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#WILDSIDEOFCONSERVATION

# WILDSIDE *of* Conservation



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# IMPORTANT DATES

## 29 July International Tiger Day

Tigers are in danger. There are only around 3,900 wild tigers left in the world.

Since the beginning of the 20th century, we have lost over 95% of the world's wild tiger population.

On Global Tiger Day, WWF urges tiger-range governments to strengthen anti-poaching efforts and reinforce investments in rangers, in order to halt the crisis and safeguard wild tigers from poachers.



## 31 July World Ranger Day

“World Ranger Day commemorates rangers killed or injured in the line of duty, as well as celebrating the work rangers do to protect our country and the world's natural and cultural treasures. World Ranger Day is promoted by the 63 member associations of the International Ranger Federation (IRF), by the IRF partner the Thin Green Line Foundation, and by individuals who support the work of rangers and the IRF.

In South Africa, game rangers stand up to poachers almost daily as they battle to end the decimation of wildlife species, ranging from the poaching of rhino and abalone to the illegal removal of plants such as cycads and Proteas.”

- source [www.environment.gov.za](http://www.environment.gov.za)



# Saving Endangered Wild Dogs takes a team effort



**ENDANGERED  
WILDLIFE TRUST**  
Protecting forever, together.

The Endangered African Wild Dog is a rare sight for visitors to a handful of game reserves that still have them. But one more opportunity to catch a glimpse of these scarce and reclusive animals will soon be available in South Africa.

The [Makalali Game Reserve](#) has recently become the newest addition to the Wild Dog Range Expansion Project, coordinated by the [Endangered Wildlife Trust](#) (EWT) and the [Wild Dog Advisory Group of South Africa](#) (WAG SA) as part of ongoing efforts to save this species from extinction.

Since its inception in 1973, the EWT has worked tirelessly to protect Africa's carnivores. To-day, these predators remain close to the organization's heart, particularly African Wild Dogs. The ultimate goal is to reverse the decline of Wild Dogs globally, by actively increasing their populations and range throughout southern Africa. This is achieved this by establishing, maintaining and expanding safe space for Wild Dogs; reducing threats to their survival; ensuring positive changes in human-based values to Wild Dogs; and supporting laws to better protect them. Despite this, Wild Dogs are still among the most threatened animals in Africa, under severe threat from snaring, poaching, disease, roadkill, and habitat loss. In southern Africa, the EWT is proud to help reverse this continent wide trend, and the population has stabilised at around 500 individuals.

This most recent relocation was made possible thanks to a group effort by aha Hotels & Lodges, the EWT, WAG SA, the owners of Makalali Game Reserve in Limpopo, and Rob Panos, the Makalali Reserve Manager.



The reserve is currently 26,000 ha and recently obtained National Private Nature Reserve status. Due to its size, ecology and the efforts made by management to keep the area protected, Makalali was identified as an ideal site to introduce a pack of Wild Dogs. While Wild Dogs have passed through Makalali before, the introduction of this new, young pack of four is aimed at making the species a permanent fixture in the reserve. The two young males, nicknamed "Nyezi" and "Mkhovu", were born in 2016 and are the ideal age to start

their own pack. The females, "Zeyheri" and "Pacman", were born in 2016 and 2017 respectively. The pack was successfully relocated to Makalali on 9 June 2019, thanks to the EWT Carnivore Conservation Programme's Cole du Plessis and Grant Beverley, and is currently being held in a 100x100m section of the predator boma on the premises. In just a few months, they will be fully released into the wild.

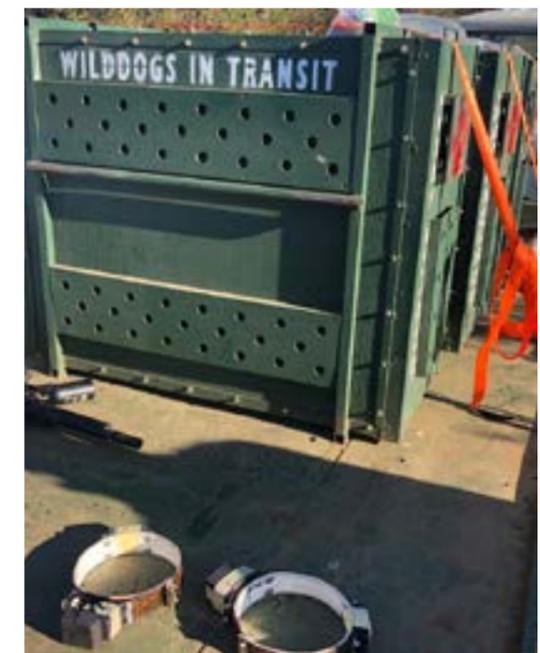
[CLICK TO VIEW VIDEO  
OF RELOCATION](#)



aha Hotels & Lodges and Makalali contributed much-needed funds towards making the pack's introduction to Makalali possible. aha CEO, Graeme Edmond was also on site to lend a hand to the EWT team and Dr Joel Alves from Wildlife Vets SA by taking samples, fitting a GPS collar to one of the males, and loading the dogs into the custom-designed crates for the long drive from KZN to Limpopo.

Graeme, who has taken a very personal interest in the process, says, "this project is some-thing that's very close to my heart and I'm over the moon that I could get aha Hotels & Lodges involved in finding a new home for these Endangered animals. We'll be paying close attention to their progress in Makalali and will continue to support the process in any way we can."

EWT CEO, Yolán Friedmann, added, "The EWT is very excited to partner with organisations like aha Hotels & Lodges and Makalali private game reserve to relocate these Endangered carnivores to new areas. Without their support and vision, relocations such as this would not be possible. The EWT encourages tourists from all over the world to view animals in their wild and free habitats, in places such as Makalali."





*“When used as a tool for community development, the Solar Bread Box becomes a self-sustaining, economy stimulating, job creating and skills development platform.”*



## THE SOLAR BREAD BOX – ENABLING ENERGY ACCESS AND DEVELOPING COMMUNITIES

Despite being ranked as the eighth most developed country in Africa in the United Nations Development Programme’s annual report in 2018, several challenges still plague South Africa. The need for employment, access to energy, economic activity, community development and access to affordable essential foods is still very prominent in both rural and urban areas.

While working on a project to empower a remote village in the Northern part of South Africa through enabling energy access and community development from locally available renewable energy sources, Profs Johan Meyer and Sune von Solms of the University of Johannesburg’s School of Electrical and Electronic Engineering Sciences conceptualised the Solar Bread Box – a first for commercial sized photovoltaic solar bakeries.

Boasting the same equipment and baking cycle as a standard grid tied commercial bakery, the Solar Bread Box eliminates the dependence, purchase and monthly bills associated with grid tied electricity. Not only that, but the bakery is also an instantaneous employment and skills development opportunity for youths, a tool for economic stimuli and an avenue for an essential product.



Low income households in rural and urban communities where there is no grid connection; communities where the residents cannot afford electricity; or communities where there are underlying social issues regarding the access and distribution of electrical power consider bread an every day staple or meal. The affordability and access of wholesome, fresh bread is essential in such areas.

Prof Meyer clarified that the Solar Bread Box should not be confused with other solar solutions such as concentrated solar power or solar thermal technologies that are used for heating and cooling. He explained that the Solar Bread Box uses a photovoltaic system, which converts solar energy into electrical power used for the baking process. Prof von Solms explained that the idea is for the bakery to function on the conversion of solar energy as much as possible – minimising the cost of solar energy storage solutions. This means that baking will be seasonally dependent, and bakers will have to adjust their baking times in accordance to the sun to harness maximum power during baking cycles.

Contrary to traditional community development activities which normally consist of agriculture, tourism and niche manufacturing, the commercial sized bakery is ideal because:

- The operation and income are immediate
- It is a sustainable business with vast opportunities for growth
- It is not dependent on grid

tied electricity as it harnesses the power of the sun

- It immediately avails job opportunities in communities
- It fosters skills development, micro business and enterprise development

The UJ School of Electrical Engineering in collaboration with Bakery and Food Technology Incubator of South Africa (BICSA), offers training on how to bake, run a bakery as a business and how to maintain a solar PV system – enabling communities to thrive independently.

So far, the Solar Bread Box has sparked economic activity, created jobs for eight individuals, created an enterprise that now serves neighbouring villages, created the access to wholesome foods, the production of at least 100 loaves of bread a day, and boosted skills development in Gwakwani - a small remote village in Limpopo, South Africa that initially had no grid connection.

When used as a tool for community development, the Solar Bread Box becomes a self-sustaining, economy stimulating, job creating and skills development platform – creating communities that have access to healthy, wholesome baked goods, are self-dependant and economically active.

Make the Solar Bread Box a part of your community development project. Contact Cornay Keefer at [cornayk@uj.ac.za](mailto:cornayk@uj.ac.za) to eliminate running energy costs in your next project.



Heather Wolmarans from Food and Trees for Africa shares her knowledge of upcycling waste material with community members involved with food gardens and cooperatives in and around Durban.

## GARDEN CHAMPIONS EXPOSED TO THE VALUE IN LITTER

At a time when plastic waste is particularly problematic in the Durban area, [Food and Trees for Africa](#) together with its partner, Shoprite, introduced community members to the principles of plastic waste management and upcycling at a two-day workshop.

Held at the Durban Botanic Gardens on 14 and 15 May, the workshop was aimed at upskilling the participating project members to become more economically active and independent.

Plastic waste management is a particularly pertinent issue in the port city following devastating floods, which saw some Durban beaches and parts of its harbour practically buried under plastic and other litter.

“The practical training in reducing pollution (by reusing waste material from garbage) was not only important in creating environmental awareness but opened my eyes to the business opportunities presented by litter,” says Innocent Mdlalose from the Iqabungelihle Garden in Kwamashu.

According to Heather Wolmarans from Food and Trees for Africa the workshop provided the perfect opportunity to learn the language of climate change, “Participants learnt how our waste affects us, and that by changing the way we view ‘rubbish’ we can clean up and re-use waste material.”

“Although our main focus at Shoprite is on hunger relief, which is evident in our continued support of community food gardens and cooperatives, we are also very concerned for our natural environment. So naturally we would support a workshop like this as we seek to transform the communities we serve,” says Lunga Schoeman, CSI spokesperson for the Shoprite Group.

Seven community gardening projects and cooperatives were represented at the workshop. They were selected based on their strong leadership, sound structure and a willingness to successfully run their own upcycling projects.

## RESCUED FLAMINGOS AT MONTECASINO BIRD GARDENS RETURN HOME

Almost 100 of the Lesser Flamingo chicks rescued from the drought-stricken Kamfers Dam in Kimberley at the end of January and hand-reared at Montecasino Bird Gardens (<https://www.tsogosun.com/montecasino/entertainment/bird-gardens>) have been released back to the now recovered dam. A further 38 chicks who are not yet ready for release will be given ongoing care through the winter months.

More than 2,000 Lesser Flamingo chicks were abandoned at the dam due to falling water levels and a lack of food. The starving chicks were rescued and sent to accredited Zoos across the country for rehabilitation, with the aim of returning them to their home when conditions improved. Kamfers Dam has become an important breeding site for Lesser Flamingos since the construction of a breeding island in 2006, and the dam and surrounding wetland are designated as a conservation zone.

The chicks were rescued through successful collaboration between the National Zoological Gardens, National Veterinary Association, BirdLife SA, Kimberly SPCA and various accredited members of PAAZA (Pan African Association of Zoos and Aquariums), including Montecasino Bird Gardens, World of Birds, SANCCOB, Ushaka Marine World, Lory Park Animal



and Owl Sanctuary and Vulpro. Elaine Reeve the Curator of Birds at Montecasino Bird Gardens, says they were delighted to be a part of the rescue and rehabilitation operation. “The Bird Gardens is equipped to rear flamingo chicks as we have a colony of Greater and Caribbean Flamingos, and we have had success with our babies. This also meant we could share our formula with other organisations that were part of the rescue operation. We were lucky enough to have had the support from our General Manager Shaun Wilkinson and the Montecasino (<https://www.tsogosun.com/montecasino>) management, to allow us to part take in this rescue.” The four-month round the clock chick care provided by Montecasino staff and volunteers was intensive and carried out by a very dedicated and skilled team of people who

*“Ninety-eight birds have now been sent back to Kimberley from Montecasino Bird Gardens to thrive and breed at the dam, and 38 chicks will continue to be nurtured as they developed a bit slower than the others for various reasons.”*

worked tirelessly to ensure their survival. Volunteers also joined the hand-rearing team from the Friends of Free Wildlife Rehabilitation Centre, Irene Mckenzie-Fraser from C.A.R.E, NSPCA staff, Bryanston Veterinary Hospital staff and a volunteer came to help all the way from Australia –Ludmila Beltrame. The four-month-old chicks now weigh between 1kg and 1.9kg.

Reeve says, “Ninety-eight birds have now been sent back to Kimberley from Montecasino Bird Gardens to thrive and breed at the dam, and 38 chicks will continue to be nurtured as they developed a bit slower than the others for various reasons. We do also have a few birds that will not be released due to medical conditions. This includes a spunky little chick that we have named Squonk, who has survived a broken neck and fractured hip – and will no doubt delight Bird Gardens visitors in the future.”

The Bird Gardens were given tremendous support by various companies to assist with the care of the chicks, which came in many ways of; towels from Netcare, Nestum cereal from Nestle, eggs from RocoMamas, 400kg sardines from Ocean Basket, a blender and shrimps from David Brooks, shrimps and fish from Dominique Bush-Nel and Peter Berge, Bryanston Veterinary Hospital for medications and donations collected by them and teddy bears from Roy

Hurrienarain. Irene Mckenzie-Fraser though C.A.R.E collected teddies, towels, boxes and fish. Caxton Newspapers donated and collected newspapers, eggs, teddy bears towels. Margi from Friend of Free Wildlife collected teddy bears and towels. Special thanks to everyone including those not mentioned above.

Mike Page the Montecasino Operations Director and Complex GM, applauded the dedicated team at the Bird Gardens for more than stepping up to the mark in this emergency rescue operation. “The team, including Elaine Reeve Curator of Birds; Michelle van Sittert, Assistant Curator of Birds; Kiara Pretorius Education and Admin Manager, Lee Ann Wolfaardt, Kathleen Kemp, Pennylope Sedabane, Assistance by; Dr Katja Koppel Veterinarian, Dr Jessica Briner Veterinarian, Dr Perushen Yenketsamy Veterinarian and others, that dedicated their time to the rearing of the baby flamingos, often going with only a few hours’ sleep a night. The release of the birds back to their breeding grounds is a triumph for the bird world and for all of us. We look forward to seeing the remaining chicks build up their strength and join the flocks at the dam.” For more information on the conservation programmes at the Montecasino Bird Gardens, go to [www.montecasino.co.za](http://www.montecasino.co.za) or follow #MonteCares on social media.

