Reports of daily wolf attacks on hunting dogs

The Larnia Hunting Association has expressed strong concern over wolf attacks on hunting dogs and sightings of wolves in areas near villages in Phthiotis, with its representative, Ioannis Tsiknis, claiming that incidents have increased significantly.

Speaking to Larnia Polis 87.7, Tsiknis claimed that hunters are now losing hunting dogs daily, describing a situation which, as he said, is becoming increasingly difficult. The discussion was prompted by a complaint from a hunter from Spercheiada, who said that wolves attacked his dogs in Gardiki, killing one and seriously injuring another. He said this was the third time his dogs had been attacked.

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