

THE ECOLOGY OF THE LEOPARD (PANTHERA PARDUS)
IN THE WATERBERG.

by

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investigated not only, to capture leopards for radio collaring

but also for THE ECOLOGY OF THE LEOPARD (PANTHERA PARDUS)

The affecting word : IN THE WATERBERG. Adult male and female

leopards in the Waterberg area were radio collared. An 803 km² area

12 km² area was divided into 12 km² by 12 km² grid squares

and the leopards were captured in 12 km² grid squares

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Supervisor : Prof. J.D. Skinner

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ABSTRACT

Although the opportunistic feeding habits of leopards were evident in this study, scat analysis showed that ungulates were by far the predominant food, with impala being the most frequent item. The fact that cattle calves were only taken up to \pm 100 days old, emphasize the relevance of a proper stock management program to prevent stock losses. In addition, where such measures were impractical, temporary physical barriers such as electric fencing showed potential for application.

Modification on different capture techniques were

investigated not only to capture leopards for radio collaring but also for the elimination of problem leopards.

The effective home range size of a resident male and female leopard in the Naboomspruit area were calculated at 303 km² and 157 km² respectively. A density of one leopard per 53 km² are suggested for the Naboomspruit study area. Both leopards were predominantly nocturnal with some crepuscular activity. Translocation experiments revealed different results. The conducting of translocations in farming areas, where problem leopards are involved are however not suggested.

Leopard density and distribution patterns showed that numbers are relative safe, and that populations are currently to a large extent linked, which makes natural gene flow a possibility. Although suitable areas for leopards thus exist, these may not be available as homogenous units in the future, due to increasing human pressure.

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