

CHEETAH STRIDES

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The newsletter of the Cheetah Conservation Fund

RETURN TO UAE

REWILDING

REBUILDING

ANNA FENNINGER

LUCKY & FELIZ

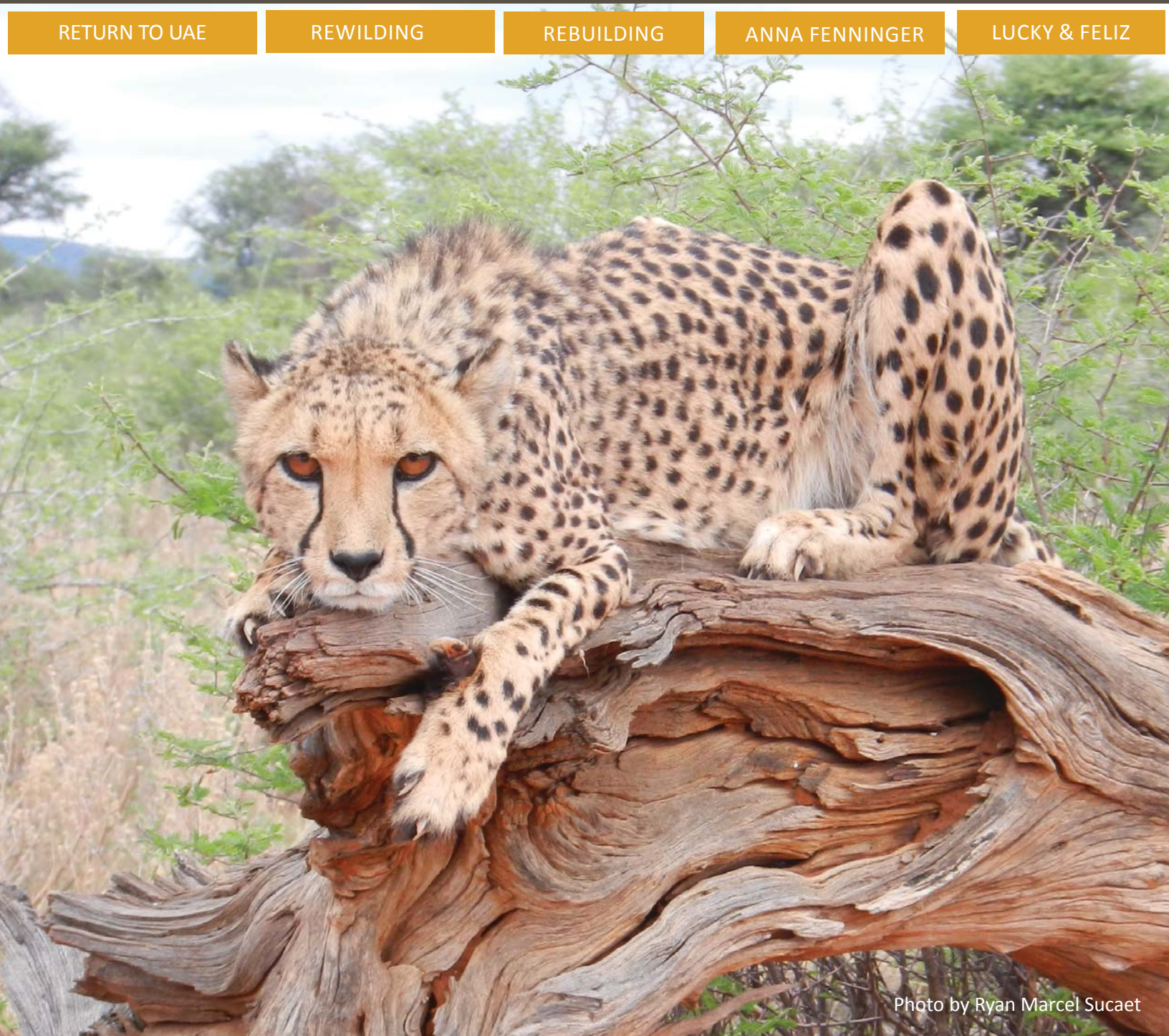


Photo by Ryan Marcel Sucaet



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

VICTORY

I've been honored to receive many accolades over the course of my career, but I am certain that nothing compares to the exhilaration that comes from standing atop the gold medal podium at an Olympic Games. I'm very proud of my friend and CCF Ambassador, Austrian skier Anna Fenninger, for winning gold and silver in Sochi. Anna, her cheetah helmet, and her work for Cheetah Conservation Fund were the talk of the games, and we are so proud of her victory.

It's rare in the conservation world that one feels able to declare victory. The problems are complicated and interconnected, and there is always more work to do. It can be tempting to lose oneself in the vastness of the work, and become discouraged.

And yet, there are recent moments that are victories for CCF of which we are all very proud. Our recovery from the fire at CCF's International Research and Education Centre is proceeding well. In December, we re-wilded three more cheetahs. I've just returned from a CCF UK event with our UK Patrons, Jonathan and Angela Scott, as well as several other events in Europe. And, after almost 40 years, my first popular book about my work, "A Future for Cheetahs," featuring photos by Suzi Eszterhas, will be available for purchase.

Our recent efforts to work with captive cheetah facilities in the United Arab Emirates also saw a great victory. In late January, members of my staff and I went back to the UAE. The growing relationships and exchange of information on the importance of proper animal husbandry and veterinary care that are now being discussed in this region are encouraging.

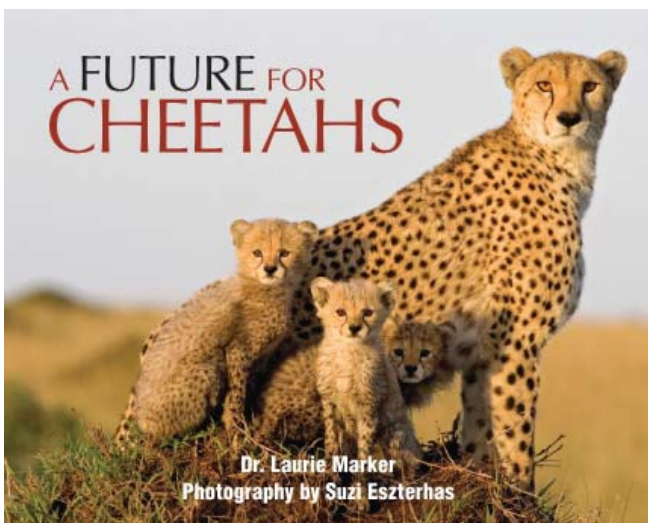
Despite all these victories, the race to save the cheetah is by no means won. I hope you'll continue to join us in this race. Please join us at one of our events this spring. Join us online on our Facebook page or follow us on Twitter. Continue as one of our CCF friends, joining others who have contributed to CCF, by sending a donation in the envelope in this newsletter.

The race to save the cheetah hasn't got a podium or a medal waiting when we are victorious. When we succeed (and I believe we will succeed), we will have assured an existence where cheetahs live in harmony with their entire ecosystem, including humans. That's something worth winning for all of us.

For cheetahs everywhere,



Dr. Laurie Marker



Dr. Laurie Marker and noted wildlife photographer Suzi Eszterhas have teamed up to create an intimate portrait of the cheetah! Order your copy on the CCF website today!

SEE DR. LAURIE MARKER ON TOUR!

Dr. Laurie Marker will be touring the U.S. from 11 April to 18 May 2014. 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. Please join us!

San Jose, CA -- 18 April
San Francisco, CA -- 22 April
Palm Desert, CA -- 25 April
Studio City, CA -- 26 April
San Diego, CA -- 27 April
Portland, OR -- 28 April
Seattle, WA -- 30 April

Santa Barbara, CA -- 3 May
Dallas, TX -- 8 May
Houston, TX -- 10 May
St. Louis, MO -- 12 May
New York, NY -- 14 May
Washington, DC -- 16 May

RETURN TO THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

In late May and early June 2013, CCF's Assistant Directors, Dr. Anne Schmidt-Küntzel and Patricia Tricorache joined Dr. Marker in the UAE. Dr. Marker lectured for the Emirates Natural History Group in three locations and the team networked with cheetah breeding facilities and veterinarians. Based on the discussions with vets and the main captive cheetah facilities, a need was identified for a workshop on cheetah health issues, husbandry, necropsies, and banking of genetic and reproductive samples.

On the 29th of January, Dr. Anne Schmidt-Kuntzel, Ryan Sucaet, CCF's Research Assistant and Cheetah Keeper and Dr. Laurie Marker returned to the UAE and headed to Al Ain for a half-day conference hosted by The President's Affairs Management of Nature Conservation (MNC) Facility. The conference covered topics such as captive cheetah care and management, health and disease, genetics and genome resource banking (GRB), including semen collection and techniques.

The team also traveled around the Emirates to conduct collections and training at individual facilities.

In Al Ain they worked on three male cheetahs with their veterinary and research team, collecting blood, measurements, and sperm from two of their cats. The next day took them to Emirates Park Zoo where they worked up one male, collected another sample for the GRB and trained their vets and husbandry team on CCF methodology.

The fourth day was triumphant: CCF worked on 11 male cheetahs at Sheik Buttie's private breeding facility in Dubai. Working with the manager and vet from this facility, a vet from Sharjah and a



Dr. Laurie Marker and the CCF team with various veterinary and animal care professionals in the United Arab Emirates. CCF has made important strides in this important area of the world.

manager from Wadi Al Safa, CCF banked over 25 semen samples from eight of the cheetahs.

The team participated in workshops in Al Bustan on the 2nd of February, where they trained more veterinarians and staff of several institutions within the UAE. And on 4 February the CCF Team was invited to attend the first day of the 15th annual Conservation Workshop for the Biodiversity of Arabia held at the Breeding Centre for Endangered Arabian Wildlife in Sharjah, which brought together international



Dr. Marker with on one of 18 male cheetahs that the CCF team worked on to initiate the UAE's Genome Research Bank

conservationists from the Arabian Peninsula working towards strategies of IUCN wildlife re-introductions, translocations and how to apply this to various species of this region.

Overall, CCF worked up 18 male cheetahs, initiated the UAE's Genome Resource Bank, and trained over 35 veterinarians and research staff from more than 10

facilities in the country. CCF has made an impact in this region by growing relationships and assisting in promoting proper management and collaborations.

MORE REHABILITATIONS!



The cheetahs known as “The Wild Girls” -- Emma, Jacomina, and Minja prepare for their re-wilding.

When the gate opened on Monday 23rd December into CCF’s soft release camp, Minja, Jacomina and Emma were about to face life on their own, in the wild. Each of them had been fitted with a GPS tracking collar. All three of these cheetahs came to CCF as orphans when they were young. A great deal of preparation went into this moment, the second rehabilitation of resident cheetahs at CCF in the past three months.

Minja left the pen at the first opportunity, using the nearby road to explore the area. From the data sent to the GPS collar, we learned that on 30 December she moved from CCF land onto a neighbouring farm briefly and then back onto CCF land. At the first proper sighting of her, we fed her a large meal because there hadn’t yet been confirmation that she had made a kill. She didn’t look thin! Overall Minja seems to be doing well and is definitely independent. We continue to monitor her closely to ensure her well-being.

Emma stuck around for a few days until she finally began moving. We provided her a supplemental feeding on 28 December. On 3 January, Emma found us. We were about to drive through a gate, and she suddenly

appeared behind the vehicle. It’s likely that she heard the feeding vehicle and had been following it for some time. We moved her into Bellebeno, our re-wilding game camp, to an artificial waterhole where she was fed again. The next day, we found her near where she had been left and she had made her first confirmed kill! As we approached, she picked up the kill and carried it off, but it was definitely a steenbok. On 6 January, we found her yet again on another kill, also a steenbok. Emma has since continued moving large distances and hunting on her own.

Like Emma, Jacomina decided to hang around in the enclosure for a few days before venturing out. On 28 December, she was found on her first (known) kill, an adult male duiker. Making a kill in under 48 hours after release was impressive. A few days later we found Jacomina again and fed her in case she was struggling to hunt. A couple days after, she brought down a young warthog and then again, a couple days later, she had killed a steenbok. Jacomina is doing well on her own in the wild with three confirmed kills, but like the others, we continue to monitor her closely to ensure she is coping well with her new life in the wild.

Our hope is that these three cheetahs will have fruitful lives as wild cheetahs. Sadly, one of the cheetahs we’d rehabilitated in October, Luna, was found dead in the Erindi Game Reserve where she had been released. We believe the cause of death was a snake bite. We are all terribly saddened by the loss. We are also, however, grateful that Luna was able to conclude her life as a wild cheetah, and that her end, while it came too soon, came from the kinds of natural threats all cheetahs face in the wild. And, on the 22nd of February, we released Athena again in Erindi Game Reserve where the next day she caught a wildebeest calf.

THE NEED FOR SPEED: ATHLETES AND CHEETAHS

The cheetah, one of the greatest athletes of the animal kingdom, attracts the attention of some of the world's greatest human athletes. Last year, Austrian alpine skiing star Anna Fenninger came to Namibia to visit CCF. Anna was so moved by the threat to the world's fastest land animal that she became a CCF Ambassador, dedicated to spreading the word about the cheetah's race against extinction and CCF's work.

This February, in the 2014 Winter Olympic Games in Sochi, Anna Fenninger took to the slopes in a signature cheetah print helmet and won gold in the Women's Super-G and silver in the Women's Giant Slalom. The media at Sochi were fascinated with Anna's story and Anna's visit to CCF was featured on Olympic

broadcasts to millions of viewers worldwide

Also in February, CCF launched an initiative aimed at athletes. HUMANS FOR CHEETAHS is a CCF charity team that can be part of any athletic event around the country for runners, walkers, bikers, and other racers that allows charity teams. HUMANS FOR CHEETAHS will make its debut on Sunday, 18 May 2014 at the Portland Rock n' Roll Half Marathon.



Anna Fenninger at CCF Namibia for her Calendar shoot!

For more information, visit www.cheetah.org/

HumansForCheetahs, and join our honorary chair, Jack Hanna, and become part of our team!

Even if you're not an Olympian, even if you can't run in a half marathon, you can still support HUMANS FOR CHEETAHS!

REBUILDING BETTER THAN EVER

As many of you are already aware, CCF's Visitors Centre was destroyed in a fire on 16 October, 2013. Thanks to our resilient and resourceful staff, we've managed to continue our operations in the wake of the loss without significant interruptions. The picnic and food preparation area used by some of our visiting groups has been re-located and upgraded behind the Creamery and is in operation. The Gift Shop and Café are operating well in temporary facilities within the Education Centre.

We continue to work with our insurance company to recover the cost of rebuilding. They have provided us partial funding to begin re-printing our education books and purchase some of the necessary day to day equipment (our kitchen items, for instance) that was lost in the fire.



Sheltered outdoor seating at CCF's Cafe

We have been busy with the re-design of our facilities. One of the most critical needs was for public toilets! We had only one toilet in the Research Centre so design and construction these facilities started immediately. We finished this part of the project right before the end of 2013. We are looking forward to the next phase of our rebuilding, and are in the process of securing a contractor and making plans. Our new and improved rebuilt Visitor Centre will hopefully have an enlarged deck, gift shop area, café, and kitchen. We're including more offices and storage space. In addition, we will move the genetics lab into this new building to consolidate our work and allow better exposure to the public of our major research areas. We are also investigating the possibility of a solar roof. This would generate enough electricity to displace our current diesel generators.

With all of these new opportunities to bring positive changes to our physical plant, this time of rebuilding is very exciting for all of us, and we look forward to sharing further developments with you.

LIVESTOCK GUARDING DOG UPDATES: LUCKY & FELIZ

At CCF we provide our Livestock Guarding Dogs to dozens of farmers every year, and these dogs grow into fierce protectors of their herds. But our work doesn't stop once a puppy is placed with a farmer. We keep up with our dogs, assuring that the dogs we've placed are doing well.



CCF brought Lucky back to CCF to receive treatment and recover from injuries he sustained from being hit by a car while crossing a road.

Lucky, a sweet well-maintained male, had been placed as a puppy last year by CCF on a resettled farm where he loved watching over his goats and sheep. In late December, Lucky was hit by a truck while accompanying his herd and his herder across the road near his farmstead. The farmer rushed him to the veterinarian as soon as possible. Lucky had sustained quite a few severe injuries and broken bones and was moved to a veterinarian clinic in Windhoek, Namibia's capital. In Windhoek, Lucky had surgery to remove part of his left femur. Both his front and back right legs were broken in the accident, so those were splinted as well. All of the vets who worked with Lucky immediately fell in love with him. His gentle eyes helped him win his life.

Lucky was brought back to CCF for his recovery just before New Years. Despite his injuries, Lucky has been

a real trooper and has been very patient with his daily bandage changes. Our clinic team, our volunteers and interns are always happy to give Lucky a short walk to help him gain some muscle strength back in his legs. Unfortunately, Lucky was having some problems with his back right leg healing and had to go back to Windhoek to undergo another surgery to reposition some of his fractures. Lucky, true to his name is now walking better than ever! The clinic team at CCF has been putting in lots of work making sure Lucky is comfortable and is healing as fast as possible. He receives physical therapy twice a day to help keep the blood circulating in his legs, and gets numerous short, daily walks to help re-build his strength. Even though Lucky's recovery will take time, he is making the best of the situation and is always happy to greet whoever comes his way!

Sadly, on the 8th of February 2014, we had to say goodbye to one of CCF's great livestock guarding dogs, Feliz. Feliz was born in France on 30 July 2010 and was brought over to CCF in October of that year to begin her journey in saving the wild cheetah. She lived at CCF where she guarded the herd at our model goat farm and participated in our breeding program, producing only one litter of puppies, all of which will be placed with farmers to protect other herds.

Feliz was always a fierce protector of her own herd at CCF. She was out with her herd when she was bitten by a snake. Unfortunately, in this case the snake that bit Feliz was one of Namibia's very venomous and extremely lethal snakes. Feliz perished quickly and there was not a lot that could have been done to save her. She has been a cornerstone of our successful and growing Livestock Guarding Dog program, and Feliz will be sorely missed.

DR. LAURIE MARKER VISITS EUROPE!

One of the things that CCF is especially proud of is its strong ties to its supporters around the globe. Dr. Marker arrived in Europe in early February for several days of events and reconnecting with our partners there. It started with a lecture to conservation biology students at Kent University through the help of Niki Rust, one of Dr. Marker's PhD students, and several meetings with her professors. The next day, 11 February, was the big CCF UK fundraising event at the Royal Institution in London with Jonathan and Angela Scott from Big Cat Diary. The night was a success for the cheetah with over 200 people joining us!

While in London, Dr. Marker attended the Illegal Wildlife Trade reception, convened by the British Government. She met with colleagues and government officials from across 50 countries. CCF collaborated with ZSL's (Institute of Zoology) Cheetah & Wild Dog Conservation Planning Process to present a poster at the ZSL conference highlighting the illegal pet trade in cheetahs.

Laurie then traveled to France, where, in Paris, she met with past volunteers and supporters. She then headed to La Fleché with Catherine Ebbs-Perin, the president of our French support group Amifelin, for a media interview and then a private dinner with CCF supporters, hosted by Pasquel Fournie from Fous de

Nature at 'Moulin des Season'. The next day, over 100 people attended our CCF cheetah conference and film viewing hosted by Pasquel Fournie. Her visit to France concluded with a stop in Nantes at the Nantes Veterinary School.

Laurie then moved on to the Netherlands, and met with the Louwman family of Wassenaar Wildlife Breeding Centre and with Simone Echarde from our support organization, Stitchings SPOTS. It was then on to Van Hall University in Leuwarden where she lectured to over 100 students and reconnected with former CCF interns.

The last stop of the European tour was in Germany. Dr. Marker visited with Birgit Braun and Teresia Rebitschko of AGA, CCF's partner organization in Germany. She had several meetings including with the Namibian Tourism Board, and with Roland Melisch, Director of TRAFFIC's Africa & Europe programs, again discussing illegal live trade of cheetahs. On the way home, Laurie was given a special behind the scenes tour of the Frankfurt airport detection dogs program, which uses dogs to find among other things, wildlife and wildlife products.

Starting the 11th of April, Dr. Marker will be in the United States for her spring tour! Check the CCF website at cheetah.org to find an event near you, and keep a special eye out for events where Laurie is signing copies of her new book with Suzi Eszterhas!



Dr. Laurie Marker listening to Jonathan Scott during his presentation at the United Kingdom CCF affiliate's event on 11 February.



Dr. Laurie Marker, Peter Antoniou of Swarovski Optik, and noted photographers Jonathan and Angela Scott at the Royal Institution of Great Britain

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*The race is on to save the cheetah.
Help us win it.*
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