

KENWOOD DMR UPGRADE PROVIDES OPERATIONS CRITICAL RADIO COMMUNICATION AT THE FIVE-STAR QWABI PRIVATE GAME RESERVE

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QWABI
PRIVATE GAME RESERVE

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NEW KENWOOD DMR DIGITAL CONVENTIONAL SYSTEM DELIVERS COVERAGE, SAFETY SECURITY AND EFFICIENCY BENEFITS



Set in 11,500 hectares within the stunning Waterberg UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, in the province of Limpopo, South Africa, the Qwabi Private Game Reserve offers an exceptional and authentic safari experience.

Guests at the reserve can look forward to experiencing an abundance of wildlife on daily game drives, which would include the opportunity to see the 'Big Five', free-roaming in their natural habitat in addition to enjoying five-star hospitality in beautiful and luxurious lodges, each positioned in prime locations with their own unique features and character.

REQUIREMENT

Reliable and clear radiocommunication is critical to the efficient operation of the reserve, linking staff spread across a large area to ensure safety, security and a first-class guest experience.

Although the existing digital radio system was relatively modern and functioning, it had limitations that hindered operations, specifically:

- A requirement for radio users to have to manually switch channels when moving between zones as the repeaters were not linked, which in turn discouraged the important, natural flow of communications between users.
- Inability of the radio system to interface with other technologies and specialised applications increasingly in use at the reserve.

- Inability to provide private calls between management and users.
- Coverage shadows in key areas.

When the opportunity arose to upgrade the existing radio system, the management and staff at the reserve were very clear that they wanted a failsafe, sitewide resource that supported daily operations and was not only instantly available but also easy to use, especially in stressful emergency situations such as a fire, animal encounter, illness, and threat from poachers.

CHALLENGE

Situated at the start of the Waterberg Plateau the reserve includes mountainous terrain especially at the northern boundaries where higher hilltops created some significant shadow zones.

Working with Brad Algar, Reserve Manager at Qwabi Private Game Reserve, the teams at Global Communications and its sister company Elvey studied coverage maps to establish the optimum locations for repeaters and identify areas that would require additional repeaters as the operations area of the reserve is expanded.

SOLUTION

Brad has used KENWOOD radios for many years and has direct experience of the reliability of KENWOOD radio systems and devices in service in his previous roles. He also values the longstanding relationship with the Global Communications sales and technical teams that have supplied and supported his radio systems.

When he considered alternatives for the new system, he found that while other manufacturers and dealers could meet most of the required specification, they could not match the combination of coverage, flexibility, compatibility, and cost offered by the KENWOOD/Global Communication combination.

Cost was naturally an important consideration and Brad was delighted that the new KENWOOD DMR system, which offers superior quality and convenience, coupled with the full technical support of Global Communications could be delivered at a lower cost and therefore better value than competing offers.

THE NEW RADIO SYSTEM

The new digital conventional DMR system is used for day-to-day, site-wide communications between Reserve Management, Reserve Field Teams, Workshops and in support of the Anti-Poaching unit.

It consists of two solar-powered sites connected via existing IP links. Each site features a 20-metre mast and is equipped with three KENWOOD NXR-1700 compact repeaters.



The radio devices employed are from the highly regarded and proven NX-3000 Series which feature built-in GPS as standard. NX3720GE mobile devices are used in vehicles and as base stations, while NX3220E radios with keypads were selected for hand-portable operation.

Additionally, with the integration of the KENWOOD KAS-20 AVL/Dispatch and EarthRanger software, Brad and his staff have access to six talk groups and can monitor the locations of their vehicles, personnel, and wildlife all on one intuitive map.

EXTENDED CAPABILITIES



One of Brad's frustrations with the old radio system was its inflexibility. He comments: "We have a high number of contractors and visitors to the reserve, and it is not always convenient or practical to accompany them throughout their visit. I had this idea to develop a device that could be temporarily attached to vehicles to allow us to track visitors and contractors using the radio system, especially those new to our reserve, while unaccompanied on site. The old radio system could not facilitate this, but working with the technical team at Global, we have designed, prototyped, and developed a rugged, solar powered, KENWOOD radio-based unit which can be magnetically attached onto any vehicle".

The new KENWOOD system is integrated with EarthRanger to provide a comprehensive monitoring capability on a single platform.

Brad continues: “We will be ordering a number of these cost-effective ‘Tracker Boxes’ in the coming months which significantly enhance the safety and efficiency of operations; the ability to know exactly where a vehicle is at any given time using the EarthRanger-KAS-20 integration will greatly reduce response times in the event of an incident and save a huge amount of time and the resource required to search for contractors and visitors that find themselves lost”.



FUTURE SYSTEM EXPANSION

While the new KENWOOD DMR system more than meets the current requirements of Qwabi Private Game Reserve, Brad is already working with the Global Communications/Elvey teams in reviewing the coverage maps from the initial phase and exploring the feasibility of creating a third radio site that could be linked to provide coverage across two shadow zones as well as additional sites that will allow for further growth in the future.

FINAL WORDS



Brad Algar, Reserve Manager at Qwabi Private Game Reserve concludes: “The upgrade to the new KENWOOD DMR system with KAS-20 software is a game-changer for the reserve – at

a stroke it has promoted the free and easy exchange of status and information between team members which has greatly improved safety, efficiency, and security on site; and just as importantly, allows us to improve the visitor and guest experience. The team at Global Communications and Elvy have exceeded my expectations and helped realise my ambitions for the system, the integration of KAS-20 with EarthRanger and the development of Tracker Boxes all of which maximise the potential of the radio system and deliver incredible results and value. I look forward to continuing and building on our productive relationship”.

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