



THE LINDT GOLD BUNNY HELPS SAVE THE RIVERINE RABBIT

30th March 2015

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One of South Africa's most threatened mammals – the Critically Endangered Riverine Rabbit – will again benefit from the LINDT Easter GOLD BUNNY sales as the makers of luxurious chocolate, Lindt & Sprüngli (South Africa), has for the fifth year in a row agreed to support the Endangered Wildlife Trust's (EWT) conservation work of this rare and endemic Karoo species.

Over the past five years, the EWT, with the funding support of Lindt & Sprüngli (South Africa), has put in place key conservation interventions, including contributing to the restoration of Riverine Rabbit habitat in the Karoo, researching Riverine Rabbit ecology, furthering our conservation stewardship outreach, raising awareness, and developing a monitoring tool to assess Riverine Rabbit populations.

The EWT's Drylands Conservation Programme Manager, Christy Bragg, says, "Through this partnership we have greatly increased the awareness and the plight of the Riverine Rabbit. We are also calling on members of the public to support us by purchasing a LINDT GOLD BUNNY this Easter to help save this species".

The Riverine Rabbit is endemic to the semi-arid Great Karoo and parts of the Little Karoo, and as a response to the animal's vulnerability, the Riverine Rabbit Project was established by the Endangered Wildlife Trust in 2003. The Riverine Rabbit is an icon of the Karoo, endemic to South Africa and listed as one of the top ten EDGE species in the world (most Evolutionarily Distinct and Globally Endangered species) by the Zoological Society of London's EDGE of Existence programme. The LINDT GOLD BUNNY, an icon in its own right, was crafted in 1952 by the LINDT Master Chocolatier with the finest LINDT milk chocolate, a golden coat and a golden bell on a red ribbon, and is a delicious part of Easter festivities.

"We are very proud to be a part of such an important local project which not only helps to save the Riverine Rabbit but also creates jobs in the Karoo area and we look forward to seeing even more progress made to protect this special Rabbit" says Lindt & Sprüngli Director of Marketing, Mathias Schenker of the Riverine Rabbit Project.

Lindt & Sprüngli (South Africa) has now been supporting the EWT's conservation of the Critically Endangered Riverine Rabbit for five years in a row. One of the largest non-governmental conservation organizations in South Africa, the EWT is coordinating all conservation efforts for the Riverine Rabbit which includes habitat protection and rehabilitation, education and research. "The five-year support by Lindt & Sprüngli (South Africa) has been a critical catalyst to upscaling our work and the

accomplishment of major successes, such as over 350ha of restored habitat, improved local job creation through our restoration interventions and many great working relationships with the farmers in the Riverine Rabbit Conservancies near Loxton, Northern Cape." explains Christy Bragg.

The Riverine Rabbit is under threat from feral dogs and hunting with dogs, road accidents, habitat loss and fragmentation through cultivation and overgrazing. It is also potentially at risk from unconventional shale gas development.

Members of the public are requested to report possible sightings of Riverine Rabbits to Christy Bragg at christyb@ewt.org.za. For more information visit the EWT's website at www.ewt.org.za. The EWT-DCP's Riverine Rabbit Project is supported by the Lindt & Sprüngli (South Africa); Altron Group, Ford Wildlife Foundation, Rand Merchant Bank, Mohamed bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund, Koos and RonaRupert Opvoedkundige Trust, National Lottery Distribution Trust Fund, Zoological Society for the Conservation of Species and Populations (ZGAP), Sean Williams Living Creatures Trust and many individuals, farmers and partners.

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About Lindt & Sprüngli
Founded in 1845, Lindt & Sprüngli is a global leader in the premium chocolate category, offering high-quality products in more than 100 countries.