

ednik (nature reserve), the rancher might not receive compensation. On the basis of the expert's recommendations, the council would decide how many, if any sheep would be given to the rancher.

Within the first four months of the experiment the experts reviewed nine cases of suspected leopard attack; the council subsequently handed over 27 sheep as compensation in six of these cases.

Naturally, this project can have significantly broader success if aimed at a wider audience, involving schoolchildren, border guards, and ultimately all levels of the population. Informational poster displays stand in all of the local councils to educate the community about the progress of the project. Future plans include creating computer classes for schoolchildren to learn to use computers at the same time that they receive instruction in sustainable land use and the importance of preserving the natural heritage of their region. It is our hope that with time, a two-pronged strategy that incorporates both education and economic incentives for leopard protection will support the long-term survival of the species.

South African Cheetah Compensation Fund

by

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The National Cheetah Management Program (NCMP) in South Africa is a conservation program aimed at the conservation of the wild cheetah as well as its habitat by means of integrated conservation, education and management plans. The NCMP has various short term objectives that would be utilised to reach the long term objectives of the program.

One of the short term objectives is the establishment and management of a compensation scheme. This is not the traditional type of compensation scheme where land users are compensated for losses. The NCMP believes that this is impractical in the current South African situation and farms are far apart and such a scheme will definitely be abused due to the fact that it would be very difficult to verify actual losses claimed for.

The NCMP has thus gone out from the viewpoint that predation is a natural ecological process and that farmers must accept that they will endure a certain percentage of losses to cattle and game ranching animals due to predation. The NCMP does acknowledge the fact that certain small scale farming activi-

ties as well as game ranching with rare and endangered species may not be compatible with the presence of predators such as cheetah.

Land users in South Africa may not at this stage utilise wild cheetah for commercial purposes due to this species uncertain population status. This has had the effect that land users see cheetah as worthless animals, that are a liability to have. They do not tolerate them as part of the natural ecosystem due to the fact that game ranching is a multi million Rand industry. Game Ranchers have had to purchase their game populations on auctions and this has cost them a lot of money. Game Ranches are in most cases relatively small and cannot afford to have too many predators resident.

Domestic stock farmers in SA are legally allowed to destroy cheetah that cause damage to their stock. They may even destroy these cheetah if they are found to be in the vicinity of the domestic stock animals. Once again, due to the fact that cheetah were seen to be worthless, domestic stock farmers simply shot these predators on sight. Other methods are gin trap, poison and shooting from helicopters. It is not known how many cheetah are shot per year. Official records are clearly not accurate as Conservation Authorities only have less than 10 incidents for the past three years on records. Interviews with farmers have indicated that this shootings are much higher, unofficial reports are between 70 and 100 for 2001 and 2001.

The NCMP's Cheetah Compensation Scheme started two years ago and has tried to change this attitude. The NCMP is not against the management of predator populations. At this stage farmers have done this using lethal methods. The NCMP believes that excess cheetah or perceived "problem" cheetah should be banked into protected areas rather than to simply destroy them. The NCMP also believes that land users should be stimulated to see cheetahs as assets and not liabilities.

The Compensation Scheme thus compensates farmers for excess and or perceived "problem" cheetah that have been captured alive using methods approved by the NCMP. This mainly includes the use of trap cages. Cheetahs are only captured legally after permits have been issued by the conservation authorities or with their permission. The landowner gets compensated a fixed donation for the live cheetah. Such compensation only gets paid after the Provincial Conservation Authority has been satisfied that the cheetah was captured legally. Currently an amount of R 10,000 (US\$ 1,000) per cheetah is paid to the land owner, which is a lot for South African

farmers. Up to now 41 cheetahs have been caught legally.

These cheetah then get relocated by the NCMP into approved conservation areas in SA. The NCMP requires a minimum donation of R 15,000 per cheetah from the new owner. This donation gets paid directly into the Compensation Fund. Any expenditure such as veterinary expenses, transport expenses etc then gets covered out of this additional R 5,000. Any additional funds remain in the Compensation Fund to keep it self sustaining. The NCMP may also use these additional funds to sponsor cheetah related conservation projects. In this way, "problem" cheetah are paying for themselves to be relocated into approved safe conservation area in SA, the farmers rather capture these cheetah alive due to the "financial" value that the cheetah now has, and additional funds that is generated gets put back into cheetah conservation projects in SA.

The NCMP believes that this is a short term solution and that it is not sustainable over the long term. This gives the NCMP time to investigate and to implement long term solutions that will ensure the survival of the wild cheetah on farmland areas outside of formally protected areas in SA.

A short-lived wolf depredation compensation program in Israel

by

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Synopsis

A compensation program in Israel ran for only one year, and was discontinued because no sponsor was found to continue to subsidize the compensation payments. Ranchers felt that compensation rates were very low relative to actual losses, but that it was at least better than nothing. Today ranchers receive subsidies to purchase fences and livestock guarding dogs instead.

Background

During the 1970's and 1980's the Golan Heights region in northern Israel experienced a rise in depredation on sheep and calves mainly by golden jackals, *Canis aureus* (Yom-Tov, Ashkenazi & Viner, 1995). During the 1990's there was a marked increase in

depredation rates by wolves (*Canis lupus*), too. There was a strict policy in place at that time outlawing any killing of the wolves; the estimated population size was about 50 at that time, but has since grown to about 150 (Reichman 2002).

The conflict reached a peak in July 1998, when in a tragic event, 28 rare griffon vultures (*Gyps fulvus*) died from eating poisoned bait that was set out by disgruntled ranchers trying to kill wolves. After this event, a Ministerial commission was established to investigate the wolf-livestock problem and to suggest methods for its resolution. The commission recommended, among other steps, to compensate ranchers for losses from wolves, at least until alternative protective measures (such as fences and livestock guarding dogs) could be put into place.

The compensation program was viewed as a means to better protect the wolves from the ranchers.

The compensation program

One-quarter of the compensation program was paid for by the federal government, and the rest was covered by Tnuva, a large cooperative for marketing agricultural products, which is owned by the kibbutz and moshav farmers in Israel. The ranchers did not pay a premium to join the compensation program, but there was a deductible required, as mentioned below.

Payment was made to the ranchers once every 6 months for all documented and approved cases of wolf depredation. Each case had to be approved by a government wildlife ranger (from the Israel Nature & Parks Authority), who determined if the animal was killed by a wolf, or if a calf had indeed been taken by a wolf.

Compensation was paid at 100% if the rancher had an electric fence and/or trained guard dogs in place (4 dogs per 250 head), and a dead animal was available for examination. Compensation was paid at 80% if the herd was not fully protected. Approved cases of missing calves were also compensated for at the 80% rate.

The 100% compensation rates were (in US\$):

Calves up to 60 days old (plus US\$2 for each additional day)	200
Pregnant heifer	800
Cow	500
Lamb	100
Sheep	200