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Ford Wildlife Foundation Supports the Endangered Wildlife Trust with New Ford Ranger

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The Ford Wildlife Foundation handed over a new Ford Ranger bakkie to the Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT) and its Cheetah Metapopulation Project, which works to increase the range, numbers, and status of wild Cheetahs in South Africa. The handover forms part of Ford Motor Company of Southern Africa's (FMCSA) commitment to the conservation and preservation of the environment in sub-Saharan Africa.

Established in 2011, the Cheetah Metapopulation Project tackles Cheetah conservation on all fronts, but predominantly focuses on increasing and preserving the Cheetah population. The EWT achieves this through translocations and reintroductions of genetically distinct male and female Cheetahs into new areas to establish healthy populations.

Currently, the project monitors Cheetahs in 54 reserves, and has created over 1 million hectares of safe Cheetah habitat. Since its inception, the project has conducted approximately 150 relocations, with the metapopulation growing to a stronghold of 350 Cheetahs nationwide. Because of the project's efforts, Cheetahs in South Africa are listed as Vulnerable on the Red List of the International Union for Conservation of Nature. In all other countries in Africa, Cheetah will soon be uplisted as Endangered.

"The Endangered Wildlife Trust is very happy to announce our partnership with the Ford Wildlife Foundation. The acceptance of the vehicle will enable the project to continue to make positive global strides for Cheetah conservation" said Tammy Baker, EWT Business Development Officer.

How the Ford Ranger Will Support the Cheetah Metapopulation Project

The Cheetah Metapopulation Project requires a capable vehicle to conduct the translocations, visit potential new reintroduction sites, and to ensure that Cheetahs are managed effectively to prevent inbreeding. With the support of the FWF and a new Ford Ranger XLT bakkie, the EWT can conduct critical and vital conservation work, to ensure that the world's fastest land mammal is protected well into the future.

“The vehicle will be used by the Senior Field Officer, Vincent van der Merwe, who coordinates the Cheetah Metapopulation Project to effect Cheetah translocations across South Africa by driving immobilised Cheetahs to their new safe homes,” says Baker.

“The opportunity to partner with Ford Wildlife Foundation is a massive step towards ensuring that we continue with the work we are doing for Cheetah conservation in South Africa, with ambitions to take the metapopulation approach elsewhere in Africa to ensure the global population of Cheetahs does not decline further,” she adds.

The locally-built Ford Ranger, which is one of South Africa’s top-selling vehicles overall and in the light commercial segment, will be used to enable the project to go further and make a real impact – particularly in the remote locations often associated with conservation and environmental projects.

Ford Wildlife Foundation’s Dedication to Conservation

For the past 25 years, FMCSA has supported more than 150 conservation projects and invested over R30 million to help maintain wildlife and ecosystems in South Africa. In September 2014, FMCSA officially established the Ford Wildlife Foundation to continue that support.

The Ford Wildlife Foundation is unique, as it does not provide cash donations to the conservation projects it supports; instead Ford’s partner organisations are equipped with very capable Ford Rangers. Ford Wildlife Foundation provides these vehicles to help project operations, such as transporting animals between different locations, vets to sick or poached animals, or environmental experts to educate others on the importance of conservation.

With the support of Ford’s extensive dealer network, the vehicles operating in all Ford Wildlife Foundation projects are monitored and serviced by Ford to ensure they operate at peak efficiency.

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