

EDITION 02  
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# WILD TIMES

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## MESSAGE FROM *Karin*

The Johannesburg Wildlife Veterinary Hospital is just over a year old. During this time, we have experienced highs and lows, and we are proud of what we have achieved.

In the past two months, we have released a large number of animals into their natural habitat. We hand-reared them, put them in pre-release enclosures, and then released them into the wild. We simulate the natural process to facilitate release, to ensure that our patients, once released, can breed and continue the cycle that ensures the normal continuation of their species.

The team faces many challenges – one of the major issues being human intervention. Most people do not realise

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how they negatively affect our wildlife by doing seemingly harmless things, such as using rat poison. Every ecosystem is sensitive and intricate, and any action can damage the system – this can have far-reaching consequences. We do our utmost to inform people on how they can lessen their impact on the environment. Our ethos is to promote education first and foremost. EcoSolutions, a company we work closely with, educates children to overcome certain cultural beliefs about owls, and sets up owl boxes in townships.

The bulk of our funds cover the free services that we offer, such as: animal care, veterinary treatment, and medicine. As a non-profit



company (NPC), we rely on your donations to provide injured wildlife with the best available care. We battle with increased capacity during certain periods, but always make a plan to accommodate our patients. Our dream is to purchase our own larger property so we have capacity throughout the year, as well as financial security to ensure the welfare of our patients and the continued sustainability of our hospital.

Our small team experiences daily emotional stress from working with wildlife patients that have suffered and been affected due to conflict with people. Being passionately dedicated people, the loss of an animal affects us deeply, and, although it is difficult to work in this field, we would never dream of giving up.

Dr Karin Lourens

# PANGOLINS ARE THE MOST POACHED ANIMAL THAT YOU'VE NEVER HEARD OF

Humane Society International – Africa (HSI/Africa), the African Pangolin Working Group (APWG) and the Johannesburg Wildlife Veterinary Hospital work together to treat, rehabilitate and release pangolins rescued from poachers.

We spend much time educating people about pangolins. We collaborate with organisations such as the APWG, of which Nicci Wright is the Executive Director. The most notable release success stories this year are of two Temminck's ground pangolin, Ivory and China. Receiving pangolins to treat is, in itself, a highlight, but seeing them free again makes us unbelievably happy.



**If you come across a pangolin in a game reserve, please do not post any photos or locations on social media. We want to protect these animals from poachers as far as possible.**



Little is known about pangolins, and there are many superstitions about the non-existent medicinal properties of their scales. By treating these animals, we help to heal them, *and* we gain valuable knowledge about them that assists in treatment protocols for future patients.

We have seen progress in the way people think about pangolins, in that pangolins are seen as more than “an ingredient on a list”, and rather as an elusive and special animal.

We take care to release pangolins into the correct habitat during rehabilitation, and each animal is monitored via telemetry and followed for at least six months post-release.

If you come across a pangolin in a game reserve, please do not post any photos or locations on social media. We want to protect these animals from poachers as far as possible.

Find out more about pangolins at <https://www.africanpangolin.org/>

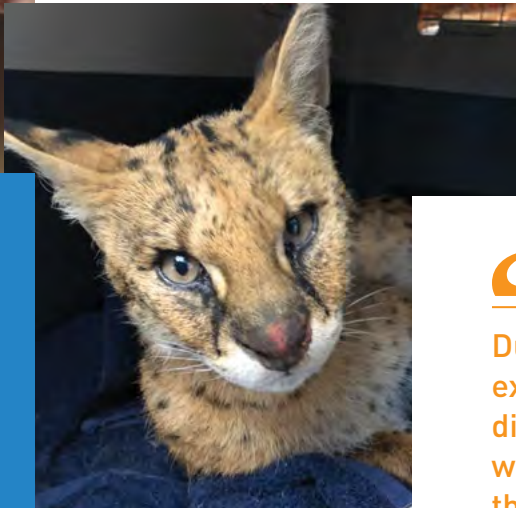


# A TALE OF TWO KITTIES



About a month ago, a female serval (*Leptailurus serval*) was found on the side of the road near Bapsfontein.

She was brought to our hospital, because she had been hit by a car. She was so dazed that the NSPCA inspector was able to pick her up without her reacting. She had a brain injury that caused her to lose her sight for two days. Her first few days were spent lying down and eating, and she received i/v fluids during this time. She initially followed our movements with her large ears, getting up only to eat. Once she had recovered from her head injury she was moved into a larger, outside enclosure where we monitored her with a camera-trap (this is a movement-sensitive camera). Over the next few days, she improved remarkably.



## Did you know?

The largest-ever recorded serval population is found at Sasol Secunda. A preferred prey item of serval is the vlei rat (*Oryzomys irroratus*) which is why they are fairly common in grassland areas.

[CLICK HERE](#) to watch the serval cats of Secunda.

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During her clinical examination we discovered that she was lactating. With the help of the local community, her very young kittens were found. Their eyes were still closed and they surely would have died had they not been found in time.

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We are happy to say that her successful rehabilitation and ultimate release on 15 June is a victory for us. [CLICK HERE](#) to watch a video clip of her sharpening her claws.

We recently treated and released a female genet (*Genetta maculata*) who was found on the road, also hit by a car. During her clinical examination, we discovered that she was lactating. With the help of the local community, her very young kittens were found. Their eyes had not opened yet, and they surely would have died had they not been found in time. We owe this remarkable achievement to the involvement of animal lovers.

However, we found ourselves in a tricky situation. An injured and stressed animal's first priority is survival, and there was a risk that she may kill or abandon her offspring. Thankfully, she accepted them immediately, and they suckled from her. She sustained a pelvis injury from the impact with the car, causing her to limp and, therefore, needed time to recover. We could not release the family immediately because the kittens were too young to fend for themselves, and she may have instinctively abandoned them to protect herself. After three long months of treatment and care, she and her kittens were moved into a pre-release enclosure at their intended release site. They were released after four weeks in this enclosure.



# WHAT WINTER HOLDS

FEATURE  
STORY



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While we do not encourage support-feeding during the summer months, as this can lead to dependence, it is sometimes needed in winter to ensure that birds receive adequate food. Feed your garden birds with fruit and seeds, and add meal worms for the carnivorous birds.

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## Did you know?

Healthy animals are equipped to handle the cold with their thick winter coats. We only use heating pads and lights during winter for some of our patients, depending on their current condition and age.

During the winter season, people can expect to see most of the usual garden birds. However, food is scarce for all animals.

Because winter is dry in Johannesburg, birds like Hadedas struggle to feed because the ground is hard, and they cannot probe for earthworms and other insects. Most of our winter patients are brought in due to emaciation.

### Do:

- Support-feed birds during winter. While we *do not* encourage support-feeding during the summer months, as this can lead to dependence, it is sometimes needed in winter to ensure that they receive adequate food. Feed your garden birds with fruit and seeds, and add meal worms for the carnivorous birds.
- Winter is breeding season for owls, so this is the perfect time to put up an owl box with the help of our recommended professional, EcoSolutions. Find more information here: [www.ecosolutions.co.za](http://www.ecosolutions.co.za)

### ... and Don't:

- Do not feed bread to birds or any other animal. Bread swells and ferments in the stomach and leads to medical complications.
- If you plan on doing major gardening, now is the time to do it. Trim your branches now to avoid damaging nests with fledglings in spring. However, be sure to look out for any owls and doves, as their nests are filled with little ones during winter.

# HOW YOU CAN HELP

- Financial assistance is critical for our survival, but you can donate in other ways too.
- Donating all kinds of soft fruit and veg such as paw paw, bananas, leafy greens and fruity Purity helps – please avoid citrus fruits.
- Our tortoises, although they aren't Usain Bolts, eat a lot of food. While doing your Sunday gardening, save some indigenous succulents for them.
- Neonates drink a specialised milk formula, available at your local vet: Royal Canin Babycat Milk.
- If you are feeling extra generous, you can contact JoziBugs to deliver some meal worms and crickets to us for our birds and animals.
- You can also help with the day-to-day running of our hospital by donating towels, dishwashing liquid, washing powder and any F10 products (available at your local vet or online).



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# OUR GRATITUDE

Thank you to our friends in Switzerland and Australia, for your extremely generous contribution. Thank you for all your contributions to MySchool; we look forward to your ongoing support. Our goal is to cover our monthly running expenses from MySchool, so please support us and get your friends and family signed up!

Fourways Veterinary Hospital allows us to use their X-Ray facilities free of charge, and they take in animals for us after hours at no extra charge. We are very grateful for the hours of free service they provide us.

A big thank you goes to Humane Society International – Africa and the African Pangolin Working Group for their continuous support. Thank you to F10 for donating your products to help our clinic. A special thank you to Drs Dorianne Elliott and Stefan Steyn and Sr Soné from the Bird and Exotic Animal Hospital at Onderstepoort Veterinary Hospital for always assisting us at no charge at any time of the day or night.

Our volunteers and team stick with us through all the highs and lows. We greatly appreciate your generosity and passion. Special gratitude to Cristina Flamini who selflessly donates many weekends of time and expertise to our team and patients. Thanks to our core team: Michelle Watson, Sarah Kempen, Alexis Kriel, Georgina Lackinger, Lauren Beckley; and our non-core team members: Marina Davis and Cassie Macdonald.

To the organisations and companies that have included us in campaigns to generate donations, or who have generously donated items to our clinic, including but not limited to:

- **Augustine Medical South Africa**
- **IDEXX**
- **Fruits and Roots**
- **Midlands Veterinary Wholesalers**
- **Hill's Pet Nutrition**
- **Greymatter & Finch**
- **Andrew Duff Attorneys**
- **Serala Financial Services**
- **Reid Morris Incorporated**
- **YuppiePet**
- **JoziBugs for their excellent service and discounts on our orders**
- **EJ Watson for his generous donations of free range eggs**
- **Dr Zoe Glyphis for donating quail and quail eggs**

