

## **Project Update: November 2006**

I still cannot believe it, and I am sure you won't either - but we collared our 5th leopard yesterday!!!! This is truly amazing. We caught M9 (he has yet to be adopted and named) on Sakkie Niewoudt's farm, Grootkloof, in the beautiful Cederberg Mountains. Vet, Dr Andre van der Merwe, and Cape Nature's Rika du Plessis were once again there to assist. I cannot thank them enough for everything they have put into this project. It is totally amazing! Sakkie Niewoudt (as are the other Cederberg farmers) has put a lot of effort into working with The Cape Leopard Trust, supporting our work even after having had livestock losses due to leopard. We are currently working hard at finding suitable means to avoid depredation of his goats and cattle. Mike Snethlage (of Flexipave) also happened to be visiting the project yesterday and managed to get to see some of the action. Mike has taken on the construction and sponsorship of all our leopard cage traps since the end of last year. He could now get first-hand experience as to how they work in the field.

M9 weighed in at a healthy 35kg - this on an empty stomach! He is at least 7-8yrs old and in good condition and as you can see from the massive paws - "these feet were made for walking..."

Yes, you probably noticed by now...it's another Male! Why no females yet? OK ladies - before you tease me about this - Where am I going wrong???? Maybe you have the answer. Do I need to change the aftershave I use as "bait" in the cages? Any suggestions would help. At this juncture, I shall refrain from taking any advice from my male counterparts...

The data from these GPS collars is giving us incredible insight into the lives of these elusive cats that live in the Cederberg and ultimately an understanding of the ecology of leopards throughout the Cape Folded Mountain system.