

# CHEETAH STRIDES

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The newsletter of the Cheetah Conservation Fund

SUPERMOM

MORE PUPPIES

BEES

FALL TOUR

EDUCATION

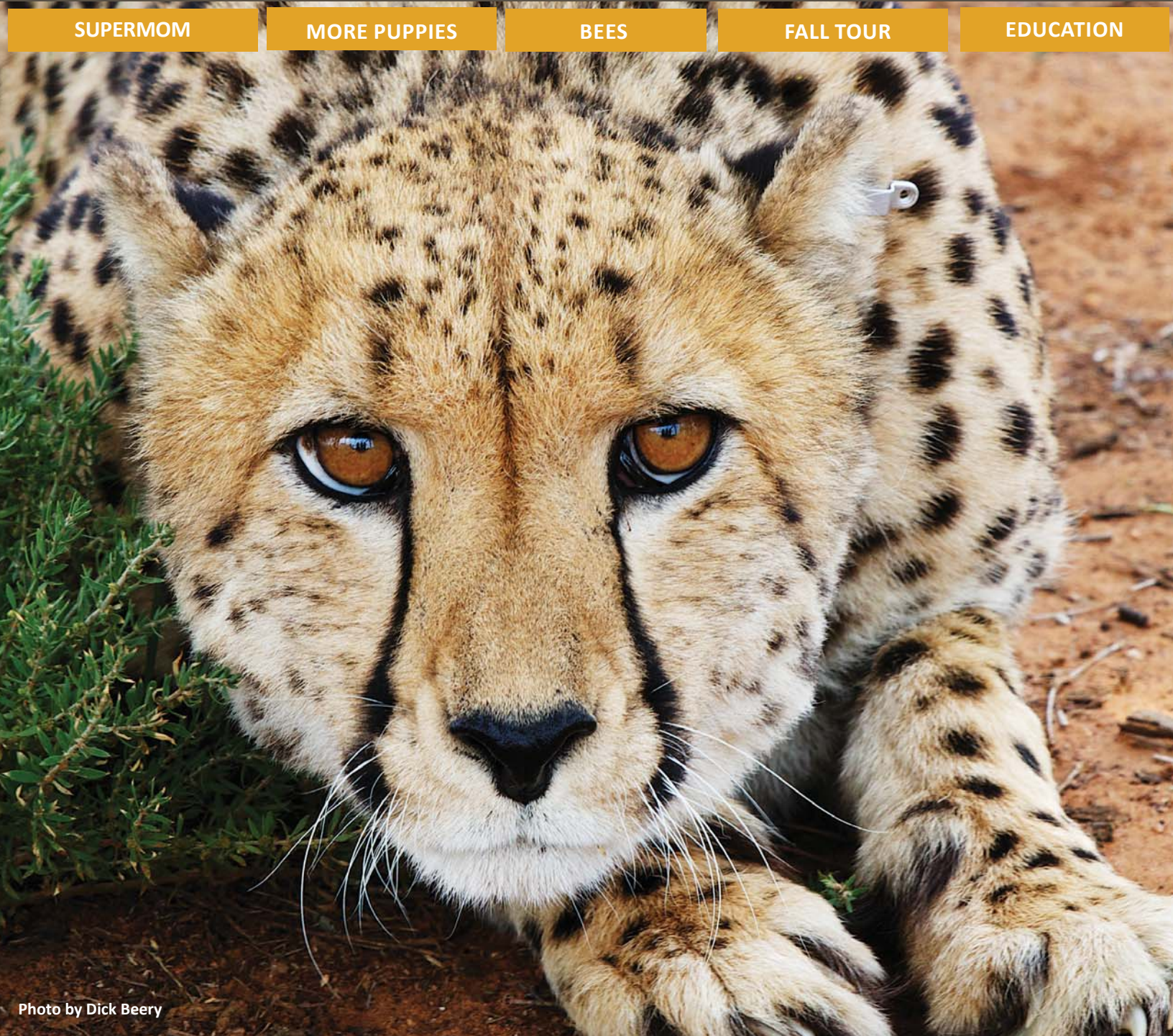


Photo by Dick Beery



Help us keep the cheetah where it belongs: **In the wild.**

## PARTNER WITH US

It seems I've had partnership on my mind a lot lately. We've initiated a relationship with a startup company that produces artwork and t-shirts. As the result of a partnership that began many years ago, Bushblok and our goat milk products are now Certified Wildlife Friendly™. Everywhere I turn, I see that when you create alliances, you can achieve extraordinary things.

Our work to save the cheetah seeks to partner with the farmers of Namibia, helping them to secure their own livelihoods, and by so doing, secure a future for the cheetah as well. I've found that when you approach people as their partner, you can very frequently find common ground and reach your goals.

My trip to the UAE with my Assistant Directors, Anne Schmdit-Küntzel and Patricia Tricorache, was an example of our constant effort to connect with people and build partnerships. One of the highlights was meeting His Excellency Sheikh Butti Bin Maktoum Bin Juma Al Maktoum (photo, below), a prominent Emirati who is passionate about wildlife and graciously allowed us to visit his Wildlife Centre. Just last month at CCF we welcomed Alan Stephenson, who manages Sheikh Butti's Wildlife Centre. His visit was short, but we welcomed the opportunity to continue a dialogue that started in Dubai nearly two months earlier. With the partnerships we are building, we hope to organize a conference and



workshop in the UAE soon.

At our International Field Research and Education Centre, I am surrounded by a dedicated staff of individuals from Namibia and around the world, all of whom impress me daily with their commitment to excellence and to saving the cheetah. When I travel abroad, I discover that there are literally thousands of supporters who are also committed to saving the cheetah. You, as a supporter of CCF, are just as much a partner in our work as anyone else. None of the great things we do would be possible without you.

As I leave Namibia for my Fall Tour, I invite you once again to partner with CCF to help the cheetah win its race against extinction. Join us at our events. Bring your friends with you so I can meet them! Share our emails and our social media content and spread the word about our work. Most importantly, please partner with us by giving generously to CCF using the enclosed envelope or go online to [cheetah.org](http://cheetah.org) and make your donation today.

Thanks for being my partner in the race to save the cheetah. I hope to see you on my tour!

For cheetahs everywhere,

Dr. Laurie Marker  
Founder and Executive Director

### SEE DR. LAURIE MARKER ON TOUR!

Dr. Laurie Marker will be touring North America September 18 to October 26. Her attendance at events in the cities listed below is confirmed. Details on these and other events are available on the CCF calendar at [www.cheetah.org](http://www.cheetah.org). Please join us!

Monterey, CA	September 22
LaGrande, OR	October 5
Portland, OR	October 6
Santa Rosa, CA	October 9
Mission Bay, CA	October 11
Columbus, OH	October 12
Toronto, ON (Canada)	October 15
Oklahoma City, OK	October 17
Chicago, IL	October 19
Washington, DC	October 24

## SUPERMOM: THE STORY OF AN AMAZING WILD CHEETAH



*When CCF releases cheetahs back into the wild, we often use VHF or GPS collars to keep track of their activity and monitor their progress*

Every time a cheetah dies it's a sad day for all of us at CCF, and for the entire species. But NamibRand Wild Female AJU 1576 (AJU is short for *Acinonyx jubatus*), was special. We generally don't name wild cheetahs, but this amazing cheetah has been a "Supermom."

She first came to CCF at the end of 2008 with three nearly-grown, 18 month old cubs--two males and one female. In January 2009, the family was released at the NamibRand Nature Reserve (NRNR) in southern Namibia. CCF had released five formerly captive, wild-caught males there the previous month, and two wild female cheetahs a few months later, all part of a reintroduction program with the Ministry of Environment.

By March 2009, "Supermom's" cubs were grown and she was on her own. Based on satellite collar data and a few visual sightings, we knew she was in the same vicinity as the NamibRand males. Data collected in June showed she was maintaining a very small home range, an indication that she had settled into a den and possibly produced cubs. In December, she was spotted with a cub most likely sired by one of CCF's five males.

Most collars last only a couple of years, but for over four years, "Supermom's" collar provided us with valuable data about her movements. She demonstrated to us over and over that cheetahs are not necessarily a 'problem

animal.' She fed on wild game, and left livestock alone. Per CCF procedure, as she moved, a liaison kept local farmers fully informed about her movements, so that any concerns that they had could be quickly addressed.

The reintroduction of cheetahs to this area was beneficial for other species as well. The number of vultures (most species of which are also endangered) increased within a year, as the scavenger population benefited from the cheetahs' hunting. The eco-system was getting healthier, much to the delight of NRNR visitors.

On June 7th, we got the type of phone call that we dread -- a farmer in the NRNR informing Dr. Marker that "Supermom" had been shot by his workers. She had three cubs, who had also been shot. The farmer understood the magnitude of this loss for CCF's research. He brought the body to Windhoek, where we picked it up and performed a necropsy in CCF's lab.

We estimate that the NamibRand female was about 10 years old, which is an average life expectancy for a cheetah living in the wild. And yet, she was in prime condition. She was raising her third litter in the NRNR, showing more tenacity than even her GPS collar. That collar taught us much about cheetah movements, ranges, and behavior. We mourn her loss, but remember her as a success story. Thanks, Supermom.



*A recent release of a wild male -- over the years CCF has collected data from hundreds of wild cheetahs, and is a leader in research on the potential for rewilding captive cheetahs.*

## PUPPIES MORE THAN EVER!

Meeting our goal to place more Livestock Guarding Dogs with farmers, this year has been a banner year for puppies. During the first six months of 2013, CCF dogs Hediye, Cappucino, Penda and Kiri have each produced litters, producing a total of 35 healthy puppies! A fifth dog, Aleya, just gave birth in mid-August to six more puppies. Most of the puppies that are born at CCF are placed with farmers' livestock, where they will become fierce protectors of their herds. The great success of our breeding program this year is particularly fortunate – word about how effective the dogs are at reducing predation rates has spread, and our waiting list of farmers who want a CCF dog is now at almost two years long!

Farmers who are lucky enough to obtain a CCF dog pay only a nominal fee for the dog, to promote a full sense of ownership, and must attend a day-long training course to teach them how to successfully train and deploy the



*A Namibian farmer with his Livestock Guarding Dog on "Puppy Day" -- when puppies are placed with their new homes.*

dog to bond and work with the herd. CCF provides vaccinations and other medical care for the dog, including follow up visits to assure that the placement has turned out well for both the farmer and the dog. We're on track for a record year for this program, which means greater security not only for farmers and their livelihoods, but for cheetahs as well.

## DNA ON A SHIRT

This summer, CCF teamed up with Phoenix-based genetic art company DNA on a Shirt (DOAS) to create art pieces and t-shirts featuring a graphic representation of the cheetah's DNA. The genetic art pieces spotlight the cheetah's unique genetic profile, its race against extinction, and its connection to man and to other cats.

The art pieces will be sold through the DNA on a SHIRT website with a portion of the proceeds going to CCF. DOAS has also launched an indiego campaign to finance its visit to CCF in Namibia to collect the DNA samples that the artwork will be derived from.



*The graphic featured on the front of the special edition shirt available as part of DOAS's Indiego campaign.*

The cheetah will be the first big cat featured by DOAS for their big cat conservation series. Dr. Laurie Marker says, "It was really important to us to partner with a company that would do more than just use our logo. We wanted to work with someone who would tell the cheetah's story. For us this isn't just a licensing deal – it's outreach."

The shirts will display the DNA fingerprint of the cheetah along with a silhouetted image of the big cat on the front. The back of the shirt features a narrative panel highlights the status of the species in the wild. Look for your chance to buy a cheetah shirt or wall panel soon!

## SAVING THE CHEETAH . . . WITH BEES?

CCF's integrated programs often focus on helping farmers because farmers that are more secure in their living are more likely to view wildlife conservation favorably, giving species like the cheetah a better chance at survival.

That's why CCF joined a program by the Namibian Directorate of Forestry (DoF) to help farmers set up beehives. CCF began an apiary, using a beehive in a tire removed from a nearby farmer's garage. CCF's new bees are now settling in peacefully, and other swarms have been added.



*CCF's first beehive as part of its new apiary, makes use of an old tire.*

In addition to delivering the beehive in late June, the DoF trained staff in beekeeping. Protective suits with veils, gloves and boots, bee brushes, hive materials and tools, and a smoker (enough for 3 beehives total) were purchased with support from donors, volunteers, and assistance from the DoF. CCF apiary team leader and long-term volunteer, Jenna Brager, also provided funding and shared her personal expertise with DoF.

Bees at CCF will pollinate the crops in our garden and increase food production. CCF intends to build up the apiary to educate visitors and local farmers on sustainability, produce honey for food and added income. Along with CCF's Model Farm and Dancing Goat Creamery, the apiary will demonstrate predator-friendly farming techniques that diversify income and add value to the landscape.

CCF's Dancing Goat Creamery products and Bushblok were recently approved by the Certified Wildlife Friendly organization. This, along with our recent renewal of our Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)<sup>™</sup> certification (indicating that CCF's woodland management practices as sustainable), demonstrate CCF's commitment to promoting sustainable land use.

### KIDS IN THE SPOTLIGHT: 4TH GRADERS OF MASON, OH



After reading about CCF in *Time for Kids*, the 4th graders in Laura Franz's class at Mason Intermediate School of Mason City, Ohio wanted to make a difference for the cheetah. They took on a writing project -- writing letters to Namibian farmers to save the cheetah. One of our staff had the privilege of talking to the students on the phone to thank them (made our day!) Thanks to Laura Franz's 4th graders! You guys are terrific!

## CELEBRATE WITH CCF THIS SEASON



*The table is set for gala season this fall! Here are the beautiful table settings featured in our Windhoek Gala in July. The invitation was designed by Namibian artist, Susan Mitchinson.*

On July 12th, CCF held its 15th Annual Fundraising Dinner in Windhoek, Namibia. This year, we honored US Ambassador Wanda Nesbitt and her husband, Mr. Jim Stejskal as the 2013 Cheetah Conservationists of the Year. FNB Namibia was awarded the 2013 Cheetah Conservation Business of the Year. Andreas Hishiko, a commercial cattle, sheep and goat farmer, received the 2013 Cheetah Conservation Farmer of the Year Award. CCF also recognized two key staff members: Matti Nghikembua, Senior Ecologist, and Dr. Bruce Brewer, General Manager of CCF and CCF Bush Pty Ltd, for their 15 years of service on behalf of the wild cheetah. We also listened to the words of Mr. Valli Moosa, Chairman of the World Wildlife Fund South Africa, and The Hon. Alpheus !Naruseb, Minister of Lands and Resettlement, our keynote speaker for the evening representing Namibia's President Hifikepunye Pohamba. The Windhoek Gala is always a highlight of our year.

During September and October, supporters of CCF in North America will have their own CCF celebrations as Dr. Laurie Marker does her fundraising tour and "gala season" commences. On Saturday, October 6, CCF's Oregon Chapter will once again host their Big Cat, Big Party Gala, which will include an appearance by Wildlife Safari's ambassador cheetah, Khayam, and a

live auction. On October 19 the party moves to Chicago, Illinois, where CCF supporters will host Chicago's Gala, which will feature an online auction and event with an ambassador cheetah at the law offices of Foley & Lardner, overlooking the Chicago River. The following week, CCF is again hosted at Foley & Lardner at their offices in Washington, DC for the DC Chapter's gala, featuring an ambassador cheetah from the Columbus Zoo, along with a silent auction and the ever-popular "cheetah wall."

North American CCF supporters will have an additional reason to get out and see CCF at a location near them because in addition to Dr. Marker's fundraising tour, CCF's Senior Ecologist and Education Officer, Matti Nghikembua, will also be doing a short tour of the United States, where he will be visiting



*CCF Trustee Jeff Corwin, Dr. Laurie Marker, Columbus Zoo ambassador cheetah Jacob and his two handlers at the 2012 DC Gala*

Denver, Palo Alto, San Diego, Phoenix and Cincinnati. We are excited to have so many opportunities to meet and celebrate with our supporters. Look at CCF's website and Facebook page for information on our events in North America this fall.

## THE NEXT GENERATION: EDUCATION AT CCF

Education, raising awareness about the plight of the cheetah and how people can make a difference in the race against extinction, is a critical component of CCF's work in Namibia and around the world. CCF is very proud to share that Gebhardt ("Geba") Nikanor, CCF's Education Officer, was just named one of the 2013 Disney Conservation Heroes by the Disney Worldwide Conservation Fund.

Geba has been an educator at CCF for over 12 years, visiting schools all over Namibia teaching 5th through 7th grade learners. Each year, CCF's education program highlights topics including predator identification, ecological and physiological characteristics of the cheetah, and problems associated with human/cheetah conflict. These programs help raise awareness about the importance of saving wildlife as well as cheetahs.

Because CCF has visited many schools more than once over the years, Geba and other educators have developed relationships that allow for ongoing education opportunities.

Geba is not the only CCF staffer to receive this prestigious award. Matti Nghikembua, CCF's Senior Ecologist and Education Officer, received the award in 2006.

"The cheetah is an iconic animal that provides a great opportunity to begin a discussion about larger issues affecting the whole ecosystem, and the whole planet", says CCF Founder and Executive Director, Laurie Marker. "We're proud that both Geba and Matti have been recognized as Disney Conservation Heroes."

CCF's commitment to education, however, is not confined to a classroom. CCF regularly hosts school learners at its overnight facility, Camp Lightfoot, and receives thousands of visitors every year, many of them including school groups from Namibia and



*A group from National Geographic Student Expeditions learns about our scat-detecting dogs at CCF in Namibia.*

abroad. In July and August, CCF hosted two National Geographic Student Expeditions groups, who were touring Namibia on a special itinerary created to celebrate National Geographic's 125th anniversary.

Thirty seven youths between the ages of 16 and 18 studied with CCF field researchers, learning cheetah husbandry, veterinary care, ecological research and integrated predator-livestock management techniques. Participants shadowed CCF's experts in tasks including feeding CCF's resident cheetahs, looking after livestock and

Livestock Guarding Dogs, and using

scat-detection dogs to collect cheetah feces for genetic analysis.


In December, CCF's education efforts go global, with our International Cheetah Day celebration. This year, in addition to the popular social media event, the "Virtual Cheetah Party," CCF will be offering educational materials for use by classrooms and zoo education programs from the CCF website. "The goal is to share with as many people as we can what we know about the threats to the cheetah's survival, and what people can do to help," says Dr. Marker.



*CCF's Education Officer, Gebhardt Nikanor, has been named one of the 2013 Disney Conservation Heroes, one of only 13 awardees.*

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*The race is on to save the cheetah.  
Help us win it.*  
[www.cheetah.org](http://www.cheetah.org)

