

# LOCAL NEWS

## Leopard attempts to gnaw its way free

The leopard will not be able to chew bones anymore and will probably stay permanently in a semi-wild environment at Stoekkamp's uBotwan-o-Africa game farm.

28 October 2011 | JANA BOTHA

MIDDELBURG - A leopard caught in a trap had chewed its teeth down to stubs as it tried to gnaw its way free.

Nature Conservation official Jannie de Bruyn and hotel owner Deon Cornelius were told of the trapped animal in the Loskop Dam area, and went to look for it.

They found it in dire straits.

It had a serious open wound around its abdomen, its paws were in a bad state and its teeth were chewed to stubs.

Cornelius took the leopard to his resort and contacted a vet, Dr Peter Caldwell, who said the animal was experiencing severe pain. Not only was the wound much more serious than originally thought, but the nerves of the teeth were all exposed. The leopard injured itself in its frantic efforts to escape the trap.

Caldwell brought along Dr Gerhard Steenkamp who specialises in animal dentistry, a relatively new field. Steenkamp confirmed what everyone feared - that the leopard's teeth were damaged to such an extent that the animal would not survive in the wild.

During an operation on Friday last week Steenkamp extracted the teeth that were too severely damaged and took out the nerves of the others.

The leopard will not be able to chew bones anymore and will probably stay permanently in a semi-wild environment.

It will be kept in a cage for the next few weeks until it recovers.

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