

BREAKING - RCP SATELLITE-COLLARS LIONS IN REMOTE RUAHA LANDSCAPE

Last week we were able to report that a snared lion was saved thanks to the preparedness of Dr Alex and the Ruaha Carnivore Project (RCP) team, underlining the importance of quick action. This team was in fact engaged in one of RCP's most exciting developments, namely the satellite-collaring of lions. The aim of this work was to gain a better understanding of lion ecology, movement and conflict, and ideally to use that information to save some lions – but we had no idea the positive benefits would emerge so quickly through being able to respond quickly and save that lion!

This satellite-collaring, which is being done in collaboration with [Ruaha National Park](#) and Tanzania National Parks Authority, will provide the first detailed, invaluable data on the spatial ecology, demography and mortality of Ruaha's lions, while the 'geo-fence' capability of the collars will allow us to understand far more about their movements outside the protected area, and hopefully prevent them from coming into conflict with local people. The initial permit allowed us to collar lions within the Park boundaries, but we were keen to try to find animals that moved close to the Park edge, and which may therefore cross onto more human-dominated land.

Before beginning the operation, RCP talked with local communities, our partners in the region and the local lodges, so that everyone has an understanding of the conservation importance of the collaring project. Although some people can be wary about collaring, the evidence from other projects shows that where all the stakeholders are involved, it is a very positive way of engaging people in conservation, protecting lions and informing conservation plans.

Currently four lions (three females and one male) have been fitted with collars. It is hoped that the female lions will give more insight into the movements of the different prides, while the male is likely to be associated with more than one pride. However, he is still a little young (at around four years old) to be a pride male in his own right, so is more likely to be fairly nomadic and avoid pride males, which will probably make his movements more extensive and more interesting.

Watch this space, as we follow these lions and share with you the secret lives of lions living in the wild. Over the next few weeks, we will profile each of the lions, and will continue providing updates through social media and our newsletters. If you would like to receive our newsletters, then please get in touch via comms@ruahacarnivoreproject.com.



Photo 1: The virtual 'geofence' used by the collars – if a collared lion crosses the white boundary, it sends RCP staff an alert, so we can intervene if needed and ideally prevent conflict occurring.



Photo 2: Photo 2: One of the lionesses relaxing with a male after her collaring.