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8 ZO ENVIRONMENT

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Troublesome tusker has been translocated

Tamlyn Cramer

AFTER posing a danger to nearby communities, as well as to itself, a tusker from Tembe Elephant Park, which kept breaking out of the reserve, has been safely relocated.

Having breached even the electric fence in search of crops on community land outside the elephant park, the situation became dire and warranted translocation.

The mammoth task was a joint undertaking by Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife's Game Capture unit, Game Capture Solutions, Munywana Conservancy, WeWild Africa, and Wildlife Emergency Fund who funded the helicopter.

The convoy consisted of an R44 helicopter, two semi-trucks, multiple 4x4s and a thermal drone.

Five hours of tracking later, the team located the elephant on community land and, despite attempts to drive it into the open, the massive beast kept retreating into thick bush.

A dart was, however, successfully administered by the veterinarian in the chopper, and the team immediately got to work.

One group stabilised the elephant, another cut a path, and the third cleared access for the truck.

Next came the hoisting of the mighty beast onto the transport truck.

Battling under the weight, the 6.5 tonne crane needed help from manpower on the ground – taking three men to lift just the elephant's trunk.

After hours of work in heavy rain, the final transfer to the recovery crate was nothing short of tense, as the elephant awoke angry, shaking the crate and trumpeting loudly.

Reaching their final destination at Munywana Conservancy at 1am, the crate was opened and the elephant sniffed its

new surroundings before taking its first tentative steps into its new home.

"The translocation went well and the tusker was fitted with a collar which will allow Munywana to monitor the elephant," said Ezemvelo spokesperson Musa Mntambo.

About Munywana Conservancy

A collaboration of private and community landowners, Munywana Conservancy is a protected wildlife conservation area spanning 29 866 hectares.

The conservancy has a proud history of successful conservation endeavours and ground-breaking research which have been instrumental in the protection of threatened species, including rhino, cheetah, pangolin, lion and elephant.

Wildlife translocations of rhino and cheetah from Munywana Conservancy continue to support new source populations within South and southern Africa.

Mammoth undertaking as massive bull elephant is darted, captured and relocated



Giving the thumbs up as the elephant is secured is Kester Vickery (Game Capture Solutions). On the right of the photo are JP van Heerden (pointing), Kieran McDonald and Ben Hensburg
 Wiki West/WeWild Africa