

# Update from the field: Black-footed Cat Working Group, South Africa



**April 2023, Michelle Swanepoel, field technician**

Yes indeed, another Michelle here to monitor the black-footed cats on Benfontein Nature Reserve.



I was born and raised in South Africa, I have recently completed my diploma in nature conservation, cum laude, and I am currently doing my advanced diploma in nature conservation.

Until recently, I have been more involved with reserve management, constituting of various aspects ranging from fence patrols to alien invasive species management, game counts, erosion control, veld management, fighting fires and monitoring of the Waterberg cycads (*Encephalartos eugene-maraisii*) and white rhinoceros (*Ceratotherium simum*).



My passion lies in conserving our wildlife. South Africa is, without a doubt, one of the most beautiful countries with the highest biodiversity, but unfortunately, a lot of the species have become threatened and the best way to combat their extinction is through research, and then targeted conservation.

I am excited to become a part of the team. There is so much potential and still so much to learn about this elusive cat species. I would like to express my gratitude for your support in making research possible on the black-footed cats.

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## Notes from the field:

These are notes from the field by the Black-footed Cat Working Group (BFCWG)

technician at the Benfontein Nature Reserve study site near Kimberley, South Africa.

Black-footed cats *Felis nigripes* (hereafter BFCs) are fitted with radio collars and monitored as part of a long-term study on the ecology of this elusive little felid.

We currently have five collared cats on Benfontein, known as Kazi, Rodeo, Shongo, Gale, and Ember.

Kazi is the only cat that is currently habituated to the project vehicle, therefore, I am in the process of habituating the other four cats to enable us to collect detailed behavioural observations.

Hopefully, my next update will be filled with amazing photos and a progress report consisting of some amazing observations.



Best regards from the veld,

**Michelle Swanepoel**