



## DE BEERS CONSOLIDATED MINES WINS TOP CONSERVATION AWARD

*'Disciplined ecological management' voted best in class*

The conservation efforts of De Beers Consolidated Mines (DBCM) have been recognised by Wildlife Ranching SA, which has awarded it the 'Biodiversity and Social Responsibility Award'.

DBCM picked up the accolade for its approach to ecological management at four private game reserves it runs in the Northern Cape and Limpopo Provinces.

Judges singled out DBCM's "disciplined ecological management approach" as being "best-in-class in the industry" and referenced the success of its approach to sustainable wildlife management practices and promotion of wildlife tourism.

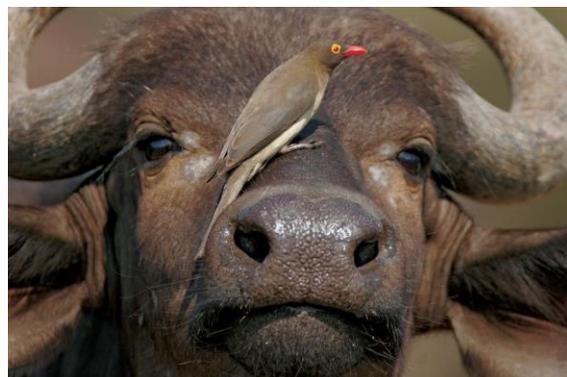


*From left to right: Dr Corne Anderson: Senior Biodiversity and Conservation manager; Carina Brits: Game Management Support; Piet Oosthuizen: Senior Manager – Ecology and DBCM properties; Tanya Schoeman: Commercial Lead; Phillip Barton: CEO – De Beers Consolidated Mines; Charles Hall: Reserve manager Dronfield.*

De Beers Wildlife, a division of DBCM, manages around 67 000 hectares of land in the Kimberley area in the Northern Cape Province. The management objectives have had a strong focus on conservation since 1887 and also supports research elements in conservation. De Beers' high value species includes rhino, buffalo, sable, roan and tsessebe, however most habitat specific, endemic plains game species are also hosted. A further 32000 hectares, consisting of a cluster of 22 cattle farms, was acquired during the early nineties in close proximity of Mapungubwe in the Limpopo Province. This added various free ranging, large predators' species such as rhino, elephant, crocodile and hippopotamus to an already extended mammal species list. There is also roughly 44000 hectares on lease to SANParks to support their initiatives.

De Beers pride themselves in hosting one of the first disease free buffalo breeding projects in SA. Other projects also include other species such as sable, roan, tsessebe and rhino. The primary objective of these projects is to conserve these animals as priority one, to breed enough to support other projects in the country and to establish free ranging herds on De Beers properties.

The financial objective was and still is for these projects to pay for themselves, including animal husbandry and infrastructure costs. With more role players in the industry, the opportunity arises to move to value adding conservation through genetic diversity and breeding animals that can survive on their own in extensive systems.



*Above: Red-billed oxpeckers (*Buphagus erythrorhynchus*) feed almost exclusively on what they can collect from the skin of large mammals, like the African buffalo – Rooipoot (photo: Erwin Niemand)*

The sustainability of De Beers Wildlife is built on sound conservation practices which starts with effective soil and veld management calling for adaptive management practices to counter the risk of natural disasters. The former provides the base for effective consumptive utilisation built on the pillars of harvesting and capture, in conjunction with various aspects of tourism to secure sustainability.



Above: A Sable – Dronfield

Piet Oosthuizen, Senior Manager, Ecology and DBCM Properties, said: “As a company that mines nature’s treasures, we take great pride in the social and environmental contribution we make around the areas where we operate. As a group, for every hectare of land affected by our mining activities, we manage five times that amount for conservation.”

De Beers Wildlife has a strong focus on equipping their employees with the relevant skills to perform their tasks either through formal training or experiential learning. They are also involved in various youth programmes, which includes environmental awareness as well as post school SETA accredited training to support students who see a future in the game industry in partnership with the Northern Cape Nature Academy. There is also a strong focus on research with two dedicated research facilities to support management objectives and general student practical educational support. Only accredited and bona vide tertiary institutions are invited to conduct their research on De Beers properties.

The conservation success is captured in the variety of habitats that we manage. The following numbers of species are hosted on our reserves:

PROTECTED, THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES	MAMMALS Incl. small mammals	BIRDS	REPTILES & FROGS	FISH	PLANTS
					
<b>SPECIES DIVERSITY - NUMBER</b>	93+	312+	49+	12+	102 to 174
<b>ENDANGERED</b>	2	7			
<b>VULNERABLE</b>	5	6			
<b>PROTECTED</b>	8	2	3	2	3

**PLANTS:** As a result of the high variability of habitats on the different properties, the number of plant species can range from 102 species on the property with the lowest biodiversity to 174 species on the property with the highest biodiversity.

De Beers has also been awarded a number of other awards in the past for the valuable contribution it has made towards conservation and the industry. These awards include:

- 2013 ZSSA Corporate Award – Zoological Society of South Africa
- 2011 Eco-logic Award
- 2011 SANParks Kudu Award
- 2010 Nedbank Capital Green Mining Award

There is always a negative connotation with Mining. De Beers Wildlife provides a self-sustainable environmental offset to De Beers Diamonds where we have roughly 45 hectares (RSA only) under conservation for every 1 hectare under mining, in other words disturbed ground.

“Managing game animals is such a privilege and all people who are involved in the industry need to understand this, execute this with respect and dignity to ensure we add value to the industry without losing sight of the responsibility entrenched in our blessing” said Piet Oosthuizen.