

CHEETAHS:

A CELEBRATION OF SPEED AND ELEGANCE

Dr. Laurie Marker

Photography by
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Saving Africa's Most Endangered Big Cat

A century ago, cheetahs thrived in numbers of more than 100,000 and had a range that stretched across most of Africa and Asia. Because of multiple threats, including habitat loss, loss of prey, conflict with livestock and game farmers, lack of genetic diversity, climate change and illegal trade, the world's fastest land mammals are on a rapid decline. Today, there are fewer than 7,500 individuals remaining.

CHEETAH CONSERVATION FUND (CCF) is the global leader in research and conservation of cheetahs. Founded in Namibia in 1990 by Dr. Laurie Marker, CCF believes that understanding the cheetah's biology, ecology, and interactions with people is essential to saving the species from extinction. CCF's approach to conservation is holistic, meaning the needs of humans and wildlife sharing land are carefully considered and all stakeholders are given a voice. The process begins with research; CCF scientists study the way wild cheetahs live, and CCF staff use this data to inform the organization's education, conservation and livelihood development programs. CCF has helped Namibia's cheetah population rebound, and its signature programs serve as models for other predator projects throughout Africa.

CCF Signature Programs

- **Future Conservationists of Africa** – *wildlife education for school learners at all levels, impacting more than 550,000 Namibian students.*
- **Future Farmers of Africa** – *An integrated, livestock-wildlife farmland management training course impacting more than 10,000 rural Namibian families.*
- **CCF Livestock Guarding Dog Program** – *CCF Livestock Guarding Dogs are one of the most effective predator control tools available. CCF has placed more than 650 dogs with African livestock farmers.*
- **CCF Bush Project** – *CCF's habitat restoration effort creates more land for cheetahs and farmers to share and produces an award-winning, biomass energy product, Bushblok.*

'Tiny travelers' — A cheetah mother ever so gently carries her young to a new nest, moving them regularly to avoid detection by predators.

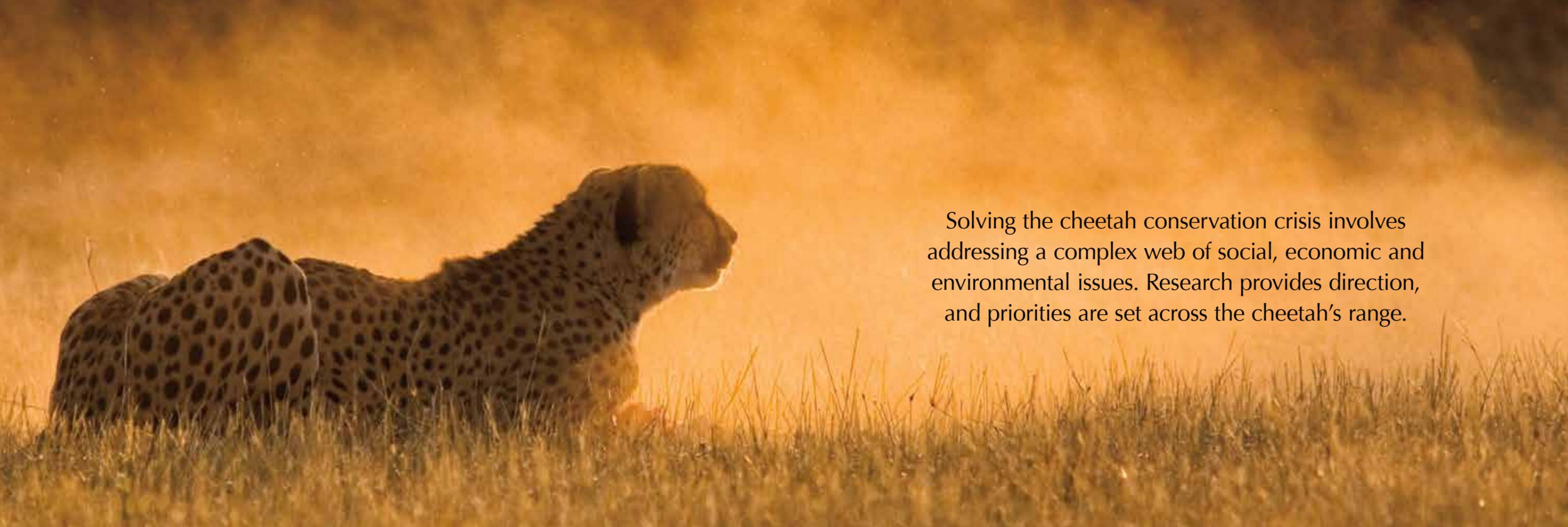


'Learning to keep a look out, just as Mom does' —
Vision develops over the first few months of life.
Cubs soon learn that it is important to keep a watchful
eye in the same direction as Mom, although they don't
often understand why or see what she is looking at.



From 4 months of age onward,
cheetah cubs are very active and playful.





Solving the cheetah conservation crisis involves addressing a complex web of social, economic and environmental issues. Research provides direction, and priorities are set across the cheetah's range.



Dr. Laurie Marker is a research scientist, conservation biologist and the Founder and Executive Director of Cheetah Conservation Fund (CCF). She has been studying cheetahs since 1974 and is one of the first persons to launch in-depth, *in situ* research into the species. To help mitigate threats in the wild, Dr. Marker launched CCF in the U.S. in 1990, and the following year, permanently relocated to Namibia. Under her leadership, CCF has grown from a small research base into an internationally recognized research, education and conservation institution dedicated to saving the wild cheetah.

Dr. Marker has contributed to most landmark studies involving the species, including the discovery of the cheetah's lack of genetic diversity, the mapping of the cheetah genome and the shocking 2016 report detailing the species' major decline, "Disappearing Spots." Initially rebuffed by Namibians fearing change, Dr. Marker's popular wildlife education programs and efforts to develop livelihoods for the poor communities who live alongside cheetahs have gained her the respect of an entire nation.

Dr. Marker has received many prestigious awards, including the E.O. Wilson Biodiversity Technology Pioneer Award, the Eleanor Roosevelt Val-Kill Medal Award, the Tyler Prize for the Environment and the Good Stewardship Award from the International Conservation Caucus Foundation. By intimately living with and studying cheetahs for nearly 40 years, Dr. Marker's perspective adds a depth to our understanding of cheetahs that is matchless. She holds a Doctorate of Philosophy from the University of Oxford in the United Kingdom.

Suzi Eszterhas is a professional wildlife photographer, based in California. She specializes in documenting the family lives of endangered species and is well-known for her unprecedented work with newborn animals. Her images are published in books, magazines, and newspapers all over the world, including *TIME*, *Smithsonian*, *BBC Wildlife*, *GEO*, *Scientific American*, *Audubon*, *Ranger Rick*, and *National Geographic Kids*. She has published sixteen books, including many books for children. Suzi has won numerous awards and is represented by the world's leading natural history agencies. Suzi is on the road for many months of the year, undertaking commissions and leading instructional photography tours and workshops everywhere from the poles to the tropics. Please visit www.suzieszterhas.com for more information.

