

Poaching rife in Manyeleti Nature Reserve, says party

The FF Plus called for intensified efforts to curb poaching of wild animals in the Manyeleti Game Reserve, while the Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency said the situation had been stabilised after a hectic December of dog poaching and snaring.

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The poaching of wild animals in Manyeleti Nature Reserve is getting out of hand, according to the Mpumalanga FF Plus.

This follows an incident in which a leopard was severely injured after being caught in a snare in the reserve.

On June 18, the day an operation was done on the animal to free it from the snare, the Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency (MTPA) said on its Facebook page it was aware of the leopard found with a snare, and that it had been with veterinarians from the Kruger National Park at the time, who were treating the leopard. The MTPA's spokesperson, Kholofelo Nkambule, said the MTPA was happy that the leopard was doing well.

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"The rangers from Manyeleti Nature Reserve and the private vets will continue to monitor it through its collar tracking device. We appreciate all the support and assistance received to ensure this leopard is well taken care of." It was released the same day the operation took place.



Photo: Supplied

The FF Plus said this is not the first predator to be caught in a snare in the reserve, and that snares have to be regularly removed from hyenas and lions. "The fence between the reserve and the surrounding local community is in a terrible state and poachers simply walk into the reserve on foot with hunting dogs.

"There are little or no anti-poaching operations carried out by the MTPA, especially at night."

The party further said it had written to the MEC for finance, economic development and tourism, Nompumelelo Hlophe, asking pertinent questions regarding anti-poaching and also requesting an urgent meeting with her.

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Nkambule responded, saying poaching in the Manyeleti Nature Reserve has been stabilised after a hectic December of dog poaching and snaring.

"More security operations were done between February and April this year. All these security efforts were conducted through collaborative operations with GKEPF, SABI, SANDF and BALULE who participated in the snare sweep. More security operations continue to take place.

"All these efforts have resulted in few incidences. Currently we have an anti-poaching unit stationed in the reserve to assist with poaching. We will continue to collaborate with these key stakeholders in our efforts to ensure a safe environment."