



Not too long after this (we live in the city and farm on weekends) I received a call from our foreman Oliver is missing!! Saddened by this I called Deon and he responded not to worry as he has a transmitter collar on, courtesy of the EWT. However, I requested the staff to search the farm for him and they found him 2 days later at a waterhole where a warthog piglet had drowned. I am assuming Oliver thought it was a calf and it was his duty to protect it and had not moved from this position!!!

Then easily Oliver's most famous hour in 2010 arrived. Now some 3 years later, having become a more efficient Nguni Stud Breeder, I take photos of my cow's and their calves and document them correctly. The photos are taken by Mutendi, my foreman, with a digital "mik 'n druk " camera!.

During the middle part of the year we would often come across the spoor of a large male leopard and a smaller spoor of a female and 2 cubs. This was later confirmed by the workers on the farm who came across the leopards on regular occasions. On one such occasion, whilst I was on the farm with some hunters, the cubs were walking around the vehicle of the foreman, rubbing themselves whilst their mother was probably hunting for a meal - so the dreaded leopard were certainly a threat to my calving season, beginning August onwards.

After a usual morning fence check in September and the usual daily photos of the new calves arriving, Mutendi with 2 other staff members on the bakkie, camera in hand, driving to the waterhole where the cows usually lay at around 10h00, came across the leopard stalking in the road, toward the waterhole where the days crèche of calves were lying with 3 or 4 mothers present. I had requested that if he see the leopard to take photos, so there he was trying to take photos, but with windows closed for fear of this majestic cat....the problem was it was also stalking up to the calves. And then they saw, it was stalking" Oliver" who was sleeping under a tree..... Suddenly "OLIVER" stood up and started barking at the leopard, the cows ran off and the leopard found its way up into a tree. Oliver continued to bark until all the cows were out of danger and then simply stopped and ran off to join up with them again....Now this, although the photo's are of a very poor quality, is absolute proof of the value of an ANATOLIAN Shepherd dog at work!!!



Oliver has been stitched up from a previous leopard encounter and returned back to work the next day after his surgery with fluid drains and multiple amount of stitches( I think the trip to town was scarier than the leopard attack to him!).

One last tale to ponder upon. We were busy ear tagging our new calves one early morning, and a new calf was born the previous evening to a first calf heifer. We chose to dip our herd, now some 80 strong, with the drip drying kraal getting rather small considering our increased number and we chose to let the animals run through the spray race to go and feed in the veld. One of these was obviously the new mother and she simply forgot to find or go to her calf whom she had hidden under a tree in the kraal. The calf, noticeably very weak, was lying there and we were concerned at this desertion, so we went off to go and look for the mother, but to no avail....

But never fear when OLIVER is near!! We usually have a bush braai at a dam near the kraal and today was to be bush-braai-day. We braai'd with concern at this poor little calf lying under the tree, and as if it was a dream, or some kind of supernatural happening, we heard this cow running through trees some 3 hrs later, coming past us and moo'ing like crazy and guess who was leading her and guiding her - Oliver. I walked behind them to experience this magic in the Bushveld ..... He took the new mother to her calf to be reunited and disappeared back into the bush to do his work and protect his family - the Nguni's..

These ancient Shepherd Dogs, originally from Turkey, where they once fended off bears and wolves, have been introduced into South Africa and specifically Limpopo some 4 years ago, with about 70 dogs hard at work fending off leopard, cheetah, hyenas, caracals and jackals with a 95-100% reduction in stock losses. It has worked for us and we have grown fond of "Ollie", our Oliver. He has saved us from livestock losses; our visiting leopards haven't been seen in many months - maybe they feeding where there aren't Anatolian Shepherd Dogs at work .

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