

CHEETAH STRIDES

ISSUE
NO 9
1 Q 2015

The newsletter of the Cheetah Conservation Fund

25TH ANNIVERSARY

KHAYJAY & SMART MAN

RE-WILDING ZINZI

SPRING TOUR



Photo by Bobby Bradley



Help us keep the cheetah where it belongs:

In the wild.

NOTES FROM THE DIRECTOR



This year, 2015, marks CCF's 25th anniversary. Our theme for this milestone occasion is Changing the World to Save the Cheetah, which encapsulates our vision and mission. This year will be a year of reflection and sharing our past successes, which have led the way for the work ahead of us. I often recall the early years, driving hundreds of kilometers on bumpy dirt roads to meet with farmers in my first Land Rover, a vehicle held together with a bit of luck. With limited funds I saved from the sale of all my worldly possessions in the U.S, I set up CCF in borrowed farmhouses with no electricity. With your support, CCF has grown into a world-class International Research and Education Centre, model farm, wildlife reserve and a pan-African Institution of learning that we term the Farmland Ecological Centre.

Our education programs, often held under a tree, have reached more than 350,000 learners, farmers and international conservation scientists over these past 25 years. We have developed the techniques and know-how to show others that humans and cheetahs can live in harmony if habitat, wildlife and livestock are all managed properly.

Since I founded the organization in 1990, CCF has rescued more than 900 cheetahs, most of them caught by farmers in capture cages. We collect vital samples – blood, tissue, and sperm (from males) – and analyze them and 'bank' them for the future. We have developed a huge biological and ecological database that is used by CCF and other scientists around the world to study the species. Today, fortunately, cheetahs are being caught less and less by farmers, as they have been taught integrated livestock and wildlife management and have learned to live with cheetahs on their lands. We still get a few orphans that we provide for in our Sanctuary. Currently, we have 36, one of the lowest resident cheetah counts in years, but it still takes a lot of our time to properly care for them.

By the time you read this newsletter, I will have just completed my annual lecture tour through Europe and will be getting ready for my spring tour in the U.S., where I hope to see as many of cheetah friends as possible during my travels. I always welcome visitors to CCF so you can inform other people in your circle about the cheetah's plight and our mission to secure the future. Please consider volunteering or interning, or coming on a Namibian safari with a stay at CCF's Babson Guest House. By doing so, you will be playing an active role in conserving the cheetah and have a wonderful time doing so.

Even if you cannot visit in person, please get involved in other ways to help us change the world to save the cheetah! Visit our web site, www.cheetah.org, to find out how you can help. The cheetah is a very special species, one that deserves a permanent place on Earth.

To our new cheetah friends, welcome. To our longtime cheetah supporters -- Happy Anniversary! We could not have made it to 25 without you.

With much gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Laurie Marker".

Dr. Laurie Marker
Founder and Executive Director

Gearing up for the Gala:

CCF's 25th Anniversary Gala will be held July 17 in Windhoek. The theme for the evening is Changing the World to Save the Cheetah. Following the Gala, CCF will host a strategic planning session with CCF global board and trustees from July 18 - 20. Special travel packages are available for those who would like to attend.

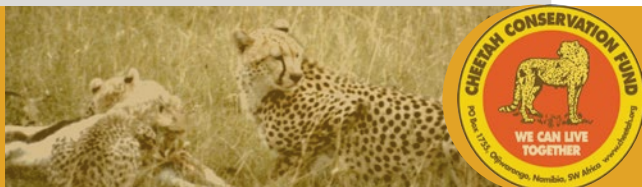
Dr. Laurie Marker founds CCF in U.S. to raise money for cheetah conservation. Namibia obtains independence and forms new government.

Dr. Marker relocates to Namibia, establishes CCF's field headquarters near Otjiwarongo, and begins collecting data on wild cheetah.

1990



1991



CCF RESEARCH UPDATE



Two research papers co-authored by CCF staff were published in the past few months, one on the topic of nutrition involving captive cheetahs and the other on the use of swing gates. “The Role of Copper and Vitamin A Deficiencies Leading to Neurological Signs in Captive Cheetahs and Lions in the United Arab Emirates” was published in *Food and Nutrition Sciences* in October. The study was conducted by the Central Veterinary Research Laboratory (CVRL) in Dubai, UAE; with collaboration from CCF; Institute of Animal Nutrition, Vetsuisse Faculty Zurich; and Centre for Applied Biotechnology and Molecular Medicine, University of Zurich.

“Many Emirates view cheetahs and other large felids as status symbols, but are often unfamiliar with the animal’s proper care or diet. Big cats need the vitamins, minerals and trace elements found in bones, viscera, fur and feathers to remain healthy,” explains Dr. Marker. “Unfortunately, this study found that many cheetahs kept as pets are not fed appropriate diet or appropriate supplements to balance their diet. As a result, they experience debilitating health problems, and many die prematurely.”

“Environmental Factors Affect Swing Gates as a Barrier to Large Carnivores Entering Game Farms” was published in December in *African Journal of Ecology*. Researchers from CCF; the Durrell Institute of Conservation and Ecology, University of Kent,

Canterbury, UK; and Van Hall Larenstein, University of Applied Science, Leeuwarden, The Netherlands contributed to this study.

CCF has demonstrated that swing gates in fence lines are a reliable and cost-effective, non-lethal predator control technique for livestock and game farmers. Swing gates are similar in concept to a residential pet door. They enable burrowing animals such as warthog, cape porcupine and armadillo to enter farms through a hinged flap in the fence line. Swing gates eliminate the burrowing species’ need to dig under the fence, opening passages that can potentially allow valuable animals to escape and large carnivores such as cheetahs and leopards



to enter. CCF has advocated to game farmers over the past few years that swing gates are a less expensive alternative to electrified fencing, and the newly published research suggests where the gates are located are critical to their success.

“Game ranchers are responsible for more cheetah removals than livestock farmers in Namibia, so it is important for us to look at how the concept of swing gates can be optimized for commercial game farm operations,” said Dr. Marker.

*top photo two cubs share a meal at CCF Headquarters in Namibia
bottom photo warthog uses a swing gate. photo captured using a camera trap*

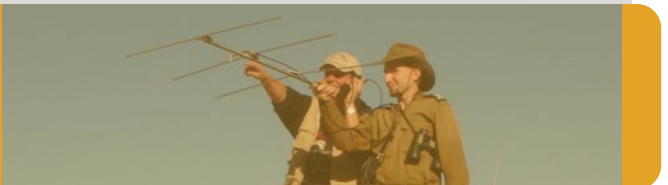
CCF becomes a Namibian non-profit. Dr. Marker surveys farmers in Omitara, Hochfled and Okahandja areas and encourages them to form conservancies.

CCF launches educational program for Namibian schools and publishes first CCF Teacher’s Guide. Dr. Marker begins radio-collared telemetry home range research and relocates three male cheetahs to Zambia.

1992



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CHEETAH SIGHTING:



THE ELUSIVE ZINZI

Zinzi is an orphan female cheetah that was rehabilitated and released in CCF's Bellebenno training camp in mid-June of 2014. Since then, she had not been seen and was leaving little sign of what she was hunting. Recently however, the situation has changed, and we are happy to report it is for the better!

After months of unsuccessfully attempting to see Zinzi during tracking her movements, this elusive cheetah finally made herself viewable to CCF's ground team. According to Ryan Sucaet, CCF Cheetah Keeper and Researcher, Zinzi allowed the team to see her three times during January. Ryan reported, "On January 26, Zinzi was less than 100 meters from the Kudu Gate and less than 50 meters from the road and reserve fence line. She charged me. She had a massive belly. She eventually showed me her kill – a big female duiker! She continued feeding on it in front of me."

These sightings allow the staff to monitor her health, making sure she is doing OK. Our satellite data shows Zinzi spending the majority of her time on CCF property, hunting wild game and staying away from farmers' livestock, which a healthy wild cheetah avoids. The CCF ground team will continue monitoring Zinzi, often finding her in the CCF's little Serengeti - Big Field area of the reserve, as this is a preferred hunting location for her.

HOUSE CALLS:

DOCTORS VISIT CCF FOR KHAYJAY AND N'DUNGE (AKA SMART MAN)

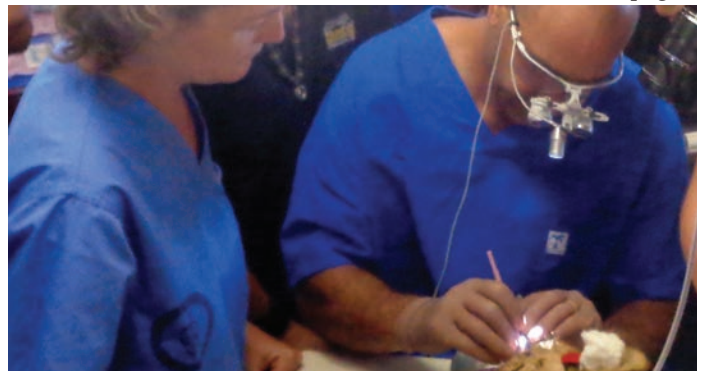
One of the advantages cheetahs living at CCF's Sanctuary have over their wild counterparts is access to good healthcare. In the cases of Khayjay and N'Dunge, this involved being treated by some of the top specialists in Namibia. Interestingly, these two doctors' areas of expertise did not encompass veterinary medicine.

Khayjay, a four-and-a-half-year-old male and one of our Okakarara Ambassador cheetahs, had been experiencing a chronic, debilitating eye problem. "Khayjay's left eye was creating excessive amounts of discharge, causing him discomfort and interfering with his vision," said CCF staff veterinarian Dr. Mari-Ann Da Silva. "When Khayjay was not responding to our initial treatment protocol, we decided to examine him thoroughly under anesthesia."

Dr. Da Silva then consulted with Dr. Léart Petrick, a human eye specialist based in Windhoek, who agreed that surgery was the best option. Khayjay's procedure was performed at CCF on January 6, with Dr. Petrick bringing his own ophthalmology surgical tools. While Dr. Petrick occasionally makes his services available to assist veterinarians with domestic animals in Windhoek, Khayjay's surgery marked the first time he had ever operated on a cheetah.

"Khayjay's problem is the result of long-term inflammation, and the procedure I performed

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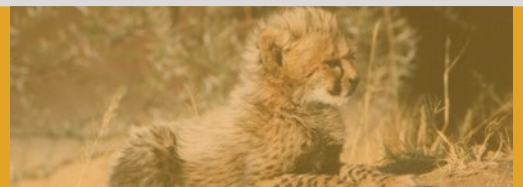
Dr. Marker initiates cheetah reproductive, genetic and gastritis studies with Smithsonian Institution and National Cancer Institute researchers. CCF launches Livestock Guarding Dog Program with 10 puppies from the U.S. and holds first cheetah workshop for Namibian vets.

Chewbaaka, CCF's first Ambassador Cheetah, arrives as a 10-day-old orphan. First of the livestock guarding dogs bred at CCF are placed with local farmers.

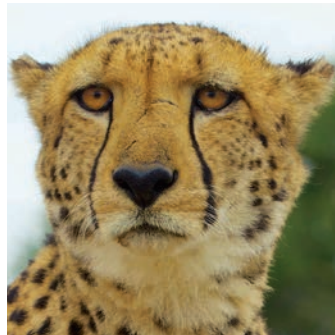
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(suturing the third eyelid closed) was fairly simple," said Dr. Petrick. "Khayjay seemed to respond well, and I anticipate he will regain full use of his eye."



left photo KhayJay taken by Peter Scheufler
right photo N'Dunge aka Smart Man

Dr. Da Silva reports that Khayjay's sutures have completely dissolved and his eye appears to be back to normal. "We have not seen any discharge and hope his eye continues to stay this way," she said.

Also in January, another of our cheetahs, N'Dunge (which translates to "smart" in Otjivambo, earning him the nickname Smart Man), broke one of his canines and needed a root canal. Dr. Jan Tiesinga, Otjiwarongo's new dentist who works with Dr. Dennis Profit, CCF's longtime dentist, volunteered to perform this procedure. Upon closer inspection, Dr. Tiesinga determined that all four of Smart Man's canines needed work.

Dr. Tiesinga cleaned and filled the root canals with a substance that does not allow bacteria to grow inside the canal. The teeth have the same appearance as before, except for a small white dot in the middle where the root canal is located. Smart Man's ability to eat was not affected.

"The procedure went very smoothly and Smart Man was quickly reunited with his coalition mates, and appeared comfortable with his repaired teeth," said Dr. Da Silva. "The day after his surgery, Smart Man was very friendly and seeking attention, which we interpret as being due to pain relief."

Thank you to Dr. Petrick and Dr. Tiesinga for your time and expertise, we (and Khayjay and Smart Man) greatly appreciate it!

CCF publishes *Cheetah Survival on Namibian Farmlands*. First group of Earthwatch volunteers visit. Dr. Marker is named Vice-Chair of IUCN's Cat Specialist Group.



1996

STAFF PROFILE:



Meet our new Vet Nurse - Grace Warner!

We are exceptionally pleased to announce Grace Warner as the latest addition to our staff. Hailing from Cape Town, South Africa, Grace joined the team at the clinic in January as a recent graduate of the Onderstepoort Veterinary Faculty of the University of Pretoria, where she studied veterinary nursing for the past two years. Grace has always had a deep love for animals and nature in general, with a particular passion for horses.

"I've always had a passion for both animal rehabilitation and conservation, and so when I learned about CCF, I knew working here would enable me to combine my two passions, as well as providing the opportunity to learn so much more in both the medical and conservation fields than I would learn at an ordinary veterinary practice," said Grace.

Grace tells us the favorite parts of her new jobs are interacting with the dogs, the goats and the cheetahs, which affords her a lot of "hands on" time with animals outdoors, and getting to know the other people who work at CCF. "There is such a feel of family and 'team spirit' here that you don't find in many other places, which is a totally awesome thing to be a part of," said Grace. "This is my first official job, and I definitely consider myself lucky!"

To sponsor a Livestock Guarding Dog visit www.cheetah.org and view 'Sponsor a Dog' under 'Donate'.

Dr. Marker presents Namibian President Sam Nujoma with a livestock guarding dog. CCF's Resource Centre opens its doors.



1997

CCF'S OUTREACH EXTENDS ACROSS THE OCEAN

The CCF education department has extended its reach across the ocean by beginning skype chats with fifth-graders at Cape Henry Collegiate in Virginia Beach, Virginia who are studying various themes connected to Africa, including conservation. During these chats, different members of CCF's staff talk to the students about their roles at Cheetah Conservation Fund and how their work supports Namibia's overall conservation efforts.

CCF'S education department has also linked local sixth-grade students from Otjiwarongo's Edugate Academy with the fifth-grade class at Cape Henry Collegiate for regular correspondence, to enhance the curriculum at both schools. In February, CCF educators visited Edugate Academy for an educational outreach program and recorded a video

message about CCF's conservation programs to send to the students at Cape Henry.

Later this summer, secondary students from Cape Henry Collegiate will be visiting CCF for a week as part of the Global Education Benchmark Group. The secondary students will learn about cheetah conservation, husbandry and livestock guarding dogs and the smallstock they protect. They will also have the opportunity to assist with various ecology and genetics-related projects.

"Namibian educators are very excited and eager to be branching out to other parts of the world and getting their students involved with global conservation efforts," said Stephanie Bradley, CCF's Education and Outreach Director. "We look forward to providing updates as the program progresses."



RE-OPENING OUR VISITOR CENTRE DOORS

Our new Visitor Centre opens to the public for the first time on March 14. We have been working around the clock to have everything ready, but the new Centre will still be a work in progress for some time to come. A big thanks to Dr. Bruce Brewer, CCF's General Manager, and Brian Badger, CCF's Operations Director, for their tireless efforts in the re-building project.

The new Visitor Centre will house the First National Bank's Conference Room, our CCF Cheetah Gift Shop, the Cheetah Café and a curing room for our Dancing Goat Creamery hard cheeses. CCF's Applied BioSystem's Genetics Laboratory will be also moving to this new building so we can more easily share the important scientific activities taking place with our visitors.

In 2000, we opened our Research and Education Centre to the public, but sadly, in 2013, our original Visitor Centre, which is the heart of this complex, was hit by lightning and lost in the fire that occurred as a result. Since this devastating loss, we have been busy building and just like the Phoenix, our Visitor Centre has come back and is even better than before. The graphics for the new building are currently being developed with a grant from the Museum Association of Namibia and promise to be amazing. They will highlight our various conservation programs; the majestic Waterberg Plateau, which can be seen from the new Visitor Centre's deck; and our work with the Greater Waterberg Landscape communities.

CCF's distinctive 15-seat Cheetah Bus becomes a familiar sight on Namibian roads. CCF General Manager Dr. Bruce Brewer joins the staff and begins renovations on CCF's Education Centre.

CCF hosts first Gala Dinner at the Kalahari Sands Hotel with President Sam Nujoma as Guest of Honor. CCF builds staff dormitories and constructs Hilkerdrom Airstrip.

1998



1999



2015 AND BEYOND: THE GREATER WATERBERG LANDSCAPE



Much of our work in 2015 will focus on the Greater Waterberg Landscape (GWL), an area encompassing about four million acres. CCF began the year by launching our Future Farmers of Africa program in this area. Monthly, we will be conducting integrated wildlife and livestock training workshops in eight different remote locations throughout the four conservancies that make up the GWL.

Our goal is to create an integrated habitat that will include wildlife species and a robust ecotourism industry, which will help create diversified income streams.

"This type of project has never before been undertaken in this area. We want to inspire innovative approaches to sustainable poverty reduction, paying particular attention to gender issues. We want all people to have the same chance to thrive," said Dr. Marker.

CCF will also be teaching more naturalist training and craft development through a grant from the European Union Development Fund. Thanks goes to CCF's Matti Nghkembua, Steven Uponi, Jackson Hindjou, Stephanie Bradley, Bobbie Bradley and our new Ecology Manager, Dr. Louisa Richmond-Coggan, all who are working along with Dr. Marker and our four facilitators and several mentors to develop this extensive training program. We would also like to thank Busch Gardens and Disney's Worldwide Conservation Fund for their grants in support of this program.

DR. MARKER'S 25TH ANNIVERSARY EU TOUR

From Brussels to Netherlands, the UK, Switzerland, Germany, Italy and France, Dr. Marker and Teresia Robitschko recently completed her annual European lecture tour. "I had a great meetings and conferences and met lots of new and long-time cheetah friends. and to celebrate our 25th anniversary with them," said Dr. Marker.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

DR. MARKER'S 25TH ANNIVERSARY U.S. TOUR

Indianapolis, IN.

March 26th
Lecture at Indianapolis Zoo

Oklahoma City, OK.

March 27th
Cheetah Fundraiser

San Jose, CA.

April 2nd
Garden Party - Happy Hollow Zoo

Davis, CA.

April 3rd
Lecture at UC Davis

Carmel, CA.

April 11th
Meet a Cheetah Fundraiser

San Francisco, CA.

April 15th
Lecture at California Academy of Sciences

Santa Barbara, CA.

April 16th
Lecture at the Santa Barbara Zoo

Palm Springs, CA.

April 19th
Meet a Cheetah Fundraiser

Sherman Oaks, CA.

April 25th
4th Annual 'Meetah Cheetah'

For more info.
www.cheetah.org/events/

HUMANS FOR CHEETAHS WALKWAY MARATHON

Poughkeepsie, NY.

June 13th
Walkway over the Hudson State Historic Park.

To participate or sponsor a runner:

www.cheetah.org/event/walkway-marathon-humans-for-cheetahs-event/

Check out our 25th Anniversary gear!
Visit www.cafepress.com/ccfcheetahshop

CCF celebrates its 10th Anniversary by opening its new International Research and Education Centre. Dr. Marker is named a "Hero of the Planet" by *TIME* Magazine.

Dr. Marker travels to Iran to advise conservationists on strategies regarding the Asiatic cheetah; CCF establishes sister program in Kenya.

2000



2001



Cheetah Conservation Fund
P.O. Box 2496
2210 Mt. Vernon Avenue
Alexandria, VA 22301-0496

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US Postage Paid
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GUESS WHO!

Can you name the celebrity here with a very young Dr. Marker?

Hint: She got physical with several wildlife species, including Khayam the cheetah, for an ABC Television special. From the looks of this photo, it must have been magic!

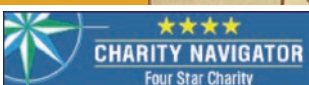
The first three people to correctly identify this celebrity by emailing their answer to dr.lauriemarker@cheetah.org will win their very own purring cheetah.

Dr. Marker completes her DPhil at Oxford University. CCF starts reproductive research with Smithsonian Institution's National Zoo and establishes cheetah genome resource bank. CCF holds first Smithsonian Conservation Biology course in cooperation with University of Namibia.

2002



Look inside for our informative timeline, from 1990 - 2002. The second half of the timeline will be featured in our fall 2015 issue of Cheetah Strides.



www.cheetah.org