

CHEETAH STRIDES

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE CHEETAH CONSERVATION FUND



HIGHLIGHTS

PUPPIES GO TO WORK

CHEETAHS TO ZAMBIA

FARMER COURSES

**Cheetah Re-Wilding
and Re-Introductions**
Pg. 2



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

CCF CHEETAH RE-WILDING AND RE-INTRODUCTIONS



Chanel arrives at Erindi, her new, wild, home.

PHOTO: ELISABETH BRENTANO

FOUR LONG-TIME RESIDENT FEMALE CHEETAHS, CHANEL and the Chocolate sisters—Toblerone, Hershey and Nestle—graduated from CCF’s 4,000-hectare Bellebenno training camp to the 70,000-hectare Erindi Nature Reserve in late December as part of our ongoing research into cheetah re-wilding. Bellebenno, CCF’s game-fenced farm, serves as a “training ground” for orphaned captive cheetahs that show good potential for release. With plenty of prey, the farm is a safe place where cheetahs can practice and perfect their hunting skills. CCF’s Cheetah Tracker and Game Ranger, James Logan Slade, has trained CCF staff and student interns to track and follow the cats so they can be monitored around the clock

Since being released into Erindi, the four females

have remained together and hunted successfully several times. They’ve even faced off with Erindi’s lions.

The five formerly captive male cheetahs that were released into the NamibRand Nature Reserve in southern Namibia continue to thrive, and a female released shortly afterward appears to have recently given birth to two cubs, showing that CCF’s release model is working.

We hope to export this model to other countries very soon. We are working with World Wildlife Fund, the African Parks, and the Zambia Wildlife Authority to discuss re-introducing cheetahs in Zambia. We are continuing our discussions with officials in India about re-introducing the species into their grassland savannahs.

DOG SPOTLIGHT

NOT JUST A FEROCIOUS BARK



Isha locates her target atop a termite mound, then sits to signal her handler.

PHOTOS: CCF

CCF'S ANATOLIAN SHEPHERDS ARE FAMOUS THROUGH-out the world for their ability to protect livestock without harming predators by virtue of their loud bark. But it's the nose, not the mouth, of one Anatolian that makes her valuable to cheetah conservation. Isha is trained to locate cheetah scat so that an accurate census of the animals can be undertaken.

Estimates of the wild cheetah population range from as many as 15,000 to fewer than 10,000, with large areas where it is not known if cheetah still exist. Given their vast territories and elusive nature, cheetahs are particularly difficult to count. And yet many decisions—such as hunting quotas—are based on best estimates.

DNA advances have made it possible to identify

individual animals by their scat. But how is one to locate all the scat of one species in a large area?

Dogs are revolutionizing wildlife conservation because of their ability to locate an individual species' scat. CCF has two dogs, Isha, an Anatolian, and Finn, a border collie, trained to find cheetah scat. When the dogs locate a sample, they sit to signal their find. The coordinates of the scat are recorded and the scat taken back to CCF's genetics lab for analysis.

CCF hopes to add two more detection dogs, including one that can identify duplicate scat samples. Soon the dogs will be able to determine whether cheetahs remain in an area, and if so in what numbers, so that critical decisions on cheetah conservation can be made based on hard data, not educated guesses.

MORE PUPPIES GO TO WORK

IN AUGUST OF 2010 CCF'S FIRST LITTER OF Anatolian shepherds conceived through artificial insemination (AI) was born. Two of the three female puppies will bring new bloodlines into our breeding program, while the third was donated to Cheetah OutReach in South Africa for its breeding program. Five puppies from another litter were placed with Namibian communal farmers after the farmers attended "puppy day" at CCF. Prior to placement, CCF's dog program coordinators, Gebhardt Nikanor and Gail Potgieter, visited the farms to ensure that the puppies' new homes were suitable and to meet the applicants, most of whom had reported losing livestock to cheetahs and other predators.

During puppy day, the farmers are trained on how to care for and train their new puppies to become successful guarding dogs. They also are given information on other predator-friendly farming practices that can reduce livestock losses to cheetahs and other predators. The farmers are always eager to learn ways to keep their goats, sheep and cattle safe from all predators.

In addition to our Anatolian shepherds, we recently added three Kangal puppies to our breeding program: Aleya was imported from Germany, and Firat and Feliz came from France. All three quickly have become part of the dog/livestock family. This is especially true for young Firat, who never wants to leave his herd and howls when separated from them.

Kangals look similar to Anatolians and also have been used for thousands of years to protect livestock



Aleya, a female Kangal from Germany, recently joined CCF's livestock guarding dog program.

PHOTO: CCF

from predators. The Kangal breed is amazingly intelligent, and we are pleased to see how protective of their herd the puppies already are.

These young dogs represent a bright future for our guarding dog program, so their excellent progress as working dogs is especially encouraging. This year, we will continue to breed our adult dogs and hope to produce four litters: two from our Anatolian females, Uschi and Penda, and our first Kangal litters from Cazgir and Hediye.

In addition, Gail and Gebhardt are beginning a comprehensive survey of livestock guarding dog owners to determine whether having the dogs has changed their attitudes toward predators. Obviously, that is the goal of the program. We will be sure to keep you updated on the progress of that study and the livestock guarding dog program in general.

SWAMP CATS FOR ZAMBIA

ZAMBIA'S CHEETAH POPULATION IS ESTIMATED AT ONLY about 100 individuals, due to increased human populations. Today, Zambia is interested in reintroducing some carnivore species, including the cheetah, into areas where they once roamed. CCF is assisting the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) with the reintroduction of the cheetah into the nearly 3-million-acre Bangweulu Wetlands area in the northeast area of the country. Laurie Marker participated in a rapid survey of the area from Dec. 13-15. The survey team included Ian Stevenson, African Parks Director for the Bangweulu Wetlands project; Dr. Matt Becker, CEO of the *Zambian Carnivore Programme*; and Rhoda N. Kachali, wildlife ecologist from Zambia Wildlife Authority. The survey assessed various factors within the Bangweulu

landscapes including habitat, prey base, other carnivores and proximity and size of local communities.

The team concluded that the reintroduction of cheetahs into the Bangweulu Wetlands is feasible and that the charismatic cat would help bolster the public's support of the nation's conservation efforts.

CCF has been asked to make recommendations for the re-introduction and to lead the team of experts involved with sourcing animals, translocation, rehabilitation and monitoring, and training of Zambian counterparts. CCF has suggested translocating a minimum of 16 cheetahs over the course of four years and adding another eight individuals every other year.

We will keep you updated on these exciting projects as they progress.

DONOR PROFILE

CHEETAH GIRL'S DREAM

"MOMMY, IF I WAIT UNTIL I AM A GROWN-UP TO HELP cheetahs it might be too late. There may not be any left to save." So said six-year-old Caraline Jackson to her mother, Hope, on Christmas Eve. Hope forwarded the little girl's worries to the CCF US staff via email.

Caraline has reason to worry. While CCF is making good progress in Namibia, the organization's practices must be adopted throughout the cheetah's range and isolated pockets of cheetahs reconnected to form a more stable population.

Caraline has vowed to help in any way she can: She has emptied her piggy bank, is making bracelets to sell and is planning a bake sale. She even has a Facebook page about cheetahs. We are very grateful for her efforts.

It's easy to throw your hands up and say "This is too big of a problem for one person to change." Luckily



Future conservationist Caraline Jackson

PHOTO: HOPE JACKSON

Caraline doesn't feel that way. And we hope she never does. Because one person can have a huge impact, either by donating to CCF or, as in Caraline's case, by inspiring others to get involved.

Please help us to help Caraline realize her dream of having the cheetah around when she's a grown-up by donating today to CCF, either in the enclosed envelope or by visiting www.cheetah.org.

CCF FARMER EDUCATION TAKES A NEW ROUTE



Visiting farmers take part in a medical workup on a cheetah in CCF's clinic.

PHOTO: CCF

ONE OF THE MOST SUCCESSFUL COMPONENTS OF CCF'S education program has been its farmer courses, which teach everything from nonlethal methods of predator control, to proper predator kill identification, to farm equipment maintenance. Over the years, CCF staff have taught thousands of farmers at our model farm in Namibia. But transportation can be very difficult to find in many parts of rural Namibia, and it's hard for farmers to leave their properties for a week at a time. Thus, beginning in 2011, CCF is taking its courses to the farmers. CCF will target communal conservancies, where groups of farmers—mostly subsistence—are

trying to entice wildlife to return so that they can develop ecotourism in their areas. CCF is happy to teach them how they can protect their livestock from predators and therefore create a balanced ecosystem.

The Solvay Okorusu Flourspar Mine Community Trust has donated two Nissan bakkies (trucks) to CCF to support CCF's Future Farmers of Namibia Program. Additionally, the Dutch Zoo Conservation Fund donated €10,000 toward the purchase of a trailer, tires and gas for the bakkies. CCF is extremely grateful to the Community Trust and the Dutch Zoo Conservation Fund for these generous gifts.

FIELD NOTE

2011 FROM A TO Z

What an amazing year 2010 was! It started with a trip to Angola to determine whether cheetahs remained in the war-torn country. Not only did we find playtrees with cheetah scat, we also saw two male cheetahs race out from behind some trees and speed out of sight. The year ended with a trip to Zambia to assess whether a large area in the northeast would be appropriate for the introduction of cheetahs. We determined that the area would be suitable for cheetahs. These survey



Dr. Laurie Marker • Founder & Executive Director

trips to Angola and Zambia were only the beginning. Now we must help Angola set up a conservation plan that will hopefully grow its population. And we have to source cheetahs for Zambia and work out the logistics of introducing them to their new home. Both will take years but will help defragment isolated cheetah populations in Africa. I hope you'll join us on this remarkable journey.

MEET LAURIE DURING HER SPRING TOUR

Laurie's 2011 spring visit to the United States will last from April 24 to May 31. Below are a few of the places she plans to include in her tour (as of press time). For information on specific events, check out Laurie's tour calendar at www.cheetah.org.

Northern California

Southern California (pending)

Portland, Oregon

Washington, DC

Denver, Colorado

Indianapolis, Indiana

Omaha, Nebraska

Dallas, Texas

Chicago, Illinois (pending)

Houston, Texas (pending)

Tampa, Florida

JOIN THE RUN FOR THE CHEETAH NEAREST YOU!

The Run for the Cheetah is a series of fun and competitive events for runners/walkers and families alike, held to raise awareness about the endangered cheetah and to raise funds to support the Cheetah Conservation Fund's programs. The dates and locations for this year's runs are:

April 23, Chicago; Montrose at the Lake • April 30, Phoenix; Papago Park • May 1, Portland; Oregon Zoo

For more information, visit www.runforthecheetah.org.