CAPE LEOPARD TRUST

A GUIDE TO SNARE PATROLS

Contents

1. The Cape Leopard Trust

The Cape Leopard Trust (CLT) is a non-governmental, not-for-profit organization engaged in innovative research, conservation and education projects established to facilitate and promote the conservation of biological diversity.

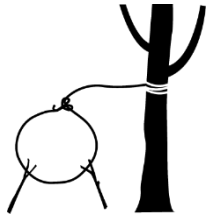
The Cape Leopard Trust's vision is to ensure the long-term survival of leopard populations, help secure their habitat and prey base, and promote their co-existence with people. To this end, we conduct rigorous scientific research as a tool for conservation, find solutions to human-wildlife conflict, and inspire interest in the environment through a dynamic environmental education program. The CLT consists of a small, highly dedicated, educated, and enthusiastic team, spread across several project areas.

This booklet aims to promote and facilitate the effective implementation of voluntary snare patrols which remove snares and prevent future snaring activity on private properties. Illegal snare hunting poses great risks to biodiversity in general. Top predators (the leopard in the fynbos biome) are especially vulnerable through prey-base depletion since small antelope (e.g. duiker, grysbok, klipspringer) and other sought-after bush-meat species such as porcupine are often targeted.

2. What is a snare and what about other traps?

A snare trap is a simple piece of cable, wire, twine, or nylon fashioned into a noose. The noose is then anchored and positioned in such a way to capture animals either by the foot (placed parallel with the ground) or by the head or body (suspended vertically).

Another trap of type regularly seen near animal burrows, are funnel traps. A funnel shaped trap is constructed using chicken mesh wire (or similar wire mesh). The trap's wider entry point is placed at the entrance to the burrow, with bait often placed at the closed end tapering to a point. Animals like porcupine enter the trap and manage to reach the bait but are unable to turn around or back out of the trap, causing stress, injury and eventually death.



3. Why do people use this method of hunting?

Materials used to make snares are cheap and easy to come by. Snares are lightweight, can be carried inconspicuously and are not easily detected in the landscape.

Snare hunters who took part in a survey [1] in the Western Cape indicated that the bushmeat is mostly used for nutritional self-use. In some instances, animals are snared for their skins (to be used in regalia and head dresses) and in rare cases even for traditional medicine (muthi). [2]

4. What are the concerns about hunting with snares?

Animal welfare is a major concern since caught animals often die a slow, painful death or can be severely injured or maimed if they manage to escape. The practice is highly wasteful since active snares are often not checked at all, resulting in captured animals simply rotting away.

This method of hunting is extremely indiscriminate in that the hunter cannot select for species, age or sex of animals caught.

Because of this, hunting wildlife by means of snares is **illegal** according to both the Nature Conservation Ordinance 19 of 1974 (prohibits snaring of any wildlife within the Western and Eastern Cape) and the National Environmental Management Act (NEMBA) 10 of 2004 (specifically regarding the capture of threatened, endangered and/or invasive species). Those found guilty of setting snares may be liable to a fine, imprisonment, or both.

5. Do snares pose a threat to biodiversity?

Private property harbors a large proportion of biodiversity in South Africa. A study [1] in the Western Cape indicated that snaring activity is widespread and common on private properties bordering on protected areas. Snare hunters who took part in this survey indicated that the species most frequently caught are porcupine and small antelope such as duiker, klipspringer and grysbok.

This is particularly concerning since porcupine and small antelope form a substantial part of the leopard diet in the Western Cape [3]. Although predators are often not specifically targeted with snare traps, they use the same habitat and paths as their prey and can themselves also be ensnared.

If caught, animals like leopard and caracal are often strong enough to break off the snare from its anchor and carry it away with them. With the snare still attached and cutting into the body, these animals may incur a slow death due to infection or starvation. If such individuals manage to survive, it is likely that they will become so-called damage causing animals (repeat offenders involved in livestock depredation events) due to an inability to effectively hunt natural wild prey.

6. What can you do to prevent illegal snare hunting on your property?

- ✓ All permanent and seasonal workers should be forewarned that snaring is **illegal** and will not be tolerated (include a clause in contracts)
- ✓ **Educate** workforce about the negative aspects and impacts of snaring
- ✓ All other workers entering the property (i.e. wood cutters, trail builders, alien clearing teams, etc.) should be made aware of **zero tolerance** towards snaring
- ✓ Regular, visible **patrols** to find and remove snares (see page 7)
- ✓ **Limit access** to materials that can be used to make snares (i.e. discarded vineyard wire and pieces of cable)
- ✓ Share knowledge and create **awareness** about snaring activity among neighbours (51% of owners/managers of properties where regular snare activity was recorded in a recent study [1], were unaware of this happening and did not know what to look out for)
- ✓ People often hunt in this manner for nutritional self-use [1]. Engage in **conversation** with individuals to determine, understand and address logistical and socio-economic difficulties forcing people to resort to this form of provisioning.

7. Conducting patrols

Identifying potential hotspots

Snare patrol records, in combination with research, in agricultural landscapes[4] revealed environmental characteristics where the potential risk of snaring is highest. Applying this information to your patrols may help to identify potential snaring hotspots and optimize patrol effort. Hotspots are largely dictated by 1) availability of prey, 2) availability of anchor points, and 3) accessibility/opportunity for hunters. Common snaring locations include:

- ✓ Game paths and dwellings (like porcupine burrows)
- ✓ Fence lines (bordering with neighboring agricultural properties and protected areas such as nature reserves)
- ✓ Alien invasive stands (good anchor points)
- ✓ Rivers and riparian zones
- ✓ Above areas which are close to roads and settlements (increasing ease of access) and/or to natural habitat

Once potential hotspots have been identified, plan a REPEATABLE patrol route that covers most of the property's boundaries as well as the identified potential hotspots. Adapt the route to add new snare sights and repeat the patrol every 3 months (at least quarterly patrols, with increased frequency if there is a surge in snares found).

What to look out for

When searching for snares and snaring activity, it is helpful to remain vigilant for visual signs of human and animal activity. Look out for:

- Well used animal pathways (tunnels or corridors)
- Animal dwellings (burrows, dens, latrine sites)
- Trampled vegetation (human-caused) leading into natural vegetation

- Other signs of human activity (broken branches, litter, excrement, 'flags' on bushes to mark paths, footprints, etc.)
- Barricades constructed in fence lines where animals move through.

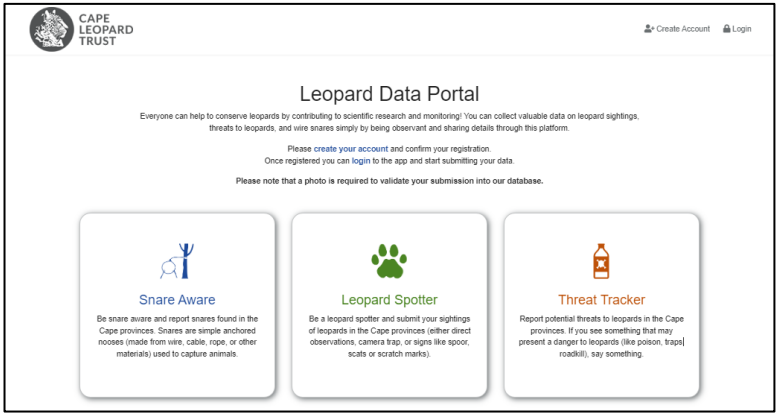
When a snare is located

1. Take a GPS waypoint or pin drop of the trap location
2. Record the required data (see page 9)
3. Take a photo of the snare
4. Remove the snare and discard responsibly
5. Remove barricades or blockages restricting animal movement
6. Report all snares found to a manager/property owner

8. Sharing information with the Cape Leopard Trust

You can report snares found in the Western Cape through the Cape Leopard Trust's website. The CLT's website-based "Snare Aware" tool is free and easy to use on your phone or computer. The data you collect aids the CLT and CapeNature to monitor snaring activity and to apply this information through a collaborative adaptive management approach.

Find the Snare Aware database here: https://app.capeleopard.org.za/



What information to record

Collecting standard information about snaring activity during each patrol can be very useful to monitor trends. When a snare is located, use the following categories and attributes to collect information related to the snare found. Pages for data logging are available at the back of the booklet. Collected written data can be submitted to the CLT.

	Category	Attribute
1	**Location**	GPS
2	**Trap Habitat**	Natural vegetation - Pristine Natural vegetation - Disturbed Pine plantation Alien vegetation stand Agricultural landscape Other (specify)
3	**Trap Location**	On footpath On game trail Along fence line Near animal dwelling Other (specify)
4	**Type of Human Activity in vicinity of trap**	Agriculture Residential Road Recreational Reservoir
5	**Distance to Human Activity**	(in meter)
6	**Type of Trap**	Snare Funnel Jaw trap Other (specify)
7	**Is Active**	(Yes or No)
8	**Anchor Method**	Rock Veg tree (>2m high, stem > 5cm thick) Veg shrub (<2m high, stem <5cm thick) Fence post Other
9	**Material Used**	Wire Cable Nylon Other
10	**Trap Height (in cm)**	0 to 20 21 to 40 41 to 60 61 to 80 81 to 100 Higher than 1m
11	**Number of snares**	If multple snares with similar above variables found in one place
12	**Trap position**	On ground (horizontal) Suspended (vertical)

9. Data sheet

Property name: _____

Trap No.	Date	Location		Trap Habitat	Trap Location	Nearest Human Activity
		Lat / GPS (S)	Long / GPS (E)			
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Distance to Human Activity	Type of Trap	Active Y/N	Anchor point	Trap Material	Height (cm)	Number	Position

Trap No.	Date	Location		Trap Habitat	Trap Location	Nearest Human Activity
		Lat / GPS (S)	Long / GPS (E)			
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Distance to Human Activity	Type of Trap	Active Y/N	Anchor point	Trap Material	Height (cm)	Number	Position

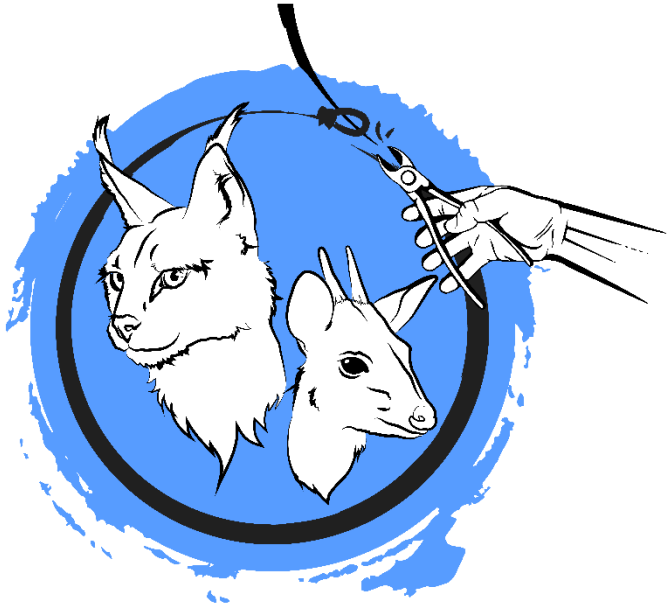
10. References

[1] Nieman, W.A., Leslie, A.J., Wilkinson, A., & Wossler, T.C. 2019. Socioeconomic and biophysical determinants of wire-snare poaching incidence and behaviour in the Boland Region of South Africa. *Journal for Nature Conservation*. Vol 52: 125738.

[2] Nieman, W.A., Leslie, A.J., & Wilkinson, A. 2019. Traditional medicinal animal use by Xhosa and Sotho communities in the Western Cape Province, South Africa. *Journal of Ethnobiology and Ethnomedicine*, Vol 15:34.

[3] Mann, G.K.H., Wilkinson, A., Hayward, J., Drouilly, M., O'Riain, M.J. & Parker, D.M. (2019) The effects of aridity on land use, biodiversity and dietary breadth in leopards. *Mammalian Biology,* Vol 98: 43-51.

[4] Kendon, T.A., Comley, J., Wilkinson, A., Grobler, M.J., Nieman, W.A., Leslie, A.J., O'Riain, M.J. & Naude, V.N. (2022) Evaluating determinants of wire-snare poaching risk in the Boland Mountain Complex of South Africa. *Journal for Nature Conservation,* Vol 70: 126295. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jnc.2022.126295



SNARE FREE

REPORT • RESPOND • REMOVE

Report snared wildlife to the Western Cape Snare Hotline:

076 127 8485

Visit www.snarefree.co.za for more information.

CAPE LEOPARD TRUST

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