

# cellular-news

## **Injured Leopard Tracked After Cellphone Coverage Expanded**

Mobile phone technology came to the aid of an injured leopard when South Africa's Vodacom overnight strengthened cellular coverage in the area into which the animal had been released, thereby enabling her rehabilitation to be effectively managed.

The female leopard had been rescued in late September from a gin trap (a pair of jaws that spring together when triggered by an animal) on a farm near Steytlerville in the Eastern Cape. After treatment and collaring with GPS collar which used a cellphone network to transmit location data, the animal was taken to Kuzuko in the northern part of Addo National Park, and released on 29 September.

However, it soon became clear that poor cellular phone reception in the area was hampering critical efforts to track the leopard's whereabouts and wellbeing through the GPS data from the collar that is continuously monitored through the cellular phone networks. There was much concern for her due to the injuries she sustained in the gin trap, and the fact that she may have been mauled by the lions in the area.

Vodacom came to the assistance of the rehabilitation efforts and overnight arranged for strengthened cellular coverage. This has enabled the Landmark Foundation, SANParks and Kuzuko staff to monitor the movements of this animal at all times.

Says Dr Bool Smuts, director of the Landmark Foundation: "We are able to deduce from the vigorous movements of this leopard that she is doing well and is recovering from the injuries to her hind foot sustained in the gin trap. Without Vodacom we would have lost valuable data from her and would not have been able to manage her.

"It has also demonstrated for us that these local introductions are successful and, contrary to conventional wisdom, that these animals stay in the areas into which they are released. This is the fifth leopard that the Landmark Foundation has introduced into Addo National Park, and they are all doing well. The project has been a great success."

Vodacom Foundation sponsored and has partnered the Landmark Foundation on its Leopard and Predator project since late 2005. The direct result of these efforts has been the successful rescue of ten leopards by the Landmark Foundation.

Vuyani Jarana, Vodacom's Managing Executive Eastern Region, says that his company is committed to sustainable development and to assisting the conservation bodies like Landmark Foundation, SANParks and Kuzuko in securing the magnificent biodiversity of our country. "We are proud to have been of assistance to save the leopards. It gives us great pleasure and satisfaction, and we hope to continue being of value to these efforts."

On the web: [Landmark Foundation \(http://www.landmarkfoundation.org.za/\)](http://www.landmarkfoundation.org.za/)

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