

# Hot Cares Christmas delivers a life-changing gift to Wild Heart Wildlife Foundation

Hot 102.7FM, through Hot Cares Christmas, has once again demonstrated the extraordinary power of giving by bringing critical relief and unexpected joy to the Wild Heart Wildlife Foundation in Limpopo after a devastating storm left the small organisation struggling to recover.

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The surprise donation, made possible by the incredible R31.5m raised during this year's Hot Cares Teddython, is valued at over R250,000 and arrives at a time when Wild Heart needs it most.

## A small team with a massive mission

The Wild Heart Wildlife Foundation is a hands-on, non-profit organisation dedicated to protecting South Africa's most vulnerable wildlife. Their mission sees them working with everything from porcupines and bushbabies, hedgehogs to jackals, owls and tortoises.

Rescue and rehabilitation work is hard at the best of times but, in October, this small but determined team was pushed to breaking point after a mammoth storm tore through the Mookgophong region causing enormous damage, forcing a race against time to save their vulnerable patients and leaving an immense clean-up task in its wake. Damage included a tree knocked over onto the rehabilitation centre, severed communication lines, destroyed shade structures along with disrupted water and electricity supplies. And, most urgently, critically ill animals that had to be kept warm through the night without power.

At one point, co-founder Carina Crayton even had to throw herself onto a hissing caracal to catch it and move it to safety. Fortunately, while no animal lives were lost, a previous storm had caused the deaths of vulnerable patients when the power went off for four days and the team was unable to keep the fragile animals warm enough.

“It’s not glamorous,” says Carina. “It’s no sleep, feeding animals through the night, cleaning up poop and vomit, doing whatever it takes. But we love them, so we do it.”

Despite the chaos and challenges, Carina and co-founder Paul Oxtan have managed to keep their sense of humour intact, but the need for help was real.

And Hot 102.7FM listeners made sure that help arrived.



### **A surprise they’ll never forget**

The day started when Hot 102.7FM presenter, Shona Madurai, arrived under the guise of giving Wild Heart some much-needed exposure after the storm. What the Wild Heart team didn’t know was that she wasn’t alone.

After spending time with some of the residents, Shona revealed the real reason for being there: she was part of Hot Cares Christmas, and there was a big surprise for them coming down the road.

Moments later Bunny Majaja and Simon Hill rolled onto the property with a car and trailer packed to the brim with urgently needed items from the organisation’s wish list.

As the doors swung open, the depth of generosity from Hot 102.7FM’s listeners was revealed. A generator for backup power was donated along with gas canisters, solar lighting, LED lights, shade mesh sails, mesh wire fencing to replace storm-damaged enclosures, and a trailer full of plants, aloes and spekboom to help restore the garden.

The Hot Cares Christmas team also brought potting soil, compost, garden supplies, a geyser and blankets. And with the Wild Heart team consisting of only Paul and Carina, labour support was essential, which Hot Cares Christmas covered with funding for additional part-time salaries to ensure infrastructure is mended correctly.

As Paul and Carina waded wide-eyed in disbelief through the donations, they were told there was more.

They had always dreamed of opening a training centre on-site. To help make that a reality, Hot Cares Christmas donated a projector, two tablets and two phones, all essential tools to keep education and outreach running smoothly.

In total, Wild Heart received over R250,000 worth of help and relief.

For a team that works quietly, tirelessly and often invisibly, the moment was overwhelming.

“This has made our Christmas,” said an emotional Carina through her tears. “In all the years we’ve been doing this, this is the first time we feel truly seen. We don’t even know what to say except ‘thank you’.”



Co-founder Paul Oxtan echoed the sentiment: “We have hundreds of thousands of followers, but raising the kind of support takes ages; little bits here and there. Getting everything we need in one go...it means the world. We do this for passion. We do it for the animals.”

Hot 102.7FM managing director, Lloyd Madurai, summed up why Hot Cares Christmas chose Wild Heart: “Our listeners told us they’re the ones who help the helpless. But who helps the helpers? By stepping in we wanted to make their Christmas extra special and ensure they continue the extraordinary work they do.”

Thanks to the generosity of Hot 102.7FM listeners and corporate partners during Teddython 2025, Wild Heart Wildlife Foundation now has the tools, equipment and support needed not only to rebuild but to soar even greater heights.

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