

ISSUE N°
21
1st 2021

CHEETAH STRIDES

The Newsletter of the Cheetah Conservation Fund



Photo by Barth Ball

IN THIS ISSUE:

Research

Vet Training

Supplies

Namibian Interns



Cheetah
CONSERVATION FUND



DONATE

PO Box 2496
Alexandria, VA. 22301
info@cheetah.org
1.866.909.3399
www.cheetah.org/donate

VISIT

CCF's Research and Education Centre
Otjiwarongo, Namibia
open 364 days per year
www.cheetahecolodge.com

CCF's Headquarters USA
200 Daingerfield Rd.
Suite 200
Alexandria, VA. 22314
Monday - Friday
9:00 am - 5:00 pm
www.cheetah.org

Keep up with the cheetahs on social media!



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

2021 EVENTS - *LET'S KEEP THE WILD, WILD.*

ONLINE

ROLLING SCHEDULE OF SPRING EVENTS
March 20 - May 31

ONLINE AUCTION
APRIL 16 - MAY 7

MORE INFO TBA

www.cheetah.org/get-involved/ccf-events/

EVENT SPONSORS

**Sponsor CCF's Event
Put Your Business Here**

Become an event sponsor! CCF has opportunities to sponsor all of our events and be featured in our communications. Sponsorship opportunities are now available for CCF's fall tour.

Contact donations@cheetah.org to become an event sponsor for this or future events.

OTHER EVENTS

ONLINE

2ND ANNUAL CHILLIN' FOR CHEETAH

Feb 20 - Mar 20, 2021

Hosted by: CCF New York Chapter

www.cheetah.org/events/2nd-annual-chillin-for-cheetah/

PAINTING WITH A PURPOSE VIRTUAL FUNDRAISER

Mar 20, 2021

4:00 pm

Hosted by: CCF Southern California Chapter

www.cheetah.org/events/painting-with-a-purpose-virtual-fundraiser/



NOTES FROM THE DIRECTOR



I'm writing to you from Somaliland where I am working to bolster our relationships within the Government of Somaliland and NGOs partnered with CCF to stop the illegal trade in cheetahs. Like everyone else in the world I had to delay or cancel most of the travel I intended to do during 2020. I usually visit several countries per year, meeting with thousands of supporters, ministry officials, and fellow researchers.

While I spent most of the year at CCF's Headquarters in Namibia, It was essential that I travel to our Cheetah Safe House in Somaliland. My first visit was to welcome multiple new staff members including Dr. Mahesh Bhatt, a veterinarian from the UK. This is my second visit and it has been a bit of a whirlwind. We held two veterinary training courses in emergency medicine for confiscated cheetah cubs. The first was for local Somaliland vets and the second was for vets from Ethiopia.

Over the past few days our cheetah team in Namibia has been busy with an extreme medical case. Daenerys (one of the rewilded cheetahs from Erindi) fractured her fibula - the thinner of the two long bones found in the lower leg of many species of animals. On Thursday February 18, Daenerys was taken to Windhoek for veterinary surgery. Screws are required to hold the bone together while it heals but she required another surgery. Today, February 23rd I received word that Daenerys's second surgery was completed and more screws were placed to add stability to the bone. If all goes well with her immediate recovery she will still require months of physical therapy and conditioning.

I will not be traveling to the United States for the spring but we will be holding online events similar to the ones we had last year. There will be some key differences and some interesting additions to our event line-up so please sign-up for our updates by joining our mailing list at <https://cheetah.org/newsletter/>

Dr. Laurie Marker
Founder & Executive Director

HELP US KEEP THE CHEETAH WHERE IT BELONGS

in the wild.



CCF SUPPORTS SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

CCF's staff members work on the frontlines of conservation performing a slew of daily tasks and responsible for the delivery of many levels of care to animals from livestock to orphaned rehabilitating cheetahs. It is an understatement that CCF's staff are very busy in their daytime roles. Their charges require daily feedings, our 67,000ha private wildlife reserve requires continual monitoring, and the rural farming community has 24/7 access to predator problem assistance via CCF's Farmer Carnivore Help Hotline and all their tasks now require additional safety precautions due to coronavirus. If all that wasn't enough, CCF's staff are also scientific researchers.

This past year staff continued their research projects and some even finished up some long-term studies for publication in scientific journals. From vertebrate biology to forestry and ecology, Namibia's landscape has a lot to offer scientific researchers. CCF's Research and Education Centre is unique in all of Africa and the research opportunities we provide are an invaluable resource. Pages three and four feature just a small sample of the type of research projects happening at CCF. Additional papers have been submitted - seven are pending and in the review process.

CCF'S RESOURCE LIBRARY

For a complete listing of published papers visit:
www.cheetah.org/resource-library/

Photos: This page: Dr. Laurie Marker and the cheetah release team performs a final work-up before cheetah Adina is released into Erindi Private Game Reserve
Opposite page: top: Hafeni Hamalwa, bottom: Eli Walker

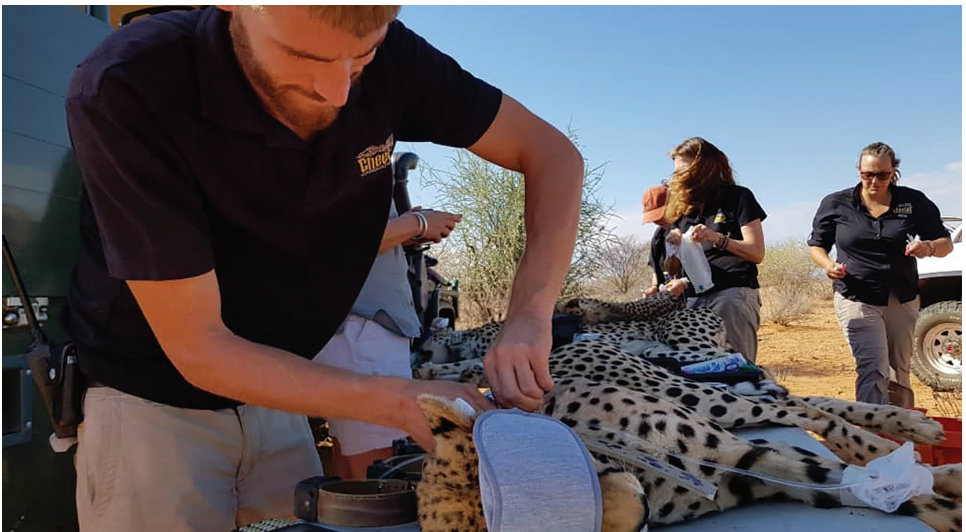
RESEARCH PROJECTS

Genetics research - Hafeni Hamalwa is a MSc candidate conducting two studies at CCF in pursuit of his degree: Investigation of Kenyan Subspecies and their Potential Involvement in Illegal Wildlife Trade (IWT) and Systematic and population structure of Kenya cheetah based on mitochondrial analysis.

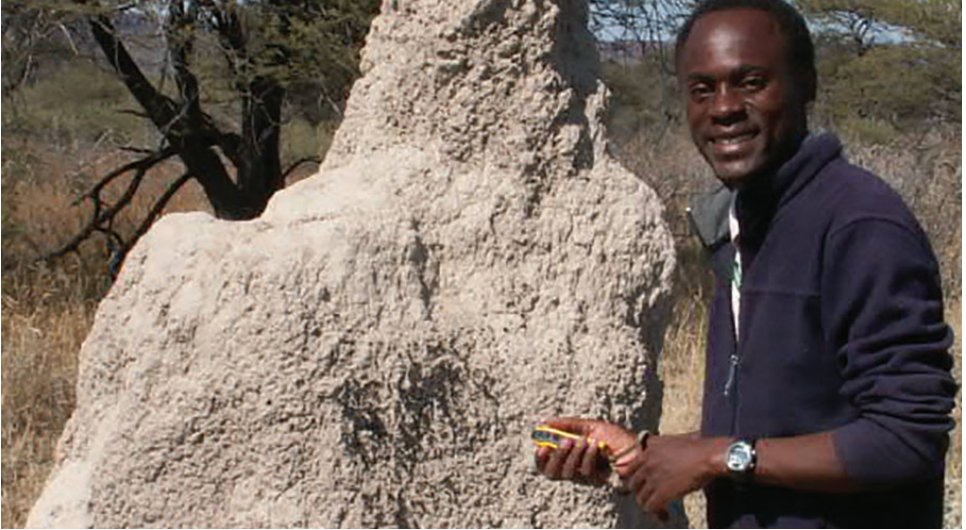


Rewilding research - CCF's research into the rewilding of cheetahs stretches back to before there was a CCF. Dr. Laurie Marker began researching whether a captive-born cheetah could be taught to successfully live in the wild in the 1970s. Eli Walker continued this groundbreaking research during his seven year tenure at CCF.

Recommendations for the rehabilitation and release of wild-born captive-raised cheetah: the importance of pre- and post-release management for optimising survival will publish in *Oryx - The International Journal of Conservation*, Authors: Eli Walker, Stijn Verschueren, Dr. Anne Schmidt-Küntzel and Dr. Laurie Marker.



RESEARCH PROJECTS CONTINUED



Biodiversity research - Matti Nghikembua's research focuses largely around landscape usage and biodiversity. During his 18 year tenure at CCF Matti has participated in dozens of research projects and contributed to papers spanning all aspects of wildlife conservation, biomass energy potential and habitat management. The upcoming paper represents his second toward his PhD candidacy.

Restoration thinning reduces bush encroachment on freehold farmlands in north central Namibia will publish in *Forestry: An International Journal of Forest Research*, Authors: Matti T. Nghikembua, Dr. Laurie Marker, Dr. Bruce Brewer, Arvo Leinonen, Lauri Mehtätalo, Mark Appiah, Ari Pappinen.



Paper published! *Global dataset for seized and non-intercepted illegal cheetah trade (Acinonyx jubatus) 2010-2019*, Journal: *Data in Brief*, Authors: Patricia Tricorache, Dr. Shira Yashphe, Dr. Laurie Marker.

Photos: Opposite page: left: Johannes Kweyo, right: Foibe Kadenga

This page: top: Matti Nghikembua, bottom: Patricia Tricorache and Dr. Laurie Marker

INTERNSHIP PROGRAM CONTINUES



CCF's internship program is an important part of everything that we do. Normally on a yearly basis CCF welcomes from 50 - 70 interns to our Centre in Namibia, most of these interns would usually come from international universities. This year due to COVID-19 travel restrictions international students did not have as many opportunities to get to our Centre in Namibia and continue their studies. We welcomed 24 Namibian interns from Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST), Vocational Training Centres (VTC) and the University of Namibia (UNAM).

Johannes Kweyo who studies agriculture at NUST and has always loved farming and nature, accepted a six month internship with CCF during 2020. During his internship, he conducted a project on the effects of compost made from encroacher bush on radish bioassay. He was supervised by Matti Nghikembua, CCF's Senior Ecologist and Forest Steward and David Shipingana, CCF's Forestry and Safety Officer, from the Biomass Department.

Johannes was such a great addition to the team that we asked him back for a second internship working on our Model Farm. He was excited to return and get more hands-on farm experience, this time with livestock.

Foibe Ndapwoshisho Kadenga recently completed a three-year Bachelor of Science degree in Biology at NUST and joined us for an internship in our Genetics Laboratory. She arrived on July 22nd and got to work right away shadowing our lab team to learn all the special procedures needed for working with genetic materials. She was also able to work with CCF's scat dogs as they searched for the cheetah scat we use for genetic analysis in the lab. Foibe was also one of the group of interns who helped CCF celebrate International Cheetah Day at our info table in Otjiwarongo.

SUPPORT CCF'S INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

Donate to help us continue offering internship opportunities:
www.cheetah.org/donate/



VET TRAINING IN SOMALILAND

CCF conducted two workshops for veterinary doctors over two weekends February 12 - 15th and 19 - 22nd. The purpose of the training was to prepare rural livestock veterinarians to give emergency treatment to cheetah cubs confiscated from the illegal pet/wildlife trade.

Cheetah cubs brought into CCF’s Safe House by Somaliland’s Ministry of Environment and Tourism (MoERD) where they are given proper veterinary care and nutrition. Most of the cubs arrive in very poor condition due to mistreatment or neglect. We hope to develop a network of “first-responders” on both sides of the Ethiopia-Somaliland border in areas where cheetah cubs are being taken. If the cubs can be seen by a trained veterinarian very soon after confiscation we can reduce their mortality rate.

The first group of veterinarians were from Somaliland and the second were from Ethiopia. The vets who participated are specialized in treating livestock - they don’t have much experience with cats or dogs and they have never provided care for a cheetah. Both groups were very interested in learning about the cheetah and also had many questions about predator-friendly farming - livestock management and care that reduces livestock predation.





The veterinary training was led by Dr. Laurie Marker and supported by CCF Somaliland veterinarians Dr. Karina Flores Pineda, Dr. Mahesh Bhatt, Dr. Asma Bileh and Dr. Ahmed Yusuuf. The lectures and hands-on practical sessions covered physical examination and handling basics, emergency care principles, syndromes of disease when re-feeding a malnourished animal, dietary insufficiencies, approach to gastrointestinal maladies and preventative care.

The International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) provided co-funding for the training, which was organised within the framework of the Legal Intelligence/Cheetah Illicit Trade (LICIT) Project, an initiative to combat cheetah trafficking. LICIT is funded by the UK government through the Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund and implemented by CCF, IFAW, and Legal Atlas.



Photos: Opposite page: top: Dr. Laurie Marker and CCF's Instructors with the group from Ethiopia, bottom: left: Dr. Laurie Marker, right: Dr. Yusuuf and Ethiopian vets.

This page: top: left: Resident confiscated cheetahs, right: Dr. Bhatt gives a tour of the grounds, bottom: Veterinarian trainee Farduus Farah Suleiman.



DR. BOGDAN CRISTESCU

In February 2021, Dr. Bogdan Cristescu joined CCF's staff in Namibia as Assistant Director for Ecological Research. Bogdan is a wildlife ecologist with ample interests in conservation science and human-wildlife co-existence. His research has routinely involved investigations of wildlife movement behavior, resource selection, and animal space use patterns and processes, with much of the work set into an applied conservation and management context at the human-wildlife interface.

Bogdan's Ph.D. research focused on investigating the effects of industrial development and reclamation on grizzly bear behavioural ecology in Canada where we carried out field investigations in the Rocky Mountains and their foothills of western Alberta. With help from the Foothills Research Institute Grizzly Bear Program, he deployed GPS radiocollars on grizzly bears and monitored how animals navigated and used a landscape with extensive surface mining operations for different behaviours.

Bogdan first visited CCF during June–August 2016, after wrapping up a Postdoctoral Fellow position at the University of Cape Town. While in South Africa, he coordinated carnivore research on a predator ecology and human-wildlife interactions project in South Africa's Northern Cape with The Cape Leopard Trust and Conservation South Africa. At CCF, he was offered the opportunity to contribute to six chapters of the book *Cheetahs: Biology and Conservation*. 1st Ed. Series: *Biodiversity of the World: Conservation from Genes to Landscapes*, Eds. Marker L, Schmidt-Küntzel A, Boast L & Nyhus P. Elsevier Publishing.

After the visit at CCF, Bogdan was a Postdoctoral Scholar and field

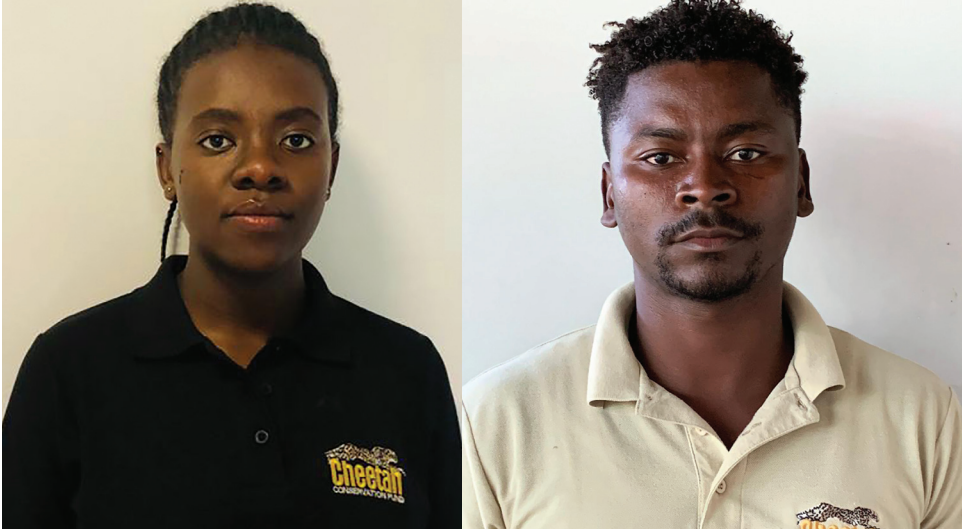
manager on the Siskiyou Deer and Puma Project, with the University of California Santa Cruz (UCSC) until 2020. Working on a large project with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and scientific input from both UCSC and Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand, he studied mountain lion ecology, with a focus on predator-prey interactions between mountain lions and mule deer. The study area was near Mount Shasta, a 4,322 m volcano in the Southern Cascades mountain range of northern California near the Oregon border. He also studied mule deer population ecology, such as densities, survival and cause-specific mortality, as well as coordinated habitat assessments. Fieldwork mostly occurred in remote and rugged terrain and involved captures of study animals, as well as intensive monitoring using GPS radiocollars on adult mountain lions and mule deer, VHF radiocollars on mule deer fawns, and camera traps to study the distribution of mountain lions, but also other carnivores that may influence mule deer dynamics, such as black bears, coyotes and bobcats in a system where mule deer were primary migratory.

Bogdan has co-authored 30 peer-reviewed articles, of which 14 were first-authored. He has given over 50 oral and poster presentations at scientific conferences as well as invited talks. He has reviewed scientific manuscripts for 30 international peer-reviewed journals, and has been Subject Editor for the *Wildlife Biology* journal since 2017.



Photos: This page: Dr. Bogdan's research projects in South Africa and Canada
Opposite page: Dr. Bogdan Cristescu

INTERNS TO STAFF MEMBERS *EVELINE AND JUSTIN JOIN CCF'S TEAM*



EVELINE IKANDJA

ASSISTANT LIVESTOCK GUARDING DOG PROGRAM MANAGER

When Eveline Ikandja began her internship with CCF last year, she was a third year Biology Student from the University of Namibia (UNAM). We are very happy to announce that Eveline has now taken on the role of Assistant Livestock Guarding Dog Programme Manager at our Centre in Namibia. While serving as an intern at CCF, Eveline worked within the ecology department on game counts and camera trapping. She also worked on CCF's Model Farm where she managed goat pregnancy charts and Eveline is committed to preserving the natural flora and fauna of her country and has made a great addition to our team.

JUSTIN MOYA

CHEETAH KEEPER

Justin Moya, CCF's two time intern from UNAM, has now become our new Cheetah Keeper at our Centre in Namibia. Justin's first internship was in 2018 where he worked on the Model Farm with Livestock Guarding Dogs and goats. He also worked within the ecology department and alongside the human-wildlife conflict team in the field using CCF's scat detection dogs.

Justin returned in 2020 where he spent the majority of his time in cheetah care. He has always had a passion for wildlife and is excited to be a part of CCF's team. Justin is dedicated to helping CCF's conservation efforts to save the cheetah in the wild and is excited to build his professional experience.

Photos: This page: left: Eveline Ikandja, right: Justin Moya

Opposite page: The first of two shipping containers filled with supplies arrives at CCF's headquarters.



PROCURING PROVISIONS DURING THE PANDEMIC

In 2018, CCF supporters Alan Feldstein and Alex Shipp approached CCF's General Manager, Dr. Bruce Brewer, with the idea of filling a shipping container with much needed and difficult to attain items and sending it to CCF's Centre in Namibia. Two years and a pandemic later, TWO shipping containers have just arrived at our gates. They couldn't have come at a better time.

With Namibian visitation at an all time low CCF staff and supporters were required to seek alternatives to the usual "pack an extra bag" solution of getting items to our Centre. For many years CCF has been creatively spreading supplies across its list of scheduled visitors, writing letters of permission to show at the airport gates and baggage checking counters. The solution worked for many years. CCF's visitors, a lot of them veterinarians and zoo professionals were more than happy to sacrifice baggage space, some even purchased luggage specifically for the purpose of transporting supplies.

Packing the goods was challenging "It was like a giant Jigsaw puzzle that required both our brains to try and figure out exactly where and how everything would fit" said Alan. In total nearly \$500,000 worth of materials was sent to CCF's Centre in Namibia. We received items like an ultrasound and an x-ray machine, golf carts, and assorted veterinary equipment and supplies.

Season of giving shipping bonus! International shipping company MyUS generously donated \$10,000 to pay for shipment of items from our online wishlist to our Centre in Namibia and our Safe House in Somaliland. So far, about half of the total shipping cost has been used and our conservation headquarters have received \$60,000 in supplies.



Kids

CORNER



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



Jeremy Lynch was named one of CCF Young Conservationists of the Year during CCF's Fall Tour event. Jeremy makes beautiful greeting cards to fundraise for CCF. Part of his award was an origami cheetah. Here he is putting together the face for the big origami sculpture.



Vivian loves all animals but especially cheetahs. She wrote a book which she sold along with handmade book-marks. Her brother Luke joined her for lemonade stands with free lemonade and any donations made went to animal conservation. Vivian has been able to donate \$120 to CCF!



Mathew likes to think of creative ways to raise awareness to help cheetahs. At his middle school in 2019, he started a Cheetah Conservation Club. When he went trick-or-treating at Halloween, he passed out CCF fliers to every house he visited.

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



RAINY SEASON IN NAMIBIA

We have experienced a lot of rain in Namibia. There has been 501 mm since January alone. In contrast, Namibia normally only receives approximately 450 mm of rain in the course of an entire year! CCF's dams are overflowing and the wildlife seem to be enjoying it as much as we are.

CHEETAH STRIDES CHALLENGE

Our virtual Save The Cheetah 5k was so well-received in 2020, that we're doing it again in 2021! This time, you get to choose your distance! This race is in honor of International Cheetah Day on December 4th, and before the race begins we need your help in designing this year's race medal!

How to participate:

- Download the coloring sheet to design your submission www.cheetah.org/usa/events/save-the-cheetah-5k-virtual-race/
- Keep CCF's programs in mind when filling in your cheetah outline. Research, Education, and Conservation submissions that directly refer to CCF's work will get extra points!
- Scan and email your design to: info@cheetah.org

Deadline for submission is March 31

One winner will be notified by email in early April. If your artwork is selected we will contact you for permissions to use your name, photo, and geographic location on CCF's promotional materials.

BECOME A CCF SPONSOR



PO Box 2496
Alexandria, VA. 22301

CCF's Resident Cheetahs and Livestock Guarding Dog Program need your support. For more information visit www.cheetah.org/get-involved/ways-to-give/sponsor/