

## **Project Update September 2025**

**Rufford I.D.:** 45703-1

**Project Title:** Safeguarding Predators: Investigating Lead Exposure in Mammalian Carnivores as Indicators of Environmental Health in Southern Africa

**Update:** I've been working with the Brown Hyena Research Center on the Namibian coast, inside a diamond mining area, where I've collected carcass samples from brown hyenas. I also had the opportunity to assist Dr. Marie Lemerle, the research manager, in my role as a veterinarian—helping with GPS collaring, as well as collecting blood and hair samples for opportunistic analysis.

In addition, I've begun investigating lead exposure in seals to understand potential contamination pathways linked to diamond mining activities. The first round of sampling is complete, and initial lab results are already showing elevated lead levels in both brown hyenas and seals.

I also visited AfriCat, a wildlife sanctuary in Namibia, to collect samples from leopards and cheetahs. This will allow us to examine the impact of feeding game meat shot with lead ammunition on large carnivores in captivity.