



BOOM IN THE BUSHVELD – TANDATULA AND LINDANDU



JUVENILE PAIR OF GROUND HORBILLS BONDING AT HOEDSPRUIT REHABILITATION CENTRE, KAPAMA

In November 2005, the Mabula Ground Hornbill Project placed two, 2-year old, hand-reared, Ground Hornbill juveniles, Tandatula and Lindandu, at the Hoedspruit Rehabilitation Centre, in their huge aviary at Kapama.

Tandatula was harvested by the Mabula Project from the Timbavati section of the Kruger National Park as a second ‘doomed’ chick, but dislocated his hip and was then carefully treated and hand reared by Dr. Stephen van der Spuy at the Montecasino Bird Park in Johannesburg. He remained there, as he was considered unsuitable for wild release, but now we hope that he will pair with Lindandu for life.

Lindandu was also harvested from Kruger as a second chick and hand-reared at Mabula. At six months old she was wild released at Haenertsberg with a lone wild female, whose whole group had been shot for window breaking eight years previously, and Punda Maria, a Kruger-harvested, Mabula-reared male that was sent to partner this female. It was hoped that a slow-moving juvenile would anchor this pair to a smaller territory, which it did for two years. Then, sadly, the male had a freak accident when he fell into a hole, broke his hip and died. After that the wild female would have nothing to do with Lindandu, so we moved her to be with Tandatula.

Tandatulu and Lindanda are now part of the Captive Breeding Programme, and we must see if, when they are 6-7 years old, the chance to bond when young will help with their breeding process. Southern Ground Hornbills were only bred in captivity in South Africa for the first time in 2005. We hope to spread individual pairs of juveniles from the Mabula Harvest and Hand-rearing Programme among knowledgeable breeders. This could provide a sound base for breeding birds in captivity and also help support Ground Hornbill conservation in the wild.

It is planned that the chicks from these pairings will go into the Wild Release Programme in the non-protected areas of their habitat, and so augment non-viable wild groups and help stop the decline in the numbers of this important flagship species.

The Mabula Ground Hornbill Project
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