

ISSUE Nº
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CHEETAH STRIDES

The Newsletter of the Cheetah Conservation Fund



Craig Taylor

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100+ Cheetahs

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Cheetah

CONSERVATION FUND



DONATE

PO Box 2496
Alexandria, VA. 22301
info@cheetah.org
1.866.909.3399
cheetah.org/donate

VISIT & VOLUNTEER

International Research and Education Centre
Otjiwarongo, Namibia
open 364 days per year

Cheetah Rescue and Conservation Centre
Geed-Deeble, Somaliland

CCF's Headquarters USA
200 Daingerfield Rd.
Alexandria, VA. 22314

Volunteer to help CCF save the cheetah!
cheetah.org/get-involved/volunteer/

Keep up with the cheetahs on social media!



@CCFCheetah



KEY DATES

IN PERSON EVENTS

CHEERS FOR CHEETAHS

APRIL 12, 2024
POUGHKEEPSIE, NY

WCN SPRING EXPO

APRIL 20, 2024
CANADA COLLEGE, REDWOOD, CA

EARTH DAY AT HAPPY HOLLOW ZOO

APRIL 21, 2024
SAN JOSE, CA

CCF MEET AND GREET

APRIL 21, 2024
SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

ADVENTURES' CLUB

APRIL 28, 2024
LOS ANGELES, CA

ZACC CONFERENCE

MAY 13, 2024
SALT LAKE CITY, UT

Check the events page for upcoming events.

cheetah.org/get-involved/ccf-events/



ONLINE

CHEETAH FIT CHALLENGE

SEPTEMBER 21 - OCTOBER 6, 2024
MAKE A DIFFERENCE FOR YOURSELF
AND FOR CHEETAHS

INTERNATIONAL CHEETAH DAY

DECEMBER 4, 2024
ANNUAL GLOBAL CELEBRATION OF
THE CHEETAH - JOIN US!

NOTES FROM THE DIRECTOR

In late January 2024, I convened the Global Cheetah Summit in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The event was hosted with the Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority (EWCA) with the generous support of NEOM, the Royal Commission for AlUla, Ethiopian Airlines, and Cheetah Safe in partnership with University of Oxford WildCRU, the Cheetah Conservation Initiative, and several IUCN Specialist Groups. We welcomed over 130 international stakeholders from 77 institutions across 35 countries - government representatives, researchers, and conservationists - the participants were united by a common goal: to safeguard the future of the world's fastest land animal.

Over four days, summit participants delved into the challenges facing cheetah populations, including habitat loss, human-wildlife conflict, poaching, and the illegal pet trade. Through 14 sessions of thoughtful presentations and discussions, we explored collaborative solutions to reverse the decline of these incredible animals.

We culminated the summit by collaboratively drafting and ratifying the *Addis Ababa Declaration for Global Cheetah Conservation*, a moment I regard as a pivotal step forward in our journey. This declaration is not just a document; it's a global call to action that underscores the urgent need for comprehensive conservation measures and enhanced collaboration across all sectors of society.



In March, I also had the opportunity to attend the Forbes Women's 30/50 Summit in Abu Dhabi. It was a unique opportunity to share CCF's conservation efforts with some of the most influential women of our time.

After reading this newsletter, please consider sharing one of the stories with a friend or coworker in a conversation. Ask your teacher if you can share it with your classmates, or contact us at info@cheetah.org to request a

few copies to display in your office lobby.

Thank you for getting involved and following along on our journey to save the cheetah.

Laurie Marker

Dr. Laurie Marker
Founder & Executive Director

HELP US KEEP THE CHEETAH WHERE IT BELONGS

in the wild.



A MONUMENTAL COMMITMENT: CARING FOR 100+ CHEETAHS

CCF stands as a global leader in working to save the cheetah in the wild. With this, however, we also operate two frontline rescue and rehabilitation facilities, one in Namibia and the other in Somaliland which are populated with cheetahs caught up in human-wildlife conflict and the illegal wildlife/pet trade. We now have a total of 129 cheetahs living in our care (a record number for CCF) and unfortunately most can never be returned to the wild. Having this amount of cheetahs living outside their natural landscape is not ideal when the species population is already so low, especially in the Horn of Africa. However, the amount is (in part) reflective of our increased cooperation with the governments of that region. Better enforcement of anti-poaching laws means more confiscations will occur, which means more cheetahs at our Centre that need care. And, our efforts in the region (see story on page 8) will hopefully help stop the trade.

In Namibia, our education and conservation programs are well established. The number of resident cheetahs (27) living at our International Research and Education Centre does not dramatically fluctuate. Thanks to 33 years of working within the community, we experience fewer incidents of very young cubs becoming orphaned or adults caught in cage traps by farmers. When we are required to intervene because of human-wildlife conflict incidents, we quickly assess the injuries and the age of the cheetahs. If the cheetahs pass our release protocols, they are given treatment and put back out with a GPS tracking collar. We only hold cheetahs for as long as they need to recover to give them the best chance at survival.

The task of caring for the now 97 cheetahs at the Cheetah Rescue Conservation Centre (CRCC) in Geed-Deeble Somaliland, is much different than our work in Namibia. At the CRCC, the cheetahs we deal with

have been confiscated from the Illegal Wildlife Trade (IWT) and are typically very young, very ill with parasitic infestations and highly contagious infections. The cubs are often severely malnourished leading to developmental issues that require long term (most often a lifetime of) veterinary

THE COST OF COMPASSION

Caring for such a large number of cheetahs is no small feat. The costs of feeding, housing, and providing medical care for these animals can exceed \$5,000 per year for each cheetah. Many of these cheetahs, particularly those rescued from IWT, require a lifetime of specialty care. We have a critical need for financial support. Please become a sponsor today.



Photos: Opposite page: Cheetah eating meat in Namibia **This page top: left and right:** cheetah cubs in care **bottom; left: the Ferees right:** Resident cheetah Rocket

SPOTlight ON SPONSORS

Jodee and Jason Ferree are recurring CCF sponsors from Utah in the USA. They are dedicated supporters who look forward to visiting CCF Namibia and decided years ago to make the commitment to help us care for CCF's resident cheetahs Rocket and Khaleesi. We were thrilled to have them agree to talk a bit about why they decided to become CCF sponsors.

Why we love cheetahs: *Because they are swift, elegant, and important to the ecosystem. Our favorite felines.*

Why we sponsor: *We want to contribute to their continued existence. We also appreciate the way that CCF goes about doing that in a ground roots strategy. Knowledge is power.*

Thank you Jodee and Jason! We appreciate your ongoing support.



RESEARCH PAPERS PUBLISHED

CCF's resource library has many interesting papers being published by scientific peer-reviewed journals. Many more are in review or pending publication. Below is a list of the most recent published papers. To read the papers in full visit: <https://cheetah.org/resource-category/scientific-papers/>

ECOLOGICAL RESEARCH

In Press - Oryx - The International Journal of Conservation, *High carnivore richness despite human pressure and prey depletion in overlooked region of the Kavango-Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area*, Verschueren S, Hofmann T, Kakove M, Cristescu B & Marker L.

In Press - Scientific Reports, *Response of woody vegetation to bush thinning on freehold farmlands in north-central Namibia*, Nghikembua, M.T., Marker, L.L., Brewer, B., Leinonen, A., Mehtätalo, L., Appiah, M., Pappinen, A.



EDUCATION RESEARCH

In Revision - *Promoting human-carnivore coexistence through outreach in Namibia's eastern communal conservancies*, Marker, L., Shipingana, D., Fleury, G., Pfeiffer, L., Pöntinen, A., Nghikembua, M.T.

REWILDING RESEARCH

In Revision - *Rewilding landscapes with apex predators: Cheetah movements reveal the importance of environmental and individual contexts*, Dimbleby J, Cristescu B, Bandyopadhyay K, Marker L, Rooney N.

In Revision - *Time to independence and predator-prey relationships of wild-born, captive-raised cheetahs released into private reserves in Namibia*, Marker L, Schmidt-Küntzel A, Walker EH, Nghikembua M & Cristescu B.

FEATURED STAFF AT CCF

HEITA SIMEON

CCF CHEESEMAKER, NAMIBIA



Heita Simeon is one of the cheesemakers working for CCF's Dancing Goat Creamery in Otjiwarongo, Namibia. He is from Oshakati and he really likes cheese and dairy products. Heita studied hospitality and tourism at Oshakati Vocational Training Centre and learned cheesemaking on the job at CCF's Dancing Goat Creamery.

The Dancing Goat Creamery is part of CCF's efforts to reduce carnivore-human conflict by demonstrating sustainable farming practices. The creamery produces ice cream and milk

shakes alongside various types of cheese like feta, chèvre, and ricotta using milk from Saanen and French Alpine goats raised on the farm. These products help illustrate how livestock farming and wildlife conservation can coexist.

Heita's work is crucial not just in producing cheese, but also in contributing to local conservation education and the economy. By selling cheese and other dairy products made from goats raised using predator-friendly methods, the creamery shows local farmers that it's possible to farm in a way that's good for both their livelihoods and the environment. CCF's dairy products are certified as @WildlifeFriendly Enterprises as well.

The creamery also serves as a practical example of CCF's Model Farm, which offers seminars and open visits to promote non-lethal predator management techniques among local farmers. Through his practical approach to cheese-making, Heita Simeon supports both local food production and CCF's broader conservation goals.



TRY OUR DAIRY PRODUCTS FOR YOURSELF Visit CCF's Centre in Namibia

Open 364 days per year CCF welcomes tourists for the day or overnight stays. There's so much to see (and taste) from our Cheetah Museum to our daily schedule of activities including a visit to our cheetah care facilities. Visit to see CCF's programs in action.
www.cheetah.org/get-involved/visit-ccf/



VETERINARY CARE AND RESEARCH CONTINUES

CCF's two veterinary clinics, including the clinic in Namibia, within the The Haas Family Research Centre and the newly established clinic at the Cheetah Rescue and Conservation Centre (CRCC) in Somaliland, provide frontline wildlife veterinary care to cheetahs suffering from injury or illness due to both human and animal related causes. These facilities not only represent our commitment to delivering the highest level of care, but they also showcase the power of your generosity. For example, blood machines were recently donated to the veterinary clinic in Namibia, thanks to a generous grant from CCF Canada.

Though our clinics are equipped with the latest in medical technology allowing us to offer unparalleled care to cheetahs, we also deliver lifesaving treatments "on-the-go", sometimes from the back of a ranger's truck. In late September 2023, Hela, a female cheetah we released into Erindi Private Game Reserve was saved by CCF's veterinary team in action. Erindi's staff sent a message with a photo of Hela with a significant wound on her shoulder as a result of a suspected fight with either a warthog or another predator. We were concerned not only for Hela's life, but also for the lives of her three dependent cubs.

Our veterinary team traveled to Erindi for treatment, and over the next five months continued to visit her at intervals to treat, clean and dress the slowly healing wounds. Under Dr. Marker's expert guidance, the veterinary staff were able to help bring Hela back to health and in turn she was able to successfully raise her cubs. The cubs are almost mature enough to venture

Photos: this page: CCF's veterinary clinic is a state of the art facility **Opposite page: left:** veterinary care happens both in the field and in the clinic **right:** Surgery performed in Somaliland **bottom: left:** the clinic in Somaliland treatment room **right:** the surgery room

out on their own. Just a couple weeks ago, the veterinary team visited again and placed tracking collars on the nearly independent cubs before they disperse from Hela.

In Somaliland, the cheetahs are now settled into the new facilities at the CRCC. We are pleased as many of the stress related health issues as a result of being in the 'safe houses' have resolved. CCF's veterinary team is still active in daily monitoring and reporting on current cases and tracking any new issues that arise, especially on new confiscations.



SAMPLES ARE SAVING SPECIES

As a research facility, CCF has been at the forefront of cheetah conservation science for decades. The data collected from samples taken at veterinary examinations and treatments provide invaluable insights into cheetah health, contributing to the global body of knowledge on cheetah conservation.

CCF's researchers and partners have collaboratively created a vast network of knowledge on cheetah biology, genetics, behavior, and ecology. Our veterinary practice is the subject of published peer-reviewed studies, and it informs research projects happening around the world. This informs the conservation needs of the species both in the wild and in captivity.



SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT Our Clinic in Somaliland Needs a Name!

Our new clinic at the Cheetah Rescue and Conservation Centre (CRCC) in Somaliland is a vital part of our effort to rescue cheetahs from illegal trade. This important facility is looking for a name, and we are inviting sponsors for this special opportunity. Sponsoring our clinic offers a unique way to make a lasting impact in cheetah conservation.



CONSERVANCIES SERVING COMMUNITIES AND SAVING THE CHEETAH

In recent years, CCF has taken significant strides towards promoting cheetah conservation across the Horn of Africa, radiating outward from our base of operations in Somaliland and with assistance from our conservation partners in Kenya and Namibia.

With collaborative commitments from the highest government and ministry levels within Somaliland and Ethiopia, CCF is helping to foster increased cooperation for conservation projects across the countries in this region. One of our most critically important goals is to recreate the Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) and conservancy models that have proven effective in Namibia.

To begin the conversation, we invited a delegation from the government of Somaliland to CCF Namibia for a 10-day educational tour across north-central Namibia and later, a five-day tour in Kenya. This first-hand experience was enriched by insights from Maxi Pia Louis of the Namibian Association of CBNRM Support Organizations (NACSO) in Namibia and Mary Wykstra of Action for Cheetahs Kenya (ACK) and Fiesta Gordon Warinwa Achayo in Kenya.

The group was shown CBNRM in practice through different models including eco-tourism. They were also shown some of the nuances of developing concessions around protected areas to benefit the communities and increase interest in conservation principles to encourage uptake of conservation practices. The goal was clear: to develop a model that resonates with the needs of nomadic pastoral communities in Somaliland while effectively mitigating threats to wildlife, particularly cheetahs.

Our collaborative journey with the Somaliland government, beginning in 2011, has been driven by a shared dedication to combating the illegal wildlife trade and caring for confiscated cheetahs. This partnership has now

Photos: *This page:* Somaliland delegation visiting Kenya **Opposite page:** a community workshop in Somaliland

evolved to address broader conservation challenges and opportunities. The establishment of the Cheetah Rescue and Conservation Centre (CRCC) in Somaliland's inaugural protected area (being developed currently) at Geed-Deeble is a testament to our shared commitment to creating sustainable solutions for cheetah conservation and rural development.

Building upon this foundation, the recent governance meeting in February for establishing a community-centered conservancy in the Awdal and Maroodi Jeex regions marked a significant advancement. This initiative set the stage for a series of four workshops attended by the Minister of Environment and Climate Change (MoECC), Regional Governors, District Mayors, and Village Development Committees, involving over 50 villages. This concerted effort aims to actively engage local communities in conservation, underscoring the pivotal role they play in managing and protecting their environment through the creation of protected area conservancies in Geed-Deeble and at Libaaxley Mountain.



This multilevel governance framework emphasizes the importance of inclusivity in conservation, advocating for an approach to resource management that ensures people also benefit from conservancy areas. The enthusiastic response from participants and stakeholders during the Somaliland Association of CBNRM Support Organizations (SACSO) debriefing underscores the widespread support for this innovative, sustainable conservation and development program.

Funded generously by grants from the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA), Rainforest Trust, and the International Union for Conservation of Nature's Survival of Species (IUCN-SOS) and co-funded by European Union Partnerships, these projects stand as a beacon of hope for cheetah conservation. It exemplifies the power of collaboration, education, and community engagement in conserving our shared natural heritage for future generations. Together, we are setting a precedent for conservation efforts in the Horn of Africa, ensuring a secure future for cheetahs and the communities that coexist with them.



STEAMING TOWARD SUSTAINABILITY

STEAMBIOAFRICA PROJECT AT CCF

In Namibia, the challenge of bush encroachment on our rangelands threatens the habitat of wildlife, the nation's food security and biodiversity. CCF's innovative Bush Project, based at the Biomass Technology Demonstration Center (BTDC), has been turning the problem of encroaching bush into a potential solution for renewable energy, particularly in rural areas that have energy access needs.

With funding from the EU Horizon 2020 funding program (EU Grant Agreement no: 101036401), we are participating in the SteamBioAfrica project. SteamBioAfrica is a collaboration between Africa and Europe that aims to create long-term sustainable benefits across southern Africa by addressing two major challenges in the region:

- The need for clean, secure, and reliable energy
- The need to address the problem of invasive woody bush species

The project focuses on a torrefaction process that uses superheated steam to transform bush biomass into a renewable energy source. The goal is a clean-burning, high-value solid biofuel that can replace coal in a sustainable way, technically and economically feasible without subsidies, environmentally friendly and socially beneficial.

The assembly of the STEAMBIO biomass processing plant is finished and the building is supported by a comprehensive solar power system and additional essential facilities.

This SteamBioAfrica project is not just about energy. By investigating and implementing solutions to bush encroachment, we're contributing to a broader understanding of how to manage and restore our lands for the benefit of future generations.

BUSHMAN, ANA AND KATIRA NEW BREED OF GUARDING DOGS AT CCF

At the heart of CCF's efforts to mitigate human-wildlife conflict, our Livestock Guarding Dog (LGD) program serves as one of our most innovative and successful conservation strategies. Since the program's inception 30 years ago, we've placed 775 dogs that have become instrumental in protecting livestock. This has resulted in an encouraging trend in Namibia toward adopting predator-friendly livestock farming techniques that are good for the herd and good for cheetahs.

To expand on our success with Anatolian shepherds and Kangal LGDs, we have introduced a new strategy that includes the use of mixed breed dogs on farms that would benefit from a lower maintenance or smaller stature dog. We are currently studying their effectiveness at discouraging predation.



In our 30th anniversary year, the LGD program boasts 193 active dogs working with farmers across Namibia and other parts of Africa. Previous studies have shown that these diligent working dogs can reduce predation at an astounding 80 - 100% and they are especially effective in combination with a mix of predator-friendly farming techniques like livestock kraaling and proper hoof care.

Our target goal with the use of mixed breed dogs is to enhance the adaptability and effectiveness of our program to extend our reach and thereby increase our success. We hope to capitalize on the unique traits of these dogs, to appeal to farmers that need an LGD but their requirements are not quite as heavy duty.

We've added three mixed breed dogs so far, a male named Bushman, and two females Ana and Katira. A few weeks ago, Ana had her third litter of puppies. The achievements and adjustments within our breeding program are a testament to our commitment to continuous improvement and adaptation. Our efforts are driven by a dedicated team whose passion and expertise are pivotal to our progress.

Photo: this page: left: mixed breed LGD puppy sits in a bowl on a scale for a weight check, **right:** Katira and her puppies **Opposite page:** SteamBioAfrica project at CCF



Kids CORNER



STORIES FEATURING THE WORK OF CCF'S YOUNG SUPPORTERS FROM AROUND THE WORLD.



Emmie is a six year old cheetah fan from Northern VA, in the USA. She is not only a talented artist who uses the cheetah as inspiration for her art-work she also decided to make a donation instead of getting birthday gifts in January. We were so impressed with her generosity and selflessness.



JoJo, is a second grader from San Francisco, CA, in the USA and she chose Dr. Marker for her “inspirational woman” project. Dressed as Dr. Marker, she delivered a speech to a large audience. She owns every book on the subject - her life is encompassed by her passion for cheetahs.



On February 29th, homeschoolers Cohen (8), Gemma (5), and Eva (2) Hodny from Fargo, ND in the USA, joined Reach the World’s live online event featuring Dr. Marker. The educational journey connected them with Africa’s fastest cats and a global conservation leader, sparking their curiosity and love for nature.

Do you have a story about a young supporter that you would like to share? Send us an email including a short description and some photos and we will include it in an upcoming issue of *Cheetah Strides* or on our website!

Email: info@cheetah.org



THE FLORAL BEAUTY OF SOMALILAND

Arid landscapes, often perceived as barren, hold a unique beauty characterized by resilience and adaptation. The flora in these regions, ranging from cacti with their stunning blooms to hardy shrubs and grasses, thrives under extreme conditions of heat and drought.

In Somaliland's arid landscapes, a diverse array of flora thrives, showcasing the resilience and adaptability of plant life. From vibrant cacti blooms to the subtle grace of hardy shrubs and grasses, each species paints the desert in an array of beautiful colors.

Cheetah Strides TikTok Challenge

Follow CCF's TikTok page @CCFCheetah

First: Watch our "Running with the Cheetah" video clips on TikTok @CCFCheetah.

Second: Create your own video expressing why you support cheetah conservation: dance, run like a cheetah, or sing along!

Third: Share your support by either stitching or duetting our clips, and don't forget to use #RunningWithTheCheetah to join the community effort. Let's spread the word about saving the cheetah!

Running with the Cheetah is written and performed by artist Davey Harris.



GLOBAL CHEETAH SUMMIT
conservation through collaboration



PO Box 2496
Alexandria, VA. 22301

CHEETAH CONSERVATION THROUGH COLLABORATION

Global Cheetah Summit attendees were from 77 institutions across 35 countries - government representatives, researchers, and conservationists. Read our recent projects: www.cheetah.org/ccf-blog/

