

NEWSLETTER JULY

Dear clients,

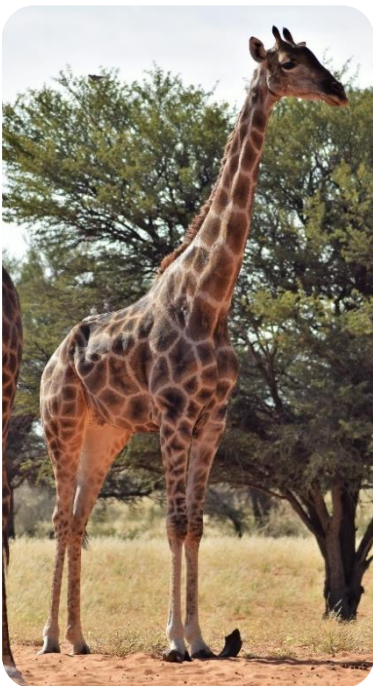
Time flies, July is almost over... We hope you had a good month so far! In this newsletter you can read more about hoof care and our possibilities to perform an ultrasound on your animals. We also explain a bit more about our capture procedure. You might know most of it, but it is always good to better understand the logic behind our actions, or what we ask you to prepare. We hope you learn one or two things! If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us!

Kind regards, Ulf

HOOF TRIMMING

When you observe your animals in the field, it is obviously important to check their condition. But you also might want to look further down and check their hooves. Especially in smaller camps with sandy soils, hooves can become too long, and can grow in a wrong way. Long hooves are prone to break, which will cause severe pain for the animal. This will negatively impact on foraging- and mating behaviour and normal locomotion.

To prevent long hooves, a farmer can place stones around waterholes and feeding places. The rougher surface can help to maintain the normal wear and tear on the hooves. In our car we always have a grinder with a special hoof cutting disk as well as a hoof cutter, to grind and cut the hooves back into shape. In some extreme cases and valuable animals it may require multiple trimmings over weeks or months to gradually trim the hooves back to a normal functional shape.



Sable



Impala

Grinding the
hooves of a roan



OUR CAPTURE PROCEDURE

Immobilizing wildlife is an expensive and risky operation. Preparation is of utmost importance to make sure the job is done fast and safely. In the article below we focus on antelope, as we mostly work with them. Here are a few facts and tips to keep in mind when we come to your farm.

Preparation

What is your goal of the immobilization? Moving young bulls out of a breeding camp, catching animals that were sold? Health check? Measuring horns? Once an animal is immobilised (the expensive part) think about procedures you may want performed e.g.:

- Horn measurements
- Microchips
- Ear tags (or ear tag removal)
- DNA sampling
- Hoof cutting/grinding
- Pregnancy tests
- Photos for studbook, auction purposes etc.

Let us know beforehand what you need and want, and we make sure we have all our equipment ready.

Helicopter time is expensive. The best way of minimising this expense is by ensuring that there are enough recovery vehicles to retrieve and transport the darted animals. In addition, you will need enough people to handle the darted animals. For a big antelope like a roan bull, at least 5/6 strong men are needed to lift the animal. It is advisable to have some bottles of water on the bakkie, for drinking and cooling the animal (when needed).

When we need to dart antelopes with horns, please make sure you have plastic pipes cut ready before our arrival. When the antelope is immobilized, these pipes must be placed over the horns. Especially sable, roan and oryx have a nasty habit of stabbing backwards, and can thereby seriously kill or injure a person.

We will inform both the farmer and the workers on what is important during the capture. We bring along our carrying mats and face masks.

Handling the immobilized antelope

When an antelope is darted, it usually starts showing signs after 2 minutes and will go down within 3-4 minutes (NOTE: spiral-horned antelope take longer!). The ground team must carefully approach the antelope, thereby minimizing noise. Approach the antelope from the front and grab it by the base of the horns. Place pipes over the horns, and put a face mask on.



All ruminants (antelope) must lay on their belly (sternal position). When it is lying on its side, it will bloat and thus may aspirate rumen content, it will struggle breathing and may even die! The nose must face downwards. If the nose is held upwards (this often happens when people hold the horns high up, thereby pushing the horns towards the back of the antelope, and thus raising the nose), stomach fluids which are burped up may enter the lungs, risking an aspiration pneumonia and thus death.



The correct way of holding an antelope. When there are no horns, or the horns are too small, the handler must hold the ears. The horns of young antelopes can easily break, and it is thus better to hold the ears.

The drugs we use to immobilize antelope is highly potent, and very dangerous (=deadly!) for humans. Not even regular vets may use it, these drugs may only be handled by registered wildlife veterinarians. Don't touch the dart, my assistant will take the dart out of the antelope, and safely dispose it.



When the antelope is still too strong to handle, a top-up dose with Ketamine® may be given to make it more asleep. In case the antelope needs to be transported, or moved to another camp, my assistant will inject Perphenazine®, a long-acting tranquilizer in the vein. Now we can place ear tags, microchips, measure horns etc. The antelope can then be placed onto the carrying mat, with the front feet in the pocket. The back of the mat can be folded over the backside of the antelope, to prevent the antelope from kicking. The antelope is then lifted onto the bakkie.



Transport

One person keeps on holding the antelope at the base of the horns. The antelope must lay nicely on its stomach, nose held down. Noise must be kept to a minimum. Breathing of the antelope must be checked regularly (my assistant will monitor the antelope closely). The antelope might be injected with several drugs. Depending on your wishes and the health and condition of the antelope, we usually advice to give:

- Kyroligo – supplement of multivitamins, amino acids and minerals.
- B Co-Bolic – supplement of Phosphor, Selenium and Vitamin B, to boost the metabolism. Very advisable to give when an antelope has been running for a long time, as Selenium helps to break down the acids that have been build up in the muscles.
- Ivomec – treatment against internal and external parasites, such as gastrointestinal roundworms, lungworms, grubs, lice and mites.
- Decaspot – Pour-on against ticks, stable flies, horn flies, cattle house flies and nuisance flies (safe for oxpeckers!)
- Vaccinations (depending on the area, risks of getting a disease and species) such as:
 - Rabies; prevention of rabies, especially important for kudu and eland
 - Anthrax; prevention of anthrax
 - Rhinovax; prevention of anthrax and clostridial diseases
 - Covexin; prevention of clostridial diseases
 - Pasteurella; prevention of pasteurellosis
 - One Shot Ultra 7; prevention of clostridial diseases and pasteurellosis



Besides the above drugs we also carry other important drugs which we use when needed, such as different types of antibiotics, painkillers, corticosteroids etc.

Release

The antelope might be woken up in a trailer or truck, or released in a new camp. When in the field, the antelope is offloaded nearby water, and turned in such a way that it faces an open space, away from fences and obstacles. Now the antelope can be taken off the carrying mat.

The person holding the horns must not let go of the antelope yet! My assistant will first wake the antelope up, by either injecting an antidote in the vein, or in the muscle. When releasing in the field, we prefer injecting in the vein, as the antelope is fully awake within +/- half a minute. When waking an antelope up in the field, keep your eyes on the antelope! It has happened that a sable turned around and charged the people.



Several types of antidote



Waking up a kudu and a roan. Simply said, the immobilizing drugs will sit on a receptor in the nerves, and this makes the animals 'asleep'. When the antidote is given, the antidote will 'kick out' the immobilizing drugs from that receptor and sits in its place: the animal is awake again.

The animal cannot be darted again for about 24h as the antidote keeps that receptor occupied; the immobilizing drugs cannot get in.

When we wake an antelope up in a truck we usually inject in the muscle, and the antelope will wake up more slowly (less chance of jumping up and injuring itself). It is important to keep quiet when being around the trailer/truck, noise will stress the antelope. When the antelope is strong enough to keep its head up, the handler can let go. When an animal is awake in the trailer/truck, move away so the antelope is not stressed by people talking and/or smoking.

For more information, download our '[Capture Procedure](#)' article on our website.

ULTRASOUND MACHINE

We have our own portable ultrasound machine that we can bring along on request. This machine sends ultrasound pulses into the animal's tissue via a probe. Ultrasound are high frequency waves of sound, that humans cannot hear. The ultrasound travels through soft tissue and fluids, and echoes (bounces) off denser tissues. Different tissues reflect different degrees of sound. These echoes are recorded by the machine and are displayed as an image. This image is also known as a sonogram. An ultrasound machine does not make use of radiation and is therefore safe to use in pregnant animals.

With this machine we can examine animals for pregnancy, and we are able to estimate how far the pregnancy is. If needed, we can supply a signed certificate to attest the animals' pregnancy status.

We also use the ultrasound machine in case of a sick or injured animal. We can examine various organ systems, tendons and muscles.



Examining pregnancy in a kudu cow



The kudu was indeed pregnant, here you clearly can see the foetus!



Performing an ultrasound examination on a sick sable cow. We examined her to find out whether the calf was still alive.

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