



**Press Release
18 February 2008**

Partnership in Predator Conservation

CapeNature and the Landmark Foundation have established an integrated partnership in predator conservation. This partnership is an ambitious endeavour to see predators conserved across the living landscape. The project is aimed at innovative and proactive management interventions, supported by research and market solutions to the livestock-predator conundrum.

This partnership follows from the unfortunate events in November and December 2007 where a leopard died in a gin trap near the Kammanassie Nature Reserve near Uniondale in the Western Cape. In the lessons learnt from this event both organisations have agreed to work together in establishing a partnership that will proactively try to address the challenges of predator conservation in agriculturally active areas. The initial area of focus of this partnership will be mutually agreed areas of the eastern region of the Western Cape. (The Landmark Foundation has been operational in the western region of the Eastern Cape since 2004.)

The partnership will focus on conserving predators with a particular focus on the leopards. Extension services will be jointly provided to try and convert farming in the region to holistic, non-lethal predator control methods that will enable livestock predation to be effectively managed. Both organisations commit themselves to work towards terminating the indiscriminate use of leg-hold (gin) traps, poison traps and hunting dog packs. Further efforts will jointly be made to bring in more land into biodiversity conservation through collaboration with commercial farmers.

The use of gin traps to manage other damage-causing animals such as caracal or black-backed jackal often results in the capture of a leopard. Records of such incidents show that the overwhelming majority of leopards are caught in traps set for other target species. The events that led to the death of the leopard last November on the boundary of the Kammanassie Nature Reserve have been fully investigated and it was found that the leopard was caught in a trap allegedly set for a jackal.

While the circumstances surrounding this animal's death are regrettable, both parties now commit themselves to providing capacity to manage future

situations jointly to the benefit of leopard, predator and biodiversity conservation.

CapeNature and Landmark Foundation will work together on efforts to ensure that farmers who conserve biodiversity patterns and processes, and in particular in this partnership the process of top-predation, benefit from predator-friendly initiatives and related industry directives in the production of meat and animal fibre products.

Both parties commit themselves to the partnership and will pool their resources to develop innovative and proactive strategies to conserve predators. In this regard staff from both institutions have already initiated joint meetings with landowners and commercial farmers. Where leopard damage activity is identified, efforts will be made to use modern acceptable methods to manage the situation, and in so doing ensure that unacceptable control methods such as gin traps, poisons and hunting dogs are removed from the landscapes where the parties are collaborating, and beyond.

The partnership between CapeNature (Western CapeNature Conservation Board) and the Landmark Foundation (a registered NGO), will be governed by a formal Memorandum of Understanding.

18 February 2008

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kas Hamman', written over a light grey rectangular background.

Dr Kas Hamman
Director Biodiversity
CapeNature

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bool Smuts', written in a cursive style.

Dr Bool Smuts
Director
Landmark Foundation