



CCF is a Namibian non-profit incorporated association dedicated to the long-term survival of the cheetah and its ecosystems.

RESEARCH

CONSERVATION

EDUCATION

cheetah.org



Dr. Laurie Marker is a conservation biologist and research scientist recognized as one of the world's leading experts on the cheetah. As Founder and Executive Director of Cheetah Conservation Fund (CCF), Dr. Marker has pioneered research and developed conservation models and cooperative alliances credited with stabilizing the largest remaining population of wild cheetah. Under her leadership, CCF has grown into a world-class research, education and conservation institution situated near Otjiwarongo, Namibia, on a 100,000-acre private reserve.

DR. LAURIE MARKER

CCF FOUNDER AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Dr. Marker began working with cheetahs at Oregon's Wildlife Safari (1974-1988). While there, she developed one of the most successful captive cheetah breeding programs in the world and initiated a groundbreaking research project that brought her to Namibia for the first time in 1977. She hypothesized that a captive-born cub could be taught to hunt, and she tested this theory with Khayam, a young cheetah she had raised from birth. Dr. Marker successfully taught Khayam to hunt, but more importantly, she discovered livestock farmers in Namibia were killing hundreds of cheetahs each year because they viewed them as threats to their livestock and livelihoods. This prompted her to undertake the first of its kind *in situ* research into cheetah ecology, biology, demographics, genetics and home range. Using the findings of her research, she began developing conservation strategies to mitigate the conflict.

Already a species in peril due to habitat loss and lack of genetic diversity, the actions of Namibia's livestock farmers were driving the cheetah even closer toward extinction and at an accelerated pace. As the Executive Director of the New Opportunities in Animal Health Sciences (NOAHS) Center at the Smithsonian's National Zoo (1988-1991), Dr. Marker searched for an organization or an individual to champion the cheetah from her post in Washington, DC. She traveled back and forth to Namibia for the next 13 years, gathering data and networking with conservation biologists and researchers studying predators, and writing letters.

After an exhaustive but fruitless search, Dr. Marker decided to take on the role herself and dedicate her life to the long-term sustainability of the cheetah. Dr. Marker established the Cheetah Conservation Fund in 1990, and a year later, she permanently relocated to Namibia, establishing a research base in a borrowed farmhouse outside Otjiwarongo. For the first few years, she drove door-to-door in an old Land Rover and surveyed local farmers. These early interactions inspired Dr. Marker to develop the highly effective, non-lethal predator control methods that CCF employs today. Her innovative strategies that balance the needs of people and wildlife sharing land have not only stabilized the cheetah population in Namibia, but have also helped mitigate human-wildlife conflict with large carnivore species in many regions around the globe.

Initially rebuffed by Namibians fearing change, Dr. Marker's rigorous scientific research and holistic conservation programs that consider all stakeholders have gained her the respect of an entire nation. The vital information she has assembled on cheetah health, reproduction, ecology and genetics has proven invaluable in the management of both wild and captive cheetah populations around the world.

Dr. Marker earned her DPhil in Zoology from the University of Oxford in the UK. She has published more than 120 scientific papers in peer-reviewed journals. She is a Steering Committee member for the Natural Resource Department of Namibia University of Science and Technology and an Adjunct Professor at the University of Omaha and Purdue University. In 2013, Dr. Marker was named an A. D. White Professor-at-Large at Cornell University, where she spends one week as a guest lecturer-in-residence every other year.

In 2015, Dr. Marker was recognized with an Eleanor Roosevelt Val-Kill Medal Award, an E.O. Wilson Biodiversity Technology

Pioneer Award, and the Ulysses S. Seal Award for Innovation in Conservation. Dr. Marker has been awarded the Tyler Prize for Environmental Achievement (2010), The Tech Museum of Innovation's Intel Environmental Prize (2008), and is a two-time finalist for the prestigious Indianapolis Prize. She was named a Hero for the Planet by TIME Magazine and has been featured in the page of *Smithsonian*, *National Geographic*, *Discover* and *The New York Times*, and appeared on numerous television shows, including *The Tonight Show*, *Good Morning America*, *The Charlie Rose Show* and *Today*.

Dr. Marker is the author of *A Future for Cheetahs*, a book detailing the plight of the species and the efforts to save them (with photos by wildlife photographer Suzi Eszterhas) and *Chew-baaka*, an illustrated children's book about CCF's most famous cheetah ambassador. She is the head co-editor of *CHEETAHS: Biology and Conservation*, a comprehensive textbook weaving together the work 150 conservationists and researchers fighting to save Africa's most endangered big cat and the co-author of numerous chapters.

AWARDS

2015 Ulysses S. Seal Award for Innovation in Conservation
 2015 E.O. Wilson Biodiversity Technology Pioneer Award
 2015 Eleanor Roosevelt Val-Kill Medal Award
 2013 International Conservation Caucus Foundation Good Steward Award
 2013 Andrew D. White Professor-at-Large, Cornell University
 2013 Distinguished Alumni, Eastern Oregon State University
 2011 Rainer Arnhold Fellow
 2010 The Explorers Club Lowell Thomas Award
 2010 Indianapolis Prize Finalist
 2010 Tyler Prize for the Environmental Achievement Laureate
 2009 BBC World Challenge Finalist
 2009 St Andrews Prize for the Environment Finalist
 2009 International Wildlife Film Festival Lifetime Achievement Award
 2008 Tech Museum Intel Environmental Award
 2008 San Diego Zoo Lifetime Achievement Conservation Award
 2008 Society of Women Geographers' Gold Medal

2008 Indianapolis Prize Finalist
 2005 Living Desert Tracks in the Sand - Conservationist of the Year
 2003 Chevron-Texaco Conservationist of the Year
 2002 Audi Terra Nova Awards Finalist, Southern Africa
 2001 Humanitarian of the Year, Marin County Humane Society
 2001 Paul Harris Fellowship, Rotary Club International, Windhoek, Namibia
 2000 Burrows Conservation Award, Cincinnati Zoo
 2000 Hero for the Planet, Time Magazine
 1997 Distinguished Leadership Award, American Biographical Institute
 1992 Conservationist of the Year, African Safari Club, Washington, DC
 1988 White Rose Award, Oregon's Top Ten Women
 1985 Outstanding Young Women of America
 1981 Oregon's Young Careerist, Business and Professional Women, Southern Oregon Division



Dr. Laurie Marker speaking at an event in Somaliland



Dr. Laurie Marker caring for orphaned cheetahs confiscated from the illegal pet trade in Somaliland