

Rare Species Fund

Black-Footed Cat Conservation



As the sun sets over the grassveldt of South Africa, the Black Footed Cat Working Group researchers and Rare Species Fund staff prepare to track the smallest and most elusive of Africa's wild feline species, the black-footed cat.



Robert Johnson of the Rare Species Fund discusses logistics of trapping specimens for tracking with Black-Footed Cat Working Group research manager Beryl Wilson.

The Rare Species Fund has worked to conserve various feline species on the African continent, but none are as endangered or as elusive as the black-footed cat. This mini-predator averages from 2-4 lbs in size and is, pound for pound, one of the most successful hunters in the world.

The secretive nature of this feline means that it is seldom seen by resident peoples. In fact, most people who live within the home range of the black-footed cat, have no idea the animal even exists. It is a small wonder that area governments are doing little if anything to save this vanishing species. In fact the majority of the work is being done by an incredibly dedicated handful of local researchers, wildlife professionals and educators who are supported, to a great extent, by organizations from Europe and America. A regular supporter of these efforts is the Rare Species Fund.

The black-footed cat (BFC) is a skilled nocturnal hunter.



www.RareSpeciesFund.org

This trailer was provided by RSF, while in Africa, to enable local researchers to haul more equipment into the field.



Currently, the black-footed cat population is estimated to be only a few thousand animals. Research seeks to find not only the current home range of the species, but also individual animals. These small felines can travel as much as 30km

in a single evening. This widespread movement puts them into potential conflict other predators, as well as the threat of highways, poachers and other human dangers.

"A black-footed cat is 2.5 pounds of fury!"

In addition to helping to research and conserve the wild population of the black-footed cat, the Rare Species Fund is working with the Cat Conservation Trust to both maintain a captive breeding population of this endangered feline, and to educate local population about the backyard neighbor, many never new they had.



Children at the Nxuba SP School learn about wildlife.

As a cultural way of life, the most common response to a predator in these rural farm lands is to eliminate it. Marion Holmes of the CCT is working with schools to change the minds and hearts of the next generation.



A local film crew joins the BFCWG and RSF for a night time off-road drive, tracking two radio collared black-footed cats.



RSF funds help to:

Educate local school groups about the importance of predators and the existence of the Black-Footed Cat.



Transport and relocate displaced wild BFCs, including performing necessary veterinary procedures.



Reconnect local people with the natural world and help reinforce the necessity of preserving local biodiversity.



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