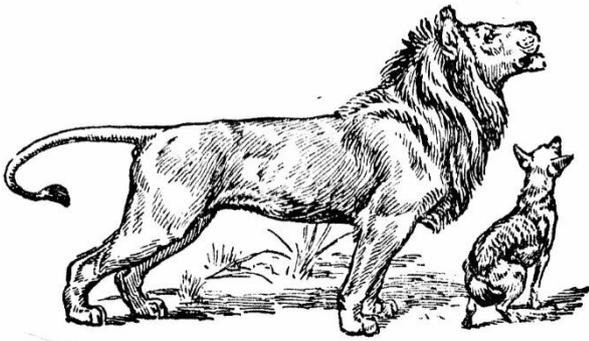




INTRODUCING WILDLIFE TO ELECTRIC FENCING



All animals need to be trained to respect electric fencing. It is therefore very important that an animal receives a good shock the first time it makes contact with an electric fence. So, once the electric fence has been well constructed, that is it is the right design for the animals for which it is intended to control and it is adequately powered and very well earthed, the animals must be given time and space to learn that their new boundaries are hostile. Don't rush them, and don't cramp them.

The following are some tried and tested methods of introducing wildlife to electric fencing.

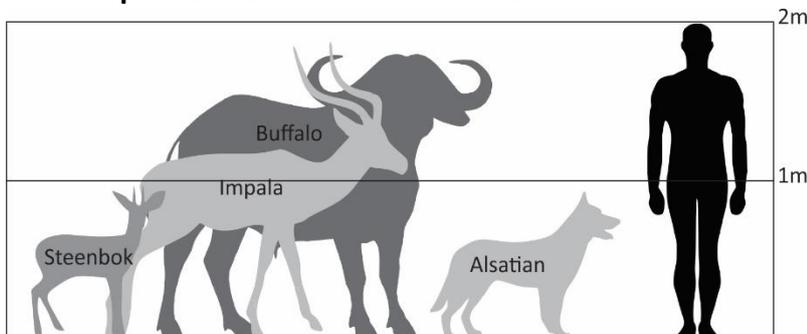
1. Power up the electric fence-line as construction progresses.

This, if possible, should be done daily, or at least as a section of fence-line is completed. This can be done from the main base station or a portable battery operated energizer can be included as part of the fencing team's tool kit.

The reasons for doing this are:

- It will ensure that the more inquisitive animals receive a good shock the first time they make contact with the fence. This will help reduce the time needed to train the wildlife as the leaders will communicate, or the herd will sense, that their newly erected boundary is hostile.
- It will reduce the incidence of damage to the fence line being constructed by animals testing it, or rubbing against it, before power is applied. Besides causing damage to the fence-line, the animals will also lose respect for the fence and it will then take longer to train them when the fence is finally switched on.
- It enables one to check for faults as construction proceeds. There is nothing more frustrating than switching on a newly erected 20 km plus electric fence line and then having to walk it looking for faults.

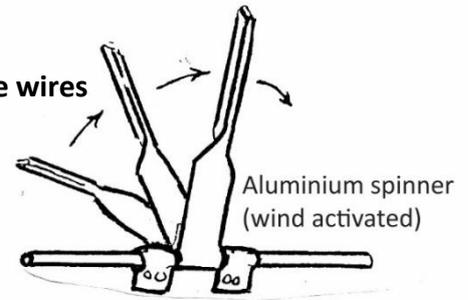
2. Pad wipe the live wires with molasses



As a rule of thumb, live wires should be positioned at nose height to the animals one intends to control. A method of attracting game to sniff the live wire is to wipe a diluted molasses mix along the live wires. The wildlife will soon learn, via their damp muzzles, what electric fencing is all about.

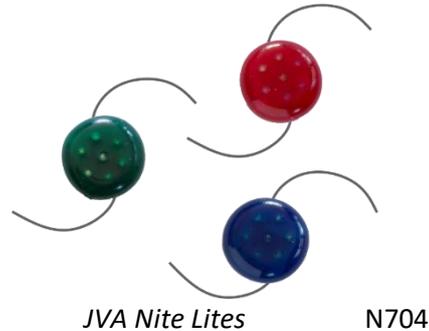
3. Attach tin cans, aluminum strips, or metal spinners to the live wires

Not only will these attachments improve fence visibility but if scented, as in 2. above with molasses or milk powder, they will also help to train the game to approach the fence slowly and with caution.



4. Install flashing lights (JVA Nite Lites)

These lights draw the power to make them flash from the energizer pulses. These flashing lights, besides enabling one at a glance to see if the fence is working, improve fence visibility, especially at night, thereby preventing nocturnal feeders such as Hippos from blundering into the fence.



Note: Nite Lites draw power from the energizer pulse so there is a limit to the number of Live Lites that can be fitted to a section of fence-line.)

5. Maintain power on the fence line at all times.

Unlike domesticated farm animals which soon become accustomed to electric fences, on a wildlife reserve one encounters a variety of species, changing populations of the same species, animals of varying size, age and sex, all with differing response reactions. Some species, especially the cat family with their whiskers, will very soon detect if a fence is off and will then challenge it. To ensure that the fence is on at all times it is strongly recommended to install monitoring devices with alarms to warn one if the fence is down or is being tampered with.

6. Consider the season.

Time of the year and season will also influence an animal's response to an electric fence. In the dry winter months, one is not only faced with the problem of dry ground and poor soil conductivity, but also the animals themselves are often better insulated with their thicker winter coats. If possible, introduce the animals to electric fencing after the spring rains when conductivity is at its best.

7. Electrify trans-location bomas.

Just as commercial livestock farmers use a well fenced electrified training camp to introduce new animals to electric fencing, so too should the game farmer. By attaching live wires to the interior of a boma, one can train new animals being introduced to the reserve to electric fencing. These offset electric wires should be switched on only once the animals have settled down in the boma. Animals born on a reserve usually learn early on in their lives that their boundaries are hostile.

8. Keep the fence lines clean and well cleared.

This will not only reduce voltage loss but will also help prevent animals blundering into the fence. A strip 3 meters wide should be kept clear of bush and the grass kept short. If monkeys and baboons are a problem, trees and overhanging branches should also be cropped. A weedicide may be sprayed directly under the fence line but beware of causing erosion in hilly areas. Game also begin to associate the cleared area with a shock.