LANDMARK REWILDING TRUST

ACTIVITY REPORT

28 February 2026

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This is a report on the activities by Landmark Rewilding Trust in 2025 - 2026.

The Trustees and Staff are grateful for the donor support and collaboration to do this work, and the many volunteers that developed the efforts in setting up the organisation and effected its work on a donor and volunteer basis.

LANDMARK
Rewilding
Research • Rescue • Education

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Executive Summary

Landmark Rewilding Trust delivers direct, evidence-based conservation action across ecological rewilding and restoration, carnivore conservation, and environmental education, driving measurable and durable environmental impact.

Conservation Impact: Leopard and Predator Project

Leopards remain the last free-roaming apex predator across South Africa's landscapes. Their survival is increasingly threatened by habitat loss and fragmentation, infrastructure expansion, compounded by human-wildlife conflict and inconsistent enforcement of wildlife legislation.

Over the last twelve months:

- Ten direct leopard incidents across the Western, Eastern, and Northern Cape provinces.
- Two leopards were successfully rescued, collared, and released.
- Several unlawful trapping incidents were responded to, including severe gin trap injuries and illegal cage captures.
- Seven leopard mortalities were recorded, reflecting escalating anthropogenic pressures including road collisions, electrocution, and illegal trapping.
- Genetic samples were secured from all interaction events to strengthen long-term population monitoring.

Camera trap surveys were conducted across key landscapes including the Outeniqua Mountains, De Hoop Nature Reserve, the West Coast, and the Garden Route. These surveys:

- Confirmed the re-emergence of an establishing leopard population along the West Coast.
- Identified concerning density declines in the Overberg.
- Generated biodiversity baseline datasets across protected and production landscapes.

The Trust continues to lead a whole genome sequencing project for African leopards, with analysis underway. This work will inform national leopard management policy and identify genetic pinch points critical for long-term viability.

Conflict Mitigation and Coexistence

Human-wildlife conflict remains a major driver of leopard mortality outside protected areas. Landmark Rewilding continued implementation of:

- Non-lethal predator management support
- Targeted conflict interventions in high-risk zones
- Compensation mechanisms linked to ethical predator management

- Corridor identification and habitat connectivity modelling

We contributed to the drafting of Standard Operating Procedures for leopard management in the Cape provinces.

Environmental Education and Capacity Building

Environmental education is a core pillar of our rewilding strategy. In 2025:

- 1,139 learners and 402 educators were directly reached.
- Six schools implemented the Green Schools Recycling Programme.
- Green Clubs operated across primary and secondary schools.
- Early Childhood Development centres integrated structured recycling and food garden programmes.
- Youth conservation interns received structured training and field exposure.
- Public awareness initiatives reached over 80,000 individuals through targeted campaigns.

Our programmes are aligned with national curriculum standards and supported through strategic partnerships with municipalities, academic institutions, NGOs and conservation agencies.

Strategic Outlook

In 2026, Landmark Rewilding Trust will:

- Expand genomic analysis and corridor modelling outputs.
- Increase camera trap survey coverage in priority landscapes.
- Strengthen conflict mitigation mechanisms.
- Scale environmental education through published manuals and expanded partnerships.
- Build financial resilience to support sustained field operations.

The ecological pressures facing apex predators and biodiverse landscapes are intensifying. The events of the past year underscore both the fragility of leopard populations and the urgency of proactive, science-led intervention.

Landmark Rewilding Trust remains committed to delivering measurable conservation outcomes through rigorous research, principled field action, and transformative environmental education.

Background

Landmark Rewilding Trust was founded in November 2023, focusing on ecological rewilding initiatives and with a particular focus on leopards through direct action, research and education.

Our work promotes conservation actions that protects Southern Africa's rich natural landscapes, landscapes increasingly threatened by unsustainable human activities. We advocate for a shift in thinking, where biodiversity and landscape conservation are recognised as both intrinsically essential and economically valuable. As an organisation, we uphold strong ethical standards and operate with integrity, independently and without undue influence. Landmark promotes the mainstreaming of biodiversity by practical, economical, and ecological viable land use management approaches that ensure sustainable conservation goals at a large scale. We promote evidence-led, ethics-driven practices that create effective conservation custodianship so that Southern African landscapes can effectively be conserved and ecologically integrity be preserved.

Landmark Rewilding Trust is an independently registered and governed non-profit organisation with the South African Department of Social Development (NPO 320-978). The organisation is audited annually and governed by an independent Board of Trustees in accordance with the highest standards of corporate governance. We collaborate with Landmark Foundation on several projects and have taken over its fieldwork and educational project legacy and initiatives, harnessing their wealth of experience, knowledge and skill, however, we are wholly independent and have separate collaborators, governance and operations.

During our first two years we focused on setting up the institutional arrangements, secured the intellectual property and implementation equipment and assets, but could only financially operate once the registrations were finalised. We relied on volunteers and our collaborations to ensure the effective implementation of our projects. This has allowed the organisation to operate at scale and assisted in separating field operations of rescue, research and education from the advocacy that Landmark Foundation focuses on. Since 2023 these historic functions (research, rescues and education) have been taken over and conducted by the Landmark Rewilding Trust, with Landmark Foundation focusing on its advocacy role in governance and landscape conservation advocacy. Landmark Foundation's assistance in establishment and capacity exchange has been instrumental in our achievements.

In 2025, Landmark Rewilding continued conservation efforts extended further throughout the Eastern, Western and Northern Cape. We have focused on the field work, research and educational aspects.

Leopard and Predator Project

Background

Carnivores, especially apex predators like leopards, are vital for healthy ecosystems as they regulate prey, control the spread of pathogens, and manage meso-predator populations. Leopard conservation in South Africa is crucial as they are the last remaining free-ranging top predators in most provinces, persisting in reduced numbers and distribution.

Our top predator conservation efforts follow a strategic approach that promotes coexistence by integrating biodiversity patterns and processes across all trophic levels in production landscapes. Our focus on apex predators is driven by the ecological collapse that occurs when top carnivores are removed, disrupting ecological balance and biodiversity.

Historically hunted as vermin, leopards have begun to recover due to government policy changes, changing land management practices and NGO advocacy. However, their range and numbers remain limited, especially outside of protected areas, which cover only ~10% of South Africa. Most leopard habitat lies in production landscapes, where threats like habitat transformation, persecution, and genetic isolation persist. For effective long-term conservation, strategies must extend beyond protected areas to include human-dominated landscapes, promote coexistence, and manage predator-human conflict.

Landmarks' leopard conservation work focuses on four core objectives to address these challenges:

1. **Rescue and Rehabilitation** – Providing care and release opportunities for injured or displaced leopards.
2. **Expanding Wildlife-Friendly Habitat** – Promoting predator-friendly farming practices to create corridors of available habitat and connect fragmented populations.
3. **Research** – Conducting evidence-based studies to inform conservation strategies.
4. **Education** – Raising awareness about the ecological value ecosystems and biodiversity and promoting coexistence and responsible practices.

Our operations in respect of permitting actions are done in collaborations with Landmark Foundation and its personnel that hold such permits. By promoting non-lethal predator management and reducing conflicts with leopards, production landscapes can become key conservation areas. This approach helps connect protected areas, supporting gene flow and long-term survival of carnivores and other wildlife. The strategy combines science-based research with on-the-ground conservation, aiming to create landscapes where biodiversity and human activity coexist. Over more than 20 years, we have

contributed to advancing scientific knowledge on leopard ecology and management imperatives, and other land management actions to improve effective species management.

Research Questions	Peer-reviewed Scientific Publications
What are the Leopard Population Dynamics in various research sites in Western, Eastern and Northern Capes?	McManus, J.S. 2009. The spatial ecology and activity patterns of leopard (Panthera pardus) in the Eastern Cape, South Africa. Rhodes University, Grahamstown, South Africa. Masters of Science Dissertation. Population dynamics in various areas: Research underway
What are the Resource Requirements and Use of Leopards, specifically investigating Land Use, Connectivity and Gene Flow?	McManus, J.S. 2018. The conservation of leopards (Panthera pardus) in the Eastern and Western Cape, South Africa: Investigating the effect of Land Use, Gene Flow and Connectivity. Witwatersrand University, Johannesburg. PhD dissertation. McManus, J., Marshal, J.P., Keith, M., Tshabalala, T., Smuts, B. and Treves, A., 2021. Factors predicting habitat use by leopards in human-altered landscapes. Journal of Mammalogy, 102(6), pp.1473-1483. Jandova, K., 2019. Does resource dispersion drive leopard habitat selection? Czech University of Life Sciences, Prague. Faculty of Tropical AgriSciences. Masters of Science Dissertation.
What is the Profit and Loss Accounting of Carnivore Impacts in lethal and non-lethal controls?	McManus J.S., Dickman, A., Gaynor, D., Smuts, B. and Macdonald. D.W. 2014. Dead or alive? Comparing costs and benefits of lethal and non-lethal human-wildlife conflict mitigation on livestock farms. Oryx. doi:10.1017/S0030605313001610.
What are the priorities in human-wildlife conflicts in the field of the Science of Carnivore Ecology?	van Eeden. L., Eklund, A., Miller, J., López-Bao, J., Chapron, G., Cejtin, M., Crowther, M., Dickman, C., Frank, J., Krofel, M., Macdonald, D., McManus, J., Meyer, T., Middleton, D., Newsome, T., Ripple, W., Ritchie, E., Schmitz, O., Stoner, K., Tourani, M and Treves, A. 2018. Carnivore conservation needs evidence-based livestock protection. PLoS biology, 16(9), p.e 2005577. Treves, A., Krofel, M. and McManus, J., 2016. Predator control should not be a shot in the dark. Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment 14, 380-388.
What are the Impacts on Veldt Condition using High Density Short Duration Grazing Kraaling? (A tool in managing human-wildlife conflicts.)	McManus, J., Goets, S, Milton, S, Bond, W., Henschel, J and Smuts, B. 2018. Trampling recovery of plants on temporary Karoo kraal sites. African Journal of Range and Forage Science. https://doi.org/10.2989/10220119.2018.1529706
Is Leopard a Presence in a Landscape a Biodiversity Indicator?	Tshabalala, T., McManus, J., Treves, A., Masocha, V., Faulconbridge, S., Schurch, M., Goets, S. and Smuts, B., 2021. Leopards and mesopredators as indicators of mammalian species richness across diverse landscapes of South Africa. Ecological Indicators, 121, p.107201.
What are the Leopard Densities in Western and Eastern Cape?	Devens, C., Tshabalala, T., McManus, J. and Smuts, B. 2018. Counting the spots: The use of a spatially explicit capture–recapture technique and GPS data to estimate leopard

	(Panthera pardus) density in the Eastern and Western Cape, South Africa. African Journal of Ecology. https://doi.org/10.1111/aje.12512. Devens, C.H., Hayward, M.W., Tshabalala, T., Dickman, A., McManus, J.S., Smuts, B. and Somers, M.J., 2019. Estimating leopard density across the highly modified human-dominated landscape of the Western Cape, South Africa. Oryx, pp.1-12.
What is the Leopard Population Genetic Viability Presently and What Does it Tell Us About the Conservation Status of the Species?	McManus. J.S., Dalton, D., Kotze, A., Smuts, B., Marshal, J. and Keith, M. 2015. Genetic structure of a solitary carnivore in a human dominated landscape. Ecology and evolution 5(2): 335–344. McManus, J., Smuts, B. 2016 Low microsatellites used to investigate leopard genetic structure severely restricts the results by Ropiquet et al. (2015) to infer population structure for managers. Comptes Rendus Biologies 339: 378–379 Lachger, E., Lensing, K., Boss, M., Fischer, K., Camacho, G., McManus, J., Tensen, L., 2024. Red, gold and green: Comparative genomics of polymorphic leopards from South Africa. Evolution, https://doi.org/10.1093/evolut/qpae178 Leopard genome analysis – Research underway
What are the Predicted and Functionality of Habitat Corridors for Leopard?	McManus, J., Schurch, M.P., Goets, S., Faraut, L., Couldridge, V. and Smuts, B., 2022. Delineating Functional Corridors Linking Leopard Habitat in the Eastern and Western Cape, South Africa. Conservation, 2(1), pp.99-121.
How Effective are Human-Wildlife Conflict Mitigations?	Dickman, A., Potgieter, G., Horgan, J., Stoner, K., Klein, R., McManus., J.S. and Marker, L. 2018. Use of Livestock Guarding Dogs to reduce human-cheetah conflict. In: Cheetahs: Biology and Conservation (Eds Marker, L, Boast, L and Schmidt-Kuntzel, A). AP, Namibia.
Are Compensation Mechanisms Effective conservation tool?	Research underway
What Evidence is there of Leopard Rewilding and Natural Recolonizations?	McManus, J., Smits, AJ., Faraut, L., Couldridge, V., Van Deventer, J., Samuels, I., Devens, C., and Smuts, B., 2024. The Recolonization of the Piketberg Leopard Population: A Model for Human-Wildlife Coexistence in a Changing Landscape. Conservation, 4, pp. 275-287.
What is the Effectiveness of Translocations as a Management Tool in Human Wildlife Conflicts?	McManus, J., Faraut, L., Couldridge, V., Van Deventer, J., Samuels, I., Cilliers, D., Devens, C., Vorster, P. and Smuts, B., 2022. Assessment of leopard translocations in South Africa. Frontiers in Conservation Science, p.63. https://doi.org/10.3389/fcosc.2022.943078
What is the Leopard Presence and likelihood of survival among Isolated Habitat Patches?	Research underway
Are there Specific Conflict Hotspots of Conflicts in Leopard Habitats, and are there Determinants of Such?	Research underway
What would an Ideal Regional Leopard Management Plan look like?	Research underway

What are the Pathways to Coexistence with Carnivores?	Boronyak, L., Jacobs, B., Wallach, A., McManus, J., Stone, S., Stevenson, S., Smuts, B. and Zaranek, H., 2021. Pathways towards coexistence with large carnivores in production systems. Agriculture and Human Values, pp.1-18. Boronyak, L., Jacobs, B., McManus, J., Stone, S., Smuts, B., Submitted. Barriers to Preventive Innovations in the US and South Africa
What are the Ecological Impacts of Wildlife Friendly Farming and Rewilding?	Hasselerharm, C.D., Yanco, E., McManus, J.S., Smuts, B.H. and Ramp, D., 2021. Wildlife-friendly farming recouples grazing regimes to stimulate recovery in semi-arid rangelands. Science of The Total Environment, 788, p.147602. Hasselerharm, C.D., Wooster, E.I.F., Zawada, K.J.A., Yanco, E., Julliard L., McEvoy, T., McManus, J.S., Smuts, B.H., Lungren, E.J, Middleton, O.S, and Ramp, D. Submitted. Wildlife-friendly Farming Promotes Functional Richness and Trophic Complexity. Schurch, M.P., McManus, J., Goets, S., Pardo, L.E., Gaynor, D., Samuels, I., Cupido, C., Couldridge, V. and Smuts, B., 2021. Wildlife-friendly livestock management promotes mammalian biodiversity recovery on a semi-arid Karoo farm in South Africa. Frontiers in Conservation Science, 2, p.6. Yanco, E. 2021 Shifts in human well-being and attitudes towards nature following livestock herder training and implementation. University of Technology, Sydney, Australia, Dissertation towards a Doctorate in Philosophy.
How do Caracal Respond to Wildlife Friendly Farming?	Jooste, E., McManus, J.S., and Couldridge, V. Submitted. Diet of caracal on lethal and non-lethal carnivore treatment farms in the Karoo, South Africa. Jooste, E., McManus, J.S., and Couldridge, V. Submitted. Caracal habitat selection and activity patterns on a predator-friendly farm in the Karoo, South Africa Jooste, E. 2020 The spatial and dietary requirements of Caracal (Caracal caracal) in lethal and non-lethal predator control landscapes. University of the Western Cape. Masters of Science Dissertation passed with Distinction 2020.

Current Project Areas in 2025/2026 Landmark works:

- Augrabies & Springbok, Northern Cape
- Goukou River, Western Cape
- Langeberg – Villiersdorp, Riviersonderend and Bonnievale, Western Cape
- Nieuwoudtville and Calvinia, Northern Cape
- Outeniqua Mountains, Western Cape
- Overberg, Western Cape
- Piketberg, Kasteelberg and Voorpaardeberg, Western Cape

- Uniondale to Keurboomstrand, Western Cape
- West Coast, Western Cape

Major outputs from the leopard conservation efforts over the last 12 months:

1 Human-leopard conflict mitigation in high leopard persecution areas,
2 Ten leopard incidences,
3 Predict suitable leopard habitat, delineate corridors and connectivity, evaluate newly recolonised areas,
4 Assess the functionality of predicted corridors through extensive camera trapping monitoring,
5 Analyse leopard genome analysis to assess population genetic vitality and connectedness,
6 Reduce human-caused mortality by employing a financial compensation scheme for verifiable livestock losses caused by leopards for farmers participating in non-lethal predator management,
7 Work on scientific publications to peer-reviewed journals.
8 Reviewed Standard Operating Procedure, led by Landmark Foundation for government agencies as part of our plan for leopards in the Cape Provinces.

Leopard Conflict Mitigation

Human-wildlife conflict and resulting human-caused mortality remain the primary drivers of leopard deaths in our focal landscapes. Mitigating conflict is therefore a central component of the Leopard Project.

Conflict typically arises from real or perceived livestock losses attributed to carnivores. Where such losses are repeated over extended periods, they can escalate into entrenched conflict hotspots, particularly when producers feel unsupported in navigating the practical challenges of farming alongside predators.

During 2025 and early 2026, our conflict mitigation efforts were focused in Arniston, Aston, Augrabies, Baviaanskloof, Blouberg, Botrivier, Bredasdorp, Calvinia, Ceres, Elim, Heidelberg, Hermanus, Kakamas, Keimoes, Ladismith, Laingsberg, McGregor, Montagu, Mossel Bay, Namaqua, Nuy, Nieuwoudtville, Noordoewer, the Piketberg mountain range including Aurora, Riebeek Kasteel, Robertson, Springbok, Stilbaai, Stormsvlei, Suurbraak, Tankwa Karoo, Uitenhage, Uniondale, Villiersdorp, Wellington, Wittedrift, Wolseley and Yzerfontein. In each of these areas, livestock depredation by carnivores was reported across multiple properties.

In conjunction with camera trapping, we deployed cage traps to capture, collar and release leopards implicated in livestock depredation areas as part of our conflict mitigation and compensation framework. During these operational periods, two leopards were successfully captured, collared and released on site. In addition, we responded to several cases where leopards had been captured unlawfully by landowners, intervening where possible to secure safe outcomes and prevent further harm.

Cage deployed in response to livestock depredation in the Northern Cape.

"I wish to thank the Landmark for helping me, when I had severe calf losses. The introduction and support, to better understand and respect the leopard was a wonderful learning experience for me, sincere appreciation for your support."
Daniel Truter (Piketberg farmer).

Leopard Interactions

We recorded several direct leopard interactions over the past 12 months across the provinces in which we operate (Table 1). Of these, one adult male and one adult female were captured, fitted with GPS collars and released on site. Both individuals were subsequently monitored as part of a broader conservation programme addressing population dynamics, conflict mitigation, compensation mechanisms and coexistence strategies. Genetic samples were secured from each interaction event.

Table 1. Leopard incidences between over the last 12 months

Date	Sex	Age	Location	Collared	Status	Notes
2025/04/05	M	Adult	Suurbraak, Grootvaderbos, Heidelberg, WC	Y	Alive	Baited cage was set by Landmark. Collared and released on site with willing famer and CapeNature. Collar dropped off five and half months later.
2025/05/09	M	Adult	Laingsburg, WC	N	Dead	Road collision death.
2025/07/02	M	Juvenile	Duivenhoks, Grootvaderbos, Heidelberg, WC	N	Dead	Gin-trap setup illegally by the farmer. Anaesthetic death. CapeNature on site. Prosecution followed
2025/07/03	F	Adult	Zandvlakte, Baviaanskloof, EC	N	Alive	Cage set by landowner, no permit, no conservation entities present. Leopard reportedly released on site without post release monitoring.

2025/07/11	M	Adult	Calvinia, NC	N	Dead	Gin-trap setup illegally by the farmer. Euthanised. Northern Cape conservation on site. No prosecution implemented.
2025/07/28	F	Adult	Bredasdorp, WC	N	Dead	Cage set by landowner without permit. Anaesthetic death. CapeNature on site. Necropsy confirms cardiomyopathy. Uncertain whether prosecution effected.
2025/09/03	-	Subadult	Keinmoes, NC	N	Alive	Cage set by landowner, no conservation entities present. Leopard released on site. No permit in place. Landmark facilitated release.
2025/09/04	F	Adult	Piketberg, WC	N	Alive	Female captured illegally in a cage. Situation handled by CapeNature who did not inform us. No prosecution implemented.
2025/10/27	F	Subadult	Botriver, WC	N	Alive	Cage set by landowner. CapeNature on site. Investigation in respect of illegal activity commenced.
2025/11/10	M	Subadult	Waaihoek, Wolesley, WC	N	Dead	Road collision, PM not conclusive but no trauma evident and too far decomposed to infer other causes.
2025/11/20	M	Subadult	Mitchells Pass, Ceres, WC	N	Dead	Road Collision.
2026/01/23	M	Adult	Nuy Valley, WC	N	Dead	Electrocution on Eskom pole
2026/02/02	F	Adult	Bredasdorp, WC	Y	Alive	Captured ins a permitted caracal cage, released on site and part of compensation agreement.
2026/02/20	F	Subadult	Calitzdorp, WC	N	Dead	Road Collision

2025/04/05 Grootvadersbos Male

On the 4th April, we setup a baited cage in response to livestock depredation on a dairy farm near Heidelberg, under our existing permit. According to camera trap data placed at the entrance of the cage, the leopard was recorded near the trap after 7pm. The farmer informed us in the early morning about a leopard in our cage and we informed CapeNature's office to assist with this capture. The team arrived on site at 11:30 and the animal was sedated one hour later. The individual was identified as a healthy adult male. The individual was released from the transport cage at 13:15 near the original capture location and walked out of sight within one minute. In October, we recovered the GPS collar, having given us 6 months of data and the drop-off mechanism having worked perfectly.

Grootvadersbos male sedated.

Grootvadersbos male GPS data (blue points) shows that his home range extend from Buffeljagsrivier to Heidelberg.

2025/05/09 Laingsburg Male

Late on the 9th May, an adult male was hit by a car 25km southwest of Laingsburg on the N1 road. Unfortunately, accidents like this are not uncommon, with 14 leopards recorded as having been killed in road accidents in the Western Cape since 2018. This is yet another factor increasingly threatening the survival of leopards and other wildlife. We obtained a genetic sample from the CapeNature office.

Lainsburg male

2025/07/02 Grootvadersbos Juvenile

We were notified by CapeNature of a leopard incident involving a gin-trap and asked to help with veterinary support and the potential collaring of the leopard. These types of cases are among the most distressing, as the injuries caused by such indiscriminate and barbaric devices are often severe and life-threatening. It was in this case.

According to the reporting farmer, one of his livestock had died of natural causes and the carcass was discarded of at the “carcass disposal” site on his farm. A worker later observed signs that an animal had fed on the remains. In response, the farmer set two gin-traps (closely adjacent to each other) and a baited cage trap at the site in an attempt to capture the animal feeding on the carcass. He admitted he had no permit to do so, nor that he suffered recent carnivore losses, and later claimed ignorance of the fact that the law required of him.

Upon receiving the alert, we mobilised immediately, coordinating a veterinarian, support personnel, and necessary equipment, and arrived on site by 12:30. After sedation, the extent of the injuries became clear. The captured animal was a leopard cub, estimated to be younger than four months (13kg). Both the front left leg and the rear right leg had been caught in the metal jaws of the traps. The injuries were extensive: a compound tibial fracture on the rear leg and severe trauma by crushing to the front paw. Due to the extent of the damage, the cub did not survive. Attempts to effect effective prosecution is still underway. Working with the farmer to use alternative methods than gin-traps is continuing but being resisted by him.

Gin traps are archaic and barbaric instruments of cruelty. Their design is to maim, and their effect is prolonged suffering and death. We support the complete abolition of gin traps as a matter of urgency. We support the urgent and complete abolition of gin traps. These devices have no place in a civilised society.

Gin-traps are barbaric devices inflicting unspeakable pain and suffering.

2025/07/03 Baviaanskloof Female

A leopard was captured in a baboon cage trap set without the required permits on the guest farm Zandvlakte in the Baviaanskloof valley. The animal was reportedly released. Leopards have been repeatedly targeted in this landscape, and wildlife management concerns in the Baviaanskloof, Eastern Cape remain significant.

The Baviaanskloof has been the focus of sustained conservation investment over the past three decades, with government agencies, NGOs, academic institutions and private partners working to promote ecologically responsible land management across this globally important biodiversity area. Landmark has contributed through long term leopard research, conflict mitigation initiatives, environmental education, peer reviewed publications, and the provision of compensation mechanisms linked to ethical wildlife stewardship. Despite these efforts, pressures on wildlife often persist.

The trap consisted of a large steel cage fitted with a smooth drum in the roof through which animals enter but cannot escape. Such structures are increasingly used to remove baboons, often through lethal means. In this case, it appears the leopard entered the cage to access a trapped baboon.

The continued use of such trapping methods within a UNESCO recognised landscape is unfortunately and inconsistent with the conservation responsibilities associated with the Baviaanskloof.

Screenshot extracted from the video of the captured Baviaanskloof female.

2025/07/11 Calvinia Male

We responded to a report of a leopard caught in a gin trap on a sheep farm near Calvinia in the Northern Cape. We arrived on site at approximately 22:00, after travelling roughly 500 km, in temperatures just above 0°C. The animal's condition was critical.

The leopard had attempted to free itself by chewing the trapped limb, resulting in catastrophic injury. The elbow was dislocated, soft tissue damage was extensive, and the animal was severely dehydrated. Based on the condition of the wounds and physiological distress, the leopard had likely been trapped for at least 48 hours.

The injuries were assessed as non-recoverable. Humane euthanasia was performed to prevent further suffering. A Northern Cape conservation official was present. We have not been informed whether a formal investigation or prosecution followed, although we have provided input and recommendation that it should be done.

Calvinia male

This individual was among the most physically impressive leopards we have encountered in over two decades of conservation work. His death is not only a tragic loss of life but also a loss for the genetic and ecological integrity of the species in the region.

About 20 July 2025 Cheetahs removed from Namaqua National Park

In July 2025, a major setback occurred for top carnivore rewilding in the Northern Cape. Landmark has worked in the province for over a decade to address human–wildlife conflict and promote coexistence with apex predators, particularly leopards. Recent events have severely undermined these efforts.

The 5 cheetahs captured by the farmer, Cheetah Outreach, SANParks and Northern Cape Conservation.

Five naturally recolonising cheetahs (one female with four subadult cubs), marking the first return of the species to the Namaqua region in over a century, were captured following pressure from neighbouring landowners. These animals should not have been removed. Instead of being recognised as a significant conservation success, they were relocated to captivity at the De Wildt Cheetah and Wildlife Centre in North West Province. The involvement of provincial conservation authorities, SANParks personnel and an NGO in this outcome is deeply concerning.

The incident reflects an entrenched resistance among some landowners to predator presence, including threats to take unlawful action against protected species. The appeasement of such attitudes has resulted in a profoundly poor conservation outcome.

This intervention has compromised decades of conservation investment, amounting to hundreds of millions of Rand by government, NGOs and the private sector, and has weakened progress toward restoring functional, biodiverse landscapes in a globally significant region. The Northern Cape officials have refused to account for their conduct and management in this affair.

2025/07/28 Bredasdorp Female

On 28 July 2025 at approximately 10:00, CapeNature notified us of a leopard confined in a cage trap set without a permit near Napier in the Western Cape. The cage had reportedly last been checked approximately 48 hours prior to notification.

We mobilised immediately and arrived on site at 11:45, accompanied by a veterinarian we and CapeNature have worked with in the past. The leopard was immobilised. The usual supportive care

was provided during handling, including intravenous fluids to mitigate dehydration risk. Morphological data were collected and the animal was fitted with a GPS collar.

Thirty-three minutes after immobilisation, the reversal agent was administered. Shortly thereafter, the leopard experienced cardiac arrest and could not be resuscitated. The animal was submitted for necropsy. Post mortem findings indicated cardiomyopathy, with consolidation of the left lung. At the time of immobilisation there had been no obvious external indicators of this underlying condition. The case has been referred for criminal investigations.

Bredasdorp female under sedation.

2025/08/27 Keimoes subadult (Northern Cape)

We received a report of a leopard captured in a cage trap near the Orange River in the Northern Cape. The specific reason for the trap being set remains unclear. However, after engaging in discussion with the landowner, it was confirmed that there was no intention to harm the animal. Footage provided by the farmer indicated that the individual was a subadult leopard. Following consultation with the conservation officials and assessment of the situation, the leopard was released *in situ* unharmed.

Subadult leopard in a cage in the Northern Cape.

2025/09/04 Piketberg Female

CapeNature let us know post facto that a pregnant leopard was captured in a cage set by the landowner, and that the animal was sedated and released. This was a key missed opportunity to collar and release the female; however, Landmark was not included in the effort. It would appear no attempt

was made to investigate the illegal setting of the cage or prosecution in this case. We have engaged with CapeNature in the area to promote more collaborative efforts for the best outcome of the species.

2025/10/27 Botrivier Female

Our team was notified by CapeNature representative around 8:30 am about a leopard in a baited cage located on a farm near Botrivier. Once under anaesthesia, we discovered that it was a subadult female in excellent body and dental condition. The sub-adult was likely still relying on her mother and the farmer agreed to release her on site. She was too young to collar. The matter was referred to the investigating authorities.

Subadult female under anaesthesia.

2025/11/21 and 2025/12/01 Ceres/Wolseley Males

Recently, we were notified of the deaths of two subadult male leopards between Worcester and Ceres. The first individual was killed in a vehicle collision on Mitchell's Pass. Ten days later, a second male was found dead on a farm in the Breede River area near Wolseley. There were no visible signs of injury, and the necropsy revealed no bullets or fractures. As a result, a toxicology analysis is currently being conducted to determine whether poisoning may have been the cause of death.

Two sub-adult males: Mitchell's Pass (left) and Wolseley (right)

23/01/2026 Nuy Valley, Worcester, Male

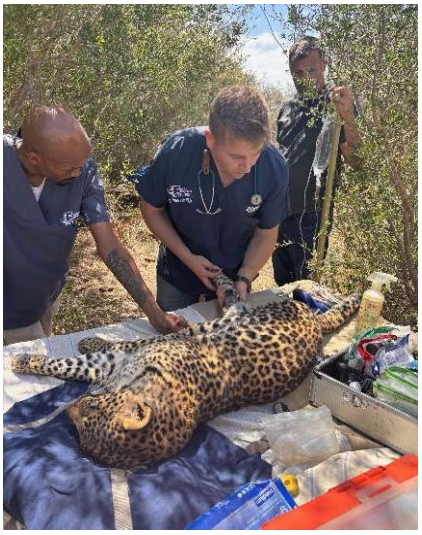
In a bizarre instance in the Nuy valley a male leopard was electrocuted at night while it climbed an electric pylon. Although previous similar instances had been rarely reported, this scenario has not been encountered by our team or any conservation body in the Western Cape. It is suspected that the leopard was either chased up (by a territorial conflict with another male leopard) or was targeting a prey item (e.g. guineafowl roosting on the pylon). The leopard's carcass was retrieved and genetic samples were secured. No foul play was suspected.

Electrocuted leopard in a Nuy Valley

02/02/2026 Female Rescue, Bredasdorp, Western Cape

We were called out to a farm of previous conflicts where the female leopard died in July 2025. This time the farmer had a permit to capture caracal and set a trap. A female leopard was captured in it. She was immobilised and fitted with a collar. The surrounding mountain range was extensively affected by recent fires, resulting in substantial habitat loss and likely short-term reductions in natural prey availability. Post release monitoring will be important to assess her spatial response to these altered landscape conditions.

This individual represents the 78th leopard assisted through our conflict intervention efforts.



Veterinarian attending to the leopard in Bredasdorp

Caracal Rescues

Landmark assisted in three caracals caught in cage traps where landowners elected to not kill them.

Captured caracal prior to release.

Leopard Density and Biodiversity Surveys

A big part of the research is to assess ecosystems within and beyond protected areas. We use camera traps in a scientifically rigorous manner to collect baseline data essential for these efforts. This approach provides accurate data of the status quo, helping us identify threats to biodiversity and develop effective solutions to reverse these threats providing useful baseline data for managers and policy makers. These areas were assessed over the last 12 month:

Outeniqua Mountains

In 2024, we initiated a rigorous leopard and biodiversity monitoring program in the Outeniqua mountains near George upon request of CapeNature. This survey helped determine prey abundance and general wildlife species richness present on the mountains, as well as improve conservation policies for the leopards within protected-, unprotected- and privately-owned lands.

Field work in the Outeniqua mountains

Between April 2024 and May 2025, we ran a three-phase camera trap survey inside and around Witfontein, Doringriver and Ruiterbos Nature Reserves. Across this survey period, we photographed 24 mammalian (including European wild boar, an invasive species) and 7 avian species (Table 3). We identified six adult leopards (3M:3F) mainly present in the Doringsriver Nature Reserve (Table 3).

Some of the mammals photographed during the Outeniqua mountains survey.

Table 2. Summary of data collected during the Outeniqua survey.

	Phase 1: Witfontein	Phase 2: Doringsriver	Phase 3: Ruiterbos
Survey period	Apr-Oct 2024 (180 days)	Oct 2024-Jan 2025 (90 days)	Feb-May 2025 (90 days)
Paired stations	14	12	7
Number of images (excluding false triggers and unidentifiable species)	7635	1166	585
Mammalian species	20*	19	15
Avian species	7	3	1
Leopard individuals	1 (maybe 2)	4	2
Average wild species per station	8.9	9.25	8
% of human-related photos	75%	37%	28%

*Including one invasive species (wild boar).

De Vlugt-Wittedrift (Plettebberg Bay/Keurboomsstrand)

Following the survey in the Tsitsikamma area (2023-2024), we placed 19 paired stations, stretching from De Vlugt to Wittedrift. Indeed, this area was identified as an important habitat in the highly human-populated and impacted Garden Route region. Between September 2024 and July 2025, we recorded 26 mammalian and 11 avian species, as well as identified six leopards (2M:2F:1U).

One of the leopards detected near Wittedrift.

Human activity was recorded in a relatively low proportion of camera trap images (31.5%), despite the site's proximity to populated areas, such as Plettenberg Bay, Keurboomstrand, and Wittedrift, no doubt protected by private property access. In contrast, previous camera trap surveys conducted near Stormsriver and the city of George (see Table 2) in state land documented significantly higher levels of human presence, with more than 70% of images capturing human-related activity (e.g., vehicles, domestic dogs).

De Hoop Nature Reserve

De Hoop Nature Reserve in the Overberg is a key habitat for leopards, but habitat loss and fragmentation in the region threaten their survival through genetic isolation and low population density. Urgent management actions are necessary to create corridors promoting genetic connectivity in the Overberg. To address this, the Landmark initiated conservation efforts in the Infanta area to reduce human-wildlife conflict, particularly with the small-stock farming community. Measures included the use of deterrent devices, such as the '*skaapwagter*'—which emits lights, sounds, and chemicals—to discourage predators from approaching vulnerable areas on farms. In 2012 – 2014), the Landmark conducted an extensive camera trap survey stretching from Cape Infanta to Hermanus/Botrivier Lagoon (2984 km2). We identified nine different leopard individuals, including five leopards within De Hoop.

De Hoop Reserve

In January 2025, we started another camera trap survey to compare the current leopard density with the 2012 - 2014 survey results, as well as to better understand leopard ecology in and outside the reserve. This is done in the aim to inform and improve conservation policy and managements for leopards. Twenty-one paired stations were placed from Infanta to the Potberg CapeNature office as part of the Phase 1 of this survey. Preliminary results show that the number of leopards decreased significantly since 2012, from five individuals to two males. This is an alarming result and urgent conservation measures need to take place such as facilitating connectivity along the Breede River and mitigations of undeclared conflicts on the margin of protected habitats.

Examples of wildlife photographs during the De Hoop survey.

West Coast

Amidst the rapid urbanization taking place in the West Coast, leopards appear to be able to recolonize remnant natural habitat along the coast after several decades of absence. However, the expanding urban sprawl and human pressures on the land poses significant challenges to wildlife connectivity and ecosystems. It is therefore essential to conserve these sites, mitigate human-wildlife conflicts to promote co-existence between people and wildlife, and facilitate habitat connectivity. Those efforts are needed to support genetic connectivity and ensure the persistence of leopards and broader ecosystem integrity in the West Coast.

Map of the ongoing camera trap survey on the West Coast.

We commenced this work in the area since 2019 when the images of leopards were first detected on the West Coast. Since February 2025, we have been conducting an extensive scientific camera trap survey along the coastline between Bloubergstrand and the Berg River, covering approximately 90 km of coastline. The survey spans a variety of land tenures, including private properties and game reserves. To date, the survey has documented 23 wild mammal, 8 avian, and one reptilian species.

Notably, and somewhat unexpectedly, the data confirmed the presence of at least five individual leopards ranging between Langebaan and Melkbosstrand. To date 5 individuals have been detected (4 males).

A beautiful example of natural recolonization in South Africa.

Several other surveys are ongoing in the Langeberg, Montague, Hermanus mountains and outlying areas like the Goukou river.

Leopard DNA Project

Leopards in Southern Africa face serious threats from habitat loss, population fragmentation, and human-caused mortality. In South Africa's Eastern and Western Cape provinces, DNA analyses have revealed troubling patterns, particularly in the coastal Overberg population, which shows reduced gene flow and high levels of inbreeding. These issues are less severe in the more connected "Central" and "North" populations (McManus et al. 2014) but overall, low population densities (Devens et al., 2018, 2019) and long-term habitat destruction since the 1600s have worsened genetic isolation and raised concerns about the species' long-term viability.

Landmark is leading a whole genome sequencing study of leopards in Africa, specifically examining the southern populations. This project uses next-generation sequencing to investigate leopard population structure and connectivity on a large scale, focusing on the Eastern, Northern, and Western Cape provinces. By identifying genetic "pinch points"—areas where fragmentation is most severe—the research aims to guide more effective conservation interventions, and specifically the human impacts on the genetic structure unveiled.

The sequencing phase is complete, and data analysis is underway, with collaboration from South African and British universities, and institutions such as SANBI. Results, expected beginning of 2026, will provide critical insights into leopard genetics and inform South Africa's leopard management plan, helping shape future conservation policies across sub-Saharan Africa.

Plans for Future and Ongoing Work in Leopard Conservation by the Landmark

1. **Leopard Whole Genome DNA Analysis**
   Objective Alignment:

- **Research:** Using cutting-edge whole genome sequencing, this project provides critical insights into leopard population genetics, enabling evidence-based management strategies to ensure their survival.
- **Information sharing:** Results will contribute to policy discussions and influence conservation management frameworks at national and provincial levels.

2. **Identifying High-Conflict Areas**
   Objective Alignment:
   - **Rescue and Rehabilitation:** Identifying high-conflict zones enables intervention in areas where leopards face threats, helping mitigate mortality risks.
   - **Education:** By pinpointing conflict zones, efforts can focus on educating local communities about non-lethal and coexistence methods for managing predator interactions.
   - **Information sharing:** Mapping these areas supports lobbying efforts for more robust predator management and conservation policies.

3. **Expanding Camera Trap Surveys**
   Objective Alignment:
   - **Research:** Camera trap surveys provide critical data on leopard population dynamics, density, and distribution, forming the foundation for science-based conservation actions.
   - **Wildlife-Friendly Habitat Expansion:** Insights from surveys guide habitat connectivity projects by identifying corridors and critical areas for leopard movement.

4. **Conflict Mitigation and Coexistence Efforts**
   Objective Alignment:
   - **Rescue and Rehabilitation:** Non-lethal predator deterrents and compensation schemes reduce the need for retaliatory killings, indirectly saving leopards from harm.
   - **Wildlife-Friendly Habitat Expansion:** Encouraging coexistence strategies promotes sustainable land use that accommodates predators while minimizing conflict.
   - **Information sharing:** Working with landowners and conservation departments strengthens policy support for coexistence programs.
   - **Market Mechanisms:** Compensation schemes, like wildlife-friendly certification, leverage market-based tools to incentivize coexistence.

5. **Drafting and Discussing a Management Plan**
   Objective Alignment:
   - **Information sharing:** The management plan consolidates scientific findings into actionable strategies, providing a roadmap for policy and legislative improvements.
   - **Research:** The process integrates data from ongoing studies to ensure robust, evidence-based recommendations.
   - **Education:** Stakeholder workshops offer an opportunity to disseminate knowledge and align efforts across diverse groups, fostering broader buy-in.
   - **Information sharing:** Providing inputs to policy, legislation and operating procedures.

6. **Publishing Key Findings**
   Objective Alignment:
   - **Research:** Sharing findings on coexistence, carnivore ecology, and recolonization amplifies the impact of the foundation's work and contributes to global conservation literature.
   - **Education:** Published work reaches academics, conservationists, and the public, raising awareness of the challenges and successes in leopard conservation.
   - **Information sharing:** Rigorous data strengthens the case for policy interventions.

Scientific literature relevant to leopard and biodiversity conservation by Landmark Foundation, Landmark Rewilding Trust and collaborators

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mammalian biodiversity recovery on a semi-arid Karoo farm in South Africa. *Frontiers in Conservation Science* 2: 6. https://doi.org/10.3389/fcosc.2021.652415

- Devens, C.H., Hayward, M.W., Tshabalala, T., Dickman, A., McManus, J.S., Smuts, B. & Somers, M.J., (2019). Estimating Leopard density across the highly modified human-dominated landscape of the Western Cape, South Africa. *Oryx* 55(1): 1-12. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0030605318001473
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Book Chapters:

- Dickman, A., Potgieter, G., Horgan, J., Stoner, K., Klein, R., McManus., J.S. & Marker, L. (2018). Use of Livestock Guarding Dogs to reduce human-cheetah conflict. In: Cheetahs: Biology and Conservation (Eds Marker, L, Boast, L and Schmidt-Kuntzel, A). AP, Namibia.

Supervision:

- Ms. Erin Jooste (Student number 3341069) at the University of the Western Cape (UWC), South Africa, for a MSc. The MSc. is titled: "The spatial and dietary requirements of Caracal (*Caracal caracal*) in lethal and non-lethal predator control landscapes". Passed with Distinction 2020.

- Ms. Etsy Yanco (Student number 12730343) at the University of Technology, Sydney, Australia, for the degree of PhD. The PhD. is titled: “Shifts in human well-being and attitudes towards nature following livestock herder training and implementation”. Passed 2021.
- Ms. Kamila Jandova at the Czech University of Life Sciences, Prague. Faculty of Tropical AgriSciences. The thesis is titled: “Does resource dispersion drive Leopard habitat selection?” Passed 2019.

Current Publications Accepted or in Preparation for Peer- Review Submission:

- Wildlife-friendly Farming Promotes Functional Richness and Trophic Complexity by Hasselerharm et al.
- Caracal habitat selection and activity patterns on a predator-friendly farm in the Karoo, South Africa by Adams et al.
- Barriers to Preventive Innovations in the US and South Africa by Boronyak et al.

Environmental Education Programme

As environmental and biodiversity degradation accelerates climate-related risks increasingly affecting communities. Environmental education has become an essential pillar of both ecological resilience and social development. Landmark Rewilding Trust's Environmental Education Program, in collaboration with Landmark Foundation responds to this reality by positioning education as a strategic intervention; one that equips learners, educators, and communities with the knowledge, skills, and values required to engage meaningfully with environmental challenges. In 2025, the Program reached 1,139 learners and 402 educators, reflecting both growing demand and sustained trust in our work.

Values, attitudes, knowledge and skills

Our educational model is underpinned by four interrelated objectives: the development of environmental values, the shaping of attitudes, the transfer of relevant knowledge, and the cultivation of practical skills. These objectives align closely with the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) of the Education Departments, particularly within Life Skills, Natural Sciences, Life Orientation, Geography, and Technology. By integrating curriculum-aligned content with experiential, place-based learning, our Programs support formal education outcomes while deepening learners' ecological literacy and sense of environmental responsibility. At the core of this approach is the recognition that sustainable communities are built not only through information, but through transformative learning that fosters empathy, critical thinking, leadership, and stewardship.

Our Programs are structured to support learners across key developmental stages. In early childhood, the Creches Project introduces foundational environmental concepts through recycling and the principles of the 3 R's, focusing on habit formation, responsibility, and care for shared resources and an understanding of food providence. These early interventions support Life Skills curriculum outcomes by embedding environmental awareness within everyday behaviour. At intermediate phase level, our focus shifts towards nurturing curiosity about the natural world, developing leadership capacity, and embedding environmental responsibility at a whole-school level through the Green Schools Recycling Program. This initiative reinforces CAPS outcomes related to responsible citizenship, systems thinking, and practical problem-solving.

Working across development stages at pre-school and school levels

The **Green Schools Recycling Program** can also be implemented in high schools, where Grade 8 and Grade 11 learners are positioned as implementers and managers of the program. This structure provides applied learning opportunities linked to Life Orientation, Life Sciences, Geography, and Technology, while building transferable skills such as leadership, data tracking, teamwork, and environmental management. For schools seeking deeper engagement, the **Green Club Program** operates as an extra-mural platform, enabling small groups of learners to design and lead environmental campaigns, advocacy initiatives, and conservation actions that extend learning beyond the classroom and into the wider community.

Green Club Program

In parallel with our school-based Programs, Landmark is strengthening its commitment to youth mentorship and adult environmental education. A growing component of our conservation strategy focuses on training young people in education-related and facilitation skills, creating pathways for youth to participate meaningfully in environmental education delivery. This approach not only builds local capacity but also contributes to long-term Program sustainability by developing a new generation of environmental educators and leaders.

To maximise impact, our Environmental Education Program is supported by a network of strategic partnerships with conservation organisations, NGOs, academic institutions, government departments, and parastatal bodies. These collaborations allow for the integration of scientific expertise, policy relevance, and practical conservation experience into our educational offerings. Environmental education remains severely underfunded relative to its importance, yet through strategic partnerships and resource-sharing, Landmark has been able to deliver high-impact Programs that represent strong value for investment.

Key partnerships, most notably with Henque Waste, are central to the success of our recycling initiatives. Our broader collaborative network includes SANBI, Botsoc, the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE), Breede-Gouritz Catchment Management Agency, CapeNature, SANParks, Garden Route Botanical Garden, Nelson Mandela University – Saasveld, George Herald,

WESSA (Eden Branch), George Municipality, Garden Route District Municipality, and a range of local environmental practitioners and organisations such as Kaelvoet Consulting, Into the Wilderness, The Lady of the Herbs and Garden Roots to mention a few.

Waste recycling in schools

These partnerships enable Landmark to scale its impact, reach communities, and embed environmental education within existing educational and governance systems. In the absence of consistent donor funding, collaborative models have been critical to Program continuity, but remain a constraint for the impact we could have. Continued investment in environmental education represents an investment in resilient ecosystems, empowered youth, and informed communities; outcomes that are essential for long-term environmental sustainability and social wellbeing

Schools Programs

Green Clubs

The Green Club Program is a key component of Landmark's school-based environmental education offering, providing a learner-led platform for developing environmental leadership, active citizenship, and meaningful engagement with local and global environmental issues. Through structured activities and campaigns, Green Clubs promote science-based understanding, advocacy, and a deeper connection to nature.

Glenwood House Green Club

Aligned with CAPS outcomes,particularly within Life Orientation, Natural Sciences, Geography, and Social Sciences,the Program supports applied learning through research, planning, communication, and action. Learners develop critical skills such as leadership, collaboration, problem-solving, and systems thinking, while extending environmental awareness beyond the classroom to the wider school and parent community.

The sustainability of Green Clubs depends largely on strong internal champions, especially committed teachers who provide continuity and guidance. A key challenge has been inconsistent leadership due to teacher turnover and competing priorities, which has limited the successful establishment of clubs across multiple schools. However, long-term partnerships demonstrate the Program's potential when institutional support is in place. Glenwood House School has been an active and dedicated partner for nearly 15 years, illustrating the impact of stable leadership and sustained commitment.

Currently, Landmark supports two highly active Green Clubs at Glenwood House School:

- **Glenwood Greens** – 16 learners at Glenwood House Preparatory School (Grades 5–7), influencing approximately 490 learners and educators.
- **Glenwood Environment Society (GWES)** – 23 learners at Glenwood House College (Grades 8–12), influencing approximately 480 learners and educators.

These clubs highlight the ripple effect of learner-led environmental action, where small groups drive awareness and behaviour change across entire school communities. Some ex-students even went on to do PhDs in ecological studies.

To strengthen Program sustainability and scalability, Landmark is developing a Green Clubs Manual to support schools in establishing and maintaining clubs more independently. This resource will provide structured guidance for educators, reducing reliance on individual champions and enabling broader Program uptake.

Green Schools – Recycling Program

The Green Schools Recycling Program is implemented in partnership with George Municipality, Henque Waste, and the Garden Route District Municipality, providing schools with a practical and curriculum-aligned waste management system that supports environmental education while contributing to a green circular economy. The program offers a user-friendly recycling model for both learners and educators, with the added incentive of financial returns to schools through Henque Waste's buy-back system for paper and tins.

Green Schools recycling program

Designed for both primary and high schools, the program is learner-driven and embedded within existing school structures. In primary schools, Grade 6 and 7 learners take responsibility for managing recycling activities, while in high schools, Grade 8 and Grade 11 learners serve as implementers and managers of the system. This structure aligns with CAPS outcomes in Life Orientation, Natural Sciences, Geography, and Technology by promoting responsibility, leadership, systems thinking, and practical environmental management, while reducing the administrative load on teaching staff.

The program has contributed to measurable reductions in landfill waste and has encouraged positive behaviour change beyond the school environment, with learners actively promoting recycling practices at home. Participating schools receive annual certificates recognising their environmental contributions, reinforcing accountability and sustained engagement.

Annual certificate for performing schools

We have six registered for the Green Schools Recycling Program, which often serves as an entry point for broader environmental initiatives within schools. Current registered schools include Gracehill College, Pacaltsdorp Primary, Hoogekraal Primary, Up with DOWNS, Carpe Diem and George Preparatory.

Crèches Project – Early Childhood Development Centres

The Crèches Project integrates environmental education into Early Childhood Development (ECD) settings by introducing young learners to the principles of *Reduce, Reuse, Recycle* through age-appropriate, hands-on learning. The program supports the early development of environmental awareness and responsible behaviour, aligning with the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) for children from birth to four and CAPS Life Skills outcomes in the Foundation Phase, particularly around care for the environment, participation, and social responsibility.

In Phase 1, learners establish basic waste separation systems and engage in simple composting activities using organic waste. Through these practical experiences, children begin to understand the value of recycling and resource care. Phase 2 builds on this learning by using the compost to support food gardens, where learners plant seeds, observe growth cycles, and harvest produce that can supplement daily meals. Recycling of plastic and paper generates modest income, encouraging community participation and reinforcing concepts of reuse, value, and circular systems.

Children learning to separate waste for recycling

The project is implemented in collaboration with the Department of Social Development, George Municipality, Garden Route District Municipality, and Henque Waste.Landmark continues to support three active registered ECD centres: George Voorbereiding / Preparatory School, Glenwood Preparatory School, and Klouter Kabouter. Among these, George Voorbereiding has emerged as a leading example, demonstrating the transformative impact of embedding environmental education into everyday school practice.

At George Voorbereiding, trained ground staff play a key role in ensuring the smooth operation of recycling systems, while Grade 3 learners,known as the “Recycling Warriors”,actively monitor recycling stations and educate their peers. Their collective efforts have resulted in the collection of approximately **120,000 plastic bottles** and the diversion of more than **7,500 kg of waste** from landfill. These outcomes highlight the capacity of even young learners to contribute meaningfully to environmental solutions when supported by structured systems.

Youth introduction to cultivation

These achievements were celebrated during a Recycling Assembly, where participating learners received Green Awards and the class with the highest annual collection was recognised. The event reflected the growing sense of pride, ownership, and enthusiasm for environmental stewardship among both learners and staff.

Project Potential: With additional human resources, the Crèches Project can strengthen relationships with more ECD centres and expand its reach. The presence of a dedicated school champion, supported by committed staff, remains essential for long-term success. Landmark is currently developing a project manual to guide new schools through implementation, supporting effective integration of environmental initiatives into existing ECD systems and curricula. This program is desperately needing more funding resources to expand.

Other Landmark Youth in Conservation and Environmental Education Efforts

Youth in Conservation

Through our ongoing partnership with the Garden Route Botanical Garden, Landmark engaged with six third-year Nature Conservation interns from Nelson Mandela University (NMU) during the year. This internship forms a core component of the interns' final year of study, providing structured, hands-on experience that bridges academic learning with real-world conservation practice.

Landmark supports the environmental education component of the internship, exposing students to curriculum-linked education delivery, community engagement, and practical program implementation. Interns gain experience in environmental facilitation, learner engagement, and the design and delivery of education initiatives within a living conservation setting. This involvement strengthens their academic development while equipping them with applied skills relevant to careers in conservation, education, and environmental management.

By contributing to the training of emerging conservation professionals, the program supports capacity-building within the sector and helps cultivate a new generation of environmentally literate practitioners who are able to translate ecological knowledge into meaningful public engagement and conservation action.


Young conservation professionals given exposure

Garden Route Environmental Education Centre (GREEC)

The Garden Route Environmental Education Centre (GREEC), based at the Garden Route Botanical Garden (GRBG), serves as the hub for environmental education programs facilitated by the Landmark. Since its inception, in 2016, Landmark has developed a range of age-appropriate programs for learners across all school phases for GREEC.

For Foundation Phase learners, the *Garden Explorations* program introduces young visitors to nature through sensory learning, encouraging curiosity and basic observation skills. The Intermediate Phase Ranger Program builds on this foundation, guiding learners to observe and understand natural systems in greater depth.

In partnership with Nelson Mandela University and Glenwood House, GREEC developed CAPS-aligned garden-based worksheets for learners from grade 4 to 11, using the botanical garden as a living classroom. Day-visiting schools are also introduced to the garden's biodiversity through guided exploration.


Green passports program

A flagship initiative is the Green Passports Program, a long-term learning journey where learners earn stamps for participating in environmental activities such as tree planting, alien clearing, seed planting, and propagation. Over four years, learners work towards achieving a Green Award, promoting observation, critical thinking, and environmental stewardship.

Landmark continues to manage and run the Environmental Education Program at the Garden, ensuring learners foster environmental awareness, responsibility, and a strong connection to nature among learners.

Landmark continues implement waste management recycling to the residents of George with its plastic recycling information sheet.

Recycling poster

Protecting Urban Trees from Weed-Eater Damage

Landmark Foundation initiated an awareness campaign supported by the George Municipal Tree Committee, as we participate in this committee. The campaign highlighted how weed-eaters and brush cutters damage at tree bases disrupting water and nutrient flow, weakening and often killing young trees. Practical, low-cost solutions such as tree guards, mulch circles, and improved cutting practices were promoted. The message also encouraged retaining groundcover around tree bases to support biodiversity. The campaign has already reached more than 80,000 people across social and communication platforms. Ongoing training with garden services including municipality staff is planned to reinforce best practice and long-term tree protection.

Weed eater training and Information

Remarkable trees poster

Arbor Week /Month

During Arbor Week and extending throughout Arbor Month, Landmark received, through a collaboration with GRBG and Kaelvoet Consulting, 100 indigenous trees from the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE). Tree planting activities were integrated across multiple projects, creating opportunities to actively support schools and communities already engaged in environmental stewardship.

In partnership with Glenwood House Preparatory School's Green Club, a whole-school tree planting initiative was implemented, engaging learners and staff in practical, hands-on conservation action. In addition, all schools participating in Landmark Foundation programs received trees to plant within their grounds, reinforcing learning around trees, biodiversity, and ecosystem services in alignment with CAPS outcomes in Natural Sciences and Life Skills.

Planting trees

Beyond school-based activities, Arbor Month was marked by continuous planting at the Garden Route Botanical Garden, alongside the distribution of trees to community members for planting in local neighbourhoods. These combined efforts supported urban greening, environmental awareness, and long-term stewardship of indigenous trees.

City Nature Challenge 2025

The iNaturalist app is integrated across Landmark Foundation projects, particularly those involving youth and interns, as a key teaching and citizen science tool. Participants are encouraged to register and use the platform to build skills in observation, species identification, and data collection.

During the Great Southern BioBlitz and the City Nature Challenge, activities focused on the Garden Route Botanical Garden, contributing to the monitoring of local biodiversity. These initiatives support CAPS-aligned learning in Natural Sciences and Geography and were shared widely on social media to extend public environmental awareness. Glenwood Green Club and Pacaltsdorp Hight Green Club actively participated in this year's challenge.

Malgas River Revival Project–Capacity Building & Skills Development

The Malgas River Revival Project is an education-focused river restoration initiative that combines hands-on conservation activities with curriculum-linked learning. Now in its second year of implementation in George, the project continues to engage Kretzenshoop Primary School in the Blanco community, building on the foundations of the *Respect the River Project* to ensure continuity in both learning and river rehabilitation.

Using the Malgas River as a learning site, the project supports CAPS-aligned outcomes in Natural Sciences, Geography, and Life Orientation. Learners explore freshwater ecosystems, biodiversity, water quality, pollution, invasive species, and human impacts on river systems through practical, place-based activities. These experiences strengthen environmental literacy while developing observation, problem-solving, and stewardship skills.

The project also builds capacity within the school and community by reinforcing responsibility for shared natural resources and active citizenship. By linking classroom concepts to real conservation action, learners gain a clearer understanding of the role healthy river systems play in ecological and community wellbeing.

Initiated by SANBI and supported by the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE), the project is implemented in partnership with Garden Roots, Lady of the Herbs, WESSA, and Landmark. Landmark guides the educational process on this event. This collaborative model ensures access to scientific expertise, effective environmental education delivery, and meaningful learner participation in river restoration efforts.

Talks and Presentations

Part of our education program includes direct interaction with public on live platforms. During this year we were invited to present talks on our Leopard Conservation work at these events:

- Conversations in Conservation – Hosted by Touws River Conservancy
- Different meetings in the Northern Cape with farmer associations and community groups in Augrabies and Nieuwoudtville
- West Coast National Park
- City of Cape Town
- West Coast Bird Club

- Berg River Bird Club
- U3A in George and Hermanus
- Several business and conservation groups in Hermanus
- Oceans Research and Saudi Arabian conservation practitioner students
- Sedgefield Conservancy


Addressing farmers in Augrabies

Umkhondo Big 5 Wildlife Education & Wildlife Forensics Academy

Our partnership with this program is ongoing and multiple lectures were given to their students through the year.

Wildlife Welfare and Wellbeing Manual

In collaboration with Karen Trendler of Working Wild we are facilitating the compilation of welfare manual and guide related to wildlife management. This manual has been completed into a draft format for open source in 2024, but despite repeated requests that contractor failed to finalise the manual. We worked with The Felix Schneier Foundation on this initiative.

Planned Education Projects in 2026

Over the past four years, our resources have been stretched, limiting the scope of our education efforts. Despite these challenges, we've made significant progress. With more resources and support, we can drive major change in our community.

Our goals for 2026 include:

- **continued talks with WCED** to develop an Early Childhood Development program in schools that integrates Environmental Education, expanding the Creches Project provincially and gaining greater educator involvement.
- **Increasing the number of Green Clubs** by targeting at least 4 schools per year, reducing waste and creating more environmental ambassadors.
- **Publishing manuals** for Farmers, Creches, and Green Clubs to guide educators and participating facilities in their environmental efforts.
- **Growing our educational capacity** with personnel and equipment.

Collaborations and Partnerships in Education

Landmark has built strong relationship with other NGO's and organizations in the environmental education field over many years. These partnerships facilitate achieving more impactful results, especially in the resource constrained environment we find ourselves.

Collaborating Organisations:

- CapeNature Conservation - Various Projects and collaborations
- SANParks – Environmental
- Garden Route Botanical Garden – Environmental Education
- Nelson Mandela University, Saasveld – Interns
- George Herald – Environmental awareness – Tree Committee
- WESSA EDEN – Support with various projects and collaborations
- George Municipality – Support with Green schools, Tree Committee,
- Garden Route District Municipality – Support with recycling and waste
- Henque Waste – George Waste Recycling Agents support with recycling and various projects with schools. Major role players in minimizing waste to landfill and generating green economy opportunities.
- Local conservation entities: Kaelvoet Consulting, Garden Roots, Into the Wilderness, The Herb Lady, Tree Whisperer
- i-naturalist Garden Route
- Touws River Conservancy
- George Hospital
- SANBI
- DFFE

Focus on social media

Landmark maintains a strong presence on the social media platforms, and our different actions are showcased through short videos, stories, reels and visual posts on active Facebook and Instagram pages where our collaborations are showcased.

https://web.facebook.com/LandmarkRewilding/

@landmarkrewilding

In 2025 Landmark Rewilding Trust launched its new website, available at: www.landmark.org.za

Illustrations for Education

We are using a series of illustrations to enrich our social and educational platforms. Cathy Fourie, a talented South African watercolour painter based in George, has graciously offered her artistic skills to create these illustrations. These artworks are used in our Outreach Projects and Programs.

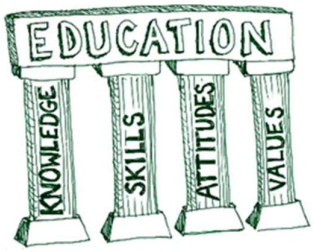

Table 3. Summary of the environment educational actions in the last 12 months

School/ Organisation	Program	Period	Total learners	Total educators	Target grades/ ages	School/ Organisation
Glenwood House	Green club	Ongoing (weekly)	25	1	Grades 8 to 12	Glenwood House
Glenwood Primary	Green club	Ongoing (weekly)	15	1	Grades 5 to 7	Glenwood Primary
Gracehill College	Green school recycling program	Ongoing	203	7	Grades 1 to 8	Gracehill College
George Voorbereiding	Creches project	Ongoing	500	23	Grade R to 3	George Voorbereiding
Klouter Kabouter	Creches project	Ongoing	50	6	Grade 000 to R	Klouter Kabouter
Glenwood Pre-Primary	Creches project	Ongoing	60	8	Grade 000 to R	Glenwood Pre-Primary
Arbor Week	Arbor Week	Annual	200	20	All grades and ages	Arbor Week
Hoogekraal Primary	Green School	Ongoing	60	5	Grades 1-6	Hoogekraal Primary
Up with DOWNS	Green School	Ongoing	68	9	All ages	Up with DOWNS
Carpe Diem	Green School	Ongoing	130	9	All ages	Carpe Diem
George Overbreeding	Green school	Ongoing	400	16	Grade 1-3	George Overbreeding
Pacaltsdorp Primary	Green School	Ongoing	700	25	Grades 1-7	Pacaltsdorp Primary
Kos en Fynbos	Food gardens	Ongoing		10	Adults and youth	Kos en Fynbos

Oakdale Agri School	Conservation Education	Annual (3days)	31	3	Grade 10	Oakdale Agri School
Green Passports EE Talks	GREEC	Ongoing	2020	20	All Grades	
Interns	Youth conservation	Ongoing	8		All age from 20	
Malgas Revival	Capacity building	Annual	30	7	Grade 5 to 7	
Youth Environmental awareness	Conservation Education	ongoing		15	Youth	
Talks and Presentations	Conservation Education	Various		420	Adults	
City Nature Challenge	Conservation Education	Annual	60	4	Open reach to George and its surrounding	
Weed Eater Campaign Special Trees Project	Conservation Education	Ongoing		+= 34 000	George Community	

"True change is the change that comes from within. Our role is to change people and children's attitude toward the environment. In some cases, we assist with furthering conservation efforts and in others with initiating understanding for the natural world. There are many ways to create change; passion and strong leadership are key elements. We strive to be resourceful, streamlined and not wasteful in any of the projects we initiate. Process is an important factor to achieve long term change. This requires time. Our coined phrase being: "ONE BITE AT A TIME" and "YES WE CAN".
Monica Vaccaro, Education Coordinator

Reflecting on 2025 and into 2026

Institutional Registrations

The registrations of the organisation took a lot longer than expected and required more than 2 years to complete. Organisation was established in November 2023 and the ensuing two years of mind-numbing interaction with state entities: the Master of the High Court, the Department of Social Development, SARS, the Tax-exempt unit and Banking compliance. While our operations commenced immediately with volunteer and partner inputs, we could only raise funds and expend money once the registrations were in place and complete. With these registration milestones having been achieved, this finally allows fundraising and capacitation of the organisation to enable full implementation of our mission.

Operational focus in 2026

1. **Staff**

Staff could only be formally appointed in October 2025, in respect of remunerations, when all registrations were in place and resources were obtained. However, operations commenced in November 2023 with volunteer input and collaborations.

2. **Funds**

We only enabled to raise funds and transact commercially once the requisite registrations were in place. We relied on collaborations to enable the operations. From October 2025 we were able to commence operations from our own account and tax exemption since January 2026.

3. **Registration with state agencies**

The registrations of the Trust instrument, NPO registration, bank account and SARS was complex, less than user-friendly, and immensely inefficient, but has been completed.

4. **Leopard losses suffered**

This year has seen an unprecedented mortality seen in leopards in our areas of operation. At least 8 leopards have died in the past year. We have seen government agencies regressing to old habits and unaccountability. Additionally, the hunting industry and their government accomplices have increasingly advocated trophy hunting, trophy hunting of “damage-causing” leopards, and hunts for cultural regalia. The silence of conservation entities is deafening, making Landmark’s input of even greater importance.

5. **Educational efforts**

Our educational program is indeed innovative and impactful, and working on a shoe-string budget has achieved far more than many well-funded and soulless efforts in the industry. We are proud of our accomplishments.

6. **Research**

We lead one of the most impactful research efforts in leopard conservation focusing on conflict situations, landscape rewilding, genomics and mitigations.

7. Collaborations and building capacity

In our formative period we have established profound collaborations with academia, civil society, private entities and some government agencies. We intend, through rescues, research and environmental education, to be influential in this field. Our operations were supported through partner contributions and funding efforts. We are honoured to be contributing to the legacy established by Landmark Foundation. We continue to collaborate with Landmark Foundation. Landmark Foundation will focus on advocacy and policy inputs, and we will concentrate on field operations, research and education.

8. **Marketing and Awareness**

We have succeeded in establishing our social media platform in www.facebook.com/LandmarkRewilding and has almost 30.000 followers and our reach some months getting up to 3.8 million views. We had launched our new website, www.landmark.org.za in 2024 and refined it further in 2025. We have a donate portal on our website, as well as a PayFast donation portal. We plan to also develop a profile on X and Instagram in the next few months.

9. Landmark Rewilding Trust & Landmark Foundation

Since 2023 we have developed a detailed partnership with the Landmark Foundation with whom we have built on the research, field operations and educational legacy of Landmark Foundation. This has enabled the separation advocacy efforts from the important research and field operations which the Landmark Rewilding has taken forward.

Organisational Information

Key staff

- **Jeannine McManus (PhD)** (2023–present) — Founder, Trustee and Executive Director
- **Monica Vaccaro** (2023 – present) — Trustee, Education Coordinator
- **Lauriane Faraut (PhD)** (2023–present) — Researcher
- **Bool Smuts** (2023 – present) — Volunteer

Current trustees

- **Dennis Farrell** – Trustee
- **Monica Vaccaro** – Trustee
- **Jeannine McManus** – Founder Chairperson, Trustee, Director

Legal and tax registration and reporting

Landmark Rewilding Trust is up to date with statutory reporting to the Department of Social Development and SARS.

Looking Forward

1. **Landmark Rewilding's Leopard and Predator Project**
   We intend to grow our influence through direct action and research impact in the field of rewilding through top trophic species conservation efforts
   - We will try to effect safe passage to each and every leopard in peril.
   - We will collect data from leopards and in landscape conservation efforts, and feed this into peer-reviewed research outputs.
   - We will continue to work on conflict mitigation, compensation efforts and record these impacts.
   - We will also continue to implement the genomic project and its collaboration.
2. **Environmental Education**
   - Strengthen and expand educational programmes at all levels, from early childhood to adult learning.
   - Aim to secure more human and materials capacity for educational efforts.
3. **Building the institution**
   - We will continue our efforts to resource and strengthen our field operations.
   - We will continue to grow our research and field actions in leopard work and education.
   - Our fundraising must also grow to ensure the above.