

Wild Dog Collaring at Liuwa Plain National Park

African Parks Zambia is embarking on a predator monitoring project in collaboration with the Zambian Carnivore Programme in 2010. As a precursor to this program Dr Matt Becker, the leader of the programme, has been in Liuwa over the past few days, together with Craig Reid, the Project Coordinator, attempting to radio collar some of the dogs in the Park. It has been long believed that the Park was colonised by a single pack of dogs from an unknown area. Sightings have been few and far between. After an intensive search using motorbikes, vehicles and the project aircraft we were extremely lucky to locate TWO separate packs. Even more remarkably, we were able to fit a VHF tracking collar to each pack as well as a satellite collar to one of them. This development has shown in a short space of time how much more there is to learn about the Liuwa ecosystem.

The presence of two packs of wild dog heightens the importance of the Park as wild dogs are Africa's second most endangered carnivore with only about 5000 remaining on the continent. It is anticipated that the deployed collars will better inform management on how to maximise opportunities for this species to ensure that Liuwa continues to enhance its importance as a key sanctuary for endangered wildlife species and a functional ecosystem.

Watch this space for further developments on carnivore conservation in Liuwa!

Roger Monde - the scout who successfully located the first pack on his motorbike patrol.

Dr Matt Becker with the first female he darted.

Collecting valuable genetic and disease survey samples.

Scout Jacob Tembo with the female darted from the pack he found on motorbike patrol.

Fitting a VHF collar to the first female.

Success!

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