

# CHEETAH STRIDES

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE CHEETAH CONSERVATION FUND



AFRICAN WILD DOGS

GIRL SCOUTS AT CCF

PATHWAYS NA

ZOO SUPPORT



**Cheetah**  
CONSERVATION FUND  
[www.cheetah.org](http://www.cheetah.org)

HELP US KEEP THE CHEETAH WHERE IT BELONGS

**in the wild.**



# NOTES FROM THE DIRECTOR



So far, 2017 is shaping up to be a landmark year for CCF. Our work is accelerating at a rapid pace around saving land and space for cheetahs. The explosive growth of the human population in Africa -- anticipated to double by the mid-century mark -- will be devastating for all wildlife unless we have programs in place to counteract impacts. We are firing with all engines to meet the needs head on. Our goal is to scale up our programs so we can help even more people use land resources wisely and share them with wildlife.

It's been far busier at our Centre than usual, and this time of the year is always a bit mad here! The biggest news is that we opened our Cheetah View Lodge in June. With five suites booked almost solid since the opening, we've had many more overnight guests than ever before. Zoo and tour groups from the U.S. and Europe, as well as people traveling independently from all over world, have stayed at the beautiful new facility.

By all accounts, Cheetah View is a smash hit.

This June, July and August we welcomed students from universities in Belgium, Canada, UK, Australia, Germany, Italy, Austria and the United States, and an Earth Expeditions group with the Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden and Miami University, Ohio. As always, we've had interns from Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST) and students from Namibia College of Technology & Vocational Training involved with veterinary work, ecology, animal husbandry, tourism and hospitality, and much more. I love having all these inquisitive minds here at CCF. Their energy and enthusiasm is infectious!

This time of the year is also peak season for farmer-predator conflict in Namibia, which primarily involves cheetahs and wild dogs. To remedy, we have had our staff out in the Eastern Communal Areas traversing the Greater Waterberg Landscape, meeting with farmers and mapping out known conflict areas. CCF veterinarian Ishmael and ecologist Richard are in the communities daily helping farmers manage through these situations. Staff at the Centre also spends a lot of time on the radio giving farmers advice.

We've had our hands full with new puppies, both Livestock Guarding Dog puppies and African wild dog puppies (see story on page 3). Two large litters of 11 puppies each are being placed, and two other litters of eight and four puppies are being raised in the goat pen. The Biomass Technology Demonstration Centre continues to evolve, as new pieces of equipment are added and tested. Our conservation genetics lab is bustling and intern Brian Soloman, a visiting scientist from Action for Cheetahs Kenya, is here processing samples in our facility.

**Exciting news!** After two years of work, the 500-page text book co-edited by myself, CCF's Dr. Anne Schmidt-Kuentzel and Lorraine Boast of Cheetah Conservation Botswana, *Cheetah: Biology and Conservation*, will be published by Elsevier. Pre-sale orders are being taken now for a November release. I'll kick-off my 2017 Fall Tour of the U.S. on September 18 by delivering the Pathways Conference Keynote Lecture in Denver, Colorado. Information and tour event tickets are available on our website. I look forward to seeing many of you very soon!

Cheetah purrs,

Dr. Laurie Marker  
Founder & Executive Director

## DR. MARKER'S USA FALL TOUR

**Colorado**  
Pathways Conference  
September 17-20

**All Things Dog & Cheetah**  
September 19

**Washington, DC**  
Open Session Board Meeting  
September 22

**Meeteah Cheetah Brunch**  
September 24

**New York**  
Cocktails for Cheetahs Garden Party  
September 29

**California**  
Mission: Wildlife's 4th Annual Fundraiser  
October 7

**Conservation Speaker Series at the Oakland Zoo**  
October 10

**Safari West Event**  
October 12

**WCN Expo**  
October 14

**Oregon**  
Big Cat. Big Party.  
October 15

**Ohio**  
A Cheetah Connection  
October 20

**Oklahoma**  
Meeteah Cheetah  
October 21

For more info and to see the updated schedule.  
[www.cheetah.org/events/](http://www.cheetah.org/events/)

## YOU ARE INVITED! PATHWAYS AFRICA 2018



Pathways Africa is an international conference and training program designed to address the myriad issues that arise as people and wildlife struggle to coexist sustainably. Colorado State University and Cheetah Conservation Fund are co-hosting the 2018 Pathways Africa Conference and Training in partnership with the Large Carnivore Management Association of Namibia (LCMAN) and the Namibia Nature Foundation (NNF). The event will be held January 9-11, 2018, at the Safari Hotel in Windhoek, Namibia. "Living with Wildlife" is the theme, and all people from around the world are invited to participate.

Following on the success of the first international conference, Pathways Kenya in 2016, the second international event is designed to increase professionalism and effectiveness in the human dimensions of fisheries and wildlife management. The goal is to set the precedent for future research, innovation, and collaboration and extend the application of these disciplines in Sub-Saharan Africa and beyond.

"We are excited to host Pathways Africa in Namibia. So many innovative and interesting wildlife management projects are based on our continent, and Pathways Africa will bring together visionary wildlife managers, leaders in conservation policy, and the students and academics that are forging new frontiers here, so we may learn from each other," said Dr. Laurie Marker, one of Pathway Africa's lead organizers. "We are also hoping that non-professionals who care deeply about wildlife and the fate of our planet will attend, to share their ideas and energy."

Key topics covered the conference will include: The Changing Nature of Wildlife Conservation; Wildlife Trafficking and Demand Reduction; Landscape Connectivity; Human-Wildlife Conflict; Community-based Conservation; Linking Science to Action; Policy and Legislation; and Transboundary Species

Management. Conference sponsors are USAID; USAID East Africa; WWF; Air Namibia; LCMAN; NNF, FNB Bank Namibia, Cincinnati Zoo, Colorado State University Human Dimensions of Natural Resources, and Cheetah Conservation Fund.

Pathways Africa will include a three-day training workshop prior to the conference for early and mid-career field staff. This capacity-building training will provide a unique and valuable opportunity for practitioners to exchange ideas and build their human dimensions skills. Training participants will attend sessions focused on community-based conservation and monitoring, education, human-wildlife conflict mitigation, communication, and more. The training will be immediately followed by the Pathways Africa Conference, where trainees will have the opportunity to present.

Sponsorship opportunities for Pathways Africa are available. Please contact [conference@warnercnr.colostate.edu](mailto:conference@warnercnr.colostate.edu) for more information. To register for the conference, visit <https://sites.warnercnr.colostate.edu/pathways-africa/registration/>.

## WILD ABOUT WILD DOGS

What do you do when the Namibian Ministry of Environment and Tourism (MET) calls to ask if you would help care for a pair of confiscated African wild dog puppies in dire need? And then calls back to ask you to help care for seven more? You open your doors and take them all in, of course.

CCF is currently holding nine African wild dogs at our Field Research & Education Centre in Namibia. The first two were picked up from a very remote area in the Eastern Communal Area of the Greater Waterberg Landscape after a communal farmer killed half a litter of pups and informed MET he would do the same to the rest if someone did not retrieve them.

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*photo top: Cheetah ambassadors at CCF by Suzi Eszterhas.  
bottom photo: Newly formed African wild dog pack is made up of two litters of orphans. Here they meet the ambassador cheetahs through the pen fencing.*



Working with MET, CCF collected the pups, which were about one-month-old at the time. Now at 16 weeks of age (four weeks when they came to CCF), Zebra Legs and White Neck have been joined by seven other orphan pups that we think are now about eight weeks-old.

According to CCF's visiting vet Dr. Kathy Gervais, all the wild dog puppies -- also known as Painted Dogs -- are "very cute and very smart." But the younger pups smell terrible and eat in a total frenzy. Fortunately, their older counterparts are learning to groom themselves and display better manners, so the younger pups' behavior should only be short-term.

"We are not really set up to take care of wild dogs, but we are learning," said Dr. Laurie Marker. "Watching them interact is one of the more fascinating things I have ever seen. We want people to know about them, because they are very special. They are also endangered like the cheetah, and we are tired of all the killing. Our goal is to integrate these wild dogs into the CCF program. We just need to figure out how."



The collaboration between cheetah conservationists and wild dog conservationists is long and extensive, as the two species face similar situations and threats. Like cheetahs, wild dog rangeland is fragmented into isolated pockets scattered in only a few places in Africa, and one of their main threats is human-wildlife conflict. The species is listed as endangered by the IUCN Red List and is a Protected Species in Namibia. They are only found in the northeastern region of the country, near the border with Botswana.

Dr. Marker believes everything CCF has learned

from caring for orphaned cheetahs is now being applied to caring for another predator species in desperate need. The goal is to provide the best opportunity for their future. Currently the pups are being cared for at an exhibit not visible to the public.

"Our intent is for these nine wild dogs to help educate Namibians and international visitors about the species. While we may not be able to release these wild dogs back into the wild, we hope to place them in a large enclosure on CCF lands. We are working very closely with the Namibian government and other NGOs," added Dr. Marker.

## CCF HOSTS GIRL SCOUTS IN NAMIBIA



On July 31, CCF staff welcomed a group of 11 young women from the Girl Scouts of the United States and three Girl Guides from South Africa to its Field Research & Education Centre. The visit was the second half of a two-part, two-nation, immersive conservation learning experience, "Voice of the Cheetah", that began in Washington, D.C. last year. There they spent time and meeting with experts in biology, conservation and politics and touring the Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute, The National Zoo, and CCF USA headquarters. The young women, enrolled in grades 9 through 12, were brought together by a deep interest in learning about cheetah conservation, protection and advocacy.

At CCF Namibia, the group spent three days and three nights taking part in conservation activities, beginning with tours of CCF's Cheetah Museum and Education Centre. CCF staff introduced the group to its conservation initiatives, including the Livestock Guarding Dog Program and Model Farm operations. Staff scientists explained cheetah genetic challenges



at its Applied Biosystems Conservation Genetics Laboratory, and the group also visited CCF's veterinary clinic for a presentation on cheetah health. On their third day, they were treated to a cheetah run, Scat Dog demonstration and safari drives.

"Our cheetah learning experience at CCF was amazing. The staff was so well prepared. They scheduled a highly informative and an action-packed itinerary that kept the young women engaged for all three days at the Centre," said Lesley Robinson, Vice President of Girl Leadership Experience, Girl Scouts of Eastern South Carolina. "We felt incredibly welcome. The hospitality shown to us by CCF staff was second to none."

At CCF, the girls took part in nature hikes, cheetah feeding and exercise activities, and learned how CCF scientists use satellite radio collars, camera traps, and other technology as tools in their ecology research. At the culmination of their visit, the group made Dr. Marker an Honorary Lifetime Member of the Girls Scouts, presenting her with a pin to denote this special status.

"It has been a true pleasure to work with this group of thoughtful and intelligent young learners over the past two years", said Dr. Marker. "This two-nation learning experience was a first-of-its-kind for both the Girl Scouts and myself. Most exciting, among these girls are our next generation of educators, scientists, conservationists and political leaders. They represent the cheetah's best hope for a long-term future."

The Girl Scouts spent 10 days in Namibia, visiting Cape Cross on the Skeleton Coast, the Namib-Naukluft National Park, and Etosha National Park in addition to CCF. The trip was sponsored by the Girl Scouts of Eastern South Carolina.

## ARUNA AND THE CHEETAH LADY: AN INSPIRING COLLABORATION

Aruna Gauba is a very special thirteen-year-old. Like most girls her age, she enjoys playing games (she is a chess standout) and looks forward to attending her new school -- the Khan Lab School in Mountain View, California -- but unlike most others, she will be publishing her second book this fall to help raise money for cheetah conservation. *The Cheetah Lady*, Dr. Laurie Marker is a collaboration between Aruna and

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*photos opposite page: left: African wild dog pups Zebra Legs and White Neck.  
right: Girl Scout group poses with one of CCF's goats.  
Photo this page: New scat detection dog Levi.*

## MEET LEVI, CCF's Newest Scat Dog



Being a scat detection dog is not easy. It's physical labor in an arid landscape with inhospitable climate. CCF's original scat dog, Finn, once again became our main scat dog when the younger Tiger suffered a leg injury last year. But now it looks like Finn will finally be getting some relief. Levi, a male Belgian Malinois/German Shepherd cross-breed trained by CCF's new scat dog trainer, Quentin de Jager, at the Paramount K-9 unit in South Africa to work with anti-poaching teams, received his "transfer orders" and has been reassigned to CCF's scat patrol!

Levi arrived in Namibia in June and has been working with Quentin to learn to detect cheetah scat in playtrees and in random transects on roads. Levi's ability to identify cheetah scat under varying weather conditions and against other predator scat samples, like those of the leopard and jackal, is also being assessed.

Levi was donated to CCF by our German partner, Aktionsgemeinschaft Artenschutz (AGA) e.V. The AGA is active on an international level to promote the protection and conservation of nature, to strengthen environmental awareness and to prevent the destruction of the livelihood of humans, animals and plants. For 30 years, AGA has worked to protect endangered species.

So far, Levi's training has been very successful and he already found his first wild cheetah scat.

Now, both Finn and Levi are being used to find scat samples on farms. These dogs' ability to help identify scat is a very important tool in mitigating conflict between farmers and cheetahs. The scat samples found by Finn & Levi will also be used for most important genetic identification purposes. This is accomplished with CCF's genetics lab, ecology department and scat dog program working in partnership.

**To sponsor a Livestock Guarding Dog visit [www.cheetah.org](http://www.cheetah.org) and click DONATE. You can also choose to sponsor one of CCF's non-releaseable resident cheetahs.**



Dr. Laurie Marker that began when the pair met three years ago when Aruna was just 10 years-old.

Aruna lives in the San Francisco Bay area and along with her mother, Savitha Narayanan, regularly attends the annual Wildlife Conservation Network (WCN) Expo where she is a familiar, energetic presence. In 2015, she approached Dr. Marker with the suggestion of collaborating on a biography.



“I was introduced to Dr. Laurie Marker in a book and read more about her on a CCF website for kids. I met her for the first time at the Expo and was very excited because she has done so much work to preserve my favorite animal, the cheetah. This inspired me to get involved in fundraising,” said Aruna.

*The Cheetah Lady, Dr. Laurie Marker* is the story of how Dr. Marker became a conservationist. The book includes many photos of Dr. Marker from childhood through the present and a timeline of milestone events in her life. The introduction is by Dr. Bruce Brewer, CCF’s General Manager. The book will be released in October at the Wildlife Conservation Expo in San Francisco. Profits from sales will be donated to Cheetah Conservation Fund.

What motivated such a young girl to take on a project like this? According to Aruna, many people around the world have been inspired by this magnificent big cat, but very few have dedicated their lives to help save them from extinction like Dr. Laurie Marker.

## CCF STAFF SPOTLIGHT: MATTI NGHIKEMBUA

Finding qualified employees at a remote nonprofit is a challenge, so having staff cover multiple roles and responsibilities is common. But in an environment where multi-tasking is the norm, Matti Nghikembua manages to distinguish himself as an MVHR – a Most Valuable Human Resource.

Matti’s official title at CCF is Chief Ecologist. He’s

been with CCF since 1997, joining as a university intern in natural resource management, then moving up to research assistant, education officer, and ecologist. Matti speaks four languages - English, Oshivambo, Herero and Afrikaans. He coordinated CCF’s Ecology Department for more than 10 years and is CCF’s Forest Steward. For more than 15 years, he has trained university-level interns and contributed to research projects at CCF as a staff scientist.

This year, his post-graduate studies in cooperation with CCF’s habitat restoration project, CCF Bush, will earn him a PhD in forestry management. The topic: Namibia’s bush encroachment. The problem? Matti will be leaving CCF soon to complete his doctorate at a university in Finland. How CCF will fill the void while he is gone is a challenge, to say the least.

“Matti is a talented teacher, and he sees the bigger picture, no matter what he is called upon to do,” said Dr. Bruce Brewer, CCF’s General Manager and Director of CCF Bush.

In 2006, Matti was named a Conservation Hero by the Disney Conservation Fund for his outstanding commitment to environmental education in Namibia and his contributions to researching cheetahs and their habitats. He also received the 2005 Cheetah Conservation Educator Award in recognition for his contribution to environmental education.

“We are very proud of Matti and are already looking forward to the day he completes his studies and returns to CCF,” said Dr. Marker.



Keep up with the cheetahs by following CCF’s social media.

Find us @CCFCheetah on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, & Pinterest.

*photos this page: top: Dr. Laurie Marker with Aruna Gauba. bottom: Matti Nghikembua Chief Ecologist at CCF is on his way to complete his PhD in Finland!*

*photos opposite page: top to bottom: Columbus Zoo’s cheetah exhibit features CCF’s programs, The Living Desert’s Year of The Cheetah campaign, Dallas Zoological Society’s cheetah exhibit features CCF prominently.*



**CCF's Zoo Supporters | 2016 to 2017**  
*20,000 and above*

- Columbus Zoo and Aquarium
- Dallas Zoological Society
- The Living Desert
- Nashville Zoo
- \$10,000 to \$19,000*
- SeaWorld & Busch Gardens Conservation Fund
- Zoo New England
- Indianapolis Zoological Society
- Safari West Preserve
- \$5,000 to \$9,999*
- Pittsburgh Zoo & PPG Aquarium
- Friends of Baton Rouge Zoo
- Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens
- Virginia Zoological Society
- \$1,000 to \$4,999*
- The Oklahoma Zoo
- Dickerson Park Zoo
- Reid Park Zoo
- Brevard Zoo
- Friends of Kansas City Zoo
- Saint Louis Zoo
- Decatur Park District
- Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo
- Central Florida Zoological Park
- Wildlife World Zoo & Aquarium
- New Mexico BioPark Society
- Little Rock Zoo
- Metro Richmond Zoo
- AAZK Roger Williams Park Chapter
- Bioparc Zoo
- Caldwell Zoo

**International Cheetah Day**

**December 4th**, celebrate International Cheetah Day with your friends, family, and co-workers. Zoos and schools around the world will be hosting cheetah awareness events. If you decide to host your own event, register it at:



[www.internationalcheetahday.org](http://www.internationalcheetahday.org)

In addition to being financial supporters, many zoos have CCF's work and programs featured at their cheetah exhibits. Visit your local zoo and learn about their conservation efforts.

Columbus Zoo and Aquarium



The Living Desert



Dallas Zoological Society





Cheetah Conservation Fund  
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### CCF'S NEWEST ADDITIONS TO THE CHEETAH FAMILY

A chicken coop is a common place where CCF has rescued many orphaned cheetah cubs. Our two newest orphans were about four months-old when they arrived in July at CCF following a circuitous path. CCF received a call from a private landowner in the Otavi region. The local butcher had gotten the cubs from an unknown landowner and took care of them for a few months because he loved cheetahs. After a while he realized that they need lots of food and appropriate housing, and that he was unable to take care of them properly. Upon arrival at CCF, they were suffering from metabolic bone disease, but we reversed it with good medical care. For this reason, they will unfortunately not be able to be released, but will remain at CCF's sanctuary.



**Witness  
Conservation  
in Action**

[www.cheetahecolodge.org](http://www.cheetahecolodge.org)

### A ROOM WITH A CHEETAH VIEW

Tracy and Tom Hayes of Tierra Verde, Florida, enjoy the view from a private patio at the Cheetah View Lodge. *Photo By Bill Weller*



[www.cheetah.org](http://www.cheetah.org)