

Southern African Feline Focus (SAFF)

Quarterly Briefing



Issue 4 – July 2026

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Welcome

Welcome to the fourth issue of SAFF (Southern African Feline Focus).

When we took the decision to try to provide interested parties with a quarterly chronicle of South African feline events and news, we hoped the project would develop into the useful reference tool we envisaged. With the publication of this, the fourth issue of SAFF (Southern African Feline Focus), we are breathing sighs of relief and giving ourselves a tiny pat on the back. Since the publication of the first issue, we have received a steady stream of requests from people asking to be added to the circulation list, and have had several positive comments endorsing SAFF and praising its usefulness.

We suspect that anyone anywhere in the world who has an interest in wildlife is aware of the name David Attenborough. On May 8th Sir David Attenborough celebrated his 100th birthday. During his lifetime the natural world has retreated dramatically due to the huge rise in the number of humans on the planet, and the rapacious manner in which humans live at the expense of the natural world. Wild fauna and flora the world over have paid a heavy price, and nowhere is this more true than among southern Africa's wild felines.

We open this issue with belated Happy Birthday congratulations to Sir David, and our thanks for the positive difference he has made towards ensuring that we have retained at least some of the natural world. His and other fingers in the dykes of human expansion and over consumption have been a crucial factor in helping to ensure the survival of at least some of our natural world.

To access the information sources referred to readers should click on the **orange headlines** for each entry. To those who have recently registered to receive the Southern African Feline Focus (SAFF) we would point out that the aim of our on-line publication is to provide an ever building reference file for journalists, campaigners, researchers, politicians and others interested in this sector.

April 9th 2026: [BONE PRODUCERS COURT SET BACK?](#)

The National Council of SPCAs (NSPCA) was granted leave to intervene in the Gauteng High Court in a case brought by SAPA (South African Predator Association) against the Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment. SAPA alleges that the Minister failed to establish commercial export quotas for lion bones and other derived products. The SAPA case followed the Minister's decision not to establish annual export quotas for lion bones and derivatives. It should be noted that the Minister cited in this case was Dion George, the previous Minister.

The court will review evidence from the NSPCA, and will make a decision which could determine the future of South Africa's lion bone export trade and have a major impact on the country's lion farming sector.

April 10th 2026: [LION CUBS FOR SALE R100,000 \(\\$6,000\). SAPS CLERK CHARGED](#)

Mokete Elizabeth Dikoko (51) a South African Police Service clerk and Elias Moloi (36) appeared in the Bothaville magistrates court in the Free State charged with trying to sell 4 lion cubs at R100,000 each. The cubs had been stolen and were returned to their owners.

April 13th 2026: [COURT'S LION BONE CASE \(CONTINUED\)](#)

Adam Cruise writing in the Daily Maverick traces the background of the Gauteng High Court case referred to in the previous entry, and examines the potential direction of the case now that the NSPCA have been given leave to present their evidence.

April 14th 2026: [PRESS COMPLAINTS DISMISSED PART A & \[PRESS COMPLAINTS DISMISSED PART B\]\(#\)](#)

The Press Council of South Africa Acting Press Ombudsman dismissed two complaints from Wildlife Ranching SA (WSRA) relating to articles published in the Daily Maverick.

April 15th 2026: [RAT POISON IS KILLING CARACALS](#)

Rodenticides targeting rats and other rodents are being consumed by genets, caracals, raptors and other species that prey on rodents. Consuming rodents which have ingested these poisons results in internal bleeding in the chest and abdominal cavities. Dr Gabrielle Leighton has performed dozens of postmortems on caracals and has become used to seeing this internal haemorrhaging.



©A caracal and rat spotted at Kirstenbosch, Cape Town.
Jacques Smith/Urban Caracal Project

April 17th 2026: [LION BONE LEGAL BATTLE \(CONTINUED\)](#)

This article in The Mail and Guardian outlines considerations in the court case brought by SAPA in the Gauteng High Court which seeks to compel the Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment to establish annual lion bone sales quotas for 2023 and 2024. The court has given permission for the NSPCA and the EMS Foundation to present evidence in the case. This case is referred to in the earlier entries on April 9th and 13th.

April 18th 2026: [SOUTH AFRICAN CHEETAHS TO INDIA](#)

Reports in Oneindia and NDTV confirmed that 4 cheetahs (2 females and 2 males) had arrived in India's Bannerghatta Biological Park from South Africa. The cats were supplied by Impex Wildlife Traders aka The Induna Primate and Parrot Park as part of an approved exchange programme.

April 22nd 2026: [NEW KZN TRADITIONAL MEDICINE REGULATORY BODY](#)

The Empiliveni Traditional Health Practitioners (THP) Warehouse project will monitor and manage the supply of medicinal plants and animal by-products used in traditional medicine. Lion body parts have a long history of use in traditional medicine.

May 16th 2026: [AUCAMP DENIES CAPTIVE WILDLIFE LINKS](#)

Mr A.D. Beesley of Action SA posed a parliamentary question to Minister W. Aucamp concerning his alleged links to the captive wildlife breeding sector. Aucamp denied any such links.

May 18th 2026: [CAPE LEOPARDS, GENETICALLY UNIQUE](#)

This piece in SciTech Daily confirms that Cape leopards are small, genetically distinct, and locally adapted which makes them a conservation priority.

May 22nd 2026: [OLD LIONESSE TARGETED AND KILLED BY PIENAAR COMMUNITY](#)

Following an incident which involved an old and sick lioness attacking and seriously injuring a community member the lioness was hunted down and killed.

May 23rd 2026: [ICARUS SATELLITE, A POTENTIAL NEW ANTI-POACHING DEVELOPMENT](#)

The new Icarus satellite system is tracking signals hidden in animal behaviour. By monitoring how animals react to human intruders conservationists hope to pinpoint and crack down on poachers. The new system is being trialled at the Okambara Private Reserve in Namibia. Icarus could save lives among several threatened species like lions, cheetahs, elephants and rhinos by making a significant advance in anti-poaching efforts.

May 26th 2026: [WHAT'S IN A WORD?](#)

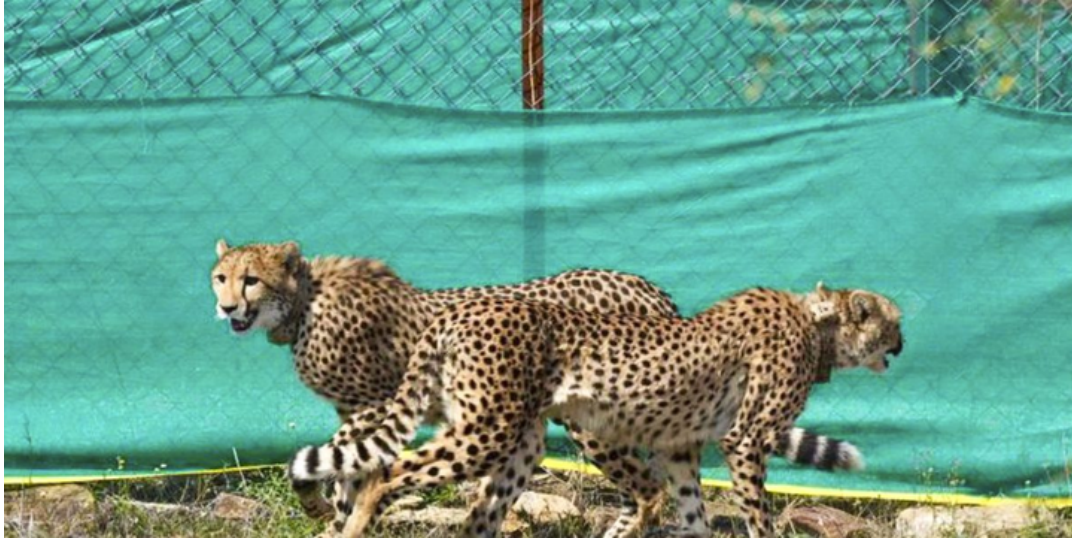
This article in the Daily Maverick reports on a potentially landmark case being heard in the constitutional court. The case may turn on one word, "wellbeing". A small word but behind it is the battle of whether South African conservation law should deal only with wild populations, permits and the sustainable use of wild animal species, or whether it should also consider the welfare of individual animals.

May 27th 2026: [QUESTIONS OVER INDIA'S 'PROJECT CHEETAH'](#)

India's Project Cheetah at Kuno National Park has been hailed a success, but as this detailed piece in The Print points out some experts are concerned at the large number of tranquilisations (110 in 2 years) and several deaths.

June 1st 2026: [INDIA'S CHEETAH PROJECT CONTINUED](#)

The Wire reports on an injured wild 27 month old female cheetah which died of her injuries. Her death brought the total number of cheetahs which have died at Kuno to 23.



Representative image. Two cheetahs roam in their enclosure after being released at Kuno National Park, Madhya Pradesh. Photo: @byadavbjp/X via PTI Photo.

June 3rd 2026: [ALARMING SOUTH AFRICAN CHEETAH DECLINE](#)

The Weekend Argus reported on the first ever Free Roaming Cheetah Census (FRCC) which revealed that the numbers of wild cheetahs living outside protected reserves may be 70% lower than previously estimated. The paper joined scientists and conservationists calling for urgent action to reverse this alarming trend.

June 4th 2026: [LIONS ON THE LOOSE IN MBOMBELA](#)

Mbombela residents remained wary and nervous after 2 lions were reported roaming in the area but only 1 was captured.

June 8th 2026: [SECOND LION CAPTURED](#)

As reported in Mpumalanga News the second lion referred to above was captured on June 8th after an intensive and extensive search assisted by drones, veterinary experts and trackers.

June 8th 2026: [POTENTIAL POLICY SHIFT SIGNED BY AUCAMP](#)

Jason Gilchrist writing in The Conversation reports on recommendations signed by Willie Aucamp, when he was Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and The Environment, to overturn previous policy and revive trade in wildlife products. Conservationists were alarmed at this development and commentators noted that South Africa could be backing itself into an uncomfortable corner on the world stage.

June 9th 2026: DARTING ATTEMPTS FAIL, LION SHOT

A professional hunter was called in to shoot and kill a lion that had been seen roaming on the R66 between Nongoma and Pongola in KZN. Conservation and welfare groups expressed concern at the frequent use of destruction permits in KZN.



The lion was spotted on the R66 between Nongoma and Pongola in KwaZulu-Natal.

Photo: sthembiso.gazu5/TikTok

June 17th 2026: DA POLITICAL SHUTTLES AND SHUFFLES

Geordin Hill-Lewis, the leader of the Democratic Alliance, wrote to President Cyril Ramaphosa requesting that John Steenhuisen be removed as Minister of Agriculture and replaced by Willie Aucamp from Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, and that David Maynier take Aucamp's place.

June 24th 2026: ESWATINI (SWAZILAND) CHEETAH REINTRODUCTION

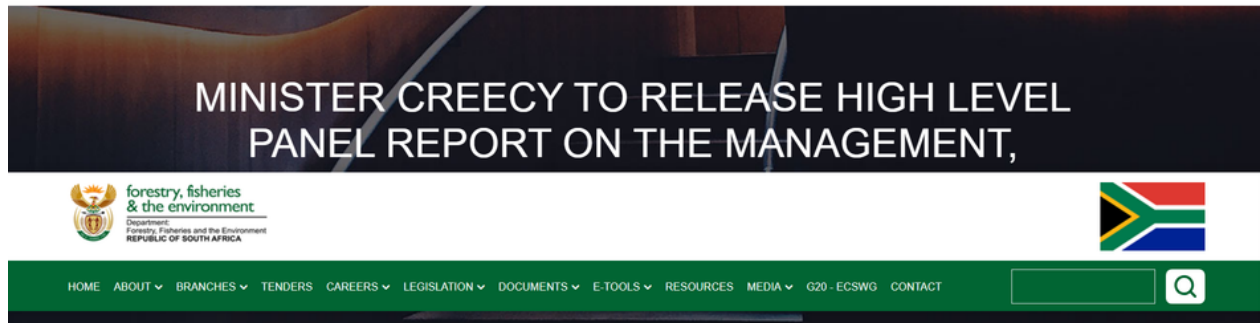
After a 35-year absence 4 cheetahs were reintroduced to Eswatini. 2 males and 2 females were released in the Royal Jozini Private Game Reserve where it is hoped they will breed and form the foundation of a local renewal for this threatened species.

June 30th 2026: DA REQUEST APPROVED BY PRESIDENT

President Cyril Ramaphosa announced a cabinet re-shuffle involving a number of Ministers and Deputy Ministers. Minister Willie Aucamp was confirmed as the new Minister of Agriculture and Minister David Maynier as the Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment.

A CURIOUS DISAPPEARANCE

Both the High Level Panel Report tabled by Minister Barbara Creecy in 2021 when she was at the DFFE, and the Ministerial Task Team Report on lion farming approved by Cabinet in 2024 have mysteriously disappeared from all DFFE public on-line platforms. We wonder whether the delete buttons were pressed deliberately!



30 April 2021

The Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, Ms Barbara Creecy will release the High Level Panel (HLP) report on the management, breeding, hunting, trade and handling of elephant, lion, leopard and rhinoceros on Sunday, 2 May 2021, in Pretoria.

