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28 Jul 2022

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07:07

## Snare kills mother zebra and foal at Bisley Nature Reserve

*A zebra and its foal have been found dead, caught in the grip of a snare in the Bisley Nature Reserve.*



File image of mother zebra and foal. Photo iStock

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A zebra and its foal have been found dead, caught in the grip of a snare in the Bisley Nature Reserve.

In a desperate attempt to escape the snare, the mother zebra managed to wind itself around a tree until the snare strangled her.

Her foal panicked and wedged its hindquarters in the fork of a tree, where it also died.

Jason Stakemire, Friends of the Bisley Nature Reserve's (FOBNR) project leader on anti-poaching and security, patrols the reserve up to three times a day.

He, together with Jessica Young and Craig Cordier, both members of FOBNR, came across the two zebra carcasses whilst on a snare patrol recently.

Stakemire explained the wire snare snares are usually made out of a strong cable-type wire which is anchored to a tree and positioned over animal paths.



*A zebra and its foal were found dead at the Bisley Nature Reserve in Pietermaritzburg.*

Once the animal passes through them they tend to get caught around the neck and, by design, the more the animal tries to escape, the tighter the snare constricts around its neck.

**Snaring and poaching of wildlife is a sad reality in all protected areas. With the financial pressures on our public services, the duty to protect animals is increasingly becoming the responsibility of the public. It will never be eliminated, but the continued disruption of activity by locating and removing snares is the most successful method of deterrence**

Stakemire added that regular activity in the reserve is in itself a deterrent to would-be poachers. The issue of poaching and snaring is an ongoing and persisting problem in Bisley Nature Reserve, which FONBR are exhausting all their resources to combat.

According to Peter West, chairperson of FOBNR, fences are cut regularly and require repair on a weekly basis.

**ALSO READ | [Two trapped zebras rescued at Pietermaritzburg's Bisley Reserve](#)**

Gladys Manzi Road, which is a public access road, passes through the centre of the reserve, so it is easily accessible at night by vehicle.

“We have evidence that the snaring is better organised than just opportunistic crime. It appears that entire carcasses are being transported out of the reserve. Previously, snared animals were butchered on site and only portions taken,” said West.

FOBNR has access to an app that records every snare or carcass found on a map. The recordings indicate that the source of snaring stems from an area in Ashburton and from another area across the R56. At one stage, there were nearly 200 impala in the reserve, now there are only about 40. West added that Bisley Nature Reserve is a unique asset both for research and educational purposes for the benefit of citizens.

“We cannot just allow it to be taken away from us by ruthless thieves. If people were snaring out of hunger, they would check their snares regularly. We believe that they are also selective in what they want. Wildebeest is a sought-after delicacy, but zebra is undesirable, so if you have both species in snares, the zebra is left,” he said.

A local businessman has agreed to install a sophisticated camera system that can detect any movement during the day and night and can differentiate between animals and humans.

Dr Edith Elliott, Ward 37 councillor and member of University-Msunduzi Bisley Nature Reserve Joint Management Committee, said the major problem is that both the University of KwaZulu-Natal and Msunduzi Parks have extremely limited allocated resources for any sort of security intervention for the reserve.

**The fact that the reserve is traversed by the well-used Gladys Manzi Road is an additional security problem. We are, therefore, very grateful that we will soon have 24/7 monitoring in the reserve with a highly sophisticated day/night camera**

Despite all the problems, FOBNR and its supporters have spent nearly three years on re-opening the walking, cycling and birding trails in the reserve.

There are over 200 bird species in the reserve and citizens are encouraged to walk through and enjoy the reserve. By doing so, poachers will be discouraged from plying their ruthless trade.

The FOBNR has appealed to members of the public to join them on snare patrols and to follow them on their Facebook page, FriendsOfBNR, and WhatsApp group. People who want to join the group can contact Stakemire on [bnrpatrols@gmail.com](mailto:bnrpatrols@gmail.com)