

For immediate release

29 July 2022

SANBI pursues options for retirement of Charley, the African elephant at the Pretoria National Zoological Garden

The South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI) would like to announce the decision to pursue options for the retirement of Elephant Charley from the Pretoria National Zoological Garden into a suitable wildlife sanctuary or similar setting. This decision follows a number of considerations, among others, the elephant's advanced age. The retirement may include giving Charley the opportunity to have a partner following the death of his late partner Landa, in 2019. Charley the elephant (aged 42) has been at the National Zoological Gardens for over 22 years after being exposed to a circus environment for about 20 years.

The recent comprehensive medical assessment done on Charley which covered hematological and blood chemistry analyses, fecal glucocorticoid metabolites analysis, bronchoalveolar lavage and a trunk wash, radiology of distal extremities, a dental and eye examination, as well as screening for tuberculosis (TB), shows that the elephant is in good health.

SANBI is working on a suitable retirement venue option to a sanctuary and would benefit from cooperation and support from stakeholders and partners to ensure the continued welfare of the elephant. The requisite pre-release protocols including but not limited to psychological and behavioural assessment are being facilitated.

The Chairperson of SANBI Board, Professor Edward Nesamvuni would like to take this opportunity to thank the NZG staff, the public, civil society stakeholders and partners for their support in ensuring the best possible life for Charlie in the Pretoria NZG. The date for retirement will be announced once all processes as per the above are finalised.

SANBI is committed to the welfare of all the animals in its care.

Ends

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