

## The Mercury/IOL (online)

A.V.E.: R7,000

<http://www.iol.co.za/news/south-africa/kwazulu-natal/endangered-buck-saved-from-game-reserve-1.1352771#.UBdz7LRcf0c>

SA Time: 31 July 2012 09:20:34 AM

Endangered buck saved from game reserve

July 31 2012 at 07:33am

By Tony Carnie

[Comment on this story](#)



KwaZulu-Natal - Four endangered antelopes have been caught and moved from a private game reserve in the Ladysmith area to offer them a better chance of survival in another reserve in the Ulundi district.

It is thought that there are less than 2 500 of these small-bodied oribi antelopes left in KwaZulu-Natal and about 4 000 nationwide, although exact figures are not known.

The four oribi, two males and two females, were darted and captured in the Nambiti private game reserve near Ladysmith recently and moved to the Gelukwater oribi reserve near Babanango.

A spokesman for the Nambiti reserve said the Endangered Wildlife Trust assisted with the relocation project.

“These small antelope are easily caught and killed by predators, and because of this, it was decided to remove them from Nambiti and donate them to the Gelukwater reserve,” reserve officials said.

Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife ecologist Athol Marchant estimates that there are about 600 oribi protected in Ezemvelo reserves and less than 2 000 on privately owned land.

“Oribi are classified as ‘endangered’ in the SA Mammals Red Data Book and they are very vulnerable to organised dog-hunts.

“Most of these antelope survive on private land and we try to encourage farmers to leave corridors between their properties to allow these animals to move and breed with other small populations on neighbouring land,” Marchant said.

Ecologists say the animals feed selectively on short grasses but also need tall grasses to shelter themselves and their young from predators. Unfortunately, its favoured habitat is the same type of terrain best-suited to crop farming and timber plantations.

Ezemvelo surveys over the past two decades have shown that several small oribi populations have declined or become locally extinct, especially on farms with groups of less than 10 oribi. - The Mercury