

Wild about dogs

PHOTO: NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

Cenessa Stork

THE very popular 'Nature Untamed: Wild Dogs' series on the National Geographic channel visited the Hluhluwe-iMfolozi Park to follow and document a pack of Wild Dogs.

This popular show takes a look at the African Wild Dog, travelling around the country taking an inside look at how Wild Dogs operate as group hunters, analysing everything from instinctive strategy and tactics, to the moment of capture.

The number of Wild Dogs in the park stands at 110 and amazingly, only two staff members monitor and control the collaring of the dogs.

Biologist Freek Vonk, often depicted as the Steve Irwin of snakes, is taking audiences into the daily life of the dog.

The programme on the Hluhluwe-iMfolozi dogs will air in April or May.

St Lucia's Heritage Tours and Charters staff accompanied the National Geographic team during the days, whilst a local St Lucia B&B made sure the staff was entertained in the evening.

Impressed with the excellent service, accommodation and help from Heritage Tours and Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife, the National Geographic crew has already decided to return for a follow up.



Biologist Freek Vonk leading the National Geographic team around Hluhluwe-iMfolozi Park trailing Wild Dogs

New home for Autumn

Cenessa Stork

EXHILARATION in motion best describes the reaction of Autumn the cheetah when she sped from her cage to explore her new home at the Emdoneni Cat Rehabilitation Centre in Hluhluwe.

Born in captivity in 2007, Autumn - orig-

inally called Elsie Jane - was raised by Lente Rooode at the Hoedspruit Endangered Species Centre and cost Emdoneni R75 000 in adoption fees.

The Emdoneni rehab facility started in 1997 with three cheetahs.

Passionate about wild cats, Emdoneni owners Cecilie and Louis Nel keep small numbers of

Serval, Caracal, African Wild Cats and cheetahs for education and breeding purposes.

Surplus cats are released back into the wild.

All the cats are fed a daily balanced diet with added supplements such as calcium and minerals.

Feeding sessions are open to the public for viewing every day at 4.30pm.

PHOTO: DEAN GRANT



Dash to freedom - Autumn the cheetah rushes off for a sprint on the wild side after being released by owner Cecilie Nel

Where do you spend your money?

Megan Erasmus

STATISTICS South Africa (StatsSA) field workers will be in Zululand over the next few months collecting information for the 2010/11 Income and Expenditure Survey, and ask that residents please cooperate as best they can.

The field workers, who can be identified by their StatsSA ID cards, will approach randomly

selected households to ask a series of questions about how South Africans spend their money.

Approximately 33 000 households will be surveyed throughout South Africa.

Visits should last no more than half an hour and are due to take place mainly in the afternoons to accommodate working hours.

StatsSA guarantees respondents that their information will be treated with the highest

confidentiality.

The areas chosen for survey in the northern Zululand area include:

- KwaMzimela, near uPhongola, which will be visited between 4 April and 15 May; and
- Godide, Masolosolo, which will be visited between 4 April and 15 May;

For more information, contact StatsSA Provincial Branch in Durban on 031 3600600.

Illegal taxi operators feel the vice

Rachel Breed

A FINE of R15 000 or eight months imprisonment of which half is suspended for five years, and vehicle impoundment.

That was the stiff sentence handed down to more than 160 illegally operating Mtubatuba taxi owners since October 2010.

They were charged in the Mtubatuba District Court under the National Land Transport Act 5 of 2009 for operating without a licence or permit prerequisite for operating Public Transport Services.

The clampdown was part of an action plan by the Department of Transport Services to combat taxi violence and intimidation.

Operation Shanela is executed by the Public Transport Enforcement Unit with elite members sporting SWAT training and state-of-the-art weapons.

The Department said one of the major contributions to taxi violence is the 'unlawful operator' who is not registered with the Transportation Board.

The unit also targets those who have registered but failed to adhere to the conditions of the permit.

The permits allow the operator to operate from a specified point to specified end point and under certain conditions.

All vehicles must be roadworthy and all passengers treated with dignity and respect.

No loud music may be played in the vehicle. All vehicles must have facilities for passengers to get rid of litter gathered during their journey.

All drivers must follow the route as prescribe by the route-based permit.

If the operator or driver fails to comply or is caught transporting passengers for reward without a valid route permit, the vehicle is impounded and will only be released once R20 000 is paid or a valid permit for the specific vehicle can be produced. A fee of R200 is charged for every night the vehicle is impounded.

The sentences were all upheld in review.

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