

ISSUE Nº  
**28**  
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# CHEETAH STRIDES

The Newsletter of the Cheetah Conservation Fund



Angela Scott

## IN THIS ISSUE:

Wildlife

Tourism

Conservancies

30 Years LGD



**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

#### **WCN EXPO**

OCTOBER 5, 2024  
SAN FRANCISCO, CA

#### **CHEETAH TALK AT OKC ZOO**

OCTOBER 15, 2024  
OKLAHOMA CITY, OK

#### **LECTURE AT UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING**

OCTOBER 17, 2024  
LARAMIE, WY

#### **LECTURE AT COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY**

OCTOBER 18, 2024  
FORT COLLINS, CO

#### **ANNUAL DC BENEFIT**

OCTOBER 28, 2024  
ARLINGTON, VA

#### **CHEETAH TALK AT AUSTIN ZOO**

NOVEMBER 1, 2024  
AUSTIN, TX

Check the events page for upcoming events.

[cheetah.org/get-involved/ccf-events/](https://cheetah.org/get-involved/ccf-events/)



### ONLINE EVENTS

#### **CHEETAH FIT CHALLENGE**

SEPTEMBER 21 - OCTOBER 6, 2024

#### **TWO JURIED ART COMPETITIONS**

**ADULTS:** SUBMISSION DEADLINE  
NOVEMBER 12, 2024

**YOUTH:** SUBMISSION DEADLINE  
NOVEMBER 18, 2024

#### **INTERNATIONAL CHEETAH DAY**

DECEMBER 4, 2024

**ANNUAL GLOBAL CELEBRATION OF THE CHEETAH - JOIN US!**

## NOTES FROM THE DIRECTOR



This year, we are celebrating the 30th anniversary of our Livestock Guarding Dog Program, and I am so happy with the progress we've made in protecting cheetahs and fostering coexistence between humans and wildlife. Our dogs - Anatolian shepherds, Kangals, and our new mixed breeds - are invaluable assets, just like our amazing team. This program continues to thrive thanks to the unwavering support of our donors, partners, and granting organizations (page 11).

I recently attended the 33rd meeting of the Animals Committee of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) alongside CCF's Director of Wildlife Crime and International Policy, Shira Yashphe. The event held in Geneva, in July, was a vital opportunity for us to share our knowledge and collaborate with international partners to save the species and its ecosystem.

I am also excited to announce the construction of our new Education Centre in Somaliland. Our education programs, known as the Future Conservationists of Africa, have made a significant impact, reaching an average of 25,000 students per year in Namibia (page 10).

Looking ahead, we have a series of exciting events coming up this fall that I'd love for you to be a part of. These events are a wonderful way to engage with our work, learn more about cheetah conservation, and show your support. Also please remember to mark your calendars for International Cheetah Day on December 4th! Help us celebrate these incredible animals and raise awareness about the conservation challenges they face. I hope you'll join us and spread the word about this special day.

After reading this newsletter, I encourage you to share one of our stories with a friend, coworker, or even your classmates. You can also contact us at [info@cheetah.org](mailto:info@cheetah.org) if you'd like a few copies to display in your school or office lobby. Thank you for your continued support and dedication to our mission.

Together, we can make a lasting impact on the future of cheetahs.

Dr. Laurie Marker  
Founder & Executive Director

HELP US KEEP THE CHEETAH WHERE IT BELONGS

**in the wild.**

## STUDYING THE CHEETAH'S ECOSYSTEM

### WILDLIFE IN GEED-DEEBLE SOMALILAND

At CCF we study all aspects of the cheetah including its ecosystem and the wildlife they live alongside, both fellow predators and prey. By understanding the relationships among all species, we aim to support the region's overall biodiversity and develop better conservation programs.

Now that we've settled into our new Cheetah Research and Conservation Center (CRCC) in Somaliland, we are extending our ecology studies by cataloging the animals and plants in the surrounding landscape. Throughout 2024, we've observed a wide variety of wildlife at the CRCC, including (but not limited to) the species pictured and listed below:



Striped polecat  
African porcupine  
Leopard tortoise  
Bell's hinged-back tortoise  
Spur tortoise  
Bush hare

Hamadryas baboon  
Warthog  
Snakes like Red Spitting Cobra and Puff Adder  
Many species of insects, reptiles, and birds



**Photos: This page:** Clockwise top left: Spotted hyena, Dik-dik, African wild cat, White-tailed Mongoose, Golden wolf photo by Lee R. Berger **Opposite page:** Eveline likondja with Gamena, CCF's Scat Detection Dog.



## RESEARCH ON WILDLIFE IN NAMIBIA

Our commitment to understanding cheetah ecosystems is helped by extensive research projects across the species' range. In Namibia, we've benefited from some great recent projects focused on the dynamics of different species within the environment.

In 2023, graduate student Amy Wong, from University of Bristol in the UK, won an award for her research, under Dr. Anne Schmidt-Kuentzel, CCF's Director for Animal Health and Research. Amy used a new technique to identify different carnivore species from scat (animal droppings), helping us learn more about the diversity of carnivores in Namibia's bushland savannah without disturbing the animals. Another student, Emma Reasoner, focused on human-wildlife conflict involving black-backed jackals and African wild dogs for her Master's degree from Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST). She studied 140 scat samples and defended her MSc in mid-2023, providing valuable insights into how these animals coexist with humans.

In early 2024, we conducted a carnivore survey in the N# a Jaqna Conservancy, part of the Kavango-Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area (KAZA). We used scat detection dogs and camera traps to monitor carnivore activity, including species like hyenas, leopards, and African wild dogs. This ongoing research helps us understand where these carnivores are and how they behave in areas shared with humans.

We also explored the impact of livestock on biodiversity around waterholes. This research focused on how livestock affects plants, birds, ground beetles, and mammals near water sources in the semi-arid woodland savanna, helps us build strategies that balance wildlife conservation with sustainable farming.

Cheetahs cannot thrive alone, they play an important role in the ecosystem and they depend on a healthy open landscape with a suitable prey base for survival. We continue to explore the complex interactions within ecosystems, ensuring our conservation efforts support the cheetah by supporting the entire ecosystem.

## 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: [www.cheetah.org/resource-category/scientific-papers/](http://www.cheetah.org/resource-category/scientific-papers/)

### ECOLOGICAL RESEARCH

**Published** - Conservation Science and Practice - *Spatial ecology of cheetahs in India and the complexities of the real-world context*, Cristescu B., Jhala Y.V., Balli B., Qureshi Q., Schmidt-Küntzel A., Tordiffe A.S.W., van der Merwe V., Verschueren S., Walker E. & Marker L.

**Published** - Mammal Review - *From popularity to preservation: Large carnivore potential for ecosystem conservation*, Verschueren S., Bauer H., Cristescu B., Leirs H., Torres-Uribe C., Marker L.

**Published** - Biological Conservation - *A diminished large carnivore guild with contrasting species-habitat associations persists outside national parks in Namibia's central-eastern landscape*, Verschueren S., Hofmann T., Briers-Louw W., Kakove M., Leirs H., Bauer H., Marker L., Cristescu B.

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



### REWILDING RESEARCH

**Published** - Frontiers in Conservation Science - *Rewilding landscapes with apex predators: Cheetah (*Acinonyx jubatus*) movements reveal the importance of environmental and individual contexts*, Dimpleby J., Cristescu B., Bandyopadhyay K., Rooney N.J., Marker L.

### CHEETAH RESEARCH

**Accepted** - Journal of Zoo and Wildlife Medicine - *Penile abnormalities in wild-born captive cheetahs (*Acinonyx jubatus*)*, Basto A.F.F., Anahi Hidalgo A., Marker L., Bornman N., Schmidt-Küntzel A., Marker L.

## FEATURED STAFF AT CCF

**EVELINE IIKONDJA,**

**SCAT DETECTION DOG HANDLER, NAMIBIA**



Eveline Iikondja, a Namibian national, has been making significant strides in wildlife conservation as a Canine Officer at CCF in Namibia. Since joining CCF in 2020, Eveline has been dedicated to advancing conservation efforts and supporting local communities.

Eveline earned her honors degree in Environmental Biology from the University of Namibia in April 2024 and completed an online Conservation Detection Dog Handling certificate in June 2024. She began her career as the Livestock Guarding Dog Program

Assistant Manager at CCF, where she focused on providing Namibian farmers with dogs to protect their livestock from predators like cheetahs. This role was crucial in reducing human-wildlife conflict and fostering co-existence between local farmers and wildlife.

In February 2024, Eveline transitioned to her current role as a Canine Officer for the scat detection dog team. She became a certified conservation dog handler through K9 Conservationists in June. Her work now centers on using specially trained dogs to detect and locate wildlife scat, which is essential for monitoring animal populations and their health. This role involves not only fieldwork but also data collection and analysis, contributing significantly to CCF's research and conservation initiatives.

Recently, Eveline had the exciting opportunity to embark on her first field expedition with CCF's scat detection dog, Gamena, to the N#a-Jaqna Conservancy (page 3). In addition to her professional pursuits, Eveline is fluent in English, Afrikaans and Oshiwambo.



### SCAT COLLECTION TRAINING IN SOMALILAND

Participants learn how to collect crucial samples to aid in the fight against the illegal pet trade of cheetah cubs. Since 2004, CCF has received over 2000 samples, with 55 linked to the Horn of Africa's cheetah subspecies, *Acinonyx jubatus soemmeringii*, helping to support its uplisting in December 2023.



## SUPPORTING CONSERVATION AND LIVELIHOODS IN SOMALILAND

In Somaliland, protecting wildlife and supporting local communities go hand in hand. Research shows that for conservation to work, it must include efforts to improve the lives of people living near wildlife. CCF focuses on combining community development with wildlife protection to create lasting solutions.

A key part of our approach is Community-Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM). This means involving local people in managing their natural resources. We help train local leaders and set up CBNRM units to ensure communities have a say in how their resources are used. This makes conservation efforts more relevant and supported by those who live there.

Our second phase of the Legal Intelligence and Community Governance for Cheetah Illicit Trade (LICIT II) project is a great example of this approach. Through LICIT II, we're working to fight wildlife crime while also improving how local resources are managed. By setting up and training CBNRM units, we help communities manage their resources responsibly, which helps reduce illegal activities and boosts local economies.

Another important project is our partnership with Deutsche Welthungerhilfe (WHH), funded by the EU. This project merges anti-trafficking strategies with area protection methods to sustainably reduce wildlife trafficking within Somali communities.

We also have a project funded by the IUCN that adapts Namibia's CBNRM approach for use in northwestern Somaliland. This project aims

**Photos: this page:** CCF's conservancy movement begins in Somaliland **Opposite page: top:** fingerprint signatures administered and documented by the MoECC **bottom:** MANTRA staff onsite at a MANTRA Impact Fund site.



to lower human-wildlife conflict and improve rural livelihoods through education. We train teachers and students about sustainable practices and the importance of wildlife conservation.

In addition to these projects, we work to reduce conflicts between people and wildlife. For example, our Future Farmers of Africa (FFA) program teaches farmers how to manage their livestock in ways that prevent problems with wildlife. This helps farmers protect their animals and live peacefully with wildlife.



## SPOTlight ON SPONSORS

In 2024, CCF welcomed seven new puppies to the LGD program. The strategic placement of these puppies ensures they grow up to become effective guardians, continuing the legacy of the program.

CCF Corporate Sponsor MANTRA donated US \$10,000 to place ten puppies with Namibian farmers across the country.

**Why they support conservation:** *We are inspired by a deep connection to nature and consider it our responsibility to encourage people to think about nature.*

**Why we sponsor LGDs:** *A visit to Namibia showed us the beauty of the cheetah's landscape and upon learning that the cheetah faced threats from human-wildlife conflict we decided to support a successful conflict mitigation program.*

**Thank you MANTRA!** We appreciate your ongoing support.

Learn more: [www.mantraimpactfund.com/](http://www.mantraimpactfund.com/)





## RESPONSIBLE TOURISM HELPS SAVE THE CHEETAH

### *PLAN YOUR VISIT TO CCF*

When day visitors and overnight guests come to see our work firsthand, they not only gain a deeper understanding of our challenges and successes, but they also make a direct and positive financial impact on cheetah conservation. Visitors appreciate seeing rehabilitated cheetahs during our daily educational activities and wildlife in the surrounding Waterberg Plateau National Park. Revenue from tourism supports our programs and the livelihoods of the people who share their landscape with predators like the cheetah. Overnight guests at CCF can enjoy staying at our family-friendly Cheetah View Lodge or our luxury accommodation, Babson House. Both are homey and comfortable, offering full-service dining, unique amenities, and beautiful views. The Cheetah Café, with its locally sourced and freshly prepared dishes, provides a pleasant, casual dining option for cheese lovers. Popular menu items are made onsite at our Dancing Goat Creamery, which is part of our work at the Model Farm—a working farm that serves as a teaching center offering predator-friendly farming techniques to the farming community. Since the pandemic, we've seen a boost in visitation, reflecting a trend toward meaningful travel experiences, and we welcome many interesting people! Notable returning guests this year included Sven Odman, a semi-retired veterinarian who shared his expertise with us, and Clive Johnson, Director of B2Gold, who brought a group of visitors to enjoy a cheetah run. First-time visitors Bill and Deborah Crowson, owners of Allied-Locke Industries Inc., which serves major clients like John Deere and Caterpillar, enjoyed a stay at Babson House. Mr. Crowson has visited Africa 13 times and explored 22 countries, and we were honored that he chose to come to CCF. CCF attracts a wide array of visitors thanks to our unique accommodations

**Photos: This page:** Tourist takes home a souvenir cheetah from their visit **Opposite page:** Cheetah named Ryan in a transport crate

and picturesque setting. We often host film crews focused on our conservation work, including two recent groups from Wild Africa Fund—an NGO that raises awareness about poaching, habitat loss, and human-wildlife conflict—and the Discovery Channel, which visited in June and July. We look forward to showcasing these exciting projects when they are completed. For those interested in experiencing CCF's work firsthand, we invite you to visit and see the impact of your support.

## CCF EAST: CARNIVORE CONFLICT FIELD OUTPOST

CCF East, located in the Omaheke Region of Namibia, is a key field outpost for CCF. This station plays an essential role in managing conflicts between humans and wildlife, promoting peaceful coexistence between local farmers and predators like cheetahs and leopards. The work at CCF East, led by Dr. Hanlie Winterbach and Johan J Viljoen, includes wildlife rescue, conflict management, education, community outreach, and using Livestock Guarding Dogs (LGDs).

### GOOD NEWS FROM CCF EAST

**Cheetah Rescue:** An adult female cheetah named Ryan was captured after a report of livestock loss on a farm. In July 2024, efforts to find her cubs using traps and cameras failed, so Ryan was taken to a vet for a check-up. She was then fitted with an EWS radio collar and released on another farm, where she is being monitored.



**LGD Success:** Farmers in the Omaheke region remain positive about the LGD program, confirming that the 33 dogs currently working there are effectively preventing livestock losses. The team performed their first set of vaccinations for the year and scheduled the second set of visits for the second half of the year.

**Farmer Reports:** CCF East often receives valuable reports from farmers about carnivore movements. In January 2024, a farmer reported an adult female cheetah with four cubs near a road, while another reported African wild dogs on his farm. These reports help CCF East track wildlife and prevent conflicts.



## GROUNDBREAKING NEW EDUCATION CENTRE IN SOMALILAND

Construction is well underway on a new Education Centre at our Cheetah Rescue and Conservation Centre (CRCC) in Geed-Deeble, Somaliland. The Centre will be the first of its kind in the Horn of Africa and will focus on protecting the Northeast African cheetah (*Acinonyx jubatus soemmeringii*), a subspecies threatened by illegal wildlife trade.

The Education Centre represents a major advancement in CCF's efforts to combat wildlife crime and support conservation initiatives. It will serve as a key resource in the fight against the illegal trade, especially focusing on the protection of young cheetahs who are often targeted.

We've completed the site layout, excavation for building foundations, water supply, septic systems, and initial trenching for the water line. In phase two we'll begin building construction, plumbing, and the establishment of essential utilities under the guidance of contractor Yousuf Abdirashid. The designs are being finalized by award-winning architect, SDI Architecture with technical assistance and construction oversight by Detour Habitats from the United States.

A temporary Welcome Centre has been constructed to accommodate visitors during the Education Centre development phase.

The Education Centre has also received notable support from the Royal Commission for AIUla (RCU). It will act as a hub for environmental education, engaging local communities in Somaliland. Educational materials have been translated into Somali to enhance accessibility. Programs at the Centre will include training on predator-friendly livestock management, veterinary practices, and wildlife protection enforcement, following the successful model established by CCF's Education Centre in Namibia.

**Photo: this page:** Groundbreaking for the Education Centre Dr. Laurie Marker with Honorable Shukri Haji Ismail (Bandare), Minister of Environment and Climate Change of Somaliland, Ambassador Chenhwa Lou from the Taiwan Representative Office in Somaliland, and CCF Staff **Opposite page: left:** LGD puppies, **right:** farmers visit CCF's Model Farm to see our predator-friendly livestock management first-hand.

## LIVESTOCK GUARDING DOG 30 YEARS OF PLACEMENTS AND FOLLOW-UPS

This year marks the 30th anniversary of our Livestock Guarding Dog (LGD) Program, a groundbreaking initiative that has become a key part of conservation efforts in Namibia and beyond. Since it began, the LGD Program has played a major role in reducing human-wildlife conflict by providing farmers with dogs that protect their livestock from predators like cheetahs.

**CCF's Livestock Guarding Dog (LGD) program in Namibia saves the equivalent of 6% of the global cheetah population every year.**



**How do dogs save cheetahs?** CCF prevents potential conflicts on farms by placing nearly 800 LGDs since the program's inception in 1994. Currently, there are 229 dogs working on farms in Namibia, significantly reducing the predation rate and saving approximately 458 cheetahs in that country annually.

In June 2024, CCF welcomed two new additions to its Livestock Guarding Dog program from Turkey. Lejant, a future breeding male, arrived on June 7th, followed by Lotus, a future breeding female, on June 14th. Both dogs are expected to play a crucial role in the program's efforts to improve and expand the number of working LGDs. By introducing new genetic diversity, Lejant and Lotus will contribute to breeding healthy, robust dogs that can help protect livestock from predators and support the livelihoods of local farmers.

Throughout the year, working dogs are visited for their required 3-month, 6-month, and 1-year follow-up checks. At follow-up visits dogs are vaccinated against rabies and other canine diseases. They have an overall health check, and were evaluated on their working success. When dogs are found to be unhealthy or not doing their job, they are removed from that specific farm, evaluated, and either placed on another farm or placed as pets if they are no longer able to work as LGDs.



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



CCF's Ecologist, Stijn Verschueren was invited by WWF Belgium to speak about cheetahs to a group of twelve Rangerclub kids and their parents. The 'interview' will also be featured in the Rangerclub magazine that will be distributed to 5,000 - 6,000 households in Belgium.

The logo for "Cubs Club" features the words "Cubs" and "Club" in a large, orange, sans-serif font. A stylized cheetah tail graphic extends from the bottom of the word "Club".

At the first Cubs Club meeting, young cheetah enthusiasts learned about ancient American cheetahs that roamed during the Ice Age. Their coloring sheets showed outstanding creativity! Cubs also chatted about king cheetahs, the topic of September's meeting. Contact [info@cheetah.org](mailto:info@cheetah.org) for the Cubs Club meeting schedule.



Staff and students at Cherrydale Primary School participated in a traditional "Cheetah Walk" on their nature trail. Kids wore cheetah headbands, Cherrydale Cheetah and PeaceBuilder t-shirts, animal prints while listening to songs like "The Cheetah Theme Song" by Mark Shepard.

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](mailto:info@cheetah.org)**



New episodes of CheetahTV premiering every other Wednesday starting on September 4th at 1:00pm ET. Subscribe @CCFCheetah and click the bell on YouTube to catch every premier.

## Cheetah Strides TikTok Challenge



**Join our fun TikTok Challenge** and vote in the only election where the cheetah (in the wild) wins no matter what! Choose CCF's Livestock Guarding Dogs by telling us why you #VoteDog or say why our Resident Cheetahs will get your support as you #VoteCheetah this election season.

### Challenge Instructions

#### Create a TikTok Video

- Choose your candidate!
- Show your support by making a creative video! You could dress up as your favorite animal, show off some cool dog tricks, or even dance like a cheetah on the prowl. Get creative and have fun!

#### Use the Hashtags

- In your video caption, include either #VoteDog or #VoteCheetah depending on your favorite.
- Don't forget to add #undecided if you just can't choose between the two!

#### Share and Tag Us

- Make sure your video is public, so everyone can see your creation!
- Tag us @ccfcheetah and use the hashtags #VoteDog or #VoteCheetah and #undecided to make your vote count.

## FUTURE CONSERVATIONISTS OF AFRICA

CCF uses environmental education to teach people (of all ages) about predators and why they are important for the ecosystem. [www.cheetah.org/about/what-we-do/education/](http://www.cheetah.org/about/what-we-do/education/)



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