



## THE EWT'S BIODIVERSITY STEWARDSHIP WORK IN KWAZULU NATAL BEARS FRUIT

8<sup>th</sup> July 2014

*Start*

The Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT) is celebrating the publication of the Notice of Intent to Declare the Beaumont Nature Reserve in the Swartberg region of KwaZulu-Natal.

“The proposed Beaumont Nature Reserve is 1050 ha in size and forms part of the Thule Conservancy, which was created in 2012 with the assistance of the EWT. Many of the properties in the conservancy will also be proposed as Nature Reserves or Protected Environments in the near future. Nature Reserve status represents the highest category in the Biodiversity Stewardship Programme and the Beaumont Nature Reserve will become the first declared nature reserve that EWT has negotiated,” said Cobus Theron, the EWT’s African Crane Conservation Programme’s Southern Drakensberg / East Griqualand Stewardship Facilitator.

The Biodiversity Stewardship Programme is a national governmental initiative that aims to complement the expansion of protected areas in the country with particular focus on private and communal land. The programme, is a process into which landowners voluntarily enter, consists of legally binding agreements with government to enter their land into the protected area network and manage it for biodiversity. The programme also allows for legal recognition, assistance and improved management where landowners are committed to conservation on their land. Currently the EWT is promoting and implementing the programme in the Southern Drakensberg, East Griqualand and Mpumalanga regions with the aim of securing valuable habitat for cranes.

The declaration of the Beaumont Nature Reserve will afford the property the same status and protection as any other national or provincial nature reserve. In addition, Beaumont Nature Reserve may qualify to be incorporated in to the Maluti World Heritage Site.

According to Theron, “The announcement of the Intention to Declare is exciting news for the EWT due to the importance of this reserve. Beaumont Nature Reserve consists mostly of scenic, mountainous terrain and is considered one of the upper catchment sources for the Umzimvubu River – the largest undammed river in South Africa. It provides valuable habitat and foraging grounds for species such as Grey Crowned Cranes, Secretary birds, Southern Bald Ibis and a variety of antelope including Grey Rhebok and Common Reedbuck. Both Cape and Bearded Vultures are regularly seen soaring over the farm and there are unique examples of rock art on the property.”

Furthermore, the property is of strategic importance as it will contribute to conservation efforts to expand the Maluti Drakensberg World Heritage Site in KwaZulu-Natal and Lesotho westwards

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The Endangered Wildlife Trust is a non-profit, public benefit organisation dedicated to conserving species and ecosystems in southern Africa to the benefit of all people.

**NPO Number:** 015-502, **PBO number:** 930 001 777, **Member of IUCN** - The International Union for Conservation of Nature  
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towards the Eastern Cape Border. It will also safeguard valuable catchment services, feeding many of the wetland systems in the Cedarville Flats and ensure the protection of biodiversity and cultural assets.

Individuals in support of this declaration may write letters of support and lodge them before 27 July 2014 to the address below:

The Chief Executive Officer  
 Ezemvelo KwaZulu Natal Wildlife  
 P.O. Box 13053  
 Cascades  
 3202

The EWT-ACCP's work is supported by the Critical Ecosystems Partnership Fund and the European Union. For further information please contact Cobus Theron on [cobust@ewt.org.za](mailto:cobust@ewt.org.za)

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