



10TH METAPOPOPULATION WILD DOG RESERVE WELCOMES AFRICAN WILD DOG PACK

4th May 2015

Start

The Endangered Wildlife Trust's (EWT) National Wild Dog Metapopulation Project in collaboration with its partners, released a newly bonded pack of six African Wild Dogs onto Zululand Rhino Reserve (ZRR) in northern KwaZulu-Natal on Friday, 1 May 2015. The ZRR pack comprises two males and four females.

The plan to reintroduce wild dogs into ZRR started in 2013 where the project identified ZRR as highly suitable habitat containing enough prey for the reserve to sustain a small pack of Wild Dogs. Thereafter, the selection of individuals to bond into a single pack was made by both the national Wild Dog Advisory Group of South Africa (WAG-SA) and the provincial KZNWAG, with two males originating from Zimanga Private Game Reserve (KZN) and four females from Madikwe Game Reserve (North West). Both WAG-SA and KZNWAG are specialised advisory groups comprising protected area managers, ecologists, district conservation officials, vets, researchers and relevant landowners.

Once the individuals were selected, the two groups were introduced to one another in the UmPhafa Nature Reserve boma (near Ladysmith, KZN) in June 2014 and have been temporarily held in the ZRR predator boma since 23rd of December 2014 to allow them to bond into a pack and become habituated to the area. The Zululand Rhino Reserve (ZRR) in KwaZulu-Natal is the 10th current metapopulation Wild Dog Reserve in South Africa and is located in the very heart of the KZN Wild Dog population.

Said David Marneweck, the EWT's Carnivore Conservation Programme Wild Dog Project Field Officer, "African Wild Dogs are the most endangered carnivore in South Africa with a high degree of historical persecution resulting in with a drastic reduction in their numbers and range. Wild Dogs face a number of threats including direct persecution through hunting and car collisions, disease outbreak, indirect persecution (snaring) and habitat fragmentation. With consistently less than 450 Wild Dogs in South Africa, reintroductions of newly formed packs into areas where they formally inhabited is resulting in increasing the number of individuals, packs and their conservation status in South Africa. Our National Wild Dog Metapopulation Project works across three provinces to facilitate the coordinated management of Wild Dogs in small, isolated and fenced reserves in order to improve the status of this endangered species in South Africa. We are extremely excited to announce that Zululand Rhino Reserve will now become an integral part of the national

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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.

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metapopulation and we look forward to the persistence of Wild Dogs in this pristine habitat in the northern KZN region."

"This day marks a very positive step in the direction to achieve both provincial and national targets to improve the number of Wild Dogs and areas holding this species. We hope to see ZRR's Wild Dog population contributing significantly to establishing populations elsewhere in South Africa." added Marneweck.

The EWT has collaborated with a number of organisations to ensure this reintroduction including: Zululand Rhino Reserve, WildlifeACT Fund, Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife, UmPhafa Private Nature Reserve, Colchester Zoo (United Kingdom), Tembe Elephant Park, Zimanga Private Game Reserve and Madikwe Game Reserve. Thanks also go to Illovo Sugar who has agreed to sponsor the monitoring and equipment for the pack on ZRR.

The EWT KZN Wild Dog Project is supported by: Land Rover South Africa, Land Rover Centurion, GCCL², Painted Wolf Wines, Knowsely Safari Park & Vaughan de la Harpe.

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