

# Boom in the Bushveld

Mabula Ground Hornbill Project

June 2011



It has been a while since the last 'Boom' and we just wanted to update you on the Project and the birds. The Ground Hornbill Action Group has almost finalized the Species Recovery Plan that will guide all groups involved with the conservation of this species into the future.

The Plan includes six priority objectives which are:

- **Increase the wild population by expanding the population into historic ranges,**
- **Understanding the genetics and dispersal of individuals from groups,**
- **Collecting population data and information on threats and mortalities,**
- Investigating **wild** and captive conservation management interventions in areas that may be sources or sinks for South African birds,
- **Increasing awareness of both the species and the threats that face them to increase tolerance towards the birds and a greater understanding of their value,**
- Providing insurance against future declines by managing an 'insurance' captive founder population.

Our role within this Recovery Plan (**highlighted in red**) is vital to ensuring the sustainability of wild populations and we are putting together a comprehensive, systematic strategy on how to achieve these goals under the new Plan.

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Other news from the hornbill group at Mabula: a Ground-Hornbill chick, likely destined for the pot, was rescued in the eastern Cape in the Mnyameni district by a truck driver. Thanks to this truck driver and the Crag's View Rehabilitation Centre, the bird was safely brought to the Johannesburg Zoo for quarantine and care. From here it was moved to Mabula. After an adjustment period in our boma, Mnyameni was released into the group and is now an accepted part of the Mabula group. Thor, the subordinate male in the group, has taken on responsibility for this young female bird and with time, this strong bond will hopefully form the basis for a new group.

Unfortunately we lost a released bird (Moutse – a captive bred, parent-reared bird from Loskop) to predation at Mabula. The release itself was successful, and the alpha male had taken responsibility for this bird. However, it appears that a honey badger was responsible for killing the bird after the group had gone to roost. We were lucky enough to retrieve the radio-transmitter but are still saddened by the loss, even though it was a natural occurrence.

Nkosi and Imvula at Madikwe are doing well.

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As always we value your support and interest in the Project and encourage you to submit any records of Ground-Hornbill sightings, particularly in areas outside of national parks, to [project@ground-hornbill.org.za](mailto:project@ground-hornbill.org.za). Thank you.

