Predation Management South Africa

October 2026 newsletter

LOCAL • PLAASLIK



Insiggewende predasiekursus by Williston

Die belangstelling was groot toe Johannes Penaar, gekontrakteerde opleier vir PMSA, by Williston opdaag vir 'n predasiebestuurskursus. Beide produsente en plaasarbeiders het gebaat by die virtuele toets, waar vangste en spore behandel is voordat die vlagmotodes gedemonstreer is. As gevolg van die areas wat so wyd uitmekaar gelee is, sal die behemmetodes natuurlik verskil.

Die interaksie en vrae tussen die 42 deelnemers het hul belangstelling bevestig, en produsente was dit eens dat hulle ook hul kundigheid kon verskerp.



Mobi-kraal – A tool to promote co-existence between producers and predators

Last month, a Mobi-kraal was successfully introduced. PMSA requested the perspectives of contracted predation management specialists on the Mobi-kraal.

Jaco van Deventer was involved in the inception of the Mobi-kraal project and served as one of the competition judges. According to Jaco, the Mobi-kraal can be a very effective predation-management tool because it provides a secure enclosure that prevents predators from accessing the sheep.

Benefits of the Mobi-kraal

The Mobi-kraal is well suited to:

- Intensive farming areas where sheep are brought into the kraal every evening.
- Problem areas where producers are experiencing ongoing predation challenges.
- Remote areas where shepherd presence is a concern.
- Kanni areas where jackal and caracal are causing losses.
- Situations where a mobile solution is beneficial, as the kraal is relatively easy to transport and assemble.

More challenging conditions

The Mobi-kraal may be difficult to implement in:

- Large, extensive farming areas covering many hectares, particularly where large flocks of ewes are involved. Bringing sheep into the kraal every evening can become labour-intensive.
- Farming systems where certain sheep breeds naturally graze at night. In these situations, sheep would need to be managed differently and brought into the kraal for feeding and overnight protection.

Practical value of the Mobi-kraal

The Mobi-kraal should therefore be viewed as a targeted predation-management option. Its effectiveness depends on the farming system, terrain, predator pressure, and the producer's ability to incorporate nightly kraaling into the normal management routine.



Predation management training for mohair producers

Mohair producers in the Eastern Cape requested predation management training. During the one-day courses held in Somerset East and Graaff-Reinet, NWGA trainer Willem Gooren highlighted the importance of weaning lambs to improve flock management and increase carrying capacity. He also emphasised the importance of maintaining a healthy natural environment by protecting small game, which predators rely on as a natural food source. Predators are less likely to target young lambs and kids if more small game is available.

Effective predation management is about finding a balance. The aim is not to eliminate predators from your farm, but to manage them responsibly while protecting your livestock and maintaining a healthy ecosystem.

AgriSETA skills programme: Predatory DCA practitioner

The NWGA is busy renewing its AgriSETA accreditation, valid until 30 June 2026. As part of this process, the *vit unit standards* are being replaced with skills programmes. The existing unit standard, "Control Problem Animals", is currently being updated.

A meeting was held with close to 25 stakeholders to discuss what the new programme should cover and how participants will be assessed. The new programme, provisionally titled *Predatory DCA practitioner*, and legislative representation, will now develop the learning material, practical training modules, and assessment requirements. The aim is to ensure that the programme equips participants with the knowledge and practical skills needed to manage predatory damage causing animals responsibly and effectively.



The caracal: Built for stealth, speed, and spectacular leaps

The *caracal (Caracal caracal)*, commonly known as the *rooikat* in Afrikaans, is found across much of Africa, as well as parts of the Middle East and Asia. It has a reddish-brown coat, a short tail, and distinctive black tufts on its ears. Its forepads are cushioned with stiff fur, which helps it to sneak up on prey completely silently. This elusive, largely nocturnal hunter plays an important role in natural ecosystems.

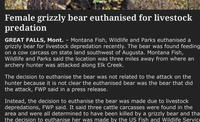
Here are some facts about this cat that deserve a closer look:

- **The name:** 'Caracal' originates from a Turkish word *karakulak*, which means 'black ears'. The Swahili name is *Simbamango*, which means 'panther lion' – as they are rarely seen.
- **The face:** Its trademark long ear tufts are operated by over 20 specialised muscles, allowing the ears to swivel independently to pinpoint the movement of prey. Unlike small domestic cats whose pupils turn into vertical slits in bright light, caracal pupils contract into small circles.
- **High-powered jumping:** Strong hind legs enable the caracal to leap up to 3 to 5 metres straight up from a sitting position to swat birds right out of the air. They can catch multiple birds in one jump. In captivity, they have been recorded jumping over 4 metres to play with a flock of pigeons. Wagers were then placed on how many birds the cat would take down in a leap. That is the origin of the expression 'put the cat among the pigeons'.
- **Diet:** While their primary diet includes rodents, hares, rock hyrax (dassies), small monkeys, and birds, they frequently take down larger prey like small antelope, and even martial eagles. They are also known to prey on other small predators. They will eat reptiles like lizards and venomous snakes, and invertebrates like insects and scorpions. They rarely scavenge. They can survive for long periods without drinking water and get all the moisture they need from their prey.
- **Caching of prey:** Caracals are known on occasion to store their kills in trees, in the manner of leopards. This habit is likely to occur in areas with a high density of hyenas.
- **Vocalisation:** Typical feline vocalisations include growls, spits, hisses, meows, and a loud cough that resembles a leopard's mating cry. Caracals purr like a domestic cat when they are happy.
- **Reproduction:** Caracals have a long gestation period and reproduction in captivity has been recorded to occur throughout the year. Females mate with up to three males. Females give birth once a year on average and their gestation period is 62 to 81 days. Caracal litter sizes range from one to four kittens, with an average litter size of two. Kittens are believed to start eating meat at four weeks of age and are weaned between four and six months in the wild.
- **Service to humans:** The South African Air Force has trained a special group of caracals to keep their runways clear of flocks of birds, thus reducing air strikes that can damage planes. Interestingly, caracals are also used in Turkey as reconnaissance vehicle equipped with a stabilised 70mm high-velocity gun turret-tank and the support purposes and named it *Rooikat*.
- **Royal Egypt connections:** Caracals were tamed and kept in ancient Egypt, where they appeared in paintings, bronze figurines, and guards of royal tombs. They were revered as sacred animals and associated with protection and divine grace.
- **Threats:** Despite their wide distribution, caracals face significant local pressures, such as:
  - **Habitat destruction:** Agriculture, urban expansion, and infrastructure are fragmenting their habitats, particularly in Central and North Africa and throughout their Asian range.
  - **Human–wildlife conflict:** Because caracals sometimes prey on small livestock such as goats and sheep, they are frequently killed by farmers in retaliation.
  - **Illegal trade:** In some regions, caracals are hunted for their skins or meat, which is considered a luxury in certain cultures. Additionally, they are increasingly targeted for the illegal exotic pet trade.
  - **Infrastructure:** Road kills and attacks by domestic herd dogs are major causes of mortality in countries like Iran and Turkey.

As these elusive hunters increasingly share space with people, understanding them and finding ways to coexist is becoming more important. By learning more about the caracal and understanding their role in nature, we can take steps towards reducing human-wildlife conflict and ensuring that these beautiful cats continue to thrive well into the future. And right to keeping the caracal a large wild cat in captivity.

– Beaenti Janecke, Predation Management Centre, University of the Free State

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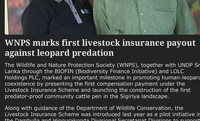
Female grizzly bear euthanised for livestock predation

GREAT FALLS, Mont. – Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks euthanised a grizzly bear for livestock-depredation reasons. The bear was found feeding on a cow carcass on state land southwest of Augusta. Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks said the location was three miles away from where an archery hunter was attacked along Elk Creek.

The decision to euthanise the bear was not related to the attack on the hunter because it is not clear the euthanised bear was the bear that did the attack, FWP said in a press release.

Instead, the decision to euthanise the bear was made due to livestock depredations, FWP said. It said three cattle carcasses were found in the area and were all determined to have been killed by a grizzly bear and that the decision to euthanise her was made by the US Fish and Wildlife Service in agreement with FWP and the USDA Wildlife Services.

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WNPS marks first livestock insurance payout against leopard predation

The Wildlife and Nature Protection Society (WNPS), together with UNDP Sri Lanka through the BIOFIN (Biodiversity Finance Initiative) and LOLC Holdings PLC, marked an important milestone in promoting human-leopard coexistence by presenting the first compensation payment under the Livestock Insurance Scheme and launching the construction of the first predator-proof community cattle pen in the Sigiriya landscape.

Along with guidance of the Department of Wildlife Conservation, the Livestock Insurance Scheme was introduced last year as a pilot initiative in the Dambulla and Hingurakgoda Divisional Secretariat Divisions to support livestock farmers affected by leopard predation while encouraging coexistence with Sri Lanka's iconic leopard outside Protected Areas. The initiative aims to reduce the financial burden faced by rural communities and discourage retaliatory actions against leopards by providing a practical safety net for affected farmers, a WNPS news release said.

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USDA urges states to strengthen wolf management and support ranchers against predation

US Secretary of Agriculture Brooke L. Rollins called on states to review their wolf management policies and work closely with livestock producers to address wolf predation. This effort follows President Trump's *Executive Order 14423 "Supporting America's Ranchers"* which aims to provide producers tools to protect their herds and operations.

Secretary Rollins emphasised that the impact wolves have on ranchers, noting the threat to livestock and family-run operations built over generations. She urged states to listen to ranchers, reconsider state-specific wolf protections, and partner with USDA to safeguard livestock. She highlighted that lethal removal of wolves can occur when authorised by law and requested by proper authorities.

Representative Harriet Hageman stressed that ranchers face ongoing losses due to protected predators like the grey and Mexican wolf, despite these species surpassing recovery targets. She supports steps to compensate ranchers fairly for losses and to reduce predator threats on their lands.

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