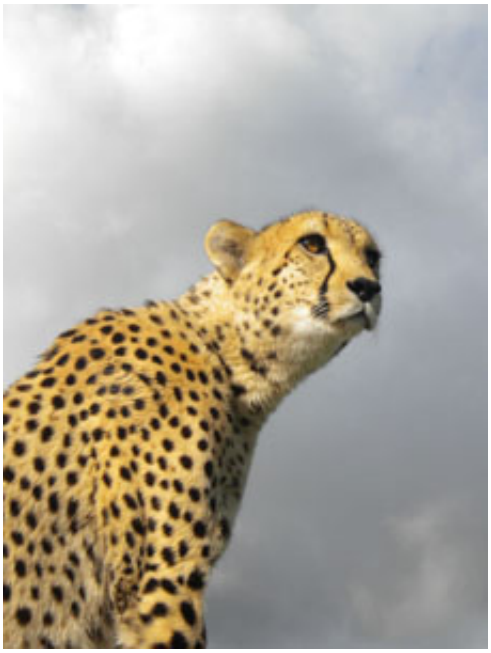
Guard dogs reduce killing of threatened species

November 26 2013



In a paper published in *Wildlife Society Bulletin*, entitled Perceived Efficacy of Livestock-Guarding Dogs in South Africa: Implications for Cheetah Conservation, researchers from the University's School of Anthropology and Conservation studied the effect guarding dogs have on the protection of farm animals across South Africa.

The research revealed that livestock guarding dogs eliminated livestock

losses from predators on 91% of the farms studied, with each farmer saving over $3,000 per year due to the reduction in killed livestock.

The team also investigated the tolerance farmers have towards cheetahs roaming their land when they have a guarding dog present. They found that farmers were noticeably more tolerant of predators, resulting in a greater prevalence of cheetahs and other predators on their land compared to farmers that did not have livestock guarding dogs.

Nikki Rust, of the University's Durrell Institute of Conservation and Ecology (DICE), said: 'This research has shown for the first time that livestock guarding dogs can successfully be used in South Africa to protect livestock from attack by predators as large as leopards or small as jackals.

'This is a true win-win solution to reduce conflict between livestock and predators, because it almost eliminates livestock losses to predators, saving the farmer a lot of money, whilst increasing the tolerance of predators from the farmers, thereby reducing the chance of using lethal control on threatened carnivores.'

Professor Douglas Macmillan of DICE added: 'Retaliatory killing by farmers is a major threat to the survival of many large carnivore species. This study shows that livestock deaths can be avoided through the deployment of highly trained dogs, and I am sure that there are many similar situations around the world where such dogs could make quite a difference to the survival chances of large carnivores.'

More information: onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10 … 002/wsb.352/abstract

Provided by University of Kent

Citation: Guard dogs reduce killing of threatened species (2013, November 26) retrieved 19 April 2024 from https://phys.org/news/2013-11-dogs-threatened-species.html

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.