Getting back on track

Paws for thought

Louis Liebenberg, whose trackercraft is an ancient art, turned to the Kalahari to find ways to monitor and predict and help prevent irreversible damage to our precious landscapes. He was inspired by the traditional tracking cultures of the !Kho and Ju/'hoansi communities. Liebenberg has been eating, sleeping and breathing the tracking arts for the last 15 years to help them overcome the challenges they face in a world that has changed so much.

"The Kalahari is undergoing a diverse set of changes," says Liebenberg. "It is losing its wildness, and the habituation to humans is dangerous. The value of knowing the area is that you can help to keep it wild.

"Kora bustard," they agree.

"The !Kho and Ju/'hoansi communities are among the last of the world's great tracking cultures," says Liebenberg. "They are driven by the land, and their lives are deeply connected to it.

"The tracking arts are an important part of their identity, and they are passed down from generation to generation. But they have been losing their place in modern society, and many are at risk of being lost.

"But the traditional tracking cultures are not just about hunting and gathering," says Liebenberg. "They are also about knowing the land, and understanding the ecosystem. They are about valuing the land, and preserving it for the future.

"The tracking arts are an important part of the cultural heritage of the !Kho and Ju/'hoansi communities," says Liebenberg. "They are a part of their identity, and they are important for the survival of the communities.

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