

# CHEETAH STRIDES



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE CHEETAH CONSERVATION FUND

FALL TOUR

RE-WILDING

WISH LIST

GUARD DOGS

GOAT FARMING



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

## COME SEE WHAT WE DO

When the fall comes, I travel across the United States and to Europe, reconnecting with old friends and meeting new ones. There are parties – like the DC Gala and “Big Cat Big Party” – and there are lectures, dinners, lunches and meetings. There are a lot of invitations.

And yet, I want to issue just one more invitation – to you. I want to invite you personally to visit CCF and see what we do. Ideally, we’d love for you to come to Namibia, stay in our Babson Guest House, or come as a volunteer, and see our programmes up close. But if a trip to Africa simply isn’t in the cards for you, please visit us at one of our events in the US or Europe during my Fall Tour. See the box on this page for our full tour schedule to date.

Even if you can’t make it to see me on tour, please visit us at our website, [www.cheetah.org](http://www.cheetah.org), subscribe to our blog, “like” us on Facebook, or follow us on Twitter. We post great information about the work we’re doing. Our favourite stories are about the successes we’re seeing that give us hope for the cheetah’s future. Every day it seems there is something new and wonderful

happening, and we want to share as many of those achievements and experiences as possible with you. All of these great things at CCF are happening because you make it possible. Just as the cheetah’s long and flexible backbone is necessary in order for it to achieve great speed, you are a necessary backbone of our work as we speed towards our goals.

We want you to come see what we do – in part because we’re proud of our success and want to share it with you, but also because we want to thank you for everything you’ve done to bring us this far. But the race isn’t over yet. The cheetah is still the most endangered of the African big cats. We are a long way from the finish line, and we need your help to get there. Please consider a donation to CCF today, using the included envelope or our website at [www.cheetah.org](http://www.cheetah.org).

Looking forward to seeing you on tour!

Cheetah purrs,



Dr. Laurie Marker



*The living room at CCF’s Babson House, which serves as exclusive accommodation for very special overnight safari guests at CCF. Guests at the Babson House enjoy luxurious quarters, meals cooked by a private chef, and the opportunity to meet our cheetahs up close.*

### SEE DR. LAURIE MARKER ON TOUR!

Dr. Laurie Marker will be touring the U.S. this fall. Her attendance is confirmed at the events listed below. Details on these and other events will be listed on the CCF calendar at [www.cheetah.org](http://www.cheetah.org). Please join us!

D.C. Chapter Gala, Washington, DC	September 19
Cheetah Party, Oklahoma City, OK	September 27
Safari West, Santa Rosa, CA	October 10
WCN Expo, San Francisco, CA	October 13
Happy HallowZoo, San Jose, CA	October 15
Denver Zoo, Denver, CO	October 17
Big Cat Big Party, Portland, OR	October 21

## CCF RE-WILDINGS CONTINUE: THE “LEOPARD PEN BOYS”

Although the Cheetah Conservation Fund is currently home to 45 captive cheetahs, our organisation’s main focus is not keeping cheetahs in captivity. That said, when a cheetah is orphaned at a very young age, there are no other alternatives except captivity. These cheetahs would be unable to care for themselves and learn the skills a wild cheetah needs to survive. However, CCF has shown that some of the orphan cheetahs which have had enough experience living in the wild with their mom do have a chance to return to the wild. CCF’s re-wilding programme was designed to maximise this chance and we have successfully reintroduced a number of cheetahs via this programme.

At the end of June, the cheetahs we call the ‘Leopard Pen Boys’ (Omdillo, Anakin, Chester, and Obi Wan) were released into the 70,000 hectare Erindi Private Game Reserve, beginning their life anew in the wild as part of CCF’s re-wilding programme.

Earlier in the spring, these four males were released in CCF’s 4,000-ha training camp and closely monitored to see if they were demonstrating adequate hunting skills and instincts to warrant release into the wild. The Leopard Pen Boys performed well in the training camp, and it was agreed they should be released when an appropriate opportunity was found.

Fortunately, Erindi Private Game Reserve agreed to provide Omdillo, Anakin, Chester and Obi Wan a new home. Erindi is already home to two of CCF’s re-wilded female cheetahs: Chanel and Hershey, released there in early January 2011.

On Wednesday 27 June, the four cheetahs were darted and fitted with VHF radio collars, which will be used to track and monitor the cheetahs to ensure their continued success. The following day the cats were crated and loaded onto a truck at CCF and taken south to Erindi. After a long drive on a dusty dirt road, they arrived at the release site; an open area with large trees, a giant termite mound and a watering hole nearby.



*Into the wild!*



*The Leopard Boys enjoy a meal in their new home.*

During the 14 days of the post-release monitoring, CCF’s research assistants, Ryan Sucaet and Soujanya Shrivastav, recorded the cheetahs’ positions throughout the Erindi Private Game Reserve, as they explored and marked their new territory.

The re-wilding of the ‘Leopard Pen Boys’ has been successful so far. They have avoided resident male cheetahs and other predators. The next milestone in the wild would be to find females to mate with, completing the success of this re-wilding by fostering a new generation of cheetahs in the Erindi Private Game Reserve.

## WISH LIST DONATIONS ASSIST CCF'S CLINIC AND RESEARCH EFFORTS



*An X-ray being taken of a cheetah's rear leg at CCF's clinic using the new digital radiograph machine*

CCF's clinical research efforts are boosted dramatically by equipment donations generously provided by people who review our website's Clinic Wish List. These very specific donations have the ability to move our conservation operations forward in a very dramatic way.

The presence of a digital radiograph machine (X-ray machine) onsite at CCF means that our clinic staff can obtain diagnoses faster, and can engage in more detailed research. The unit that was supplied to our

## SHOW ME YOUR TEETH: DR. PROFITT

Keeping the resident cheetahs at CCF healthy is a top priority. All of them get annual physical examinations. For the last 20 years, our local human dentist, Dr. Dennis Profitt of Otjiwarongo, has helped any cheetah, wild or captive, that has needed dental work. As with most top carnivorous predators, good dental health is essential to a cheetah's overall well-being. Recent dental work that Dr. Profitt has done for our cheetahs includes performing two extractions and root canal for Rosy, and two extractions for Misty.

More recently, Harry, one of the Hogwarts trio (which includes Hermione and Ron as well), went to see Dr. Profitt to address two teeth affected by periodontal

clinic and installed this past April, was put to use soon afterwards in the diagnosis and treatment of a growth on Tiger Lily's inside front left wrist. We're incredibly grateful to Mr. Mark Cater, a CCF supporter in the UK who donated the machine. Earlier in the year he also donated an ultrasound machine.

In May, Mike and Rebecca Ross of Dan Inject Dart Guns in the United States donated a top of the line dart gun to CCF for use in immobilising animals. Our previous darting system was quite antiquated and had some technical problems. The acquisition of this equipment has already made it more reliable and safer to dart animals here at CCF, and has already proven useful as part of our re-wilding efforts.

The items on our Wish List range from very expensive pieces of equipment to ordinary items like AA batteries and printer cartridges. Consult our "Wish List" under "How You Can Help" to see what you can contribute.



*Dr. Profitt does some dental work for Harry*

disease. Harry handled her procedure well and was up and participating in a cheetah run the following day.

CCF is fortunate to have Dr. Profitt's assistance to perform dental work on all of our cheetahs. His work is so important to CCF's cheetahs that he was recently recognised as our 2012 Cheetah Conservationist of the Year at our 14th Annual Gala Fundraising Dinner at the Windhoek Country Club.

## NEW DOGS IN TOWN! SCAT DETECTING DOGS ARRIVE AT CCF

Those who are familiar with our operations know a lot about our Livestock Guarding Dog Programme. But our newer programme uses dogs to find cheetah scat. And for this programme we just got two new dogs at CCF, courtesy of celebrated Australian dog trainer Steve Austin. Tiger and Billy are English Springer spaniels who have been trained by Steve to detect cheetah scat from up to 70 metres away. After acclimation, the dogs will be joining Finn and Isha, CCF’s existing scat sniffing dogs, in the effort to find cheetah scat in order to conduct our genetic research and census efforts.

The ability to utilise cheetah scat found in the wild will bolster our efforts to research the cheetah population more thoroughly, because scat allows us to extract DNA, thus providing more information about the individual animal and its relatedness within the population. In addition, we can find out other vital characteristics, including the cheetah’s diet, all without having to trap or disturb the animal in any way.

We’re so excited to have these additions to



*Our new specially-trained scat detection dogs, Tiger and Billy, just after their arrival in Namibia.*

CCF’s research team and we are grateful to Steve Austin for his important contribution to our work! Steve will come back to CCF in September to work with us and these new dogs.



### KIDS IN THE SPOTLIGHT: ISABELLE’S “AFRICA CAMP”

A longtime CCF supporter, Isabelle (with some help from her mom, Kristy) created a 3-day long “Africa Camp” for her friends as a fundraiser for CCF. Nine kids signed up for the camp, which highlighted different activities from CCF’s cheetah workbooks and featured three different craft projects, including a mask, a messenger pouch and an animal painting!

Isabelle’s efforts raised over \$1,200 for CCF! We’re so proud of her efforts, and you can go to the Kids4Cheetahs section of our website to see more photos from Isabelle’s camp, as well as get instructions on how you can make a mask too! Thanks to Isabelle and her Africa campers!

# CONSERVATION

## CHECKING IN WITH THE LIVESTOCK GUARDING DOG PROGRAMME

Our Livestock Guarding Dog Programme is so successful in part because of our thorough concern and assistance for the dogs throughout their lifespan, and in recent months, we've seen that demonstrated clearly.

Our first litter of Kangals has been placed. Placement with a farmer happens when a puppy is eight weeks old. The young dog stays with younger livestock for the first few weeks. A three months, the dog will go out with the herder and the livestock to begin habituating it to the behaviour of the livestock and wild animals. Farmers must participate in training programmes on how to work with the dogs and make them effective livestock guarding dogs. A well-trained, well-cared-for Anatolian shepherd or Kangal is an imposing barrier against the predation of its herd.

Over the past few months, our LSGD team, Gebhardt Nikanor and Anja Bradley, has been visiting CCF dogs in the Otavi, Tsumeb, and Kamanjab districts near CCF. During these regular visits we talk to the farmers and herders about the dog, and have them answer questionnaires about the dogs' performance and health. We also apply routine vaccinations and provide medical



*CCF's Kangal Feliz and her puppies with CCF staff.*

supplies to help ensure that the dogs' health is a priority.

Occasionally, we find dogs that for various reasons, are in poor health or exhibiting poor performance. These dogs are removed from that specific farm, evaluated, and placed on another farm if appropriate.

When a dog is unable to continue working, a home is found for the dog as a companion animal. When our own CCF dogs are retired, they live out the rest of their lives here at CCF as a valued member of our community. We are sad because this month we lost Shades, an Anatolian shepherd who had been protecting CCF's own kraal of goats for over 12 years. Shades had been retired, but still lived in the kraal—such was his bond with his former charges. His health deteriorated rapidly and as he was in great distress, Shades was euthanised. We all miss him terribly.

But, as they say, the circle of life continues, and on Friday, 10 August, one of CCF's Kangal dogs, Feliz, gave birth to six puppies, three male and three female. Sadly one of the males was stillborn, but the remaining five will become part of our growing and successful LSGD programme!



*Our friend Shades who guarded the goat kraal at CCF for 12 years. We miss him.*

## FRIENDLY NEIGHBOURHOOD FARMERS: THE WATERBERG INITIATIVE



*Giraffe on the plains on CCF lands with the Waterberg Plateau in view.*

Since 1998, Namibia has used “conservancy” areas collaboratively managed by the community to protect its treasure trove of wildlife. We continue supporting the Greater Waterberg Complex (GWC), a group of custodians, managers and owners that share a common vision for the management and development of an area that covers some 1.77 million hectares around the Waterberg Plateau Park and includes the eastern communal lands, the Waterberg National Park and commercial farmland surrounding the park, including CCF.

In June four visiting professors from Cornell University and CCF had a meeting with community members of the GWC to begin developing plans in this region for community-based livelihood programmes. The team also worked with us on our goat dairy and creamery design, goat nutrition, and other projects. Through a donation from CCF Trustee, Manny Freidman, we will be developing a creamery this year. Currently, CCF’s dairy project is selling its goat cheese to stores and lodges throughout Namibia.

CCF’s goat farm is an excellent example of the collaborative,

community-based model of conservation. CCF’s advice to farmers regarding predator friendly farming techniques carries weight with Namibian farmers in part because CCF itself raises livestock and has a working farm, making it a peer-to-peer model of education.

Melba Tjozongoro, who was named 2012 Cheetah Conservation Farmer of the Year, is an excellent example of this. Her father was a small stock farmer and she fell in love with the goats and sheep when she was young. She had always farmed with small stock as well as cattle, but at a subsistence level. Today she is manages extension officers who work with communal farmers.

In 2004 she attended one of CCF’s week-long integrated livestock, wildlife and predator management courses. She learned that livestock, especially small stock, must be cared for with a herder or a guarding dog. She was also excited to learn that donkeys can assist in guarding calves. (Many farmers in Namibia have donkeys, but many do not know how protective and aggressive donkeys can be.) Melba realised she could make more money through good management of her small stock, and have a more rapid return than with cattle.



*Dr. Laurie Marker and Colleen Sorensen, one of our supporters, meet the new kids in the kraal.*

Since that time, Melba’s farming operations have grown significantly, and she has been an example to all Namibian farmers with her determination to learn farming skills, her desire to reduce livestock-predator conflict, and her work in educating new farmers.

Meanwhile, CCF’s farm, like Melba’s, is growing – this month saw the birth of several new kids in the kraal, and CCF is producing cheese and other dairy products that are sold locally, providing a small income from the goat farming operations.



[www.cheetah.org](http://www.cheetah.org)

*The race for survival is on. Help us win it!*

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