

# CHEETAH STRIDES

ISSUE  
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The newsletter of the Cheetah Conservation Fund

SPRING TOUR

GENETICS LAB

RAINBOW

BREEDING DOGS

ILLEGAL PET TRADE



Photo by Christophe Lepetit



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

## WORKING TOGETHER

I've been preparing for a TED talk at TEDx Portland this spring. In figuring out what I want to tell the TED audience about CCF, I am faced with an interesting dilemma. We do what we do because we're most concerned with saving the cheetah – an icon of speed and elegance. But to save the cheetah, we have to reach the world in which the cheetah lives, and assure that the cheetah's place in that world is secured.

It's easy to wonder what raising goats and breeding dogs and making cheese and harvesting thornbush has to do with saving cheetahs, and the answer is simple: it all works together. Only using an integrated approach, advancing all of our individual programmes together, do we have a hope of really making a difference for the cheetah.

When I go on tour, I am heartened by the enthusiasm I find. People love the cheetah and want to help. Often, however, they think that because they can't actually come to Africa, that they can't actually help. That's just not true. I've often said that to save the cheetah we have to save the world. But if our efforts to save the cheetah are going to work, the whole world needs to work with us. And everyone can help save the cheetah right now, right where they are.

When you come to one of our tour events, and bring a friend with you, you're working to save the cheetah. When you give to CCF, you're working to save the cheetah. When you share our Facebook posts or retweet our material on Twitter, you're working to save the cheetah. When you work with a local CCF Chapter, you are working to save the cheetah. And every time you share your concern for the cheetah with friends and family, you are raising awareness and helping us to save the cheetah

The cheetah is Africa's most endangered big cat. We are grateful for all the work you have done as a CCF friend for the cheetah; it has made a difference. I'm glad I'll be able to share our work with the audience at TEDx Portland, and at our tour events. Please consider furthering your work to save the cheetah, by donating to CCF using the included envelope, or by visiting our website at [www.cheetah.org](http://www.cheetah.org).

I'm looking forward to continuing to work with you.

For cheetahs everywhere,



Dr. Laurie Marker



*Dr. Laurie Marker, Ignatius Davids, and Namibian school learners. CCF recently began its 2013 school visits*

### SEE DR. LAURIE MARKER ON TOUR!

Dr. Laurie Marker will be touring the U.S. from 25 April to 14 May 2013. Her attendance at events in the metropolitan areas listed below is confirmed. Details on these and other events are available on the CCF calendar at [www.cheetah.org](http://www.cheetah.org). Please join us!

Portland, OR

Vancouver, BC

New York City

Millbrook, NY

San Francisco, CA

Washington, DC

Houston, TX

San Diego, CA

Los Angeles, CA

## ANATOMY OF A RESCUE: WELCOME RAINBOW!

The call came in on 8 February 2013, a local farmer had found a starved, orphaned cheetah cub by the side of the road and had brought it back to his farm. After a week of trying to nurture her back to health, he asked if we come pick it up? Of course we could.

As we drove some 150 miles south of the purplish-blue and burnt orange of the Waterberg Plateau, the day had grown clear and bright. The rains had stormed through only hours before, and as we drove we noticed vivid rainbows stretched across the African sky.



*Because of her starved condition, it was necessary to feed Rainbow only small meals at first.*

We arrived at the farm, and were guided to where the cheetah cub was, in a small cage. She was scared, and while the farmer had been able to give her a little food during the week, she was very thin. We placed her in our transport crate and made the long drive back to our Field Research and Education Centre. She was given the name Rainbow, only natural given the bursts of colour that had arced across the sky on our way to fetch her.

Assuring the health and survival of the cub became first priority on her arrival at CCF. We took her blood to help evaluate her condition. She was weighed and measured – a scant 5 kilograms, which is very thin for what we believe is a four month old cub. Next she was given meat and calcium supplements. Given her nearly starved state, she needed small meals to aid her



*This is where we found Rainbow when we arrived at the farm*

recovery. Later came her feline distemper and rabies vaccinations, along with deworming. Over the next few days, her condition stabilised, and we were able to include a bone with some meat as part of her feeding protocol.

While she is not fully restored to health yet, she is growing stronger. Rainbow is proving to have the temperament of a normal cheetah cub, hissing at humans, but growing acclimated to the Centre, and to the presence of other cheetahs. Usually, a cub separated from her mother at an age as young as Rainbow's regrettably can never be returned to the wild. Eventually, Rainbow will be integrated with our other resident non-releaseable cheetahs. CCF will always answer a call from a farmer to rescue a cheetah, and we're glad we are able to give Rainbow a safe home.



*Rainbow is doing well now. She recently weighed in at 9kg.*

## GOOD GENES: CCF'S GENETICS LAB MAKES ADVANCES



*Dr. Anne Schmidt-Kuntzel works with E. Fabiano, a Pd.D student, in CCF's genetic lab*

The Life Technologies Conservation Genetics Laboratory at CCF is now a fully-functioning, state of the art genetic research facility, the only one of its kind *in-situ* at a wildlife conservation facility in Africa. It is already starting to prove its value to cheetah conservation efforts. On 15 January 2013, the *Journal of Zoo and Wildlife Medicine* published "Diagnosis Based Treatment in Captive and Wild Cheetahs (*Acinonyx jubatus*)," a study addressing parasite load and treatment in captive and wild cheetahs. It's the 7th study that has been published utilising research from our genetics lab since its completion in 2009.

The CCF scientists used cheetah scat –which they call "black gold"-- in a comparative study identifying four species of intestinal parasites and comparing parasite loads and efficacy of treatment between wild and captive cheetah populations.

The study was authored by Marie Mény D.M.V.; Anne Schmidt-Küntzel, D.M.V., Ph.D.; and Laurie L Marker, D.Phil. Dr. Marie Mény is a veterinary student from the

École Nationale Vétérinaire de Toulouse, France, doing an internship at CCF at the time of the study.

The study illustrates why a genetics lab at CCF is such an exciting development. Because of the availability of cheetah scat from both captive and wild cheetahs at CCF's Field Research and Conservation Centre, researchers have a unique opportunity to compare captive and wild populations present in the same general locale and over the same period. Scientists can analyse the scat samples in CCF's laboratory to verify the identities of individual cheetahs

being studied, without having to send them elsewhere. "Having a genetics lab on site allows us to do our research more quickly, and opens the door to research collaborations with other organisations and entities," says Dr. Anne Schmidt-Küntzel, CCF's Research Geneticist and Assistant Director for Animal Health and Research.

The genetics lab at CCF would not have been possible without the contributions of equipment from Applied Biosystems (now Life Technologies) and the Ohstrom Foundation, and Geneious genetic analysis software from Biomatters. Additional contributions came from donors like you and the surplus department of the National Institutes of Health.

Researchers and Namibian graduate students are in the lab every day, working on several different projects that will advance the level of knowledge we have about the cheetah. "We're grateful to our supporters for making this incredible facility possible," says Dr. Schmidt-Küntzel.

## PHOTOGRAPHER FRANS LANTING HIGHLIGHTS CCF AT EVENTS

Noted wildlife photographer Frans Lanting and filmmaker Christine Eckstrom, along with cinematographer Greg Wilson and producer Sarah Hibbard, joined Dr. Laurie Marker as featured guests for a CCF fundraiser at the editorial room in National Geographic's Headquarters in Washington, DC on 12 December 2012.

Cinematographer Greg Wilson, who shot the groundbreaking footage showing a cheetah running at full speed in high definition and slow motion, talked briefly about producing the unprecedented footage. Frans Lanting, a resident photographer at National Geographic, explained that the editorial room the guests were enjoying is the "inner sanctum" of National Geographic Magazine, and many of the critical editorial decisions about the magazine are made here. The reception



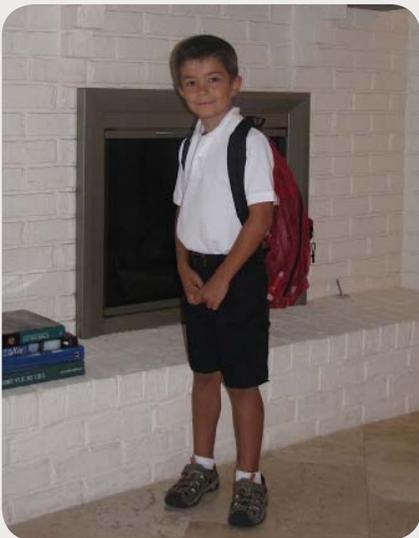
*Filmmaker Christine Eckstrom, Photographer Frans Lanting, and Dr. Laurie Marker*

preceded a talk by Frans, Christine and Greg as part of its Masters of Photography lecture series, and attendees were invited to the lecture as guests of CCF.

In January, Frans Lanting and Christine Eckstrom highlighted CCF as part of their "Cheetahs on the Run" lecture at the Rio Theater in Santa Cruz, California. As a surprise at the end of their evening show, Frans and Christine linked to Dr. Laurie Marker at CCF

in Namibia via Skype. Dr. Marker even took her iPad outside, so that she could introduce the audience to some of the cheetahs at CCF.

CCF is grateful to Frans for allowing his incredible work to serve as a platform to highlight the plight of the cheetah, and CCF's conservation efforts. We look forward to further collaborations with Frans Lanting and Christine Eckstrom in the future.



### KIDS IN THE SPOTLIGHT: DORIAN'S GIFT

When Dorian was five and a half years old, he told his father that he wanted to grow up faster. His dad asked him why, and he said he was afraid that by the time he was 20 all the wild cheetahs would be gone and so it would be too late for him to try to help save them.

Dorian's dad told him not to worry because he didn't have to wait to help the cheetahs. They talked about how he might help even while he is still a kid. Dorian decided to ask all of his family to give money instead of toys, so that he could donate to help save cheetahs for his sixth birthday. Dorian raised \$300.

Thanks Dorian!

## THE NEXT GENERATION OF PROTECTORS -- CCF PUPPIES

A mother dog gives birth to a litter. The photos of cute puppies are heart warming. But when the puppies are going to grow up to be Livestock Guarding Dogs, a litter is about so much more. CCF has been busy breeding our Anatolian shepherd and Kangal dogs. Both have been bred for centuries for the qualities that make for a good Livestock Guarding Dog, and continued attention to those bloodlines helps to make CCF's Livestock Guarding Dog Programme such a success.

CCF pays close attention to every aspect of the breeding process – choosing breeding pairs carefully, tracking which dogs are bred, and closely monitoring the aftermath. Sometimes it means employing sophisticated techniques like artificial insemination. In 2010, CCF's female Anatolian Uschi was bred to an Anatolian named Zor from the United States. Zor's bloodlines brought a diversity to our Namibian programme. Uschi was artificially inseminated with Zor's imported sperm, and gave birth to a litter of three females.

One of those puppies, Cappuccino (affectionately called "Cheena") went to live with Wanda Nesbitt, the United States Ambassador to Namibia, and her husband



*CCF's very special dog, Cappuccino, with her new litter of puppies.*

Jim at their home in Windhoek. They had recently lost their dog, and would be able to provide the care needed for a dog with Cheena's precious bloodlines. This past year, Cheena was successfully bred to one of CCF's Anatolians and has produced a litter of eight puppies – four males and four females. Cheena's litter is the first litter of puppies in Namibia that has been born to a dog birthed via artificial insemination.

Cheena is not the only successful breeding this spring at CCF. Hediye, one of CCF's Kangals, is now caring for six puppies – four males and two females. The puppies are all doing well, are eating solid food and beginning to take their first halting steps on the path to becoming the next generation of Livestock Guarding Dogs. We're also waiting for news on the breeding between male Firat and female Kiri, two Kangals. Anatolian Pinda is also pregnant. CCF's careful attention to breeding is part of why our dogs are so successful in their tasks of guarding livestock herds, and why Namibian farmers are willing to stay on a two year long waiting list for a CCF dog. Puppies are placed at 10 weeks after neutering and shots. Regular follow-up care is also provided, especially during the first two years.



*Hediye's Kangal puppies are growing fast, and will soon join the ranks of CCF's Livestock Guarding Dog Programme*

## CCF WORKS TO STOP THE ILLEGAL PET TRADE IN CHEETAHS

There are many people who want to own beautiful things, and nothing is more beautiful than a cheetah. Consequently, in some parts of the world, people want to buy cheetahs as pets. Many of these individuals believe that their cheetah was captive bred, and sold to them legally. However, cheetahs are notoriously difficult to breed, and the demand for pet cheetahs outstrips the ability of breeders to keep up.

Increasingly, those that supply pet cheetahs (usually cubs), obtain the animals from sources that operate illegally, taking the cheetahs from the wild, and in some cases killing the mother to gain the cubs. Every year, dozens of cheetahs are lost to the illegal pet trade.

CCF has been involved in this issue since 2005, when we assisted in the rescue of two cheetah cubs tied to a rope in a small village in Ethiopia.

Although the cubs eventually both died, they gave us the opportunity to initiate ongoing action to combat the illegal pet trade. Since then, we have facilitated confiscations and kept careful records of every case known to us. We also became founding members of the Coalition Against Wildlife Trafficking (CAWT), founded by CCF Board Member Claudia McMurray during her tenure as U.S. Assistant Secretary of State.

Last October, illegal wildlife trafficking as an issue took centre stage at the U.S. State Department. CCF was invited to several meetings, along with other wildlife organisations, to discuss actions to combat illegal wildlife trade. These meetings culminated in a major address by U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton

on 8 November 2012 in which she announced that the United States would be taking the view that illegal wildlife trade posed a threat to national security and new action would be taken to combat it in Africa and around the world.

On 15 November, the International Conservation Caucus Foundation (ICCF), organised a hearing before a joint subcommittee of the U.S. Congress, offering

testimony from U.S. Under Secretary of State for Economic, Business, and Agricultural Affairs Robert D. Hormats and others, addressing illegal wildlife trafficking and offering suggested legislative initiatives. CCF was invited to attend the hearing and through ICCF offered written testimony.

On December 11, 2012, during a brief U.S. visit,

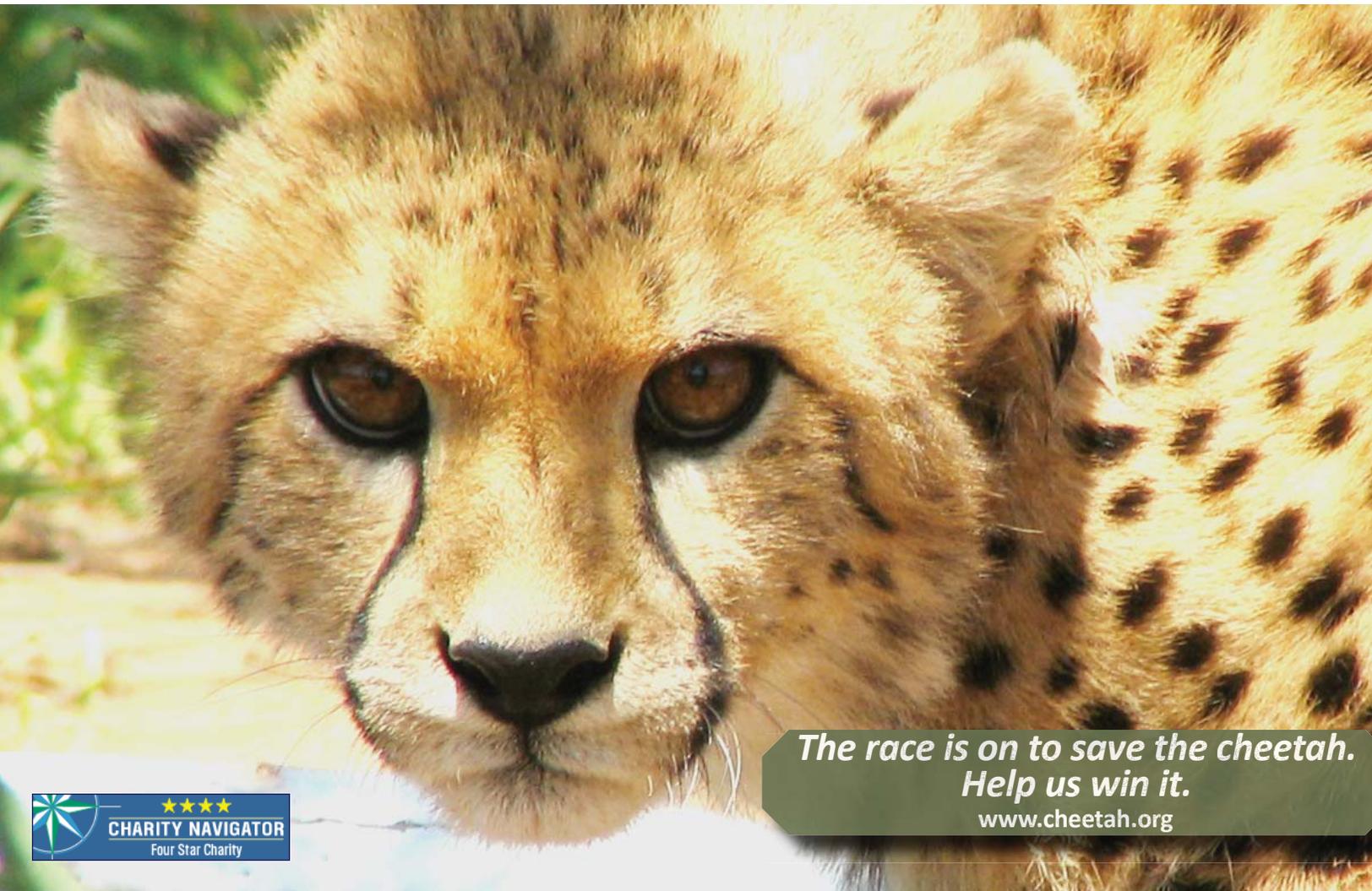
Dr. Laurie Marker met directly with Under Secretary Hormats at his office at the U.S. State Department in Washington, DC. The United Arab Emirates recently enacted a ban on the importation of cheetahs for personal or commercial purposes, and the March 2013 Conference of the Parties for the Convention on the International Trade of Endangered Species (CITES) is for the first time including the illegal pet trade in cheetahs as an agenda item submitted to CITES for inclusion by three of its parties, Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda, and utilising data provided by CCF. CCF will continue to work on this issue, lending its information, expertise and assistance where possible so that cheetahs in the wild are no longer taken as pets.



*Under Secretary of State Robert D. Hormats and Dr. Laurie Marker meeting in Washington, DC*

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