

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Prepared for ESKOM in response to the EIA for the ISUNDU substation development, and the relocation of the Raptor Rescue facility

Background

Raptor Rescue was started over 15 years ago, and is well-established dedicated specialist bird of prey rehabilitation facility. It is the largest raptor rehabilitation facility in South Africa.

Every year between 120 to 150 injured birds of prey are admitted to the Raptor Rescue clinic for a number of reasons, these being mostly cases involving

- Motor Vehicle collisions
- Collision/ electrocution with Eskom infrastructure
- Poisoning
- Disease
- Shot
- Fence entanglement

We also do a number of callouts every year for other organization where specialist knowledge is required, for instance where a hawk is trapped in large building, human raptor mitigation regarding pets or livestock, injured hawks on highways, and such.

Raptor Rescue is actively involved with research, on an academic level, where we assist post grad students with collecting samples for genetics, parasites, and biometric data.

We also provide training to other organizations and individuals on the handling, tagging /banding, and the management of injured and poisoned raptors.

Ben Hoffman, the founder and CEO, also runs small breeding program for selected species.

Objectives

As per the recommendations of the ISUNDU environmental impact report, it is recommended that the Raptor Rescue facility be relocated. This facility operates on the same property as the African Bird Of Prey Sanctuary.

The move would need to be undertaken in such a way as to not prejudice the existing stakeholders or Eskom. It needs not to comprise the hawks, eagles, owls, and vultures receiving treatment and care. The birds held in the breeding program must also have long term futures.

Requirements

- Location.
- Infrastructure
- Food source
- Long Term

Location.

Not being open to the public we do not need to be directly off the highway or on a tourist route. However we need to be accessible, as a number of birds are brought to us directly by the public, SPCA, and KZN Wildlife.

We must be reasonably close to the source of our food requirements, these being day old chicks, large mammal meat. Rats, mice, and quail can be bred on site.

We must be within reasonable distance from our specialist vet in Pietermaritzburg.

Must have minimum 3 ha reasonably flat land for infrastructure

Electricity and water must be on site

Low cost overheads. At present the Raptor Rescue comprises of two facilities:

Raptor Rescue clinic, recovery pens and flight enclosures, situated on the same property as the African Bird Of Prey Sanctuary. Raptor Rescue pays a percentage of the electricity, water, and rent.

Funding for this is raised directly from donation boxes at the African Bird Of Prey Sanctuary.

Predatory Bird Centre. Next to the Natal Zoo, this facility houses:

Large breeding bird enclosures

Extra recovery/exercise pens

Quarantine facility, food preparation room, Cold storage facilities

Workshop

Quail breeding/rearing facilities, and rat breeding facilities.

This facility is sponsored completely, including a part time staff member by Natal Zoological Gardens.

Infrastructure.

A small accommodation unit would be required on site.

A clinic would need to be constructed

Food storage facilities would be required

Quail/ Rat breeding/incubation and rearing facilities

Raptor recovery and flights would need to be constructed

Quarantine facilities

Conservation breeding enclosures/ large eagle breeding pens

Food Source

Day old chicks:

Our present location is 10 km from 3 large hatcheries, being Stoneall, National Chicks, and Rainbow. We use in excess of a thousand chicks a week.

There is a hatchery in Dargel so the lower midlands is an option

Large mammal meat.

We have an arrangement with the Lion Park 3 km away, and collect meat from them on an ongoing basis. The Lion Park cuts and puts the meat in meat trays, which are then frozen at our satellite facility at the Predatory Bird Centre. This facility is on land owned by Brian Boswell from the Natal Zoological Gardens. This meat is carefully selected from only horses or cows that are shot, and have not been injected with any chemicals or anti biotics.

The option of sourcing meat directly from farmers is an option, but would require handling facilities and bigger storage facilities. Extra running costs. A trailer would also be required to collect carcasses. The option of buying carcasses from the pound is also an option, this would incur additional costs. At present meat for the eagles and vultures cost us nothing.

Quail, Rats and Mice.

An intensive quail production unit has been established at the Predatory Bird Centre. Facilities include incubator room, brooder facilities, raising pens, and laying pens. Our rat breeding facility is at present undergoing refurbishment.

Long Term

The issue of maintaining wildlife rehabilitation centres from a funding perspective is a challenge. Over the last few years there has been a number of centres that have closed due to financial constraints. Raptor Rescue has survived due to the primary assistance of:

African Bird Of Prey Sanctuary, who maintains the donation boxes, and actively fundraises for funds to cover, rent, lights and water. Ben Hoffman has a sub-lease with Shannon Hoffman owner of the Sanctuary, who holds a 99 year registered lease for the property.

Natal Zoological Gardens, who supports our satellite facility, and covers the costs of electricity, water, labour, and provision of meat for the birds.

Without the basic over heads being covered, Raptor Rescue would have to close.

Issues

Birds of prey are a specialist species. Without the experience and correct facilities and techniques, most birds of prey entering rehabilitation die post release into the wild. Raptor Rescue on the other hand has a high success rate, with a number of birds being tracked and monitored post release. All our results are published in peer reviewed publications.

The number of birds treated by Raptor Rescue due to powerline interaction injuries is high. The closure or the demise of the only dedicated raptor facility in KZN would be a major blow to conservation in South Africa.

Existing Facilities

Predatory Bird Centre

Building 1

Workshop, food preparation Quail Breeding facility.

All under IBR roof, breeze block construction

8 meter by 15 meter

Building 2

Old clinic, incubator room, recovery enclosures.

8 meter by 12 meter

Building 3

Recovery/Holding Pens

8 meter by 9 meter

All buildings serviced with water and electricity.

Flight Enclosures

2 x Side by side enclosure 20 meter by 12 meter

Dwarf wall, CCA treated pole with fishing net and 40% shade cloth

Owl Block

15 meter by 12 meter footprint consisting of 6 enclosures with safety passage. Cement floors. Half of the enclosure roofed with translucent polycarbonate sheeting. Dwarf wall, CCA treated pole with fishing net and 60% shade cloth

Secretary Bird Pen

15 meter by 15 meter, CCA pole and fishing net enclosure

Eagle Breeding Enclosures

3 x 8 meter by 8 meter eagle enclosures

Dwarf wall, galvanized greenhouse tunnel, covered with fishing net and 80% shade cloth.

Goshawk Block

8 meter by 25 meter footprint, consisting of 5 breeding chambers. CCA slat walls with fishing net. 50% of the enclosure roofed with translucent polycarbonate sheeting.

All breeding enclosures have breeding ledges, and serviced with water.

800mm concrete paths connect all enclosures to feed and incubator room.

Facility surrounded by a 2.4 high, Bonox fence with a vehicle and two pedestrian gates

Raptor Rescue Facilities African Bird of Prey Sanctuary

Hospital

7 meter by 15 meter common brick, under IBR.

Consists of reception area, examination room, 3 wards, food preparation and storage area, toilet and shower.

Industrial epoxy coated, specialized window protectors.

All facilities have electricity and hot and cold water.

Mead recovery block

14 meter by 20 meter recovery enclosure consisting of breeze block dwarf wall, CCA treated poles and slats. 4 X 6 meter by 5 meter enclosures, central concrete passage and two 4 by 10 meter enclosures. Each enclosure half roofed with IBR sheets, with the remaining covered with industrial netting.

Owl Flight

30 meter by 4 meter tunnel.

Dwarf wall, with CCA treated poles, covered with 100 by 50 mm galvanized weldmesh. Roof consists of steel and cable frame, covered in 100% waterproof shade material.

Flight tunnel

72 meter by 8 meter, dwarf wall and CCA pole, with CCA slating on sides and roof.

1 X 8 meter by 4 meter connected holding pen, and 2 X 4 meter by 4 meter holding pens, dwarf wall and CCA slats. Roofing is 100 x 50 mm weldmesh and Ferro cement roof covering 50 % of enclosure.

Breeding Pens

18 meter by 24 meter footprint, dwarf wall, CCA pole and slat, with windows of 100 X 50 galvanized weldmesh in CCA slat walls. 50 % of roof covered with corrugated iron roof.

6 pens make up this unit,

Cabin

CCA Treated 2 roomed cabin. Slide doors and 12 windows.

13 meter by 5 meter, with a 3 y 10 Veranda.