

# Singita

## SINGITA CHAMPIONS LEOPARD CONSERVATION

### IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PANTHERA



- **Following increasing concern about the conservation status of leopards, Singita partnered with Panthera to undertake a key camera-trap survey in the Kruger National Park, South Africa**
- **Singita unveils new conservation-led gift-gifting opportunity for the holiday season, with unique support for ‘Furs for Life’ initiative**

November 2018 – In the next few weeks a fourth camera trap survey of leopards in Kruger National Park will be completed which will provide important results that will help to provide a better understanding of leopard density and distribution in one of Africa’s largest protected areas. These surveys were undertaken with support from Singita, in partnership with Panthera, an organisation devoted exclusively to the conservation of the world’s 40 wild cat species and their ecosystems, because of a serious concern about the possible decline of the species in the broader Kruger region. World-renowned for unsurpassed sightings of leopard in the wild, Singita’s Sabi Sand property boasts the highest density of these usually elusive cats of any site surveyed by Panthera to date. With more than 20 leopards residing on the reserve, Singita’s guests have the privilege of experiencing a well-protected leopard population at ecological carrying capacity. But this may not be the case in the surrounding areas around Singita Sabi Sand. More research was required to validate the growing concerns.

#### **CURRENT LEOPARD POPULATION STATUS**

There are likely fewer than 5,000 leopards remaining in South Africa and if their numbers continue to decline – which, research suggests, is happening at a rate of 8% per year – it is only a matter of time before they face the threat of extinction. Along with evidence of snares and traps targeted specifically at leopards

being found within the park, the urgent need for a better understanding of this key leopard population became apparent. With the leopard population at Singita Sabi Sand thriving, the company elected to support conservation of the species more broadly.

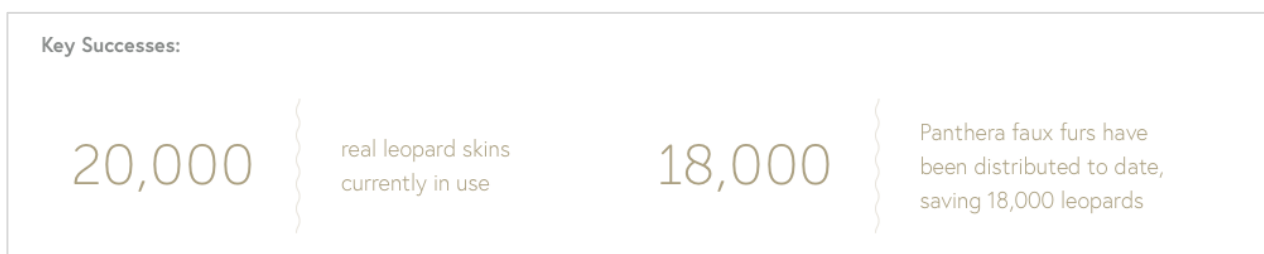
### A KEY CAMERA-TRAP SURVEY

Between January and November 2018, Lucy Smythe, a PhD student from the University of Cape Town, deployed multiple camera trap grids in different areas of the Kruger National Park, including Singita's concession (home to Singita Lebombo and Singita Sweni) Lodges, taking place over seven weeks each to investigate leopard densities in four distinct sites. To date, the project, jointly funded by Singita and Panthera, has been a huge success, with over 100,000 photographs captured - of which over 700 were of leopards. By surveying sites at the edge of the Park, as well as in its core, the researchers will be able to determine if leopard densities are being adversely affected by human impact, such as poaching. Given that Kruger, due to its size, is generally considered a stronghold for leopard, such a finding would further elevate concerns about the future of the species across its range.

### PANTHERA 'FURS FOR LIFE' INITIATIVE:

#### SINGITA UNVEILS NEW CONSERVATION-LED GIFT-GIVING OPPORTUNITES

Data collected by scientists from Panthera suggest that between 1,500 and 2,500 leopards are killed each year to fuel the demand for leopard skins for certain religious and cultural ceremonies by local communities. To combat this, Panthera has initiated the *Furs for Life* project in an effort to curb the poaching of leopards. Working with digital designers, Panthera created a high-quality, affordable faux leopard skin for use in these ceremonies. Surveys undertaken at these religious gatherings indicate that the provision of faux furs has already reduced demand for skins by 50%, preventing hundreds of leopard deaths each year.



Singita is proud to partner with Panthera to offer an opportunity for guests and partners to offer a monetary contribution of US\$30, which Panthera will then use to donate a faux fur, effectively saving a leopard's life. New for the holiday season, Singita has made these donations available for gift-giving, and available for purchase online: <https://www.panthera.org/singita>.

**Note to editors:**

Singita is a conservation brand that has been preserving African wilderness for the past 25 years, offering an exceptional safari experience with 12 luxury, award-winning lodges and camps across 5 regions in Africa. In partnership with non-profit funds and trusts who implement strategic conservation projects in each region, Singita is preserving and protecting pristine land and wildlife populations and helping to create economic independence within local communities surrounding the reserves.

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**Panthera**

Panthera is the only organisation in the world that is devoted exclusively to the conservation of the world's 40 wild cat species and their ecosystems. Utilising the expertise of the world's premier cat biologists, Panthera develops and implements global strategies for the most imperiled large cats, partnering with local and international NGOs, scientific institutions, local communities, governments around the globe, and citizens who want to help ensure a future for wild cats.

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