



# CyberTracker

30 December 2017

## **Proposal to Make Table Mountain National Park Safe for Visitors**

From a national tourism point of view, the Table Mountain National Park is one of the most important draw cards for foreign tourists. Crime in the TMNP therefore has an impact on the national economy.

Governments like those of the UK, Canada and Australia, as well as popular travel websites like Lonely Planet, have singled out violent crime on Table Mountain in official travel warnings (See Appendix on Travel Warnings). It is therefore an issue of national importance to our tourism economy.

This month an elderly couple (aged 63 and 68) from Austria was brutally stabbed on Noordhoek beach and were lucky to be alive after being hospitalised, where they received emergency operations. In 2016 Franziska Blochliger (16 years old) were brutally raped and murdered in Tokai Forest. In 2014 a hiker was killed on the Kalk Bay trail. In 2004 we found a mutilated body in the Noordhoek wetlands.

The Kruger National Park has more than 500 armed rangers who are trained as trackers, together with tracker dogs, to protect rhinos and elephants. Why can we not have 330 armed rangers (or more) trained as trackers, with tracker dogs, to protect visitors in the Table Mountain National Park?

From 2000 to 2004 we had numerous attacks on Noordhoek beach, sometimes two to four attacks in a week. Only by training up a team of trackers were we able to bring the crime under control. From 2004 to 2007 we had not one single attack on Noordhoek beach.

In 2007 the Table Mountain National Park publicly stated (Cape Times, 22/8/2007) that they will start training trackers to make the park safe. Over the last ten years we could have trained up a strong team of trackers.

But instead the Noordhoek tracker team was disbanded. In spite of the fact that the Table Mountain National Park has a full-time Master Tracker, James Minye, not a single tracker has been trained over the last 10 years.

We need to start training trackers to make the Table Mountain National Park safe.

### **Tracker Training and Intelligence Unit**

We need to establish a special tracker intelligence unit consisting of:

1. **Tracker Training and Intelligence Co-ordinator** who understands Adaptive Management Theory, Game Theory, Tactical Tracking, Forensic Tracking and Crime Investigation.
2. **GIS Data Analyst** who can analyse security data on a daily basis and provide regular updates of the security situation in the TMNP.
3. **Master Tracker** who can provide ongoing tracker training for rangers so that they can gather data and track down criminals.

The unit should focus on three core functions:

1. **Gather and analyse data** based on tracks and signs, as well as other sources of crime intelligence, to monitor criminals and provide regular reports.
2. **Investigate crime incidents** to gather forensic evidence based on tracks and signs in order to convict criminals in a court of law.
3. **Ongoing training of trackers, including tracker dogs.** For a ranger to reach the Professional Tracker level may take up to 3 years, Senior Tracker level more than 5 years and Master Tracker level about 10 to 15 years. Tracker training requires a long-term commitment.

### **Three Phase Process to Employ and Train Trackers**

In view of the increase in crime, as well as the increase in the level of violence perpetrated by criminals (possibly due to drug addiction), the estimates made in the 2007 proposal need to be revised.

To make the Table Mountain National Park safe for visitors may require up to 330 rangers (or more), including 60 expert trackers (or more) with tracker dogs.

Ideally, all rangers should also be trackers. The original “rangers” in the past always had tracking skills – it is only in the last twenty to thirty years that rangers do not have tracking skills.

It is proposed that training and deployment be phased in over a period of time. The time scale will depend on how soon the required funding can be secured and how long it takes to train up expert trackers.

In the short term, while capacity is not sufficient to secure the whole park, it is proposed to either close unsafe areas to the public, or to provide sufficient warning to the public so that they can make informed decisions on whether or not to enter certain areas at their own risk.



**Phase 1**

RED DOT: 7 Rangers (2+ Trackers)  
 BLACK DOT: 3 Rangers (1+ Tracker)  
 HATCHED AREA: No Safety Rangers

North: 13 Rangers (4+ Trackers)  
 North-East: 34 Rangers (10+ Trackers)  
 Hout Bay: No Safety Rangers  
 Central: 13 Rangers (4+ Trackers)  
 South: No Safety Rangers  
 Section Rangers: 5

**Total: 65 Rangers (18+ Trackers)**



**Phase 2**

RED DOT: 7 Rangers (2+ Trackers)  
 BLACK DOT: 3 Rangers (1+ Tracker)  
 HATCHED AREA: No Safety Rangers

North: 13 Rangers (4+ Trackers)  
 North-East: 34 Rangers (10+ Trackers)  
 Hout Bay: 10 Rangers (3+ Trackers)  
 Central: 47 Rangers (14+ Trackers)  
 South: No Safety Rangers  
 Section Rangers: 5

**Total: 109 Rangers (31+ Trackers)**



### Phase 3

RED DOT: 15 Rangers (3+ Trackers)  
 BLACK DOT: 7 Rangers (1+Trackers)  
 HATCHED AREA: No Safety Rangers

North: 45 Rangers (9+ Trackers)  
 North-East: 74 Rangers (14+ Trackers)  
 Hout Bay: 52 Rangers (10+Trackers)  
 Central: 110 Rangers (20+Trackers)  
 South: 44 Rangers (7+ Trackers)  
 Section Rangers: 5

**Total: 330 Rangers (60+ Trackers)**

### Recruitment

- All new recruits should pass a minimum **physical fitness** test.
- Regardless of educational qualifications, new recruits should undergo a **spatial visualisation aptitude test**, which may be an indicator of potential ability to become an expert tracker.
- **Salary scales should increase** for Tracker I, II, III, Professional Tracker, Senior Tracker and Master Tracker in order to attract high calibre candidates and provide them with an incentive to develop their tracking skills.

**Spatial visualisation** manifests a lower correlation with socioeconomic status than verbal-mathematical ability. Therefore, utilising spatial ability measures will identify more talented students from lower socioeconomic status levels than current talent-search procedures (Shea, Lubinski and Benbrow, 2001).

Spatial ability has a unique role in the development of creativity. Spatial ability not only plays a unique role in assimilating and utilizing pre-existing knowledge, but also plays a unique role in developing new knowledge (Kell, Lubinski, Benbrow and Steiger, 2013).

For more information, please see:

<http://www.cybertracker.org/tracking/tracking-dangerous-criminals>



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[www.cybertracker.org](http://www.cybertracker.org)

#### References

Kell, H.J., D. Lubinski, C.P. Benbow and J.H. Steiger. 2013. "Creativity and Technical Innovation: Spatial Ability's Unique Role." *Psychological Science*. doi: 10.1177/0956797613478615.

<http://pss.sagepub.com/content/early/2013/07/10/0956797613478615>

Shea, D.L., D. Lubinski and C.P. Benbow. 2001. Importance of assessing spatial ability in intellectually talented young adolescents: A 20-year longitudinal study. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 93, 604-614.

<https://my.vanderbilt.edu/smpy/files/2013/02/SpatialAbility1.pdf>

## **Government of Canada Travel Warning**

There have been attacks on hikers and tourists at reserves and hiking trails, including Table Mountain. Some attacks have been violent. Authorities are attempting to address the problem, and recommend that visitors walk in groups and take all appropriate precautions.

<https://travel.gc.ca/destinations/south-africa>

## **UK Government Travel Warning**

There have been violent attacks on hikers and tourists on Table Mountain. Take care in quieter areas of the Park, especially early in the morning or just before the park closes.

<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/south-africa/safety-and-security>

## **Australian Government Travel Warning**

Hikers have been attacked on tracks on the slopes of Table Mountain in Cape Town

[http://smartraveller.gov.au/countries/africa/southern/pages/south\\_africa.aspx#safety\\_and\\_security](http://smartraveller.gov.au/countries/africa/southern/pages/south_africa.aspx#safety_and_security)

## **Lonely Planet**

Avoid deserted areas day and night, including isolated beaches and parts of Cape Town's mountains.

<https://www.lonelyplanet.com/south-africa/safety>