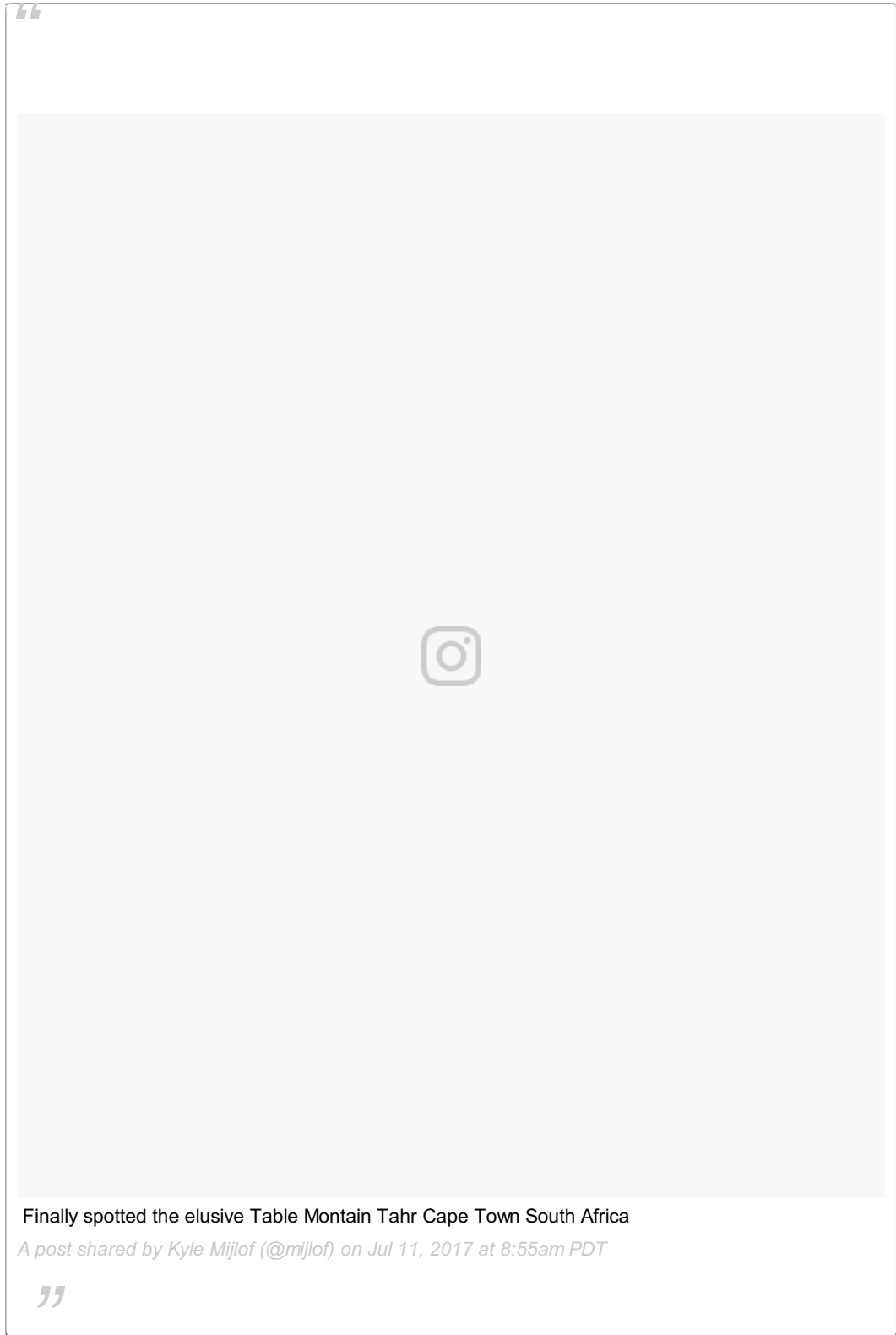


Exotic goats back on Table Mountain

Thirteen years after marksmen were ordered to wipe out Table Mountain's tahrs, a trio of the exotic goats has been photographed gazing out over Cape Town. Kyle Mijlof, who posts daily videos of his Cape Town adventures to Facebook and Instagram, took the picture on Sunday.



Finally spotted the elusive Table Montain Tahr Cape Town South Africa
A post shared by Kyle Mijlof (@mijlof) on Jul 11, 2017 at 8:55am PDT

"I have been wanting to see them for years, and have covered most of the trails on Table Mountain without seeing them," Mijlof said yesterday.

Tahrs at the centre of controversy

Tahrs were at the centre of controversy between 2001 and 2004 when animal rights activists formed the Friends of the Tahr in an effort to save them from being culled. The tahrs established themselves after a few escaped from a zoo in the 1930s.

In 2004, SANParks eventually brought in sharpshooters to get rid of them.

Cicely Blumberg, one of the activists who wanted to save the tahrs by relocating them to their native Himalayas, where they are endangered, said she knew a few animals had survived the cull, which killed at least 109 of the goats.

Another campaigner, Ellen Fedele, said she preferred to describe what happened to the tahrs as murder. "There were alternatives but the SANParks officials refused to look at them," she said.

Both urged TimesLIVE not to reveal where on Table Mountain Mijlof took his photo. "The so-called conservationists will be straight up there with their guns if they know where to look," said Fedele.

Merle Collins, Table Mountain National Park spokesman, said she would comment later.

Fallow deer being culled on Robben Island

Blumberg said it was ironic that the tahrs' re-emergence coincided with the start of a fallow deer cull on Robben Island, where the first two of around 400 animals were shot on Wednesday night.

She said activists had a legal team on standby to apply for a high court interdict to stop the cull, but due to a lack of funds, they had to be certain of success to avoid a costs order if they were defeated. "We're looking for valid reasons to give us a chance to get an interdict and find a safe place for the deer," she said.

Three fallow deer were introduced to the island in 1963, the same year Nelson Mandela arrived there. By 1977 there were 40, and the population was controlled by hunting. But it mushroomed after the island was declared a museum in 1990, and 220 animals were culled in 2009.

"The reduction of the population of fallow deer will have a positive impact on the health of the remaining animals on the island, as well as ensuring the restoration of vegetation to a point at which it will be self-sustaining," said Robben Island Museum marketing manager Bongiwe Nzeku.

Source: The Times