

***The Kruger National Park CyberTracker Programme gets an
“Energy Boost” from Halewood International.***

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Palm Tungsten W

Thanks to Halewood International, South African energy-drink and alcoholic beverage manufacturers, the Kruger National Park CyberTracker Programme has received an “Energy Boost” in the form of 8 *Palm Tungsten W* handheld devices. The CyberTracker system (<http://www.cybertracker.org>), which was developed for application in conservation by Louis Liebenberg, is a user-friendly interface developed for handheld computers (PDA's). This system allows literate as well as illiterate field rangers to record customized latitude and longitude observations in the Kruger National Park (KNP).

Mr. Douw Swanepoel, the ranger of Olifants section at the time, first recognised the potential of CyberTracker as an ecological data collection tool for KNP management in early 2000. Assisted financially by the GTZ and SAPPI, he was able to purchase 44 *Palm IIIe* organisers and 44 *Garmin 12XL* GPS units with Palm/GPS interface cables. In 2003 further funds were donated from the Erna Goodwin estate, enabling us to purchase 120 *Handspring Visor Deluxe* organisers with integrated *Magellan* GPS companions. Each of KNP's twenty-two management sections (see figure 1) were issued with 5 of these devices for deployment with field rangers (see figure 2) and 5 additional devices were issued Skukuza's Scientific Services division for various other research projects.



Handspring Visor

The system was customised in-house with an icon-based interface (see figure 3) including English and Shangaan descriptions for the collection of daily patrol information. This information is used by KNP management in planning section patrols for area-integrity management; as an early warning system for disease outbreaks; in order to identify trends in exit and entry points for poachers; the management and control of invasive species as well as reporting fence-breaks to the Veterinary Dept. for animal health purposes. Our scientists use the information for the monitoring of rare species (see figure 4); invasive species research; fire mapping; archeological inventory; identifying species distribution patterns etc.



The programme is however, in dire need of funding in order to replace the now ailing Handspring Visor devices. To support the programme, Halewood International South Africa has kindly donated 8 new *Palm Tungsten W* handheld devices, as well as a supply of their Red Square Reload energy drink, which contains a range of Vitamins, Caffeine, Taurine and Ginseng to ensure the Rangers are technologically equipped and energized. Halewood is one of the leading alcoholic beverage and energy-drink manufacturers in South Africa, with brands such as Red Square, Caribbean Twist and Shakers. Mike Veysie the Managing Director of Halewood announced that “The company is privileged to be able to help in a small way by giving something back to a worthwhile cause. We value the work that is being done by the Kruger Park Rangers and the benefits that the data collected will have on managing our eco-systems and South Africa’s immense wild-life heritage”.

The devices donated by Halewood will be used by Scientific Services to aid in the collection of data in the field until such time as blue-tooth GPS units can be purchased and the devices distributed to the appropriate sections.

If you would like to help support the KNP CyberTracker programme, please visit our website <http://www.sanparks.org/parks/kruger/conservation/scientific/donations/cybertracker.php> and you could stand a chance of winning a pair of Steiner Precision Binoculars.

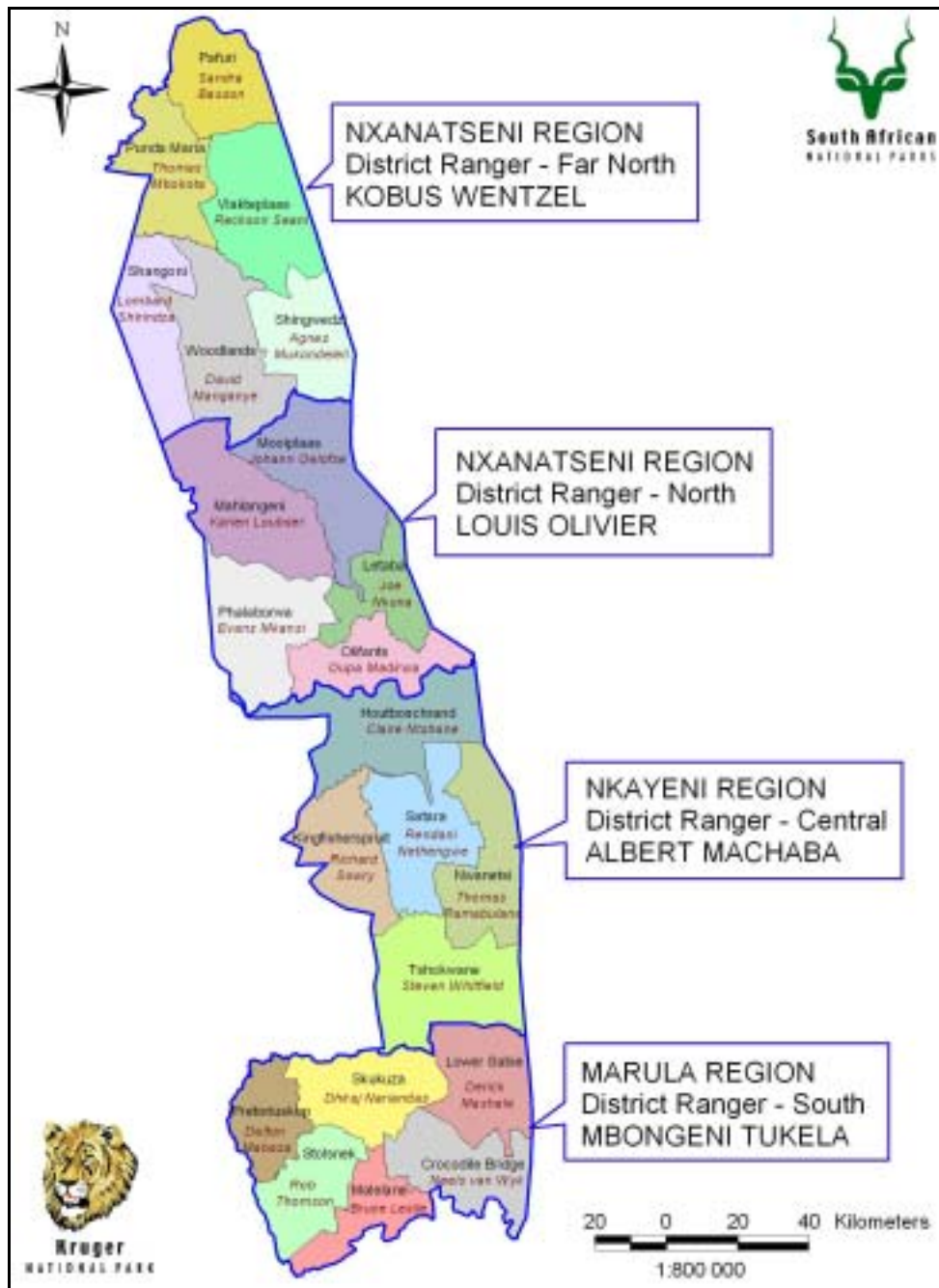


Figure 1: Twenty-two management sections of the Kruger National Park



Figure 2: Woodlands section field rangers ready for morning deployment with CyberTrackers.

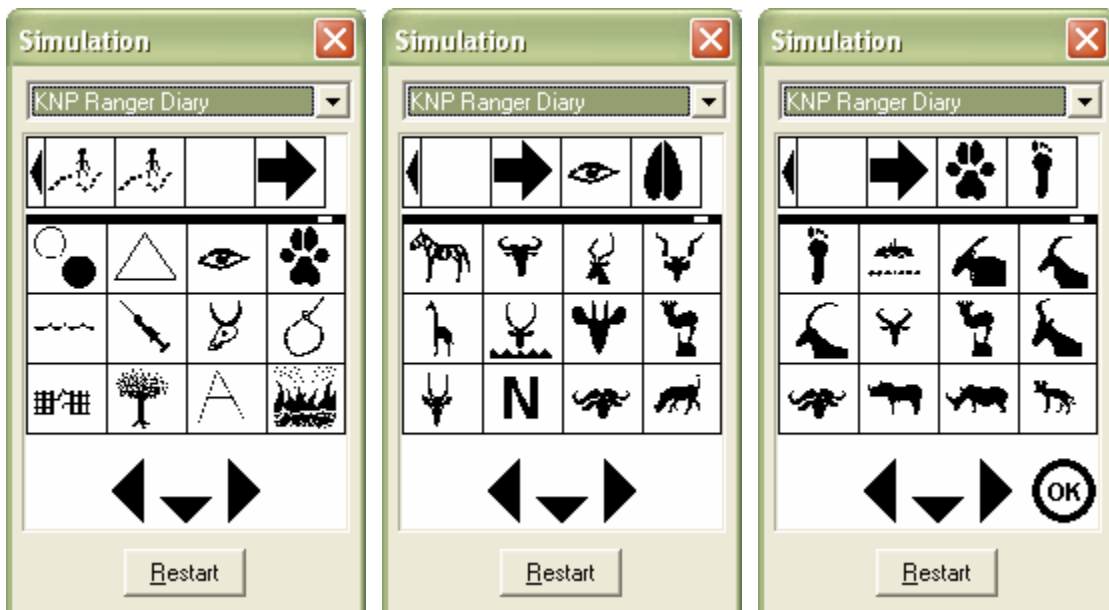


Figure 3: Icon-based interface designed specifically for Kruger Park management and research.

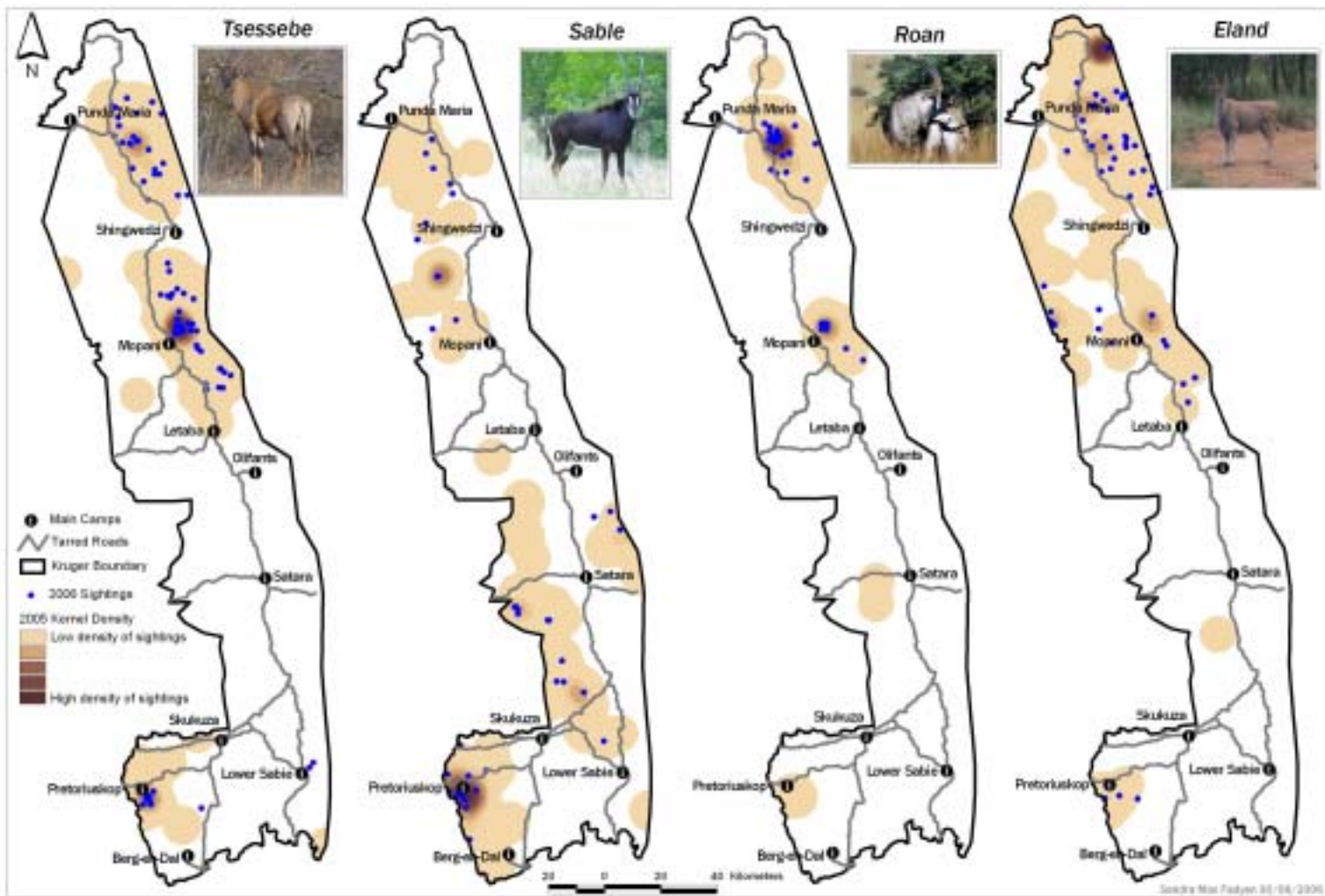


Figure 4: Rare ungulate distribution mapping using the CyberTracker system as a data collection tool.