



CAPE
LEOPARD
TRUST

IMPACT REPORT
2023

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CAPE
LEOPARD
TRUST

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

When we look back at the activities and many achievements of the Cape Leopard Trust over this past year, one of the standout features is the growth and expansion of the organisation's conservation reach locally, as well as internationally. The CLT is now recognised as the leading predator conservation organisation in the Western Cape, partnering in various projects and initiatives with provincial and local stakeholders as well as statutory bodies such as CapeNature. Furthermore, and most gratifying, is the increasing way our researchers and educators are welcomed within local communities and societies of landowners, who acknowledge and appreciate our aim to protect wild habitats.

During March this year the Cape Leopard Trust, together with elite international partners co-hosted the inaugural Global Leopard Conference, a virtual gathering of the world's foremost leopard scientists and enthusiasts seeking ways to better protect one of the world's most important persecuted and threatened big cat species. The Cape Leopard Trust is immensely proud to have delivered a successful conference and immensely honoured to be part of an esteemed group of scientists and conservationists, as well as to share in their extensive knowledge and wisdom.

A major problem the Cape Leopard Trust must contend with, is the increasing prevalence of wire snares to poach bushmeat. Of all the various poaching methods, the setting of wire snares is the most difficult to combat and it's a scourge which confronts conservationists worldwide. The Cape Leopard Trust is pro-actively searching for practical ways to curb this menace and again has joined forces with a network of respected organisations to address the challenge. Through our joint efforts, hundreds of snares are already being found and removed in the Western Cape. This holistic collaboration has already responded to animals found alive in these snare traps, and I urge readers to visit the dedicated Snare Free website to get a detailed picture of the efforts and to join us in supporting these endeavours.

We at the Cape Leopard Trust believe that effective conservation should combine education with research, and we go beyond purely conducting research and data gathering for scientific purposes, we also combine this with substantial and meaningful education programmes that reach thousands of children every year, educating them about the preservation and protection of animals and

plants, their habitats and how these are affected by environmental and human influences. Again, I encourage readers to visit our website to learn in more detail about this very important work.

I often emphasize that an organisation is only as resilient and vibrant as the quality of its people. My thanks to our dedicated personnel who consistently deliver outstanding results. Their performance and commitment this year have been outstanding, and the successes at the recent Eco-Logic Awards and Kudu Awards is highly deserved and testament to their dedication.

My sincere gratitude also to my fellow Trustees and to our eminent Scientific Advisory Board for their valuable contributions, as well as to our partners CapeNature, for their valuable support and assistance. And of course, thank you to our wonderful sponsors and our growing community of supporters.

Johan van der Westhuizen
Chairman



INTRODUCTION FROM THE CEO

The end of the year offers an opportunity for quiet reflection. A chance to acknowledge the obstacles we have overcome, and to consider our achievements in 2023. The whirlwind of the last 12 months indicates that life has almost returned to 'normal', post Covid. However, the reality of the economic downturn, and the catastrophic environmental events are a stark reminder that there is no room for complacency. We continue to lose species and valuable habitat at an unprecedented rate, which will ultimately impact human well-being too. So, what can we do to make a real difference in the face of such despair?

The Cape Leopard Trust remains a small, focused, and innovative organisation. This year more than ever we have found hope by consolidating relationships and forming strong collaborations. You will read more about these on the project pages, but perhaps the most significant partnership has been the hosting of an inaugural Global Leopard Conference in March, bringing together leopard projects from across the world. Hearing other countries share their leopard related concerns and brainstorming potential solutions together is vital when it comes to meaningful species and landscape protection. Leopards may be the world's most adaptable big cat, but many of the sub species are in big trouble. The conference has enabled us to consider how we can join hands through this global network and potentially work together for greater good.

Our day-to-day work can sometimes be disheartening, and this was certainly the case last year when the Cape Leopard Trust was called out to an increasing number of animals discovered alive and wounded in illegal wire snares. In response we formed 'Snare Free', in partnership with CapeNature, Kogelberg Biosphere, Cape of Good Hope SPCA and the Wildlife Forensic Academy. Looking back, it's incredible to think that in the space of one year we collectively developed and launched resources that will be shared freely with others struggling with similar challenges.

Our education work continues to go from strength to strength, providing the backbone of our conservation work. While changing adult mindsets can be hard, motivating children to learn about and become inspired by nature is something we can do well. We have continued to build on the success of the Girls in Conservation Programme and in 2023 hosted our first Gents Trek, a mentorship journey for young men. This project is essential if we are to nurture positive

male behaviour in a society where appropriate role models are often missing. The 'Footprints in the Fynbos' children's book made it to the top six titles chosen by the Global Literacy Summit this year. Seeing this South African conservation tool showcased on an international stage and recognised for its contribution to literacy, is evidence that our environmental education goes way beyond one dimension.

These are just a few examples of where our home-grown concepts are modelled on world vision thinking to ensure the long-term survival of leopards and the protection of landscapes upon which they depend. And perhaps that's the moral of the story. Alone things can seem impossible, but together we can make ideas a reality. I am so proud of our hardworking team, and it is with sincere gratitude to our Board of Trustees, Scientific Advisory Board, donors, and supporters who have enabled us to bring this work to life. It's remarkable to think we'll be celebrating our 20th anniversary in 2024, and thanks to you all, the Cape Leopard Trust is ready to face the next decade, whatever it brings!

Helen





CAPE LEOPARD TRUST

- to better understand leopard ecology and distribution
- to contribute scientific data
- to inform management policies

- to understand and mitigate conflict with and threats to leopards
- to promote biodiversity conservation and habitat connectivity
- to capacitate community members living in leopard areas

OUR WORK

The Cape Leopard Trust (CLT) is an environmental NGO and non-profit, founded in 2004 and based in the Western Cape, South Africa. We facilitate and promote the conservation of biological diversity, with a focus on the leopard as a flagship species. The leopard is the last large predator and member of the Big 5 to still roam free in the Western Cape. The species faces multiple threats, including limited and fragmented habitat, reduction in prey numbers, and high levels of conflict with people.

Our purpose and vision is to ensure the continued survival of leopard populations, to help secure their habitat and prey base, and to promote their coexistence with humans. To achieve this, we employ a three-pillar approach of research, conservation, and education. These three pillars operate in synergy within the Cape Leopard Trust and in collaboration with communities, private landowners, and partner organisations.



- to reconnect the youth to our natural heritage
- to instil a consciousness of and appreciation for biodiversity
- to inspire the next generation to become conservation ambassadors



OUR TEAM



Helen Turnbull
Chief Executive Officer



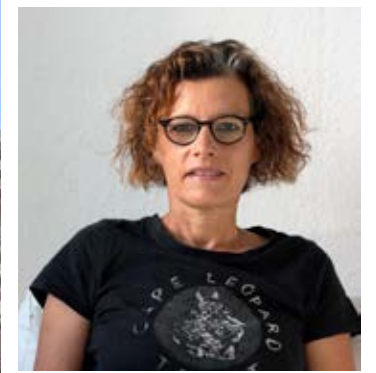
Dr Katy Williams
Research & Conservation Director



Chris Eksteen
Education & Outreach Manager



Jeannie Hayward
Communications & Media Manager



Yvonne Kamp
Administration & Finance



Anita Wilkinson
Senior Researcher



Andrea Schnetler-Niddrie
Conservation Coordinator



Dr Chavoux Luyt
Community Outreach Officer



Jaco Fourie
Environmental Educator



Naas van Jaarsveld
Environmental Educator



Matthew Arendse
Research & Conservation Field Officer



Vusi Martins
Research Assistant



Silindokuhle Tokota
PhD student



Eugene Greyling
MSc student



Jeanne van Tonder
MSc student



Jamie-Lee Carle
MSc student



Lawrence Steyn
MSc student



Rosco Ockhuis
Verification Officer



Frank Scheepers
Verification Officer



Ben Farmer
Verification Officer



Stewart van Rooy
Verification Officer



Lionel van Rooy
Verification Officer



Ricardo Salomo
Verification Officer



SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

In 2023, the CLT research team came 'home' to the Trust's birthplace to lead a large-scale camera trap survey across the Cederberg landscape. Fieldwork was conducted between June and December, and the team scaled rugged and precipitous terrain in scorching heat, unprecedented floods, and even snowfall. The exertion paid off as the photos revealed some individual leopards known from the previous survey in 2018, as well as several new cats.

Periodically re-surveying areas is essential to establish population trends and support necessary conservation measures. The Little Karoo region has been surveyed using camera traps three times, most recently in 2022, and analyses to examine leopard densities using the data from these three surveys are underway with a MSc student at the University of Cape Town.

For the first time the CLT's camera trapping work has extended into the Eastern Cape. Silindokuhle Tokota, a CLT staff member turned PhD student at Nelson Mandela University, is working with the CLT and Panthera to monitor leopard populations on reserves in our neighbouring province. Silindokuhle is currently running his final field survey, and he has had to deal with a whole different suite of fieldwork challenges – including lions trying to 'eat' the cameras!

Broad-scale thinking is necessary to conserve wide-ranging species like leopards. This year we congratulate two Stellenbosch University MSc students who worked with the CLT to analyse extensive province-wide interviews and leopard distribution datasets. Their results provide valuable insights into the relationships between people and leopards, threats to leopards, and suitable habitat and connectivity for leopards across the Western Cape. The findings will be applied to our conservation strategies and have already sparked a continuation research project.

The illegal practice of snaring is a growing threat to leopards in the Western Cape. Social science research investigating this hunting method further illustrates the intertwined and essential relationship between research and conservation. In partnership with the CLT, over 100 interviews were led by Dr Wendy Annecke and research assistant Vusi Martins, to understand specific drivers of

snaring in four communities, and consider localised opportunities to address the socio-economic drivers of snaring together with communities. This research is part of a larger multi-faceted project to address snaring in the Western Cape.

Sharing of research results is paramount to the CLT. Nine peer-reviewed publications were published in scientific journals this year. Two 2023 publications revealed the CLT's lowest leopard density estimate (0.64 leopards per 100 km² in the Overberg) and highest leopard density estimate (1.96 leopards per 100 km² in the Piketberg and Olifantsrivier Mountains) in the Western Cape. The CLT research team presented at four local and international conferences, including the first ever Global Leopard Conference which was hosted online in March (read more on p.29).



It is very important to check and prepare all equipment before heading into the field.

CEDARBERG CAMERA TRAP SURVEY

> 2000 km² covered

67 paired stations, 134 camera traps active for just over 6 months

6 nights camping in the wild

54 stations with leopards photographed

3 partner organisations working together to service camera traps

16 camera traps permanently damaged in extraordinary flooding

1 tough as nails Toyota Land Cruiser!



Great attention to detail is required to ensure a proper camera setup.



Setting up camera traps in the Cedarberg.



The Cederberg survey involved a lot of hiking through rugged but beautiful terrain.



A complete camera trap station in the Cederberg.



CapeNature staff in the Cederberg were trained to assist in the camera survey and their support has been invaluable.



Fieldwork in winter may entail many stream crossings and opportunities to sport fashionable rain gear.

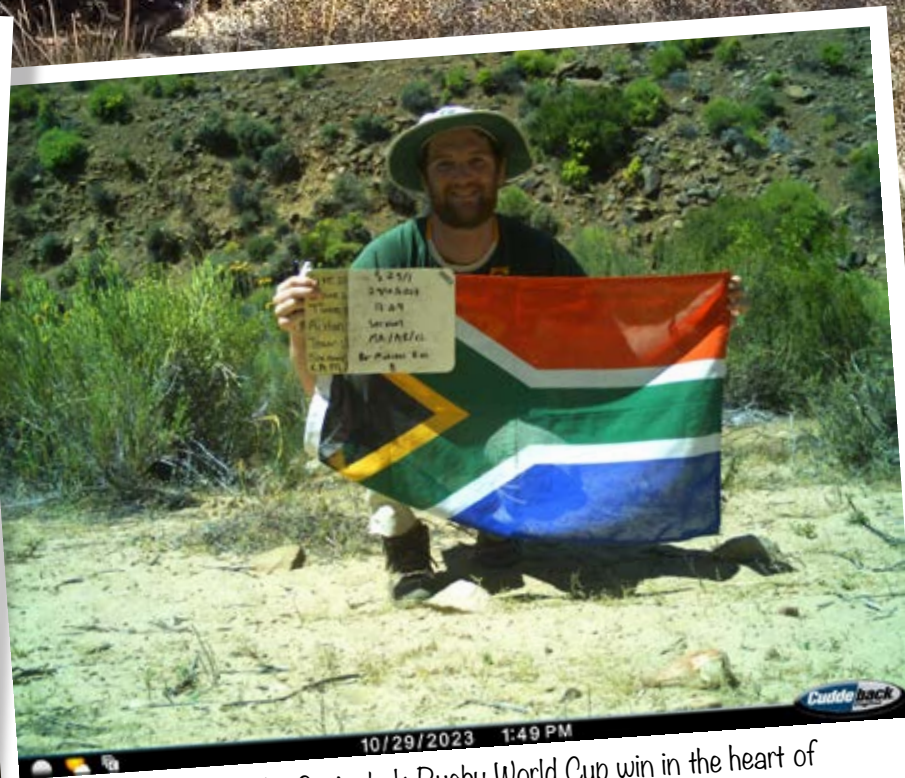




Unprecedented flooding resulted in the loss of 16 camera traps. Some bravely took photos of the rising waters!



After the massive rains in June, our team had to contend with snow in September. It made for some pretty chilly but epic fieldwork!



Celebrating the Springbok Rugby World Cup win in the heart of the Cederberg.



Reliable field research vehicles are an invaluable asset.



Witblitz, our tough-as-nails Toyota Land Cruiser, is particularly at home in the rugged Cederberg.





The presence of leopard signs like spoor, scat and scratch marks is a good indication of where to place new camera traps.



Leopard field sign is plentiful in the Cederberg - sometimes even so fresh that it is still warm! This is a fresh dropping, urine and scrape site.



Complex datasets need careful analyses. A lot of thought and discussion goes into selecting the best methods.



Helen, Anita and Katy at the Southern African Wildlife Management Association conference.



Sharing research results with an audience of peers at academic conferences provides a good platform to network and learn.



Some of our research team attending the CapeNature Landscape East Biodiversity Stewardship Partners workshop to give feedback on our Little Karoo research and share our provincial work on suitable leopard habitats and connectivity.



CONSERVATION IN ACTION

It’s certainly been an exciting and dynamic year on the conservation front!

In response to escalating reports of snares and animals caught in snares, the CLT, together with partner organisations, developed the Western Cape Snare Response Plan (WCSRP) as part of the **Snare Free** initiative. The response plan, with its reporting hotline and dedicated support vehicle, provides streamlined reporting and emergency response. Snare Free also aims to improve awareness about snares, lead training for land managers and the public, and enhance the collection of data on snaring. Lastly, it hopes to improve knowledge via a social science research project which works with communities to better understand the drivers and potential solutions to snaring. Since the public launch of the Snare Free hotline in August 2023, the WCSRP has been activated for two reported snared wildlife incidents. Assistance was sent quickly and efficiently to the scene, and follow up snare mitigation training support was offered to the properties affected.

Multi-layered collaboration is also key to the success of The Tale of Two Leopards (ToTL). This, a joint project with the Endangered Wildlife Trust, received the Gold Nature Conservation Award at the 2023 Eco-Logic Awards. As part of this project, six new leopard and toad reflective road signs were installed at vehicle collision hotspots in the Overberg. This newest batch of signs depict local leopards from the 2021-2022 Overberg camera trap survey and feature two new endangered amphibian species. The ToTL has also joined forces with Grootbos Foundation to begin exploring ideas to link the Walker Bay Protected Environment in the west with the Agulhas National Park and Nuwejaars Special Management Area in the east, in an effort to maintain and improve habitat connectivity across the entire local ecosystem. This priority biodiversity area has been coined the Agulhas Green Corridor (AGC). So far, the AGC project has resulted in four biodiversity assessments (Bioblitzes) for private properties, amphibian acoustic monitoring surveys in the corridor area, a localised camera trap survey, and a landowner event celebrating the exceptional biodiversity, endemism and ecological importance of the Agulhas Plain.

Relationships between people and wildlife are often complicated, and sometimes overwhelmingly negative. Committed and adaptive strategies are needed

to transform such negative interactions. In 2023, the CLT Conservation team responded to numerous conflict calls involving leopards, providing support and advice to landowners and farmers as a way to promote positive coexistence with predators. Together with several organisations, three ‘Farming with Nature’ workshops were held in new geographic areas on predator conflict mitigation and farm management methods that protect nature, benefit farmers, and enhance food security.

Our discussions with farmers revealed the need to design a mobile, predator-proof kraal (protective enclosure) to better protect livestock from predation. The CLT has launched the **Mobi-kraal** project to design and test a suitable enclosure to house livestock overnight or at times of vulnerability. Preparations are well underway to host a national competition in 2024 to find a robust, affordable, easy-to-use kraal design, which will be rigorously tested for efficacy and useability during the next phase of the project.

SNARE FREE

5 partner organisations signed the Western Cape Snare Response Plan

33 workshops and presentations led by the CLT

2570 people reached through workshops and presentations

871 snare awareness resources (posters, booklets, flyers) distributed

42 snares reported on the CLT’s Snare Aware online database

111 interviews conducted

PREDATOR CONFLICT SUPPORT

31 conflict calls supported

6 active Verification Officers

7 active Community Champions

3 Farming with Nature workshops hosted

38 people attended the Farming with Nature workshops



Various partner meetings were held over the course of several months to develop and fine-tune the Western Cape Snare Response Plan and Snare Free.



The Western Cape Snare Response Plan was signed by partners from the CLT, CapeNature, Kogelberg Biosphere, Cape of Good Hope SPCA and Wildlife Forensic Academy.



Many stakeholders were involved in workshops to discuss the Western Cape Snare Response Plan.



SNARE FREE
REPORT · RESPOND · REMOVE
snarefree.co.za





Outreach and education are important components of Snare Free.



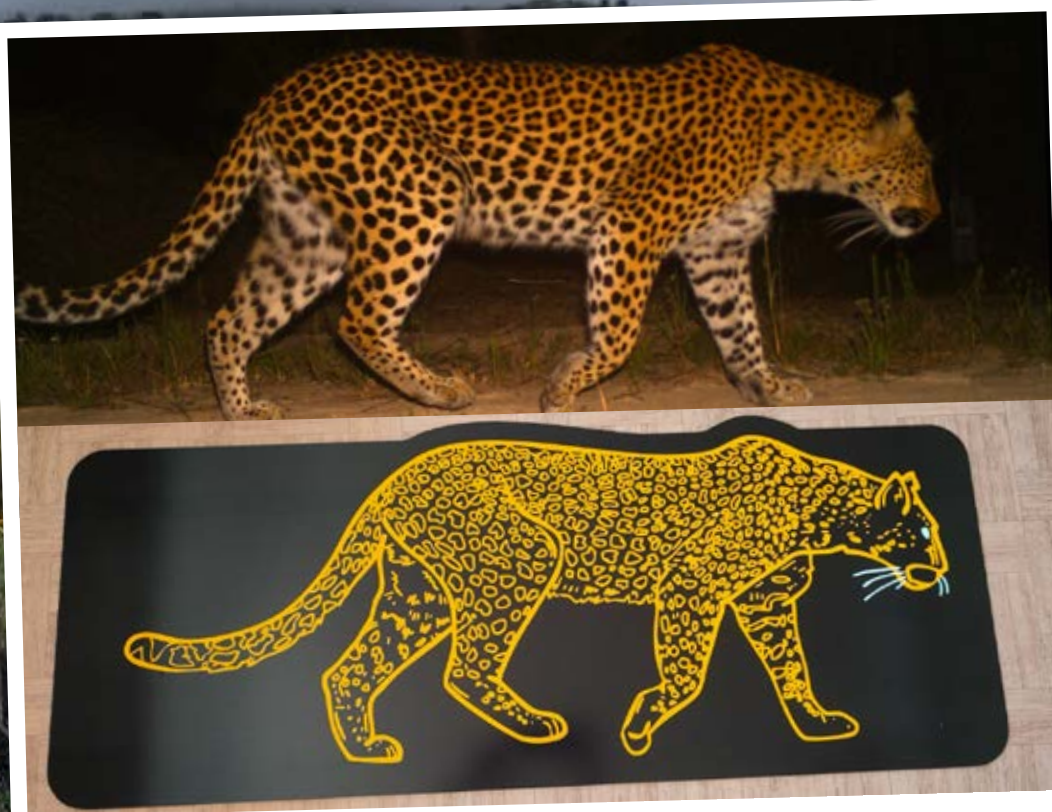
The Snare Free Ford Ranger is used to respond to conflict calls and snaring incidents, and for outreach and workshops to spread the Snare Free message.



The CLT led multiple workshops and hands-on training days to impart knowledge and awareness about snaring.



Six new leopard and toad reflective road signs were installed at vehicle collision hotspots in the Overberg.



The new reflective road signs depict actual local leopards from the 2021-2022 Overberg camera trap survey.



Dr Jeanne Tarrant (EWT) and Dr Katy Williams (CLT) accepting the Gold Nature Conservation Award at the 2023 Eco-Logic Awards.



Presenting our results and giving feedback to stakeholders are important parts of collaborative conservation efforts.



Presenting and discussing the Aguhas Green Corridor project with stakeholders.



A 'Creatures of the Corridor' event held to involve landowners in the Aguhas Green Corridor project.



The CLT Verification Officers received training to refresh their knowledge and skills.



A collaborative 'Farming with Nature' workshop held in Nieuwoudtville.

CONSERVATION KRAAL CHALLENGE

UP TO R50 000 PRIZE!

Do you have the skills and vision to design a kraal that is

- ☑ Mobile
- ☑ Predator Proof
- ☑ Affordable
- ☑ Durable

COMING SOON!

ENTRIES OPEN
1 February 2024

DEADLINE
30 June 2024

Mobi-kraal
A CAPE LEOPARD TRUST INITIATIVE

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ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

UN Sustainable
Development Goals



In 2023, the CLT education team had the privilege of implementing new environmental education programmes across the Western Cape and elevating our impact. Our vision to educate and empower young people by connecting them with nature, instilling an attitude of reverence and respect for the natural environment has been the driving force behind improving and ensuring the quality of our programmes. This approach has enabled us to attract a diverse range of participants and foster inclusivity. We have continued to offer a comprehensive range of nature experiences that transform the way in which young people perceive themselves and nurtures their commitment to conservation.

Our growth has extended beyond the boundaries of our organisation. We actively engaged with local communities, fostering partnerships that not only enriched our programmes but also contributed to the positive development of the areas in which we operate. The focus of the environmental education team is to motivate and mentor responsible citizens who will become future protectors of the Cape's unique landscapes.

Chris Eksteen, CLT Education and Outreach Manager, had the privilege of attending the World Literacy Summit in Oxford, UK, where our inclusive book project 'Footprints in the Fynbos' was nominated for a World Literacy Award. Environmental Educators Naas van Jaarsveld and Jaco Fourie also presented our work at this year's Environmental Education Association of Southern Africa (EEASA) conference. Chris and Naas were also both honoured at the Kudu Awards – Chris won the Environmental Education / Capacity Building Award, and Naas the Youth in Conservation Award.

The Western Cape is fortunate to have several institutions and organisations that support environmental learning in schools. However, many teachers and educators remain unaware of the resources, tools and services available to support their EE teachings. In 2023, we conducted another four SACE-accredited teacher workshops, emphasizing climate change education and incorporating STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics) teaching materials. Additionally, we extended the programme to encompass the hosting of a regional conference dedicated to the community of environmental education practitioners in the Western Cape.

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION IN NUMBERS

>10 900 learners and adults reached in person

1 online quiz

40 camp days on
13 wilderness camps

13 exhibitions

7 day trips

5 skills development workshops

47 presentations

3287 children's books distributed

2 holiday programmes

>3400 people reached online with lessons, career showcases, virtual hikes & webinars

105 eco-club sessions

The 'Girls in Conservation' programme, our flagship skills development project where female high school learners apply to participate in a week-long holiday programme that showcases female-led career opportunities in the green economy, continues to yield positive results. It includes a year-long environment-focused mentorship where the give back to their community through service assignments and share what they have learnt.

Following the success of this initiative, in 2023 we set out to design a similar programme targeting male learners, and the 'Gents Trek' was born. This 4-day guided hike in the majestic Cederberg not only imparts environmental knowledge but also fosters social well-being and adventure. During the course of their journey, the boys engaged in discussions about communication, conflict resolution, empathy, the meaning of positive male identity, and the value of brotherhood. This experience goes beyond a mere hike; it profoundly impacts these young men, leading to lifelong friendships, newfound skills, and a heightened appreciation for the environment.





Cederberg wilderness camp days are spent hiking and exploring the wonderful biodiversity, rock art and imposing rock formations of the region.



A refreshing swim in one of the many rock pools is one of the highlights of a Cederberg camp.



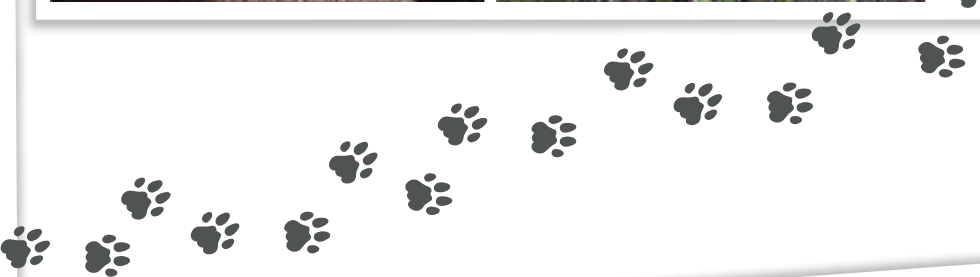
Many camp participants are gifted a copy of our children's book, Footprints in the Fynbos.



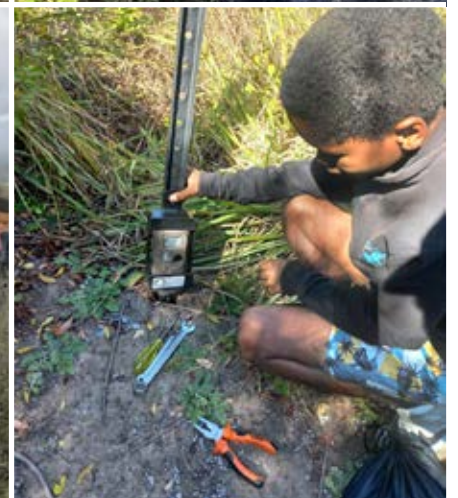
Overberg bush camps give learners an opportunity to experience fynbos, forest, lagoon and ocean.



As in the Cederberg, the Boland and Overberg education experiences focus on experiential learning and hands-on experiences in nature, and noticing the small natural miracles all around.



Camps include many fun and enriching games and activities.



The CLT Research Box project teaches youngsters how to set up field cameras and manage a small monitoring study to give them a taste of scientific research.

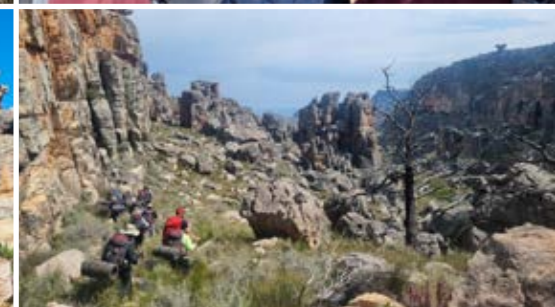




Our Girls in Conservation participants learn about different green economy careers in some special settings like the West Coast Fossil Park, Paarl Mountain, Kirstenbosch and Mont Rochelle Nature Reserve.



The Girls in Conservation programme includes three service assignments: sharing their new knowledge with their peers; planning a 'Snare Aware' workshop at their schools; and hosting a book reading and book distribution at early childhood development centres in their communities.

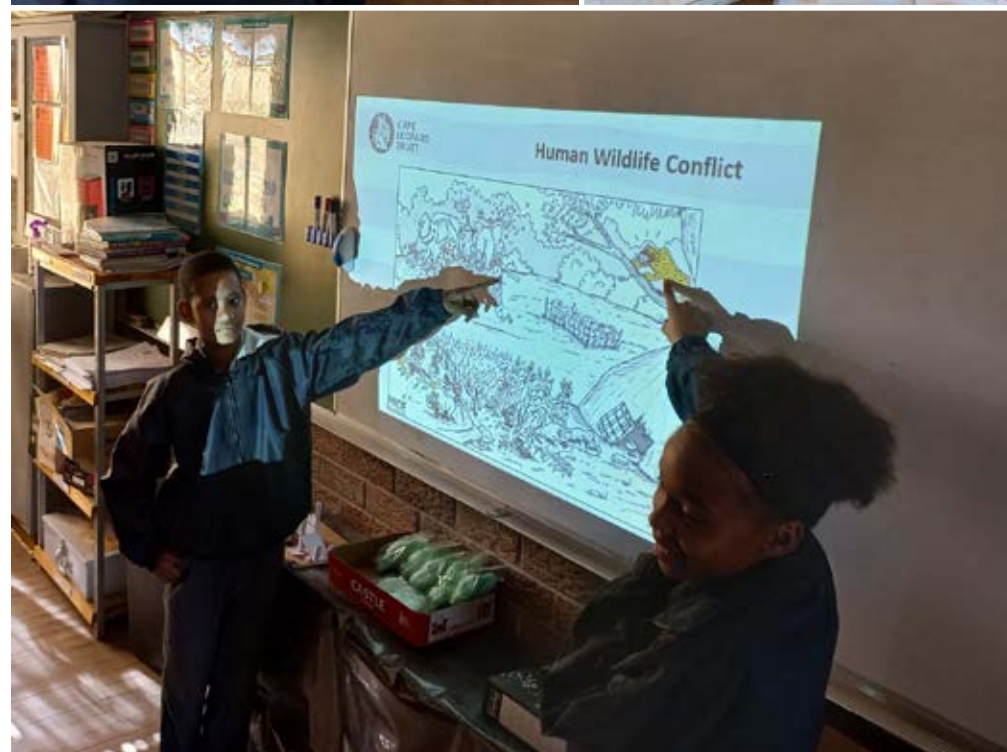


The Gents Trek participants had an immersive experience in the Cederberg through hiking, camping, learning about animal field sign, learning how to navigate with a map and GPS, seeing majestic old cedar trees and planting tiny seedlings.



Much of the programme focusses on hands-on learning experiences.





Little Karoo learners in our eco-club programme received a special CLT workbook with lessons and activities to aid learning.



In 2023, the CLT hosted another online quiz to give participants a glimpse into what it's like to be a wildlife researcher.



Planting trees during Arbor Week.



Naas and Jaco presenting at the 2023 EEASA conference.



We have distributed thousands of copies of our children's book. The young kids are enthralled by the story of Leeto the Leopard.



Involving local children and families in environmental education, setting up camera traps and making plaster of paris casts of leopard tracks.



CLT Teacher Development Workshops present an opportunity for teachers to learn how to engage with environmental learning and introduce these concepts into the classroom.



Chris Eksteen and Naas van Jaarsveld with their Kudu Awards.





COMMUNICATING OUR MESSAGE

The CLT Research, Conservation and Education teams are wholly committed to conducting robust scientific studies, understanding and mitigating threats to biodiversity, delivering meaningful outreach and connecting people to nature.

The purpose of our communications and media portfolio is to ensure that these worthwhile projects, activities, stories and milestones are reported and disseminated accurately in an accessible format to a wide public audience. This includes the CLT website and social platforms; digital storytelling and content creation; print, broadcast and online media; internal and external communication and liaison, and outreach via public presentations and field outings for student groups and sponsors. The holistic approach to storytelling ensures a unified message and has proved invaluable in bolstering awareness and support for the CLT in the public consciousness.



CEDERBERG CAMERA TRAP HIGHLIGHTS



CAPE LEOPARD TRUST EVENTS

The CLT engaged in a diverse range of public events in 2023, thanks to positive partnerships.

On the sports front, the CLT had rider teams participating in both the Absa Cape Epic and the FNB Wines2Whales, and an exhibition stall at Vines & Views.

An official launch of Snare Free, hosted at Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens in collaboration with the founding partners, was attended by policy makers from provincial government and district municipalities, stakeholders from several environmental organisations, nature reserves and conservancies, as well as various media, and project supporters.

And in collaboration with British wildlife photographer Margot Ragget MBE and ORMS, we assisted with a Cape Town launch of the latest book in her Remembering Wildlife series, Remembering Leopards.

Each of these events has helped to raise important awareness of our work.



Kyle Niddrie, Neil Davison, Peter Sproul and Anton Wrensch rode the FNB Wines2Whales for leopards.



Adriaan de Bruyn and Herman Breytenbach successfully completed the gruelling Absa Cape Epic as team Cape Leopard Trust.





The launch of the Snare Free, held at Kirstenbosch National Botanical Gardens.



The CLT's Katy Williams explaining the scope of the snaring issue.



Partners from CapeNature and Cape Leopard Trust at the launch of Snare Free.



Councillor Alex Lansdowne, CLT CEO Helen Turnbull & Wildlife Forensic Academy MD Greg Simpson at the Snare Free launch.



CapeNature CEO Dr Razeena Omar addressing attendees of the Snare Free launch.



The Cape Town launch of Remembering Leopards with Margot Raggett MBE and Orms.



AGAINST THE ODDS

2023 saw the release of a Cape Leopard Trust book to join the ranks of the CLT's very successful children's book, 'Footprints in the Fynbos'.

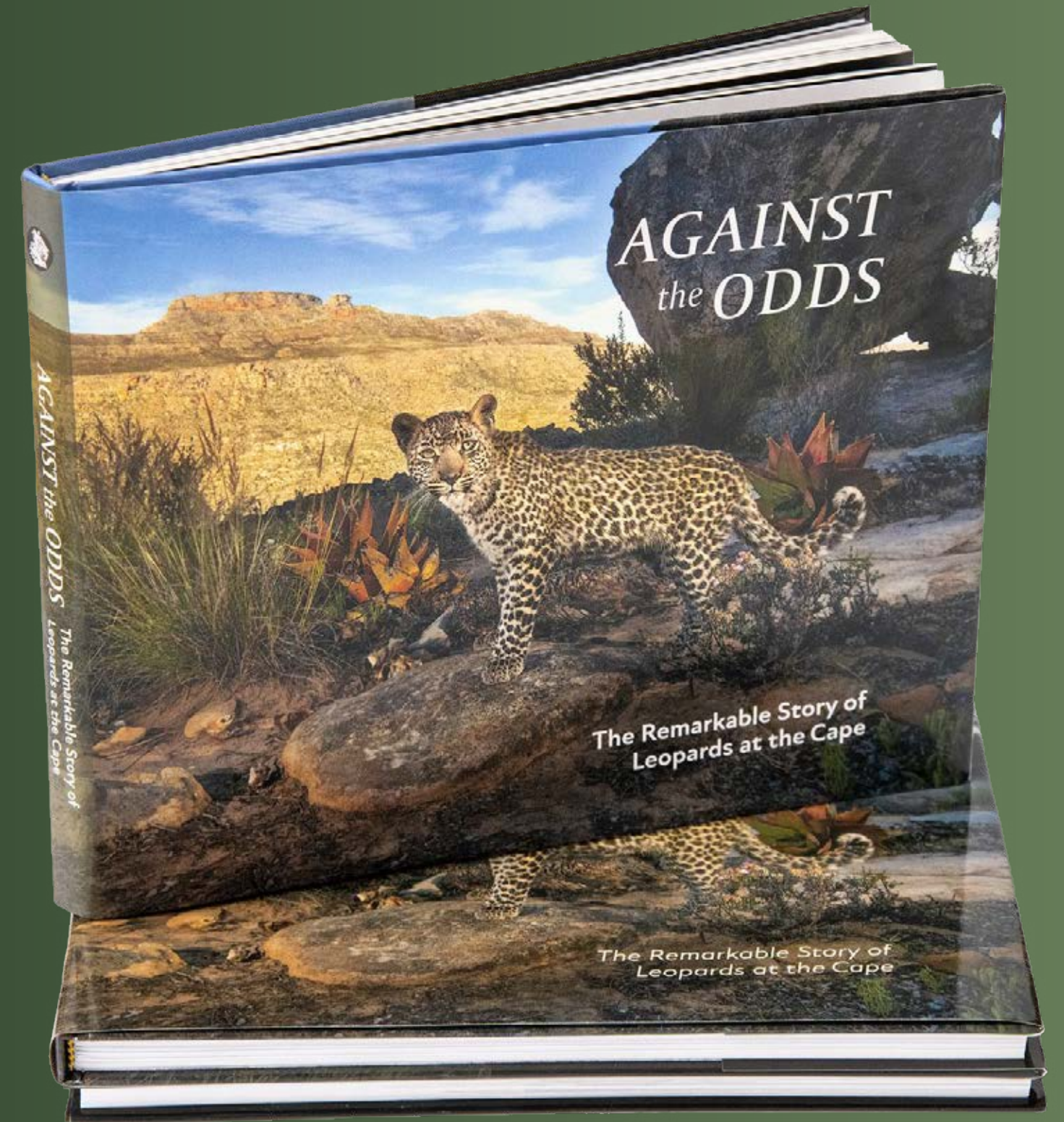
'Against the Odds – The Remarkable Story of Leopards at the Cape' is an appealing and informative coffee table book that celebrates these special big cats and conservation efforts to protect them. Endorsed by Dame Jane Goodall, with a Foreword by Dr Ian McCallum and magnificent cover image by National Geographic photographer Steve Winter, the 144-page hard cover book is a visual feast with high quality photographs that reveal the magnificence of leopards at the Cape. Written in accessible narrative style by environmental journalist John Yeld, it explores the early history and persecution of leopards in the region and how attitudes to these cats have evolved over the last ~400 years. It delves into the birth and coming of age of leopard research and conservation at the Cape, with a focus on 18 years of the Cape Leopard Trust and the people on the ground who have made the organisation what it is today. The book features poignant personal accounts from various role players who dedicated time and personal sacrifice to secure a future for leopards, and shines a light on the importance of these truly wild and elusive felines.

Against the Odds was commissioned and funded by the Hans Hoheisen Charitable Trust.

Book synopsis

Elusive, mysterious, ghost-like ...

Many people are unaware that leopards still roam the wild mountain regions of the Cape and occasionally venture down into adjacent areas in valleys and even the coastal strip. Intensely shy, these reclusive cats are almost never seen, but they reveal their iconic presence in evocative camera trap photographs and through other signs like spoor and scat. The same subspecies as leopards that occur elsewhere throughout Africa, but significantly smaller and with some unique traits, the leopards at the Cape have survived centuries of persecution and hunting – some say miraculously. Now, they have full legal protection (although contraventions still occur) and are widely, if not universally, celebrated for their magnificent physical presence and crucial role as apex predators.



This book tells the remarkable story of leopards at the tip of Africa, and of the Cape Leopard Trust's efforts to ensure these 'ghost cats' continue to survive.

GLOBAL LEOPARD CONFERENCE

In March 2023, several international conservation organisations united to host the inaugural **Global Leopard Conference** (GLC), a virtual gathering of the world's foremost leopard scientists and conservationists, all with one common goal: to better protect one of the world's most important persecuted and threatened big cat species.

The conference was conceived and driven by the CLT, ignited by our ambition to enhance leopard conservation through international dialogue and learning exchanges. With the help of professional conference organisers, Africa Massive, the idea finally became reality through an international partnership network to jointly host the conference. The partners comprised the CLT, Panthera, the Wildlife Conservation Research Unit (WildCRU) at Oxford University, the Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT), WildCats Conservation Alliance, the Royal Commission for AlUla, and the Arabian Leopard Fund, with financial sponsorship from Catmosphere and the Arabian Leopard Fund.

The five-day virtual conference brought together organisations and individuals researching and conserving the nine subspecies of leopards across the globe, providing a platform to share leopard conservation lessons and promote collaborative solutions to ensure the long-term survival of this ecologically important umbrella species.

Despite being a well-known and charismatic species, the conference presentations and discussion groups overwhelmingly indicated that leopards are still greatly in need of awareness raising, support and investment – especially considering their 'Vulnerable' status as listed by the IUCN.

As a lasting legacy of the GLC, International Leopard Day on 3 May and its **website** was officialised and endorsed to give it a permanent and meaningful place on the global wildlife calendar, enabling the promotion and celebration of leopards worldwide. Another significant legacy project is a GLC bursary programme which will launch in early 2024.



GLOBAL LEOPARD CONFERENCE

7 host partners

5 days of presentations

>110 talks & poster presentations

>300 delegates

59 countries

2 legacy projects

A key priority of the Cape Leopard Trust is to invest in and empower scientific research. Over the course of the current reporting period, the CLT contributed to the following peer-reviewed academic articles.

de Villiers, M-S., Janecke, B.B., Müller, L., Amin, R., & Williams, K.S. (2023) Leopard density in a farming landscape of the Western Cape, South Africa. *African Journal of Wildlife Research* 53(1): 177-184.
<https://doi.org/10.3957/056.053.0177>

Hinde, K., Wilkinson, A., Tokota, S., Amin, R., O’Riain, M.J. and Williams, K.S. (2023) Leopard density and the ecological and anthropogenic factors influencing density in a mixed-use landscape in the Western Cape, South Africa. *PLOS ONE* 18(10): e0293445.
<https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0293445>

Parker, D., Nams, V., Balme, G., et al. (2023) The implications of large home range size in a solitary felid, the Leopard (*Panthera pardus*). *Journal of Mammalogy* 104(6): 1353-1363.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/jmammal/gyad074>

Serieys, L.E.K., Bishop, J.M., Rogan, M.S., Smith, J.A., Suraci, J.P., O’Riain, M.J. & Wilmers, C.C. (2023) Anthropogenic activities and age class mediate carnivore habitat selection in a human-dominated landscape. *iScience* 26(7): 107050.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.isci.2023.107050>

Parker, K.H., Bishop, J.M., Serieys, L.E.K., Mateo, R., Camarero, P.R. & Leighton, G.R.M. (2023) A heavy burden: Metal exposure across the land-ocean continuum in an adaptable carnivore. *Environmental Pollution* 327: 121585.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.envpol.2023.121585>

Nams, V.O., Parker, D.M, Weise, F.J., et al. (2023) Spatial patterns of large African cats: a large-scale study on density, home range size, and home range overlap of lions *Panthera leo* and leopards *Panthera pardus*. *Mammal Review* 53(2): 49 – 64.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/mam.12309>

Jansen, C., Leslie, A.J., Cristescu, B., Teichman, K.J. & Martins, Q.E. (2023) Leopards living at the farmland-protected area interface prefer wild prey but consume high biomass of livestock. *African Journal of Ecology* 62(4): 1023-1029.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/aje.13165>

Teichman, K.J, Cristescu, B., Crevier, L., O’Riain, M.J. & Hodges, K.E. (2023) Movement choices of persecuted caracals on farmlands in South Africa. *Rangeland Ecology & Management* 88: 77-84.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rama.2023.02.004>

Greyling, E., Comley, J., Cherry, M.I., Leslie, A.J. & Müller, L. (2023) Facilitation of a free-roaming apex predator in working lands: evaluating factors that influence leopard spatial dynamics and prey availability in a South African biodiversity hotspot. *PeerJ* 11: e14575.
<https://doi.org/10.7717/peerj.14575>

ENABLING OUR WORK

We wish to acknowledge all our partners, friends, donors and fellow conservation organisations that have enabled us to make a difference this year. It is heart-warming to have the support of like-minded individuals and organisations that encourage us to constantly strive to achieve our conservation vision. Thank you for investing in our work!

Main funders, donors and sponsors from 01 December 2022 to 30 November 2023

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The Cape Leopard Trust

(Registration number IT 2720/2004)

Financial Statements for the year ended 28 February 2023

Statement of Comprehensive Income

	2023	2022
Revenue	R8 058 389	R6 912 913
Cost of Sales	-R95 280	-R87 073
Gross Surplus	R7 963 109	R6 825 840
Other income	R315 179	R319 343
Operating Expenses	-R6 998 013	-R6 384 847
Operating Surplus	R1 280 275	R760 336
Investment revenue	R288 335	R175 988
Suplus for the year	R1 568 610	R936 324
Other comprehensive income	-	-
Total comprehensive income for the year	R1 568 610	R936 324

Statement of Financial Position

Assets

Non-Current Assets

Property, plant and equipment	R1 913 978	R1 201 695
Other financial assets	R6 016 614	R5 569 847
	R7 930 592	R6 771 542

Current Assets

Inventories	R375 093	R174 384
Trade and other receivables	R67 750	R40 564
Cash and cash equivalents	R4 176 811	R3 976 656
	R4 619 654	R4 191 604
Total Assets	R12 550 246	R10 963 146

Equity and Liabilities

Equity

Trust capital	R200	R200
Accumulated surplus	R10 385 930	R8 817 520
	R10 386 130	R8 817 720

Liabilities

Non-Current Liabilities

Restricted Funds	-	R2 000 000
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Current Liabilities

Trade and other payables	R164 116	R145 626
Restricted Fund	R2 000 000	-
	R2 164 116	R145 626

Total Liabilities

	R2 164 116	R2 145 626
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Total Equity and Liabilities

	R12 550 246	R10 963 346
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Aside from the many smaller monetary donations we received this year, we appreciate each of you who willingly support us in kind, offering time, expertise, products and vehicles to assist us when you can. We are extremely grateful to you all!



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The Cape Leopard Trust
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Designed by Erinn Straughan