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SANParks adds small surveillance aircraft to its anti-poaching arsenal

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Image: SABC

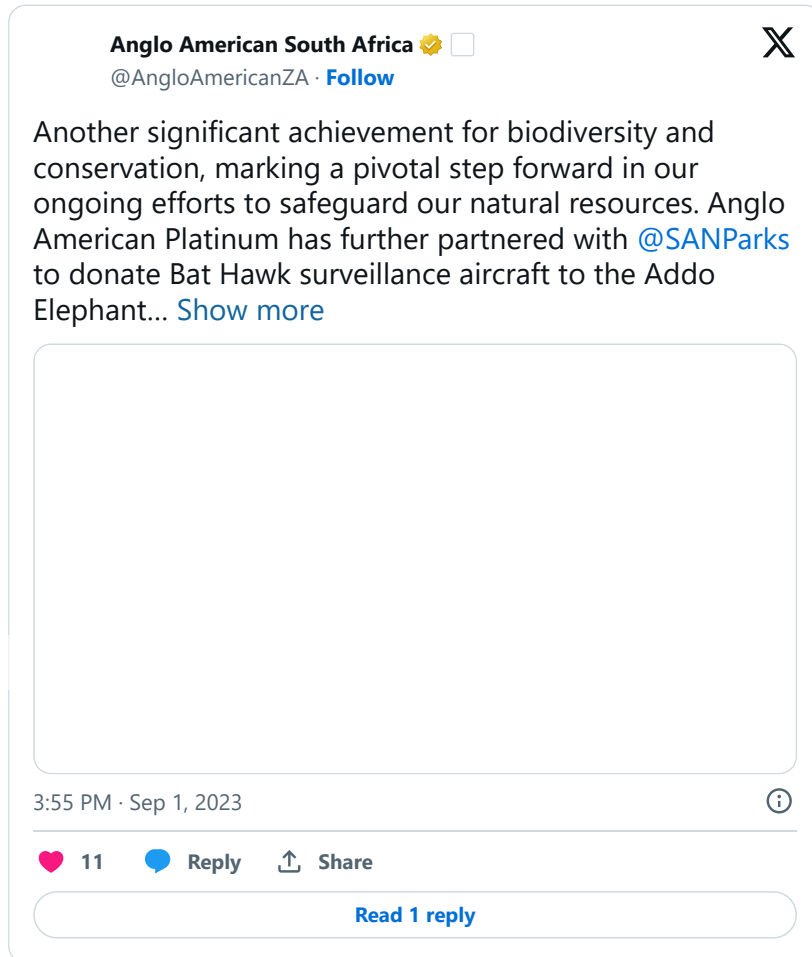
Elephants enjoy a cool down.

In a bid to strengthen safety and curb poaching in the country's national parks, SANParks, has added a small surveillance aircraft to its anti-poaching arsenal at the Addo Elephant Park in the Eastern Cape.

The aircraft was donated by mining giant Anglo American Platinum.

The park says the small aircraft will be used to curb poaching and maintain biodiversity.

A Senior Section Ranger at Addo Elephant National Park, Anban Padayachee, says hunting and abalone poaching is very rife in the park.



The image shows a screenshot of a tweet from the account 'Anglo American South Africa' (@AngloAmericanZA). The tweet text reads: 'Another significant achievement for biodiversity and conservation, marking a pivotal step forward in our ongoing efforts to safeguard our natural resources. Anglo American Platinum has further partnered with @SANParks to donate Bat Hawk surveillance aircraft to the Addo Elephant... Show more'. The tweet is dated '3:55 PM · Sep 1, 2023' and has 11 likes. Below the text is a large empty rectangular box, likely where an image or video would have been displayed. The tweet interface includes a 'Reply' button, a 'Share' button, and a 'Read 1 reply' link.



He says the aircraft will also be used in other areas of the park.

“The park is huge so this plane will allow us to have aerial coverage. There’s not a lot of roads in the park so we can’t work anywhere. So, the plane allows us to cover long distances in short time. We would use the plane apart from anti-poaching operations but for biodiversity monitoring. Monitoring high valued endangered animals.”

Meanwhile, Anglo American’s Executive Head of Projects, Prakashim Moodliar, says the visibility in the cockpit and endurance makes the Bat Hawk aircraft ideal for anti-poaching activities.

“You don’t need a landing strip for it. It takes off and land in small space and has five-hour endurance. So, again the engine allows you five hours endurance. So, you have long flying capabilities. It can also fly close to the ground. Lowest at 10 metres depending on the pilot’s skills, allowing you to create that really vision presence that allows for anti-poaching activities.”

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