

Project Update: August 2018

After a busy start to 2018 we have finally captured photos of our target species, both leopards and lions, walking along the park boundary!



Fig 1. Two of our study animals photographed along the southern CKGR boundary.

January 2018 was spent preparing the camera traps and training our field team in how to set them up correctly. Along with standard activities such as formatting SD cards and replacing batteries, this also involved learning how to conduct 'walk tests' in front of the cameras to ensure they are properly placed to capture animals as they go past. In other words, passing in front of the camera pretending to be a lion – and causing much entertainment for the rest of the field team.

Once the training phase was completed, we were able to begin conducting our spoor surveys and deploying camera traps along the first two fenced transects. We completed 10 repeats of each transect during rainy season between February and April 2018 and have now started with our dry season repeats. Over this time we have gathered information on not just lions and leopards but other nocturnal and cryptic species, including African wild cats, aardvarks, and even a sighting of a serval, nearly 200 km outside of their known range!



Fig 2. An aardvark and African wildcat captured at night.

Over the next few months we will be finishing off our final dry seasons repeats and processing all this data. One project we are working on currently is a comparison of the information coming in from the tracker-collected spoor surveys and the camera trap images. We look forward to sharing the preliminary results with you in our next update!