

ISSUE Nº  
**18**  
2º 2019

# CHEETAH STRIDES

The newsletter of the Cheetah Conservation Fund



Photo by Jennifer Leigh Warner

## IN THIS ISSUE:

Somaliland

Erindi

Fall Tour

25 Years LGD





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on social media!



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## VOLUNTEER

Contact us to learn more  
about volunteering in  
the United States to help  
save the cheetah across  
its range in Africa.  
volunteer@cheetah.org

## KEY DATES

*DR. MARKER'S USA FALL TOUR*

### NEW YORK

NEW YORK

#### OPEN SESSION CCF'S ANNUAL BOARD MEETING

SEPTEMBER 19 - 20

### OREGON

PORTLAND

#### BIG CAT. BIG PARY. 25 YEARS OF DOGS SAVING CATS

SEPTEMBER 29

### CALIFORNIA

SANTA CRUZ

#### FILM SCREENING - BORN TO EXPLORE NAMIBIA: LAND OF THE CHEETAH

OCTOBER 8

SANTA ROSA

#### IT'S A RACE FOR SURVIVAL AT SAFARI WEST WILDLIFE PRESERVE

OCTOBER 10

SAN FRANCISCO

#### WCN EXPO

OCTOBER 12

### INDIANA

INDIANAPOLIS

#### CHEETAH GALA AT THE CONRAD

OCTOBER 18

### VIRGINIA

ARLINGTON

#### 18TH ANNUAL DC GALA

OCTOBER 21

### OHIO

POWELL

#### A CHEETAH CONNECTION AT THE COLUMBUS ZOO

OCTOBER 25

### OKLAHOMA

OKLAHOMA CITY

#### ART INSPIRES CONSERVATION

OCTOBER 27

### OTHER EVENTS

### NEW YORK

HARPURSVILLE

#### ANIMAL ADVENTURE PARK - ALES FOR TAILS

SEPTEMBER 28

FOR MORE INFO AND TO SEE THE UPDATED SCHEDULE.

WWW.CHEETAH.ORG/EVENTS/



## NOTES FROM THE DIRECTOR



I can hardly believe it is already September! 2019 has just flown by. I am preparing for another trip to Somaliland on my way to the USA for our CCF fall tour. Where did this year go?

I've had a really busy travel schedule, including already several trips to Somaliland. During late June, CNN reporters joined me in Somaliland to share a story about the illegal wildlife trade and what CCF is doing. In addition, I traveled to Portugal in early July as one of the speakers for the Global

Explorers Summit. I also traveled to South Africa twice, first to assess a new cheetah project, and a week later, to attend the East and southern Africa IUCN Regional meeting. I spent the second half of August in Geneva at the CITES convention bringing awareness about the illegal cheetah pet trade during CITES CoP18.

In Namibia, we continue to celebrate the 25th anniversary of our CCF Livestock Guarding Dog (LGD) program. We have recently placed more puppies with farmers, so our team has been very active busy with care, training and placements. To help increase program capacity, we just finished building some new dog pens. Two orphan cheetah cubs recently were brought to our Center by the Namibian Ministry of Environment and Tourism. Jaya, a female, is about five months old now, and HeChee, a male, is nearly three months. They are both healthy and growing, and we have recently put them together so they will grow up and have each other in which to socialize and play.

It has been very busy in Namibia with many international visitors and CCF friends. Some are in Namibia on Safari, and others come as working guests or university interns. It is also the time of year that many educational groups visit.

August and September is our Namibian "show season," when staff work our CCF booth at local livestock and trade shows around the country (similar to county fairs). Show season is an excellent way to spread awareness about our various programs, as we get families and all ages visiting our booth. Our staff looks forward to the shows every year, as we are able to meet with farmers and communities and share ways to live in harmony with nature & predators. We always get lots of questions about our livestock guarding dogs and educational outreach programs.

Please check our website regularly, [www.cheetah.org](http://www.cheetah.org), for information on CCF events this fall. I hope to be coming to a town or city near you, so we can meet! Together, we will create a future for cheetahs on Earth.

Dr. Laurie Marker  
Founder & Executive Director

HELP US KEEP THE CHEETAH WHERE IT BELONGS

**in the wild.**



## CCF EXPANDS 'CHEETAH SAFE HOUSE' AND WORK IN SOMALILAND

Since 2011, CCF has been assisting the government of the Republic of Somaliland in its efforts to counter illegal trafficking of cheetah cubs and has helped place the cubs in facilities in Ethiopia and Djibouti. In 2016, due to a change in Somaliland law, cubs cannot be placed in other facilities, so CCF and its global partners stepped in to support and operate temporary holding facilities. CCF began helping care for cheetah cubs confiscated from the trade, first as consultants, and later by supporting and operating temporary holding facilities for these cubs. Currently, 31 cheetah cubs intercepted by the Ministry of Environment and Rural Development (MoERD) are under the care of CCF's local team in Hargeisa, Somaliland's capital.

In May, when Dr. Marker visited Hargeisa, she began major renovations of the 'cheetah safe house', to accommodate the growing number of cubs. Working with CCF friends, Toni Piccolotti, Brian and Kitty Johnson, and James Young, rebuilding began. Dr. Marker and James Young returned in June to continue with James staying on for the next two months as the Project Manager to complete the facilities. Over the past four months, the facilities have been completely rebuilt to increase the amount of space for each cheetah and make better use of the facility's outdoor space. The yard now includes a large run & exercise area which can be shared among the various groups of cheetahs and a quarantine area for new arrivals. In addition, a food preparation area was created. Inside, the cheetah clinic was updated, including a pharmacy with shelves for medications and supplements, courtesy of CCF's cheetah friends at the Nashville, Woodland Park, Jacksonville and Columbus Zoos.

To keep up with the demands of caring for 31 cheetahs, volunteer veterinarians and veterinary students from Vétérinaires Sans Frontières Czech Republic (VSF-cz), USAMV Cluj-Napoca (Romania), University of Veterinary and Pharmaceutical Sciences Brno (UVPS, Czech Republic) and University of Hargeisa (UOH) began in November 2018. The partnership

has been instrumental in increasing the level of care for the rescued cheetahs, including a very complicated orthopedic surgery performed on one of the cheetah cubs, Moonlight, with a broken leg.

Dr. Laurie Marker has visited the project three times in the past six months, with each trip putting another foundation block for advancing the project. In late May-early June, Dr. Marker had a series of meetings with the Somaliland government that resulted in the offer for CCF to build a permanent sanctuary on land set aside for Somaliland's first national park. President Muse Bihi invited Dr. Marker to the Presidential Palace to explain how Somaliland wishes to become a leader in natural resource management in the Horn of Africa and how they hope to inspire other nations to consider climate change and wildlife trafficking as serious threats.

To build upon these efforts, on July 1, CCF announced a grant to build law enforcement capacity in the Horn of Africa and Middle East known by the acronym LICIT (Legal Intelligence for Cheetah Illicit Trade), funded by UK's Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA) through a grant administered by the Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund. LICIT's goal is to increase awareness of wildlife laws along trade routes and close enforcement and legal loopholes exploited by poachers.

In July, Dr. Marker returned to Hargeisa with CCF's IWT law enforcement specialist, Christian Dietrich, to initiate work on LICIT. She was joined again by Kitty Johnson, who will be coordinating CCF's volunteer



**Photos: Opposite page:** One of three cheetah cubs confiscated in Somaliland and now living in the Cheetah Safe House.

**This page:** Television news producer Ingrid Formanek, a veteran CNN war correspondent, and on-air reporter Jomana Karadsheh, joined Dr. Marker in Hargeisa to create a report on cheetah trafficking. The story premiered August 16, 2019, on European television on the show *Amanpour and Co.*, which is carried in the U.S. on PBS stations. During the week of August 26th, the story was broadcast on CNN and released online, creating a tremendous impact. Many more millions now know of the illegal cheetah pet trade and how it impacts species survival in the wild.

program in Hargeisa. She and her husband, Brian, are residents of Saudi Arabia and have become repeat volunteers, giving much of their time and resources to helping the cheetah project. Also in Hargeisa was Dr. Jane Galton of CCF UK and Jackie Fast, a CCF UK Ambassador, and her husband, Chris. Jackie, a well-known UK entrepreneur is joining forces with Jane Galton to develop funding and awareness initiatives in support of CCF's work in Illegal Wildlife Trade. In addition to helping with the safe house renovations and cheetah care, the CCF group was honored to celebrate Somaliland's Independence Day as guests at a State Dinner on June 26, 2019.

In early September, Dr. Marker returned to Somaliland to talk with the government about the next steps for the cheetah project. A law enforcement training with some of CCF LICIT partners is planned for November. The conversation about the land for the CCF cheetah sanctuary project continued, with discussion shifting to increasing the holding capacity for rescued cheetahs in Somaliland during the interim period, before the sanctuary is built.

With 31 cubs, CCF's facilities are full.

"We are bracing ourselves for the next round of confiscations and making the necessary preparations, including securing another temporary facility like the one we have now," said Dr. Laurie Marker. "Costs are a major concern, as this is an expensive project. But it is what we must do to help protect the wild cheetah populations in the Horn from becoming extinct. Please help us. We need both money and volunteers to help in Somaliland."





## CCF ATTENDS IUCN REGIONAL MEETING AHEAD OF WORLD CONGRESS 2020

Dr. Laurie Marker and Dr. Shira Yasphe, a CCF consultant on illegal wildlife trade, traveled to Johannesburg, South Africa to participate in the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Forum July 23-25, 2019. The purpose of the meeting was to organize members from the 24 Eastern and Southern Africa countries ahead of IUCN World Conservation Congress 2020, which will be held next June in Marseille, France. IUCN members have an impact in guiding humankind's relationship with our environment for decades into the future.

"The IUCN Congress is where the world comes together to set priorities and drive conservation and sustainable development," said Dr. Laurie Marker. "At this conference our region declared a call for action to secure a future for nature, people and future generations in Africa."

Held every four years, the IUCN World Conservation Congress is the largest conservation event, bringing together leaders from government, civil society, indigenous peoples, science and policy, and conservation to share the latest research and exchange ideas. IUCN Members and Commissions, businesses, partners, and academia host pavilions, booths and events in the Exhibition, which is open to both Congress participants and the public. Dr. Marker will travel to France to represent CCF at the World Congress 2020.

**Photos: Opposite page:** (top and lower right) In July, Dr. Laurie Marker addressed students at Amoud University and the University of Hargeisa, inspiring young conservationists and wildlife caretakers to pursue careers in natural resource management. Professor Suleiman Ahmed Gulaid, President of Amoud University in Borama, Somaliland, re-scheduled final examinations so the entire student body and faculty could attend, about 2,000 people. (lower left) Dr. Laurie Marker and CCF team members in Hargeisa were invited to a special Iftar dinner at the Presidential Palace during Ramadan to talk about conservation. From left to right: Nuura Ahmed, Head of Delegation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Yasin Hagi Mohamoud, Foreign Minister; Dr. Laurie Marker; President Muse Bihi Abdi, 5th President of the Republic of Somaliland; Shukri H. Ismail, Minister of Environment and Rural Development and Toni Piccolotti, a Mammal Keeper with the Jacksonville Zoo and CCF Volunteer. Not pictured: James Young, CCF Somaliland Project Designer.

**This page:** The Namibian Delegation at the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Forum.



## **BARK OUT LOUD FOR CCF'S LIVESTOCK GUARDING DOGS 25TH ANNIVERSARY!**

In 1994, Cheetah Conservation Fund (CCF) began its Livestock Guarding Dog (LGD) program with four dogs. Twenty-five years later, CCF's Livestock Guarding Dogs are considered the Namibian farmer's best tool for reducing livestock losses to predation. What started as a research project to help protect farmer's livestock from cheetah and other predators, today our program has grown, where we have bred and placed nearly 700 dogs and show how they work on our Model Farm.

Over the past two-and-a-half decades, CCF has bred nearly 700 Anatolian and Kangal LGD puppies to place with smallstock farmers to help protect their goats and sheep from predators, with the generous support of donors and partner institutions.

In Namibia, farmers with CCF dogs report a drop in predation losses ranging between 70 to 100 percent. For communal subsistence farmers, even the loss of one animal can be financially devastating, so having a CCF LGD can be like having an insurance policy. Due to their popularity in Namibia, there is a one-to-two year waiting list for those who wish to get a puppy.

CCF LGDs would not be as successful without the CCF staff who work hands-on with the dogs. The person who deserves much of this credit and gratitude is Armas Shaanika. Armas joined CCF's staff as a herder in 2001, although previous to working at CCF, he was the header caring for one of the 1st dogs in the program and he has raised almost all of CCF's LGDs since. Although he only speaks Oshiwambo, he has such a way with the dogs that around CCF, Armas is known as the 'Livestock Guarding Dog Whisperer.'

Armas works with our puppies before homing them. He also works with CCF's adult dogs that go out with our herds each day. Sometimes we need to rehome one of the working dogs, and he often works with them with his herd of goats at CCF's farm Boskop, where he lives.

CCF maintains herds of Boer goats, Damara sheep and Saanen dairy goats



that total just over 300 animals. The puppies are raised with the small stock, and as part of LGD training, Armas brings them out to the bush with goat herds during the day. He evaluates young dogs on field work, and he assesses whether rehomed dogs are ready to go back to work. Armas' current favorite dog is an Anatolian shepherd named Silver (like our anniversary!), one he favors because she is energetic, alert and listens to his commands.

Without Armas, we would not have realized the full potential of our work, nor would we be celebrating the success our program has become today. Thanks to Armas, and our other dedicated staff and volunteers, CCF Livestock Guarding Dogs are the Namibian farmer's best employee and CCF's most vital, 'paws on the ground' partner in cheetah conservation.



**Photos: Opposite page:** 'The Livestock Guarding Dog Whisperer,' Armas Shaanika, and Aleya, a Livestock Guarding Dog on CCF's Model Farm he raised and trained. Photo by Jenna Brager

**This page:** (left) Armas Shaanika delivers Silver to his new home, the farm of Cedric Shilanogo in Grootfontein. (right) Silver with his new goat herd.



### LITTLE KNOWN CCF LIVESTOCK GUARDING DOG FACT

Guard dogs are presumed to be the most effective when they are closest to the herd they are protecting. For this reason, LGD puppies are introduced at a very young age so that they learn to associate the herd as their own pack and subsequently remain close and protective.



## CCF VET CLINIC GOES ON THE ROAD

Rabies is a serious problem for wildlife in Namibia. The disease can be spread between wild animals and unvaccinated domestic animals. It is fatal for the carrier animal, and the fear that the disease will be transmitted to people or livestock exacerbates human-wildlife conflict. CCF believes the best way to minimize rabies contraction in Namibian wildlife is to promote awareness and make vaccinations accessible for domestic companion and working animals. To this end, CCF has been traveling to the Eastern Communal areas with its newly developed mobile veterinary clinic.

For the past several months, CCF's Mobile Vet Clinic has conducted a series of road trips into the communal conservancies of the Greater Waterberg Landscape (GWL). From all indicators, this new program has proved to be even more successful than anyone dared project.

Dr. Robin Gieling, CCF's veterinarian, accompanied by a team of CCF community officers, and in some areas, animal technicians from the Department of Veterinarian Services, have vaccinated local dogs for rabies and educated owners about local animal health issues.

After the initial wave, vaccinations decreased as the team went from the most populous locations to deeper into the bush, where they reached the most remote GWL villages. These places have fewer people and fewer domestic animals. But by August 1, Dr. Gieling was being interviewed on Namibian television about vaccinating the 1,000th animal! Considering the human population of the GWL is only about 23,000, this figure is even more impressive.

"We think our work here will make a tremendous impact on the quality of life for Namibians living in the GWL. The opportunity to help stop the spread of this debilitating disease in a vulnerable part of the world is also exceptionally satisfying, from a veterinary standpoint," said Dr. Gieling.

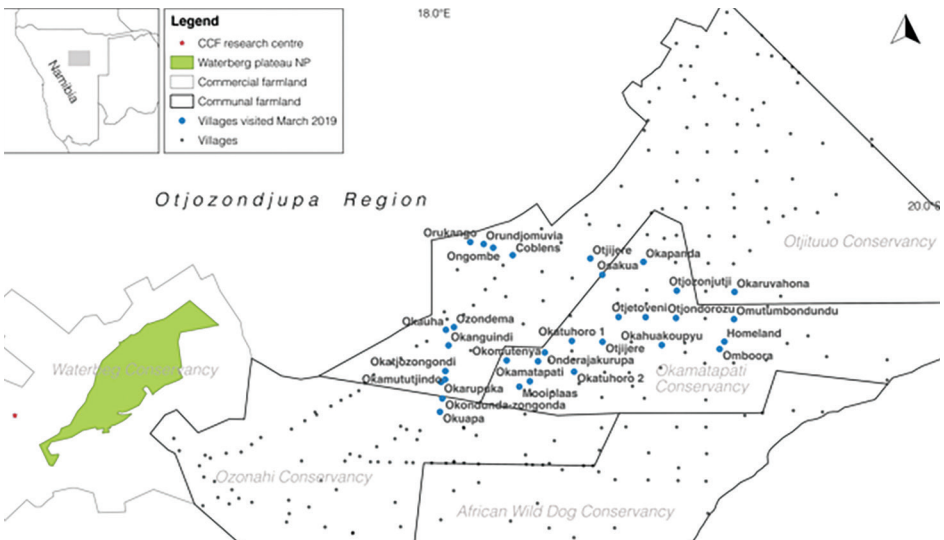
The CCF Mobile Clinic not only delivers essential veterinary services, but it helps develop other CCF outreach projects as well. While the CCF veterinarian team administer vaccinations, CCF Ecologists use the opportunity

to connect with community members about living with wildlife, farming methods and testing of non-lethal, predation control tools with their live-stock animals.

These rural villages are also within the range of some of the last of Namibia's African painted dogs, and conflict is high in this area. Through the communications and working directly with these rural communities, we can help with livestock management as well as herd health initiatives.

“The first phase of the CCF Mobile Clinic has exceeded our expectations, in terms of what we are able to do for the community,” said Dr. Laurie Marker, CCF Founder and Executive Director. “We are excited to see the success and hope to expand with the services we offer. We hope to soon be able to perform spay and neuter procedures, but much will depend on the funds available for this project and the temporary registration of the Mobile Vet Clinic.”

Thanks to grants by FHREE, Disney and Tusk organizations, CCF's mobile veterinary care clinic is delivering professional veterinary care to the local farming communities of the GWL. From early indicators, the clinic is poised to become an indispensable part of CCF's outreach interventions in the future.



**Photos: Opposite page:** Dr. Gieling performing vaccinations in the Eastern Communal Area.

**This page:** (top) Map of rabies vaccination service area for the 2019 Mobile Vet Clinic - Blue dots are locations visited in March 2019. (lower left) Dr. Bruce Brewer and Dr. Laurie Marker with Martine Work, Executive Director for the Foundation for Human Rabies Education & Eradication (FHREE) supports CCF's new One Health Rabies Education and Prevention Program. (lower right) Dr. Gieling and Carolina Torres at Mobile Vet Clinic.

## CCF ADVOCATES FOR CHEETAH INTERVENTIONS AT CITES COP18

Dr. Laurie Marker and Patricia Tricorache, CCF's Senior Illegal Wildlife Trade Consultant, represented CCF at the 18th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES CoP18) in Geneva, Switzerland.

During a 12-day period spanning August 17-28, 2019, the pair met with representatives from African and Middle Eastern countries impacted by wildlife trafficking to present evidence of the illegal cheetah trade. They also made recommendations to government agencies that enforce CITES and connected with professional associates and other NGO's to discuss the illegal trade in cheetah, including TRAFFIC, Born Free Foundation, ZSL, WCS, IUCN Cat Specialist Group, IFAW, Range Wide Conservation Program for Cheetah and Wild Dogs, WildAid, Four Paws and WWF International.

"It is very important to be at CITES to speak on behalf of the cheetah. Fragile populations of East African cheetah in territories where illegal trade exists may be lost in the very near future if we do not make this problem known," said Dr. Laurie Marker. "Communicating with CITES leadership and the member states who vote on decisions impacting cheetah can mean all the difference for the species' long-term survival."



## RELEASED CHEETAHS IN ERINDI

Since January 2019, CCF released seven captive-raised, wild-born cheetahs into the Erindi Private Game Reserve. These seven come from two litters of orphans rescued by CCF in 2016. Two males, Kamin and Cyclone, born to another CCF cheetah rehabilitated and released in 2014, Zinzi, were captured from the wild on CCF property at 11 months of age after they lost their mother to a leopard. Five other orphans, Elwood, Susan, Georgia, Tatjana, and Daenerys, were rescued at five months of age from a farm near the Waterberg Plateau area after their mother had been shot.

Upon arrival to CCF, these two litters were bonded and later the males and females were split to create two coalitions, one of three males and the other of four females.

In January 2019, the three males, Cyclone, Kamin and Elwood, were released from their holding boma in Erindi. After a couple of days, the males began exploring their new environment and began making their first attempts at hunting. Sadly, one week following release one of the males, Cyclone, was killed by a leopard while the coalition was drinking at a waterhole. However, despite the loss of their coalition mate, the other two males learned very quickly to remain hyper-vigilant within their new home and began making regular kills shortly after their loss. CCF's monitoring team only needed to supplementary feed the males a few times before they were entirely self-sufficient. Kamin and Elwood are still performing exceptionally well within Erindi and haven't needed human support since early February. These males have already been observed with non-collared female cheetahs within Erindi.

In February 2019, the coalition of four females was released. The females remained within the area of their holding boma for a few days before venturing out to explore. As we expected, the four females split up forming two groups. Female cheetahs lead solitary lives in the wild. We release females in artificially formed coalitions so that they have extra support during the early days of release. The females began making regular kills and were nearly self-sufficient, only requiring an occasional supplemental meal from CCF and Erindi's monitoring teams. Sadly several months after release, one of the females, Susan, was killed by a troop of baboons. Two of the females, Georgia and Tatjana, are still together and doing well. The other female, Daenerys, is currently on her own and making regular kills. With the progress we've seen recently in these females, they should be fully self-sufficient within the year.

Rehabilitating and releasing orphaned cheetahs is always risky as these cheetahs are deprived of the training and experience that their mothers would provide to them. Additionally, these cheetahs face all of the natural threats that other wild cheetahs face on a day-to-day basis. Despite the risks, we believe that every cheetah with potential to return to the wild should be given the opportunity to do so.



**Photos: Opposite page:** Released cheetah Elwood

**This page:** (left) Kamin and Elwood with a zebra kill (right) Daenerys with a springbok kill - photos by Eli Walker.

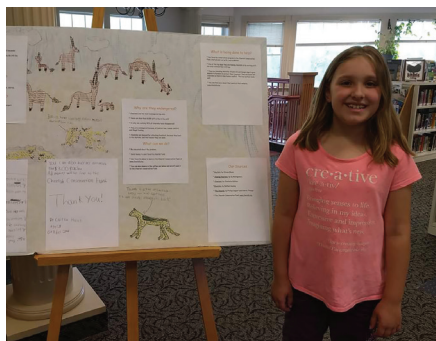


# Kids

## CORNER



STORIES FEATURING THE WORK OF CCF'S YOUNG SUPPORTERS FROM AROUND THE WORLD.



Caitlin is 8 years old and just finished her second grade year. For a research project she studied cheetahs and put together a display at their local library to raise awareness.

Caitlin also drew and painted pictures of cheetahs that she sold as a fundraiser for CCF.



This year, Cécile Falbert's classes organized their presentation during Talent Day at Saint Alban Leysse Intermediate school in France. CCF was presented by students in 5th grade (12 years old). The talented students sold homemade cakes to fundraise and expressed themselves through music, dance and acrobatics.



Evelyn won the Award for Best Student Presentation at the 22nd Annual SCGIS Conference in Monterey CA. Evelyn gave a presentation on cheetah safety corridors, with contributions from CCF's researchers in Namibia, and she did a fantastic job. The attendees couldn't believe she is only 13 years old.

Do you have a story about a young supporter that you would like to share? Send us an email including a short description and some photos and we will include it in an upcoming issue of *Cheetah Strides* or on our website!

**Email: [info@cheetah.org](mailto:info@cheetah.org)**



## SIXTEEN YEARS OF EARTH EXPEDITIONS

Among many notable groups recently, we welcomed two Earth Expeditions groups of graduate students. This is the 16th year of this collaborative environmental education course that is part of a graduate program offered by Project Dragonfly at Miami University (in Oxford, Ohio) in partnership with conservation and education partners worldwide.

## CHEETAH STRIDES CHALLENGE

New Website Review - History of CCF  
**Scavenger Hunt in the Blogs!**

### Steps:

- **Visit** our blog at [www.cheetah.org/ccf-blog/](http://www.cheetah.org/ccf-blog/)
- **Search** the blogs from the post dates below to collect the pieces of a special message from Dr. Laurie Marker.
- **Complete** the message and email us at [info@cheetah.org](mailto:info@cheetah.org).

### Post dates:

Sept. 20, 2008	Jan. 16, 2014
Oct. 24, 2009	Oct. 2, 2015
Sept. 18, 2010	Sept. 24, 2016
Oct. 10, 2011	Oct. 5, 2017
Sept. 5, 2012	Oct. 24, 2018
Sept. 13, 2013	Sept. 4, 2019



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Woof!  
Woof!

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25 YEARS OF DOGS SAVING CHEETAHS!



YEAR OF THE



**Cheetah Conservation Fund**  
LIVESTOCK GUARDING DOG PROGRAM

**25 Years**