



## HORRIFIC KILLING OF THREE AFRICAN WILD DOGS IN THE WATERBERG

31<sup>st</sup> January 2014

Start

The Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT) received a report from Ken Maud of Swebeswebe Wildlife Estate in Lephalale, on Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> January 2014, of the alleged illegal killing of three Endangered Wild Dogs *Lycaon pictus*. Derek van der Merwe, Conflict Mitigation Field Officer of the EWT's Carnivore Conservation Programme, went to investigate the incident early on Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> January and discovered the three dead animals on the Beauty gravel road between Vaalwater and Ellisras.

"The Wild Dogs were already in an advanced state of decomposition and we estimate that they were killed late on Monday the 27<sup>th</sup> or early in the morning on Tuesday the 28<sup>th</sup> of January. Oscar Mandlmeier, a registered medic and farmer in the area, and I retrieved genetic sampling kits from the nearby Welgevonden Nature Reserve and carried out an autopsy of the animals to determine the cause of death," said van der Merwe.

The autopsy results showed that the Wild Dogs were run over by a vehicle and that one of the three dogs was also shot in addition to being run over. It is a strong possibility that these animals were deliberately killed.

African Wild Dogs are protected in terms of the National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act (Act 10 of 2004) and the Threatened or Protected Species Regulations of 2007 (ToPS). They are categorised as an Endangered Species (EN) – *Indigenous species facing a high risk of extinction in the wild in the near future, although they are not critically endangered*. The activities of hunting or killing ToPS listed species require a permit from the relevant conservation authority, and where no permits have been issued for such activities, it is deemed a crime.

Limpopo is one of the last remaining provinces in South Africa that still has free roaming Wild Dogs. This means that they were not reintroduced and did not escape from any fenced reserves, but rather they occur naturally outside of fenced reserves. Genetic testing conducted on this group of Wild Dogs has demonstrated that they are genetically distinct from the Wild Dogs in the Kruger National Park and in other smaller reserves in South Africa. This makes this group of dogs critically important in a species that is on the verge of extinction. Because Wild Dogs occupy such vast ranges (each pack can range over more than 2,000 km<sup>2</sup>) it is extremely difficult to determine the population dynamics of Wild Dogs in the Waterberg. However, recent estimates put their numbers at between 15 and 30 Wild Dogs left in the area.

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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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“There are just 450 Wild Dogs left in South Africa and the loss of three is significant. There are less Wild Dogs left in South Africa than the number of rhino poached in 2013 and the visible cruelty with which the animals were killed is particularly devastating in light of their low numbers,” continued van der Merwe.

Conflict between carnivores and farmers over the killing of game is a reality in the Waterberg but many farmers have chosen to implement conflict mitigation measures in partnership with the EWT such as the use of Livestock Guarding Dogs. Unfortunately, the three animals killed this week are proof that negative attitudes towards these carnivores persist. We are asking you as the public to help us to save these canines wherever there is the potential for persecution and violence. If you know or hear about any activity that will bring harm to Wild Dogs, or can shed light on who is responsible for the death of these dogs, please contact Derek van der Merwe at [Derekv@ewt.org.za](mailto:Derekv@ewt.org.za). Sightings of Wild Dogs and photographs of these sightings are particularly useful so please send these to Grant Beverly at [grantb@ewt.org.za](mailto:grantb@ewt.org.za). For further information about Wild Dogs and conflict mitigation measures that benefit farmers and carnivores please contact Derek on [Derekv@ewt.org.za](mailto:Derekv@ewt.org.za).

The EWT's Wild Dog work is supported by Investec Properties, Jaguar-Land Rover South Africa, Land Rover Centurion, Vaughan de la Harpe, GCCL<sup>2</sup> - Richard Bosman, Painted Wolf Wines, South African National Parks Honourary Rangers and IQ Business.

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