



More than a sore tooth for a Leopard



We received a beautiful young female leopard from a farmer near

the town of Bela Bela four weeks ago. The farmer had no idea how long she was in the trap but estimated it to be between three to four days. On closer inspection of the leopard we noticed that her bottom lip was seriously injured and also that she had extensive damage to her bottom canines. She clearly was in excruciating pain.

We rushed her to our consulting veterinarian Dr Peter Caldwell of Old Chapel Veterinary Clinic and it was decided to get her to a specialist veterinary dental specialist. The De Wildt Wild Cheetah Project mainly focuses on cheetah related issues and we don't have any dedicated sponsors or funding available for leopard work. Most of these expenses have been covered by eating into our valuable cheetah conservation budget.

Dr Caldwell mentioned that this would be an expensive procedure to extract the bottom canines and to do root-canal work on the top canines which were also damaged. This is funding that the De Wildt Wild Cheetah Project does not have...

Dr Caldwell kindly offered to sponsor some of the expenses of the leopard and the dental veterinary specialist Dr Gerhard Steenkamp, offered his services at cost. The leopard was rushed to Dr Steenkamp's dental practice and she underwent a four hour surgery. We had to remove both her bottom canines and both top canines required root-canal work. Both Dr Caldwell and Dr Steenkamp was of the opinion that she could survive if she was released back into the wild.

She was released one week later after she was fitted with a telemetry collar to keep tabs on her and to make sure she survives. The owner and staff of Nsele Game Ranch near Vaalwater kindly offered to monitor her after release as she was set free on Nsele Game Ranch.

One week later she is doing fine, and has spent some time

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with the local resident male... Hopefully love is in the air!!!!!!

It is disgraceful that farmers are allowed to catch predators such as leopards in traps that cause serious injury, and the worst part of all is that these farmers think they are doing the leopards and organisations such as De Wildt a favour to capture these predators for relocation.

Although DeWildt's core focus will remain the conservation of cheetahs outside of protected areas, we simply can not ignore the other large predators such as leopards.

