

CHEETAH SPOTS

Cheetah Conservation Fund Australia | Autumn 2020

Cheetahs in the time of Coronavirus

As the planet moves into lockdown, its inhabitants have tended to focus inward - sometimes forgetting the world at large. Here in Australia, we have experienced the horrific destruction of our Summer fires before the fear of COVID-19 set in, and we have donated what we could for our native causes, and the cheetahs have had to take a step back. However, we are very grateful for the donations that have come in in these difficult times, especially from our young cheetah conservationists,

CCF is Thirty Years Old

Much had been planned to celebrate this momentous birthday, but fate had other plans. However, this is an opportunity to reflect on how far Cheetah Conservation Fund has come since a younger Dr Laurie Marker left for Namibia, with 14 trunks, six suitcases, and her two dogs.



Dr Laurie Marker pictured at JFK airport heading to Namibia with some of her belongings.

The Gulf war was on, so she took the flight via Brazil. At the time, she wasn't sure if any of her bags would actually arrive in Windhoek. But, after a long flight Dr. Marker and her belongings finally landed in Namibia on April 3rd 1990.

Continued on page 3



Cheetahs in the time of Coronavirus (Continued from Page 1)

Namibia, like most other countries, has closed its borders and is experiencing various degrees of lockdowns throughout the country. All Dr Laurie Marker's tours have been cancelled until further notice. The Otjiwarongo headquarters are closed to the public, a first in CCF's 30 year history while staff are practicing social distancing and are taking extra measures to ensure they stay healthy.

However, vital conservation work to secure a

future for the cheetah and the communities who shares the cheetahs' landscape is



continuing. Core staff are providing care for the 39 resident orphaned cheetahs living at the Centre in Namibia as well as for the 33 cheetahs confiscated from the illegal wildlife trade at the cheetah Safe Houses in Somaliland. Many samples are being processed in CCF's genetic laboratories in the pursuit of a complete picture of the wild population of cheetahs across Africa.

New educational outreach strategies are being developed for the students who we can no longer visit, and for farmers to help reduce human-wildlife conflict.

Finally, CCF's livestock, livestock guarding dogs, creamery and gardens are being maintained to ensure they are available as the training facilities for countless farmers and students each year, when facilities can reopen.

News from Somaliland



In May 2019, CCF responded to an unprecedented crisis involving cubs caught up in the illegal wildlife trade in Somaliland. The goal was to create immediate capacity to manage the ever-increasing numbers of cubs being confiscated from wildlife traffickers. CCF spent June to September upgrading the existing Cheetah Safe House. In October, the CCF Somaliland team began the huge task of

building a second facility (Safe House 2) to keep pace with the needs of the growing number of confiscated, cheetah orphans. SafeHouse 2 was official opened on 1/03/2020.

CCF is 30 Years Old (Continued from Page 1)

Since 1990, CCF has developed a renowned research facility setting the bar for worldwide standards for researchers into the wild cheetah. Thanks to funding from Life Technologies Conservation Genetics Laboratory and The Haas Family Veterinary Clinic, a DNA laboratory conducts a non-invasive, genetic monitoring program to provide accurate population estimates of cheetahs in Namibia and other home-range countries. It also examines cheetah gene flow and geographical patterns of genetic variation, as well as adaptive questions related to the cheetah's behavioural ecology in specific habitats.

The CCF Centre includes several model farms that have been developed to research and display predator-friendly and commercially viable livestock and wildlife programs. Innovative business initiatives include the cheetah-friendly cattle farm and the Dancing Goat Creamery, which makes goat's cheese, ice-cream, fudge and more recently, goat's yoghurt from the milk of CCF's goats. These goats are protected by the Anatolian Shepherds and Kangal Livestock Guarding Dogs, providing the opportunity to witness first-hand that farmers and cheetah can co-exist. CCF's Education Centre and Cheetah Museum displays are designed around CCF's scientific research findings and provide detailed information about the cheetah and what CCF is doing to ensure the species' survival for future generations.

Two-day or longer environmental courses are available for school groups with overnight accommodation provided at the CCF educational campsites. With up to 15 tons per hectare of invasive thorn bush, central Namibia is an ideal location to demonstrate the full economic potential of biomass related industries and to research sustainable harvest methods that ultimately restore habitat.

Alongside improvements to CCF's successful clean-burning fuel log Bushblok, the Biomass Technology Demonstration Centre has fostered green energy technology including the manufacturing of briquette logs, charcoal hex logs, lump charcoal, pyrolysis-based electrical generation and other promising technology such as wood pellet production.

CCF is also an ecotourism destination, providing informative and memorable experiences for travellers, whether they visit for a day, or stay overnight in guest house accommodation. Although CCF has released many of the cheetahs it has rescued, some cannot be rewilded and these are accommodated at the headquarters. They are provided with runs and other enrichment activities which visitors can witness. CCF headquarters also feature the longest privately owned runway in Namibia. The two km long, compacted earth airstrip can accommodate small aircraft.

You can take a virtual tour of Cheetah Conversation Fund headquarters in Otjiwarongo with Dr Laurie Marker here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=182&v=cUz0VYR-FfM&feature=emb_logo

There is also an aerial view of the headquarters at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=14&v=Yy-yjqd-ij4&feature=emb_logo

Happy 30th birthday, Cheetah Conservation Fund!

Cheetah Champions



A message from Joshua:

I am 9 years old. In my class at school, we had to do a passion project to raise awareness or solve a problem we saw in the community or the world. I chose to do my project on Cheetahs and how to stop them becoming extinct in the wild. As part of that project I did a stall at the local market selling play dough, scrunchies that I crocheted using old t-shirts for yarn, and some of my artwork. I raised \$120 to help the cheetahs. I also made a powerpoint presentation all about cheetahs and shared it with my class. One day I would like to work with cheetahs in the wild to help them.

Thank you, Joshua, you are our hero!

And a message from Lief:

Dear scientists, Thank you for helping the cheetahs. I would like to send this money over for the cheetahs. I raised the money by painting and drawing pictures and selling them. From Lief Worthing (7 years, Perth, Western Australia) pictured here with her brother, Langlan, who also donated.

Thank you Lief, your passion is contagious!



We would also like to thank our own

Jamie Bonnar, a member of our Board, who has founded his own charity, **KindLife**, with a friend. Consistent monthly donations from **KindLife** really help, not only with our finances, but with our morale in these difficult times.



Finally, as always, our many thanks to our friends at **Goodwill Wine**. Remember to get some cheetah wine to drink during your quarantine. You will be amused by the new labels. But don't forget to pick Cheetah Conservation Fund Australia as your chosen charity!