

Conservation Efforts on the African Leopard

- The “Big Five” includes the African lion (*Panthera leo*), the African elephant (*Loxodonta africana*), the Cape buffalo (*Syncerus caffer*), the black & white rhinoceroses (*Diceros bicornis* and *Ceratotherium simum*). These five animals are mainly what the public thinks of when Africa’s wildlife is mentioned.
 - In the late 1800s, these five animals earned this title because they were considered the most challenging for trophy hunters to hunt on foot.
- The “Big Five” animals are still being hunted today, but tourism has made seeing these wildlife species a huge goal for safari-goers.
 - The population numbers of these species are unfortunately declining rapidly.
- The African leopard is a solitary and nocturnal species. This makes seeing a leopard during the day a very difficult task. In turn, tracking leopards for conservation efforts on the Nambiti game reserve becomes nearly impossible.
- According to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the African leopard is classified as “vulnerable”. This means the species faces a higher risk of extinction in the wild. According to the Endangered Species Act (ESA), they are “endangered”. However, the African leopard population in Sub-Saharan Africa (where South Africa is located) is listed as “threatened”. This means these leopards do not have the full range of protection. For example, they currently are not included in the ESA’s strictest limitations of trophy imports.
 - This species is threatened by habitat loss and fragmentation, illegal wildlife trade, use of skins, human-induced threats, and poorly managed trophy hunting.
 - The world’s largest importer of African leopard hunting trophies is the U.S. Between the years 2014 and 2018, hunters in the U.S. imported the trophies of 1,640 leopards with more than half of those being globally traded (Center for Biological Diversity).
 - Baited camera trapping footage is crucial to the conservation management of the African Leopard at the Nambiti Game Reserve.
 - It helps with assessing the population numbers and activity of the leopards on the game reserve.
 - A trail camera will typically cost around **100-200 US dollars**. It would be best to use a cellular camera that does not need an SD card, so that the footage can be viewed anywhere at any time.
 - Another consideration would be batteries for the cameras, which would cost about **10 US dollars** per camera.
- Total, I estimate that this project will cost about 3,000 US dollars, if we give 10 cameras. This is only possible through donations from individuals. Below is a link to a Zeffy webpage where you can donate. Any support helps!