

SPECIES CONSERVATION

Why it's our problem

Mammals have evolved on the Earth over hundreds of millions of years. The earliest known fossils of *Homo sapiens* (modern humans) date to approximately 300,000 years ago. In our short geologic time, we have caused the extinction of many species. According to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), over 800 species have been documented as extinct since the year 1500, with many of these extinctions attributable to human actions, such as habitat destruction, overexploitation, pollution, and the introduction of invasive species. This number does not account for species that have gone extinct without being documented or those that have not been assessed by the IUCN. Once a species goes extinct, it's gone forever.

Why we must act

Humans are contributing significantly to the extinction of species, but we can change our problem-causing behaviors. It's not just about safeguarding our climate and preserving habitats; it's also crucial to ensure peaceful coexistence between humans and wildlife beyond protected zones. As consumers, we must embrace a sustainable way of life to shield nature from overconsumption and exploitation.

Why we should care

Beyond the practical reasons that wildlife is valuable to human livelihoods in ecosystem health and biodiversity, agricultural services (pollinators, seed spreaders, etc...) and tourism, we also have an ethical and cultural responsibility to conserve wildlife and ecosystems for future generations.

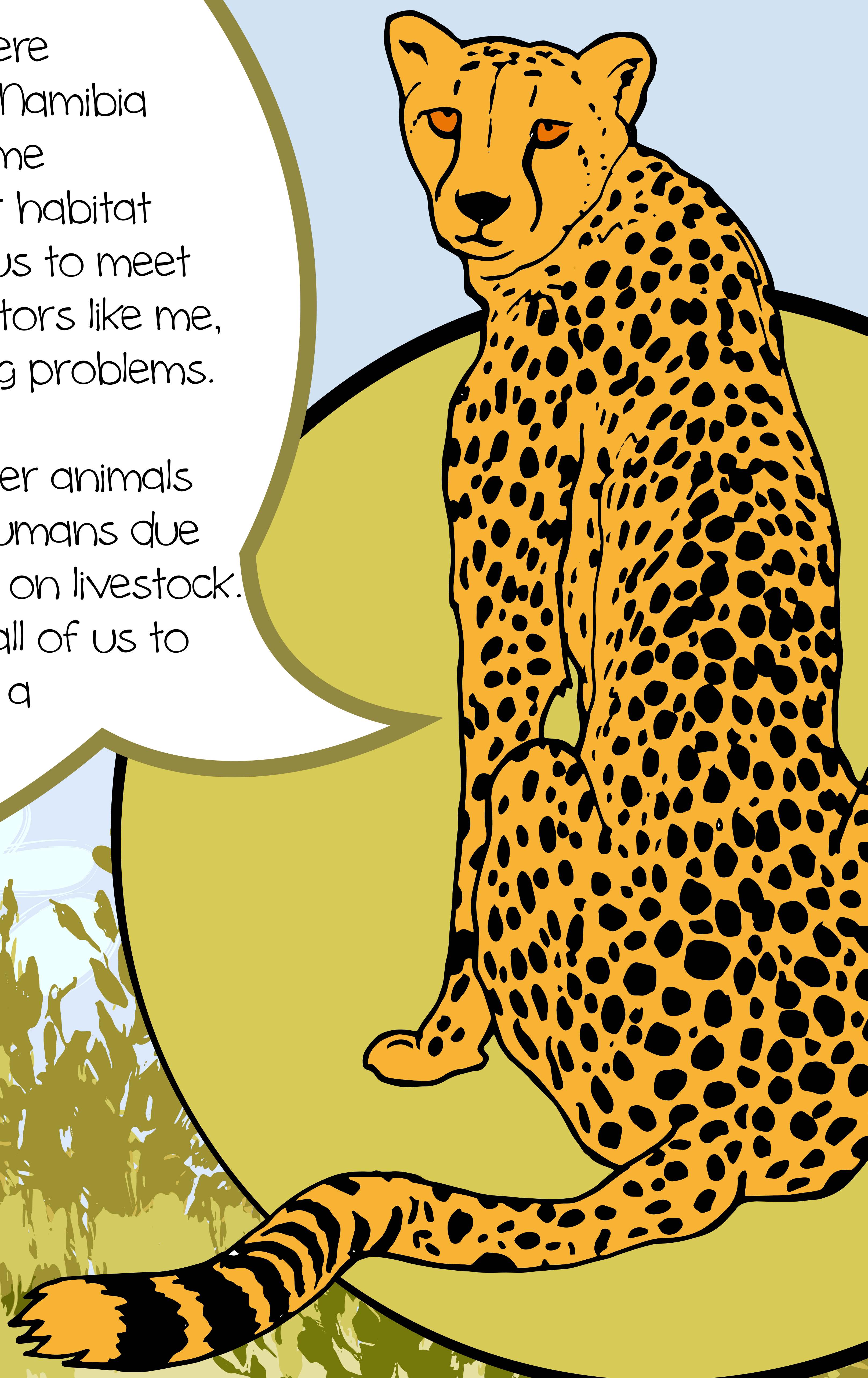


Hello,

I am Zinzi. I would like to invite you to learn more about species conservation.

In the recent past, wild animals were abundant in my home country of Namibia and elsewhere. Today, it has become increasingly difficult to survive. Our habitat is shrinking rapidly, which causes us to meet with people more often. For predators like me, proximity to humans can cause big problems.

Often, we cheetahs and many other animals get into unwanted conflicts with humans due to limited resources and predation on livestock. There are solutions that can help all of us to live together peacefully. Let's have a look at how this is possible.



THE CHEETAH

- A HIGHLY SPECIALIZED CAT

Features

Cheetahs are the fastest land mammals, reaching top speeds of 110 km/h. They can accelerate from 0 to over 100 km/h in just three seconds. But this top speed is energy-consuming and can be maintained only for about 30 seconds. That is usually enough for a hunt, but not every hunting attempt is successful.

The cheetah's physique is perfectly adapted for a fast sprinter: **slim and streamlined, with long, slender legs, a very flexible spine, and a voluminous rib cage to accommodate large lungs. The long tail serves as a stabilizing rudder to keep their balance during sharp turns.** Unlike other cats, cheetahs cannot retract their claws. These „spikes“ prevent them from slipping during a hunt.

By its body shape, size, and fur pattern the cheetah can easily be told apart from another well-known African predator, the leopard. The leopard has shorter legs and is stockier in comparison, with a broad, heavy bone structure and enormous muscles. Its sand-colored fur has a distinct pattern with black-brown rosettes on its rump.

The **cheetah has simple black dots** on the entire body, except on the belly. At the tip of the tail the dots merge into stripes. In combination with the yellowish sand-colored fur this is excellent camouflage. The big cat blends in with its environment.

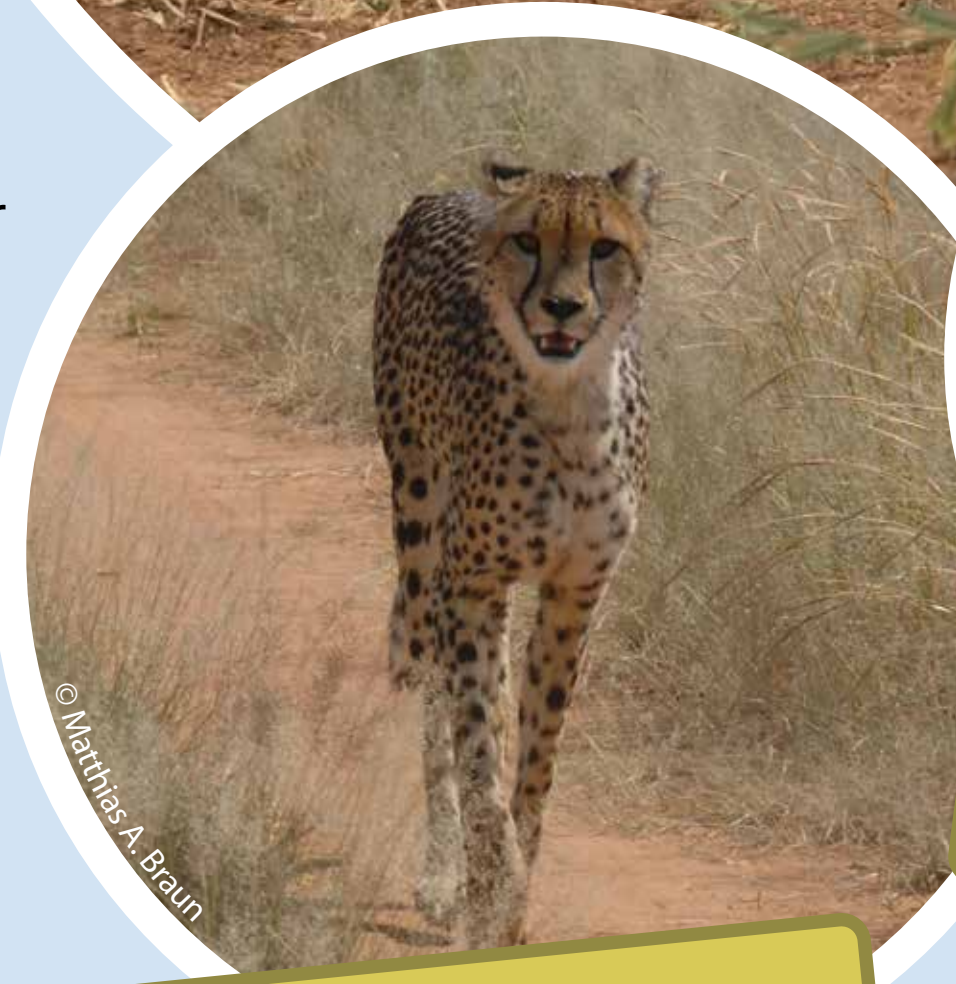
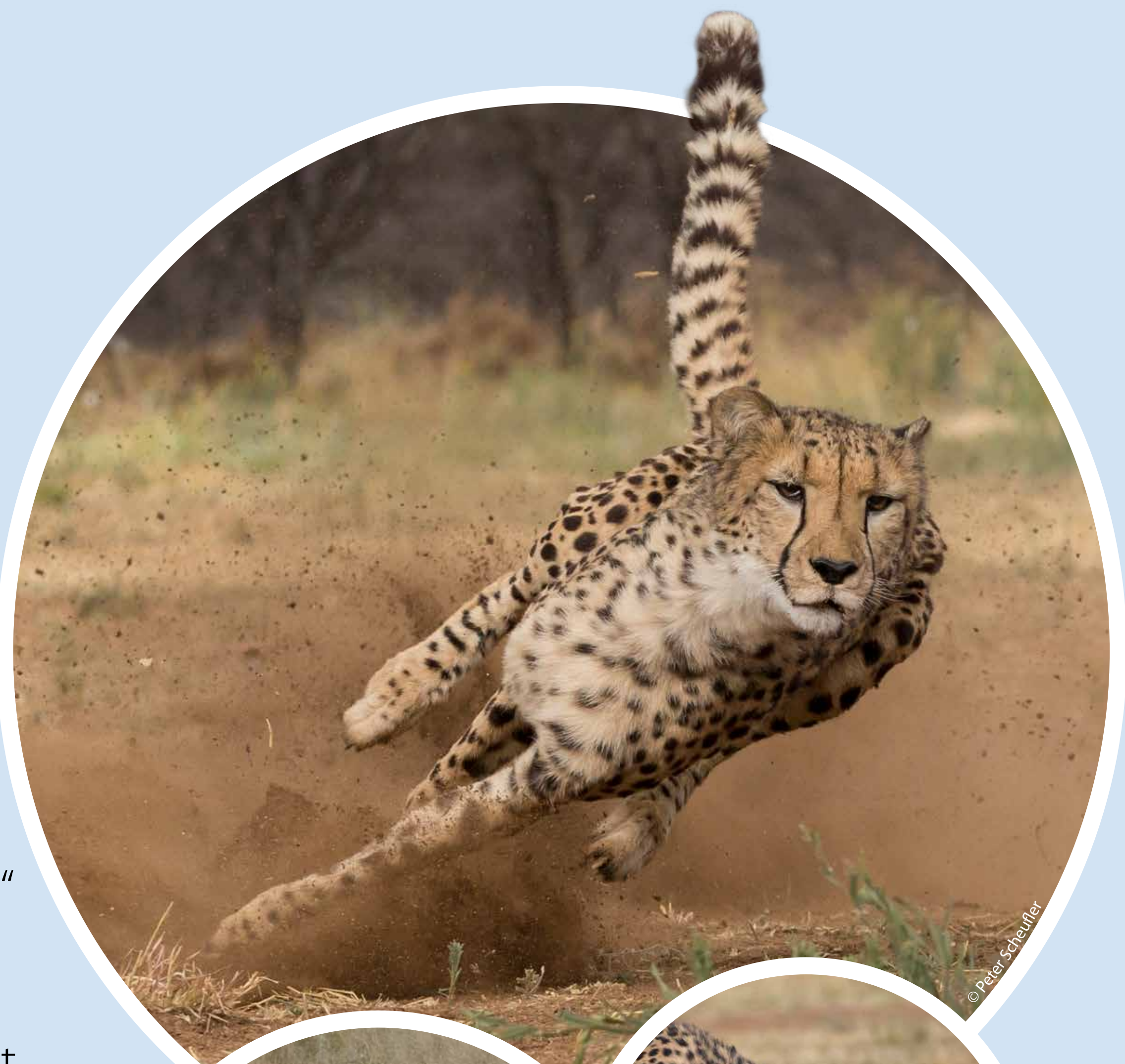
A defining feature for cheetahs are the „**tear streaks**“ on their face, which run from the inner corner of the eyes towards the mouth. These black markings absorb the bright sunlight and thus serve as glare protection.

Way of life and social behavior

Cheetahs are diurnal (primarily active during twilight) and live in the open savanna with vast grasslands. In general adults, especially females, are solitary, unless they are with their young. Cubs stay with their mothers for up to two years to learn to hunt. Adult cheetah brothers usually form small groups, called coalitions.

During the first three months, cheetah cubs have a long strip of silvery hair on their backs, called a “mantle”. It probably serves to effectively camouflage them in the tall grass and to protect them from heat and rain. In addition, this special coat resembles a honey badger, a small, aggressive marten, that even larger predators tend to avoid. As an additional protective measure against enemies such as leopards, hyenas, and lions, the mother repeatedly carries her young to new hiding places every few days or weeks. Despite these protection measures, cheetah cubs have a high mortality rate during their first year.

Order:	Carnivore (Carnivora)
Family:	Cats (Felidae)
Genus:	Acinonyx
Species:	Cheetah (<i>Acinonyx jubatus</i>)
Weight Ø:	female 40 kg, male 50 kg
Age Ø:	6–8 in the wild
Speed:	110 km/h max
Diet:	Small ungulate such as gazelles and antelopes
Distribution today:	Africa; residual population in Iran
Habitat:	savanna, grasslands, steppe
Circadian rhythm:	primarily active during twilight
Enemies:	humans, lions, leopards, hyenas
Endangered:	yes



Non-retractable claws

Cheetahs have a slender body



Perfect camouflage in cubs and adults



Mother with cubs



Leopard

FROM HUNTER TO HUNTED



Cheetahs have the typical denture of a predator, with four prominent, pointed fangs (canines) and sharp carnassial shears (anterior molars). Their preferred prey are small ungulates such as gazelles or springboks.

Their slender body makes cheetahs perfect runners, but not strong fighters. Therefore, they prefer flight to fight and avoid areas with a high density of lions, leopards, and hyenas. These natural enemies of the cheetah usually „occupy“ protected areas in reserves and national parks. Hence almost 80% of cheetahs still living in the wild in Namibia must live outside protected areas on farmland used for livestock.

Even outside of reserves, natural prey is plentiful. But due to the steady advance of humans, the cheetah's habitat is shrinking. Inevitably, the animals have nowhere to go and live closer to populated areas - and more often conflicts arise between cheetahs and humans. Some farmers see the cheetahs as a threat to their livestock herds and do not shy away from trapping or even killing these elegant predators, despite scientific studies showing that cheetahs feed mainly on wild animals.



Not only for us cheetahs, but also for other wild animals such as elephants, bears, sea turtles or koalas, the proximity to humans often has deadly consequences. Threatened species are already in a precarious position. We can become even more endangered by these losses.

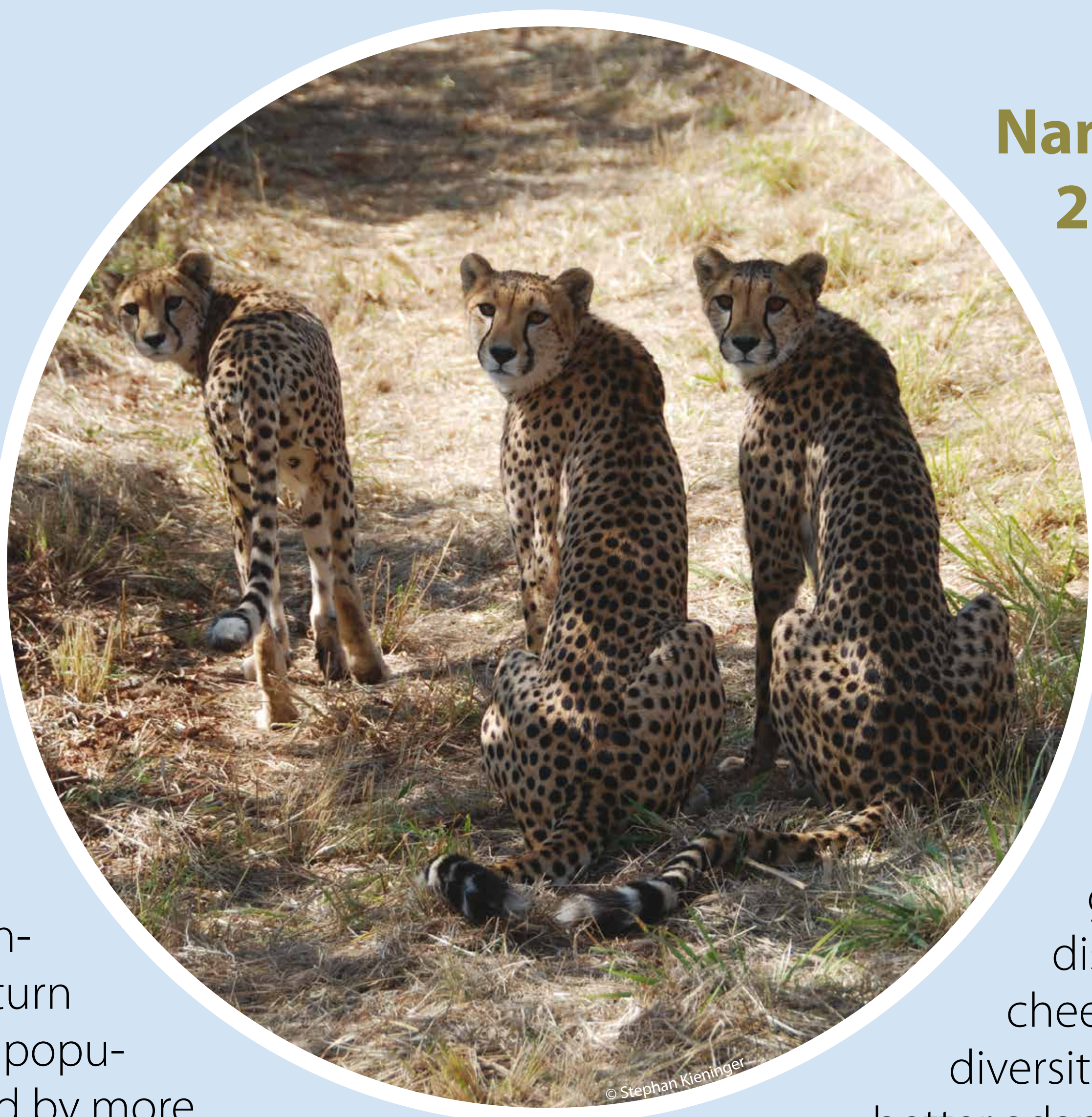


DECLINE OF THE CHEETAH POPULATION

The cheetah is one of the oldest cat species on earth.

It took cheetahs four million years to evolve into the unique animal we know today. And it took mankind less than 100 years to bring the cheetah species to the brink of extinction.

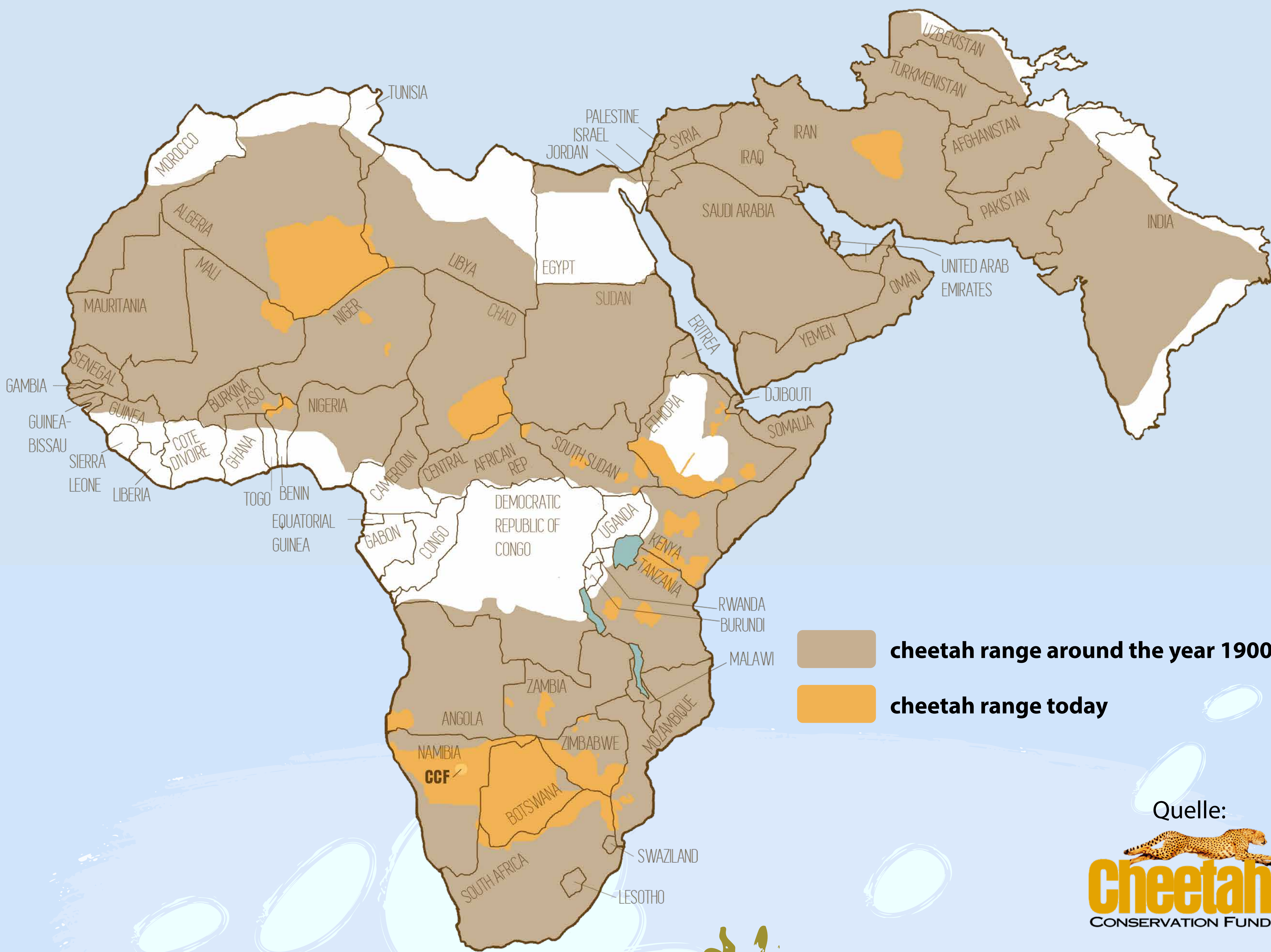
Historically, the cheetah was widespread in the African savannas and even in Asia. Since the turn of the 20th century, cheetah populations worldwide have declined by more than 90% to just over 7000 adults – and the numbers continue to decline rapidly. Today, the cheetah is one of the most endangered predatory cats in Africa.



Namibia is home to around 2500 adult cheetahs, the largest remaining wild cheetah population.

But here, too, human-wildlife conflicts and habitat loss are decimating these elegant cats.

In addition, the lack of genetic diversity with a high mortality rate in cubs and the greater susceptibility to various diseases poses a major threat to the cheetah's survival. A broader genetic diversity usually allows any species to better adapt to environmental and ecological changes, and to be more resilient to diseases.



Quelle:



HUMAN-WILDLIFE CONFLICTS CAN BE SOLVED

Resolving human-wildlife conflict is one of the biggest challenges in the conservation of cheetahs and other wildlife. Depending on the situation, strategies must be worked out that allow peaceful coexistence between humans and wildlife.

The danger posed to livestock by cheetahs is usually greatly overestimated, since they feed mainly on wild animals. The development of „cheetah-friendly“ livestock management methods, educational workshops for farmers and a 24-hour predator hotline are intended to increase acceptance of cheetahs as part of the natural ecosystem.

Livestock Guarding Dogs

A successful strategy for safeguarding Namibia's wild cheetah population and addressing the pressing issue of human-wildlife conflict is the livestock guarding dog program supported by CCF's international affiliates like AGA and implemented by the Cheetah Conservation Fund (CCF).

Among other breeds, Turkish guard dogs, Kangals have an innate protective instinct. The puppies grow up with the herd, bond with them and take on their role as protectors of the herd.

With sponsorship for the livestock guard dog program, you can support our four-legged cheetah protectors in their important work.
More info: <https://cheetah.org/learn/human-wildlife-conflict/>

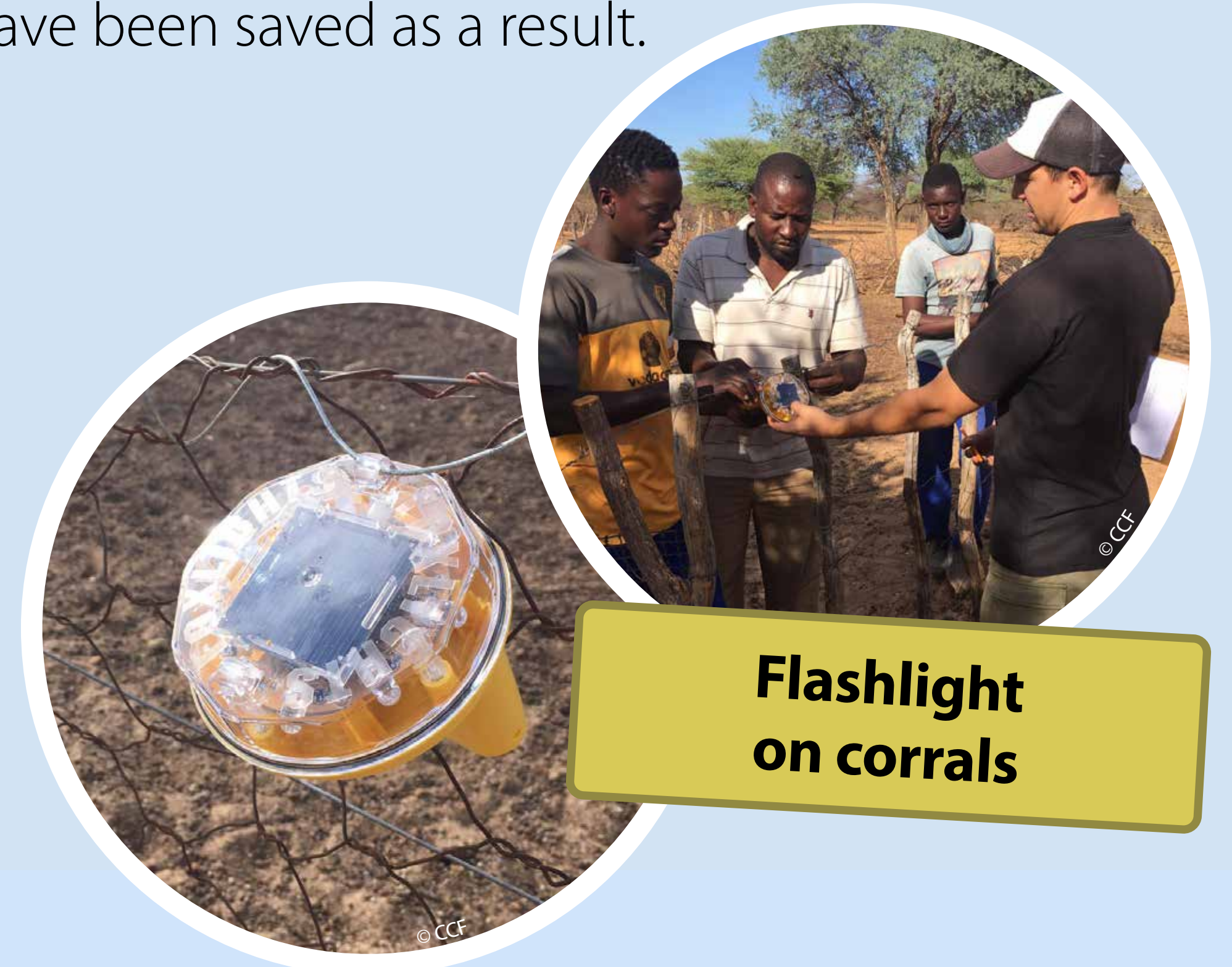
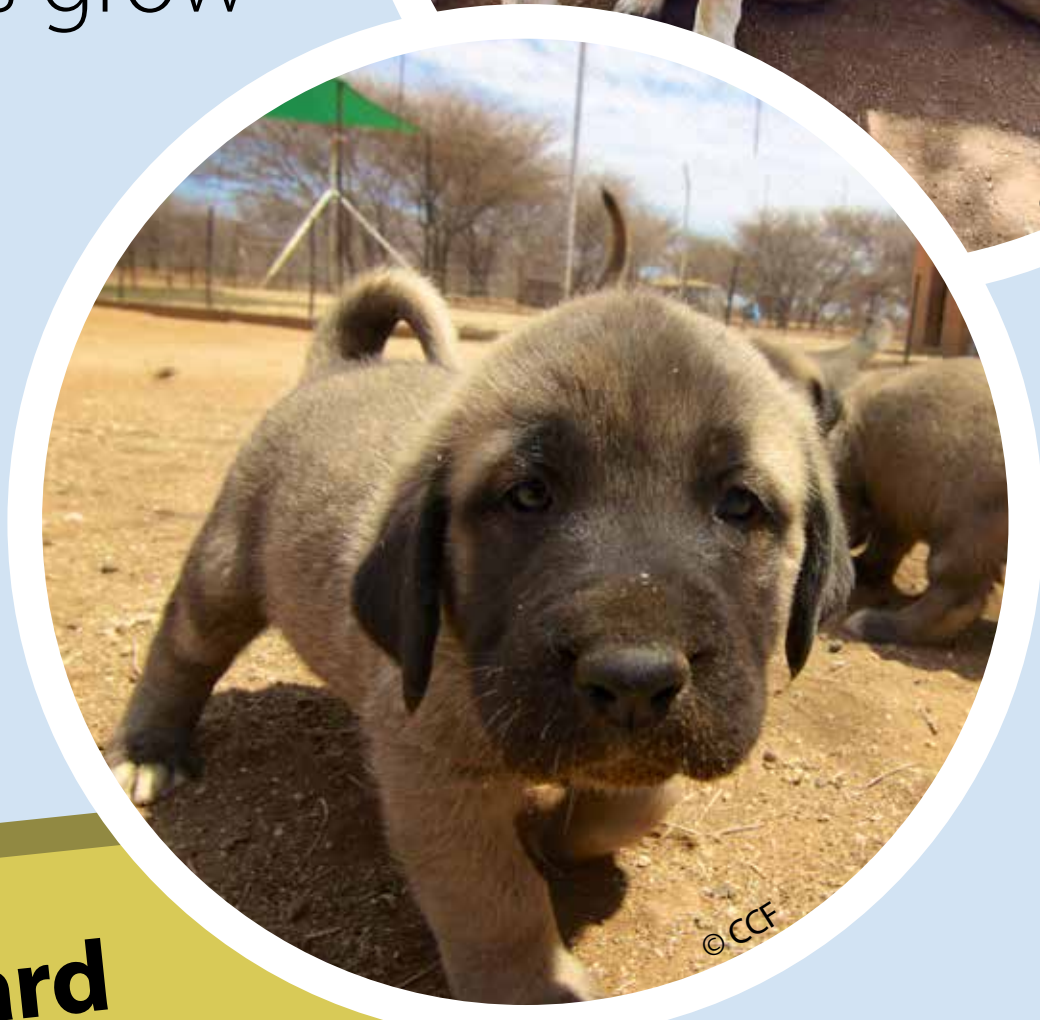


Kangal
guarding dogs



A well-trained, healthy Kangal is already an effective protection against livestock loss to predators with its large size and deep bark.

Through education, workshops and training for farmers, the increased use of guarding dogs in cheetah habitat is encouraged. Follow-up visits by CCF staff ensure that the dogs are well kept and cared for. Many local farmers have begun to rethink their approach, and the lives of many cheetahs have been saved as a result.



Flashlight
on corrals

Predator Deterrent Lights

Another method of cheetah-friendly livestock management is the use of flashing lights. To deter predators, a light system that resembles the flickering light of a flashlight and thus simulates the presence of humans can be used on fenced livestock pens.

The lights are powered by solar panels. The system has been used successfully in Kenya and Botswana to keep lions away from livestock. This has deterred up to 90% of predators and avoided human-wildlife conflicts. In collaboration with CCF, a pilot project has been funded by AGA to develop another way to resolve conflicts with cheetahs.



That sounds super exciting to me. I learned that not only dogs but, for example, llamas and alpacas are used for protecting livestock. And to keep elephants away from their crops and gardens, people rely on bees. Incredible, isn't it?

VISIT CCF IN PERSON!



Did you know that you can visit CCF Namibia as an international tourist? Our Field Centre in Namibia accepts visitors 364 days of the year (closed only on Christmas Day). Visitors can come for just a day if you are planning to travel to the country, or you can stay in one of our luxury accommodations overnight if you'd like to spend more time learning about the cheetah!

Accommodations

CCF Namibia has two luxury accommodations for guests: The Babson House and Cheetah View Lodge.

Babson House, CCF's luxurious guest house, sleeps up to 6 people and guests can enjoy sundowners on a private veranda overlooking the Waterberg Plateau as well as several resident cheetah enclosures. Guests are treated to a private chef who prepares lunch on the veranda and dinner at the communal dining room table, catering to close-knit groups who wish to experience CCF as a unit.



The five room Cheetah View Lodge is the ideal setting for travelers who want to witness a world-class conservation facility at work. Accommodation fees include both breakfast and dinner at the Meal House, a full-service restaurant with an open-air veranda, as well as 15 % off of all cheetah activities including cheetah drives and the popular cheetah runs. The large family room situated below the Meal House also overlooks the waterhole with similarly breathtaking views of the Waterberg Plateau in the distance.

The two guestroom buildings are split into individual suites each with their own private entrance and porch area. The four standard suites include a double bedroom, bathroom with shower, and a lounge with sofa to accommodate up to two adults. The family room is larger and comfortably takes up to two adults and two children. Sleeping arrangements consist of two queen beds and one sleeper couch.



Internships & Volunteering

Both CCF Namibia and CCF Somaliland accept volunteers year-round. CCF Namibia accepts interns, working guests, and general volunteers, while CCF Somaliland accepts animal care or veterinary volunteers with relevant experience. Volunteers, interns, and working guests get to experience real conservation work in action and will be utilized for their skills according to the needs of the facility.

CCF USA also has chapters across the country! Consider joining a chapter near you (or starting one!) and contributing to our mission straight from your home.

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer with CCF, consider filling out an application!
<https://www.cheetah.org/get-involved/volunteer/>
<https://cheetah.org/usa/volunteer/>



ALTERNATIVE INCOME SOURCES PROTECT CHEETAHS

Arts and crafts workshops

Improving livelihoods by developing and implementing alternative sources of income, especially in rural areas, also benefits conservation. A better income usually increases the acceptance of conservation measures. Therefore, creating jobs for alternative household income plays an important role in cheetah conservation of AGA and CCF. For example, in special workshops, participants can learn to make high-quality handicrafts.



Handcrafted necklaces with paper-beads made from old magazines

CCF's model farm with products from goat milk

At first, goat milk dairy may not sound like cheetah conservation, and yet it is an important contribution to the protection of these fast cats. For a long time, farmers didn't even use the milk of their goats.

On its model farm, the CCF has not only developed and tested methods of livestock protection, but also alternative income opportunities. With its goat milk dairy farm, the CCF shows farmers how to use their goats' milk, produce various products and thus generate a new income - which then can be used for herd protection. In addition, CCF offers internships at their dairy farm for extensive learning opportunities.

The "Cheetah Café" at CCF's visitor center offers dishes made with locally grown organic vegetables and goat milk products from CCF's model farm. This model farm gives local farmers the opportunity to learn about predator-friendly livestock management and explore new areas of production.



Handmade goat cheese



Organic at CCF

Winemaking offers another great alternate source of income. This idea has been pursued and developed in CCF's own organic garden. Some regions of Namibia are suitable for growing vine, and the sale of Namibian wine could provide local farmers with an additional income.



Thanks to the goats on CCF's model farm, visitors can enjoy delicious ice cream and various cheeses made from goat's milk. Some farmers have already accepted the idea and switched to cheetah-friendly farming methods and thus created new income.

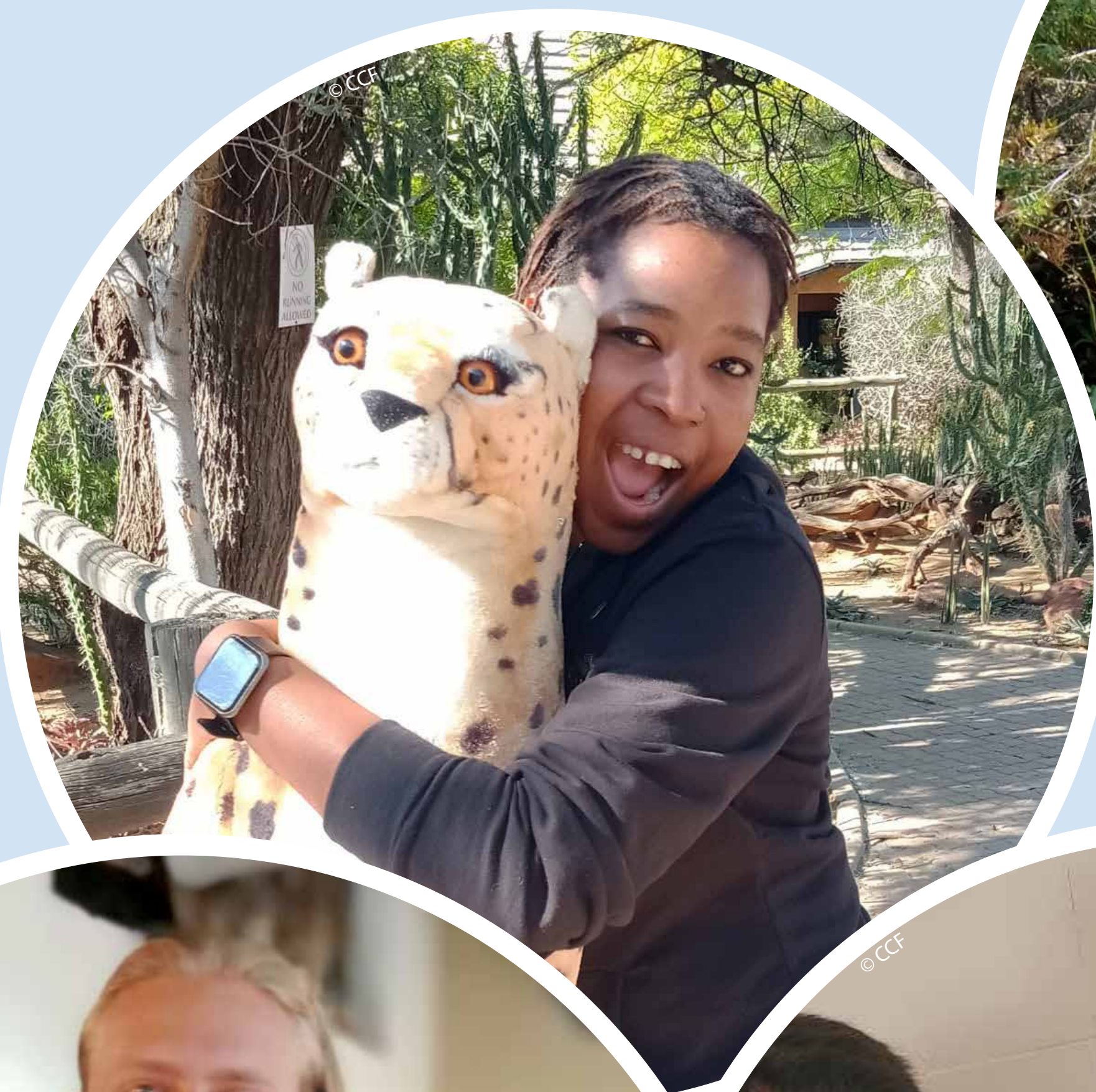


PROTECTING THE CHEETAH STARTS WITH YOU!

Donating to CCF WILL make a difference towards saving the cheetah in the wild. Your donations go directly to our holistic conservation efforts and our worldwide mission to stop their decline.

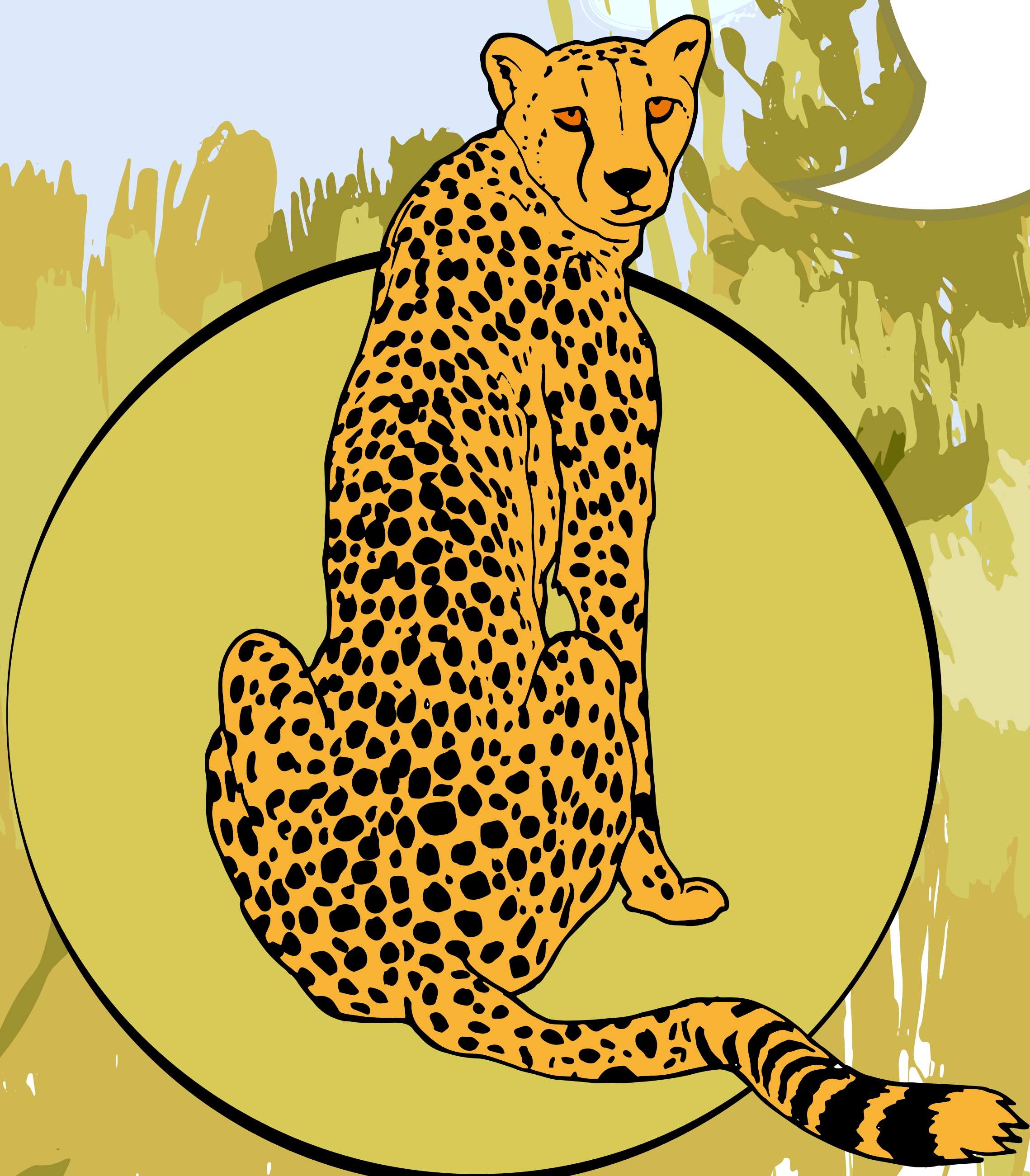
There are many ways to give:

- Donate directly online
- Sponsor a Resident Cheetah or Livestock Guarding Dog (and receive twice yearly updates!)
- Corporate matching campaigns



There are many ways to give. Make a donation, sponsor a cheetah, or support our research, education and conservation efforts with a bequest.
<https://cheetah.org/donate/>

Everybody can make the world a better place and contribute to the protection of cheetahs and other endangered species.



HABITAT DESTRUCTION

- PEOPLE ARE "SAWING OFF THE BRANCH WE ARE SITTING ON"

We are using more resources than the Earth can supply us with in the long term. We are losing wilderness areas and wild animals every day. 200 years ago, there were fewer than 1 billion people in the world. Today, there are nearly 8 billion. If we are to maintain healthy wildlife populations and natural habitats in the 21st century, the destruction of nature through land development, mining, deforestation, pollution, and overuse of plants and wild animals through gathering and poaching must stop.

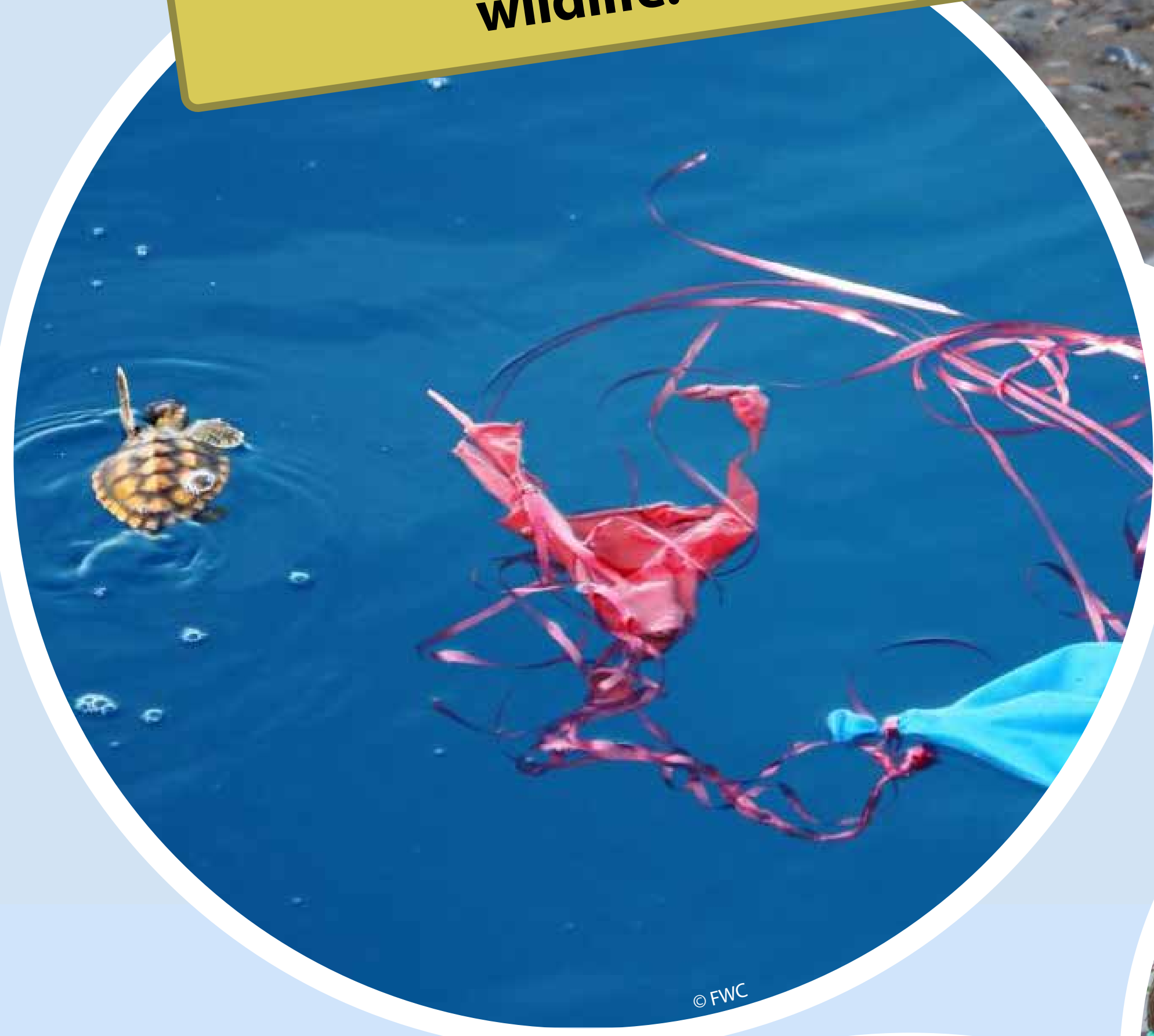
Global climate change increases the frequency and intensity of natural disasters, such as bushfires, floods, and droughts with devastating consequences for nature as well as for us humans.



Plastic waste pollutes our environment - often with deadly consequences for wildlife.



Species threatened by extinction often only exist in small, isolated groups - for them there is no more time to waste. To save them, sustainable nature conservation is necessary. Comprehensive environmental programs, information and public relations are vital. We only protect what we know and love. Knowledge about wild animals and plants and their importance for the habitats they live in, could get people to change their attitudes and consumer behavior. Only then endangered species and their habitats will have a chance to survive in the long run.

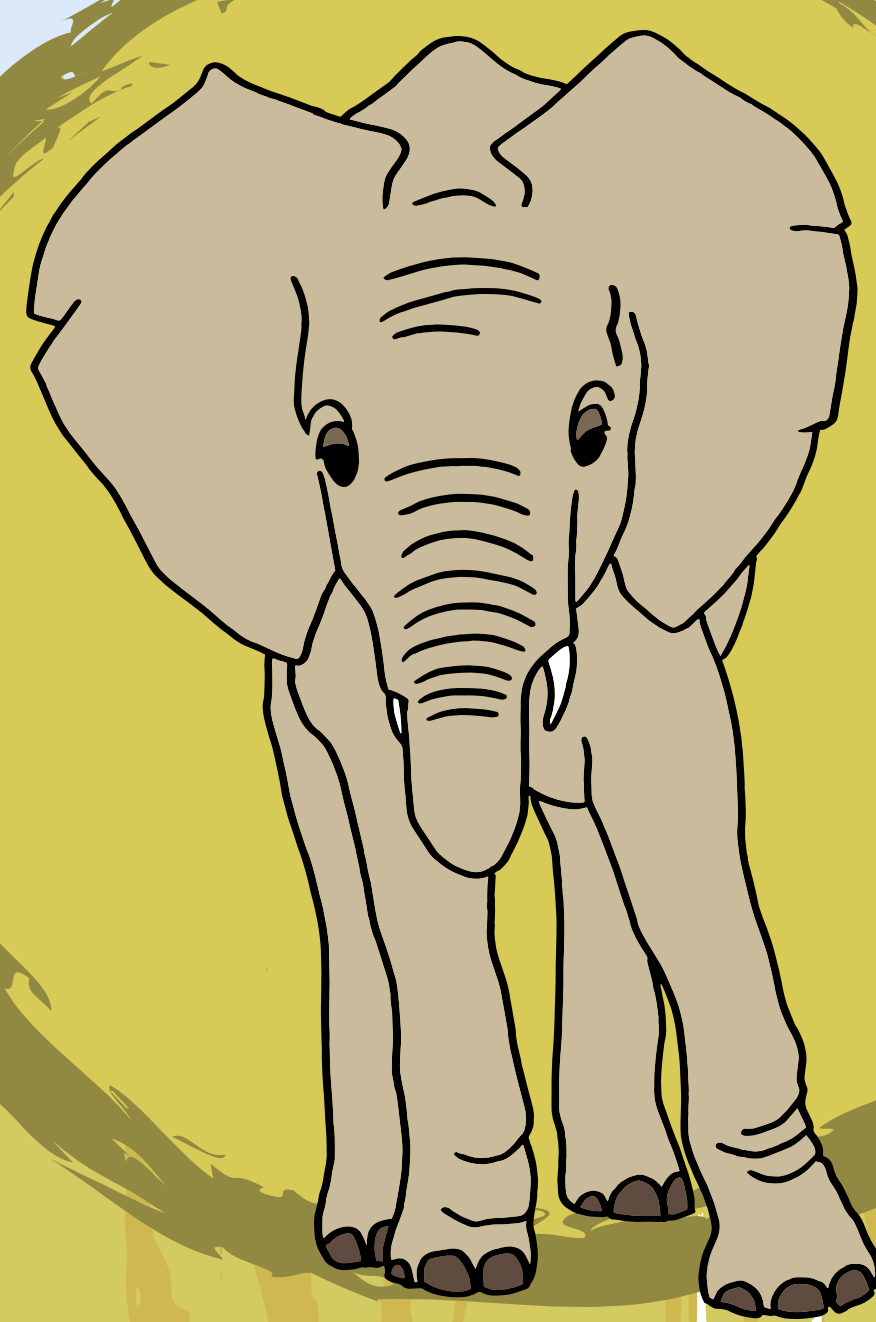


Environmental education programs are important to make a change



Loss of BIG species, has BIG effects!

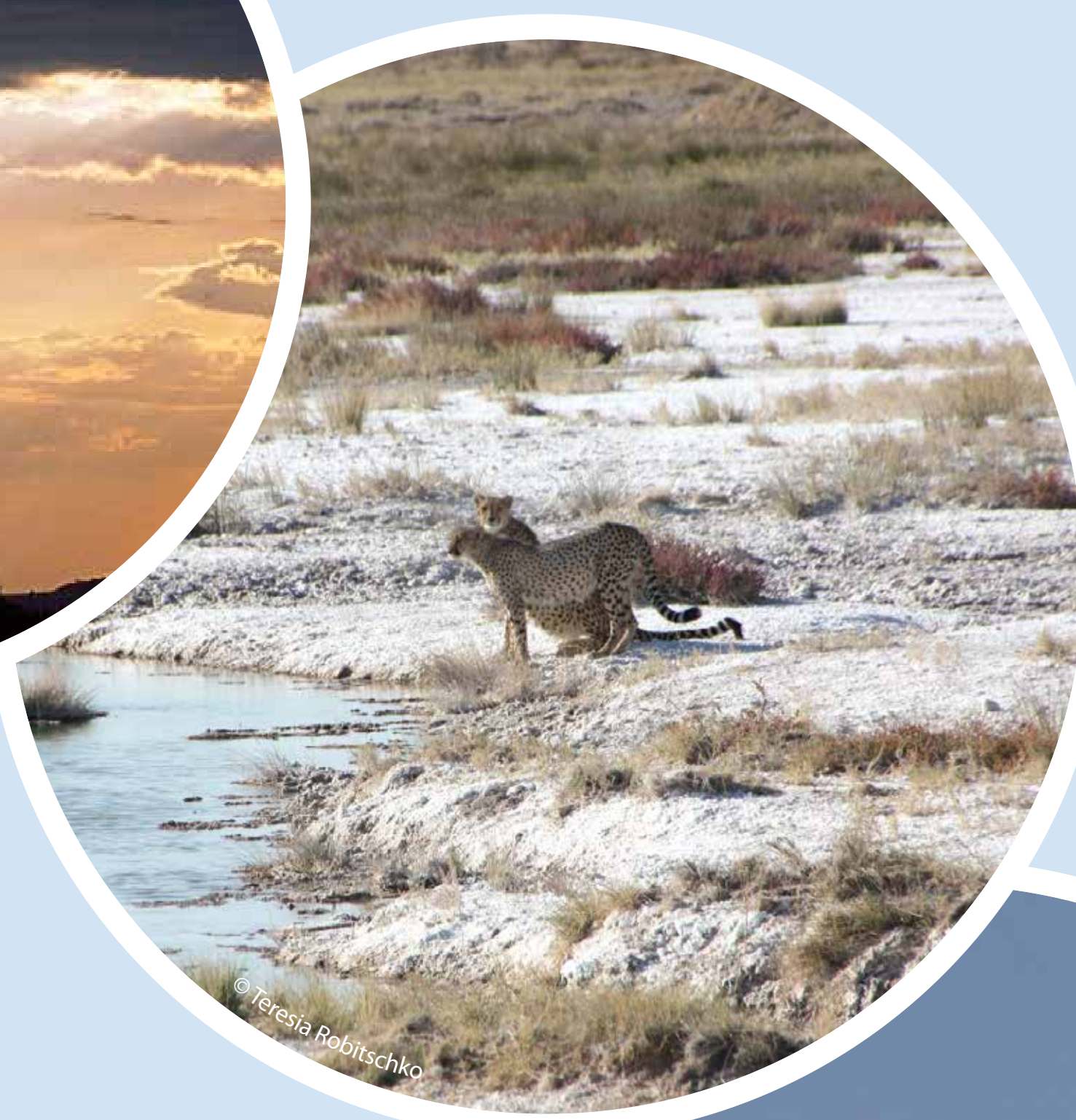
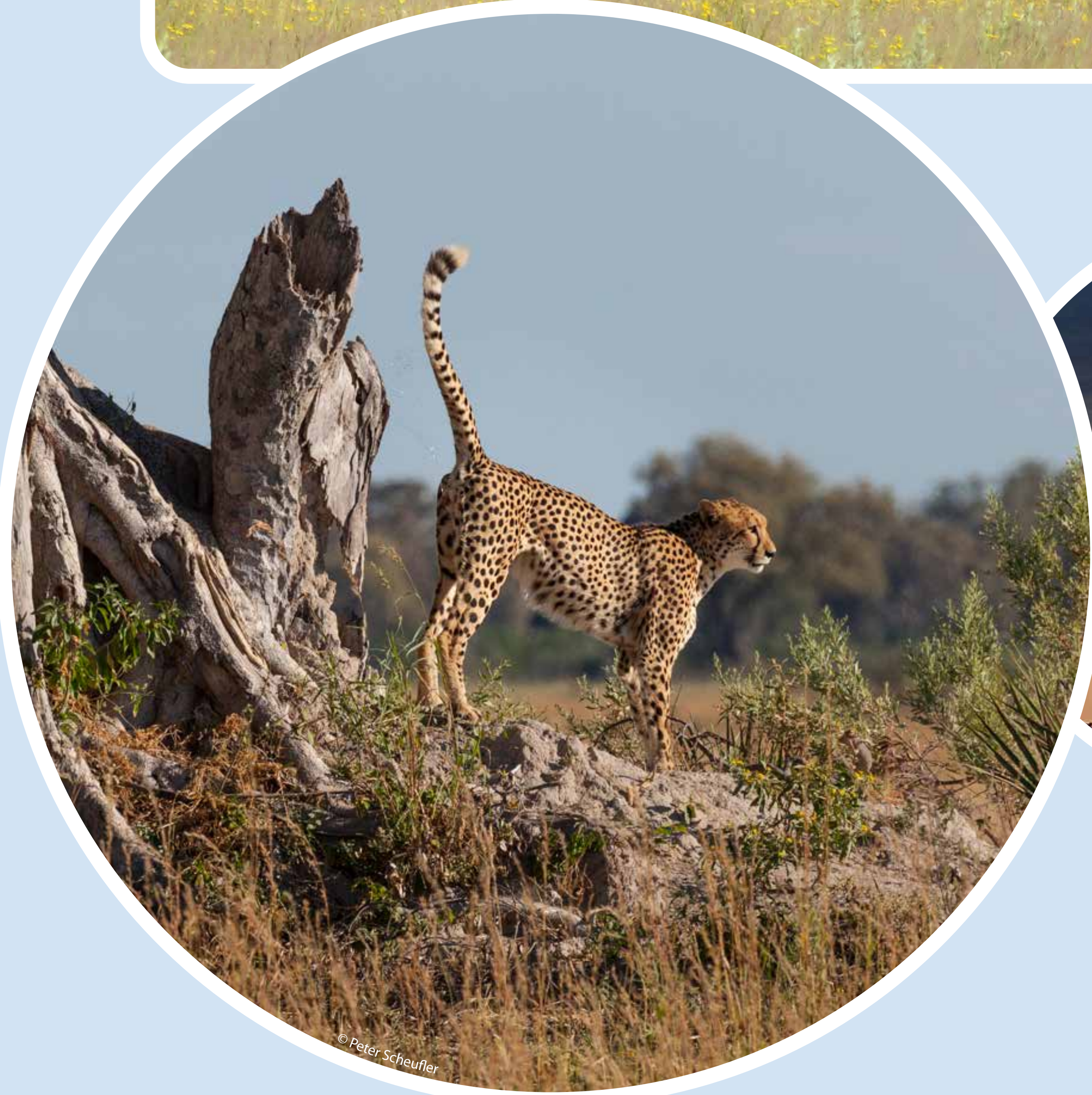
Over the past century, the loss of large herbivores like elephants and rhinos (known as megafauna) has resulted in the overgrowth of native thorny bushes - a process known as bush encroachment. While the disappearance of these iconic species is well known, their absence has had another less visible consequence: the loss of the open spaces that cheetahs need to hunt effectively.



CHEETAH CONSERVATION PROTECTS ECOSYSTEMS



Savanna - habitat for cheetahs and other wildlife



Cheetahs are predators at the top of the food chain. The presence of apex predators in any ecosystem is a good indicator that the natural habitat and ecological structure are largely intact. We humans must understand this central role of predators in any ecosystem. Only then will we understand that through protecting endangered cheetahs we are preserving many other wild animals and their habitat at the same time. These elegant cats make an important contribution for keeping the sensitive natural balance.

When competing with humans for habitat, however, wild animals such as cheetahs are usually bound to lose. With the ongoing decline of cheetah populations, entire ecosystems are increasingly out of balance. We must remember that all life is interconnected.

The cheetah's survival depends on the readiness of humans to protect the cat's habitat, and to manage wildlife populations in general. Many farmers are already working with predator friendly management techniques or are at least open to change. Southern Africa, with its many diverse ecosystems and abundant life forms, is a great hope for the future and the survival of cheetahs – and thus for the preservation of healthy wildlife populations.

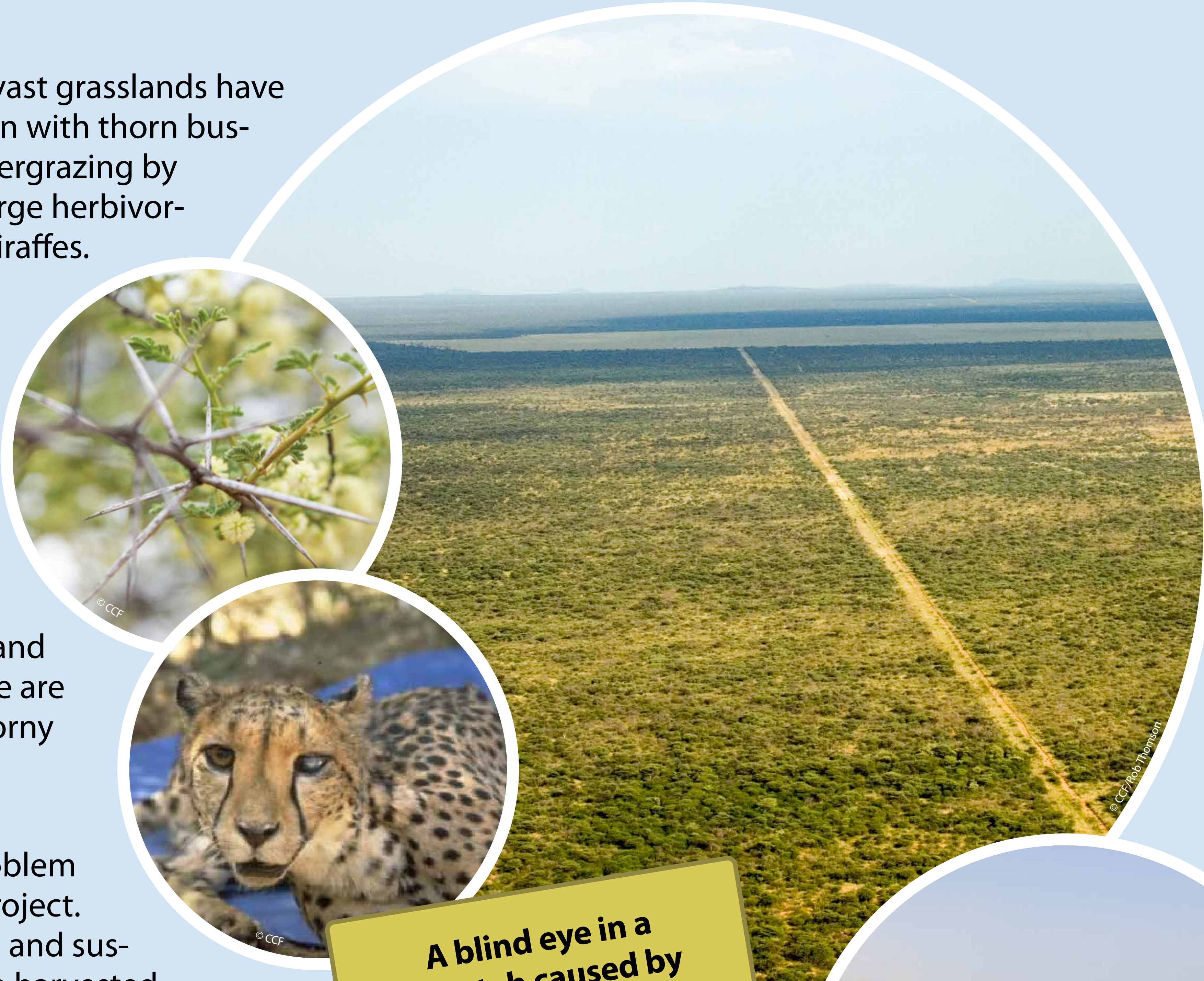


SAVANNA BUSH ENCROACHMENT

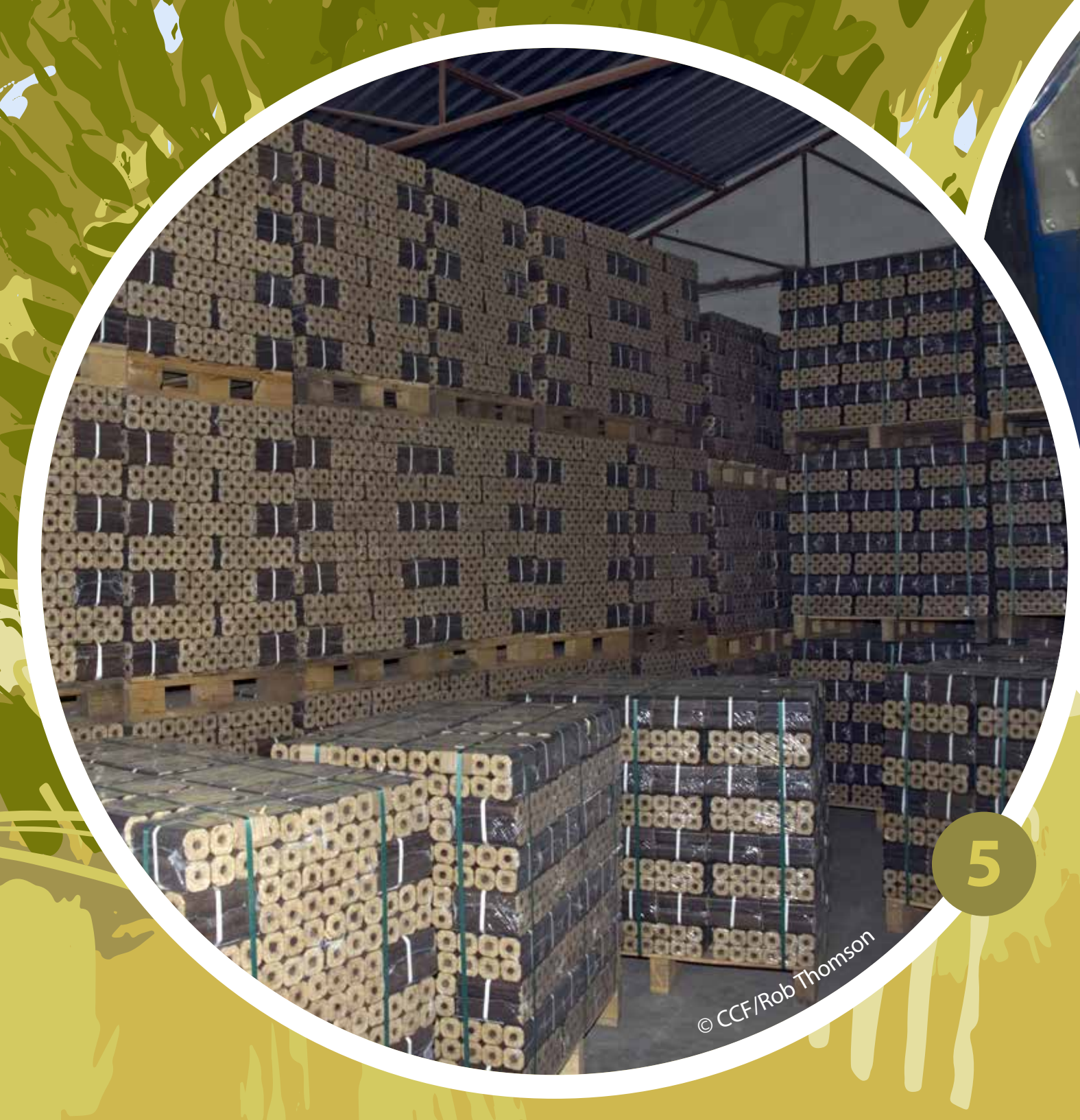
How firewood bricks protect the savannah

Namibia's open savannas and vast grasslands have become increasingly overgrown with thorn bushes. Reasons for this are the overgrazing by livestock and the absence of large herbivores like rhinos, elephants, and giraffes. Unlike livestock, these animals also feed on thorny bushes. Some areas are so overgrown with thorny bushes, that both wildlife and livestock hardly find any grass. Cheetahs are especially affected by bush encroachment. Time and again cheetahs are found with scratch wounds on their head and especially in the eye area. These are caused by running through thorny encroachments.

To solve the encroachment problem CCF created the BUSHBLOK® project. The idea is simple, yet effective and sustainable: The thorny bushes are harvested, dried, shredded and pressed into solid firewood bricks. BUSHBLOK® are certified by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC®)(FSC-C004580).



A blind eye in a cheetah caused by thorny bushes.



Manufacturing BUSHBLOK®



CLIMATE PROTECTION IS SPECIES PROTECTION

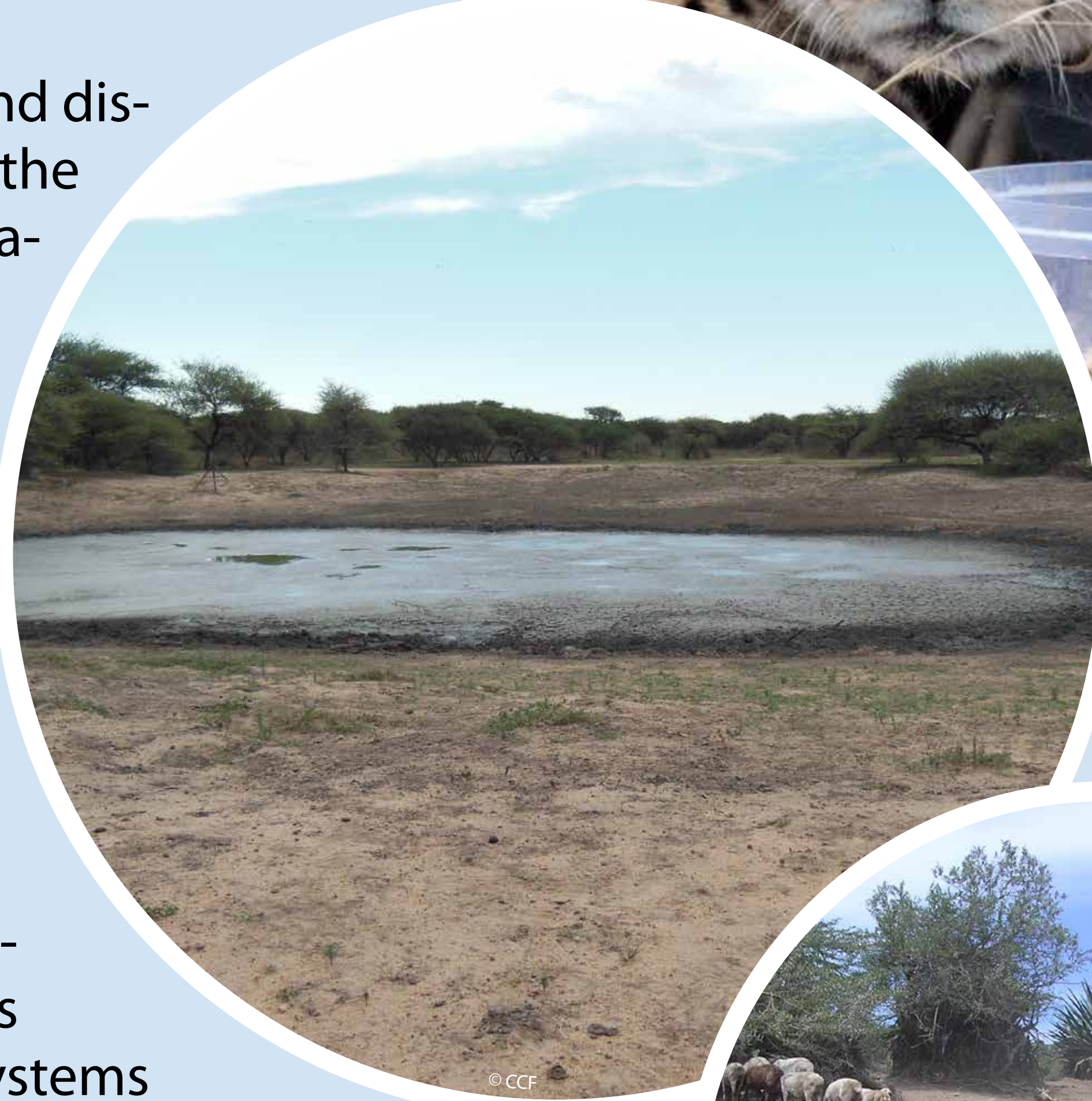
Everyone has seen the frightening and sad images of polar bears with the arctic ice melting under their paws, or the walrus on the lonely drifting ice shelf in the endless Arctic Ocean. Flagship species like these are representative of thousands of animal and plant species whose long-term survival is seriously threatened by man-made global climate change. Ultimately, humans are destroying their own livelihoods – because everything is connected.

Climate change and cheetahs

The immediate and fatal effects of climate change on an animal species threatened by extinction are evident in the case of cheetahs. Cheetahs have been inhabiting Africa and parts of Asia for millions of years. Today, these remarkable predators face the risk of extinction. In addition to numerous other threats, climate change is intensifying the challenges they face.

Climate change affects the availability and distribution of prey for cheetahs, as well as the quality of their habitats. Warmer temperatures and altered precipitation patterns can lead to changes in vegetation and water sources, forcing cheetahs to travel greater distances in search of food and water. This can result in increased human-wildlife conflict as cheetahs may come into closer contact with human populations and livestock.

Furthermore, climate change can exacerbate existing threats to cheetahs, such as habitat fragmentation and loss. As ecosystems shift and adapt to changing conditions, cheetah populations may become more isolated, reducing genetic diversity and increasing vulnerability to diseases and other threats. The compounding effects of climate change pose significant challenges to the long-term survival of these iconic big cats.



Namibia is experiencing the adverse effects of climate change, such as increasing temperatures and erratic rainfall patterns. Though not responsible for large amounts of greenhouse gas emissions, Namibia still plays a role in climate change mitigation and adaptation through its commitment to sustainable development, conservation, and the implementation of climate-resilient policies.

SCIENCE AND RESEARCH IN CHEETAH CONSERVATION

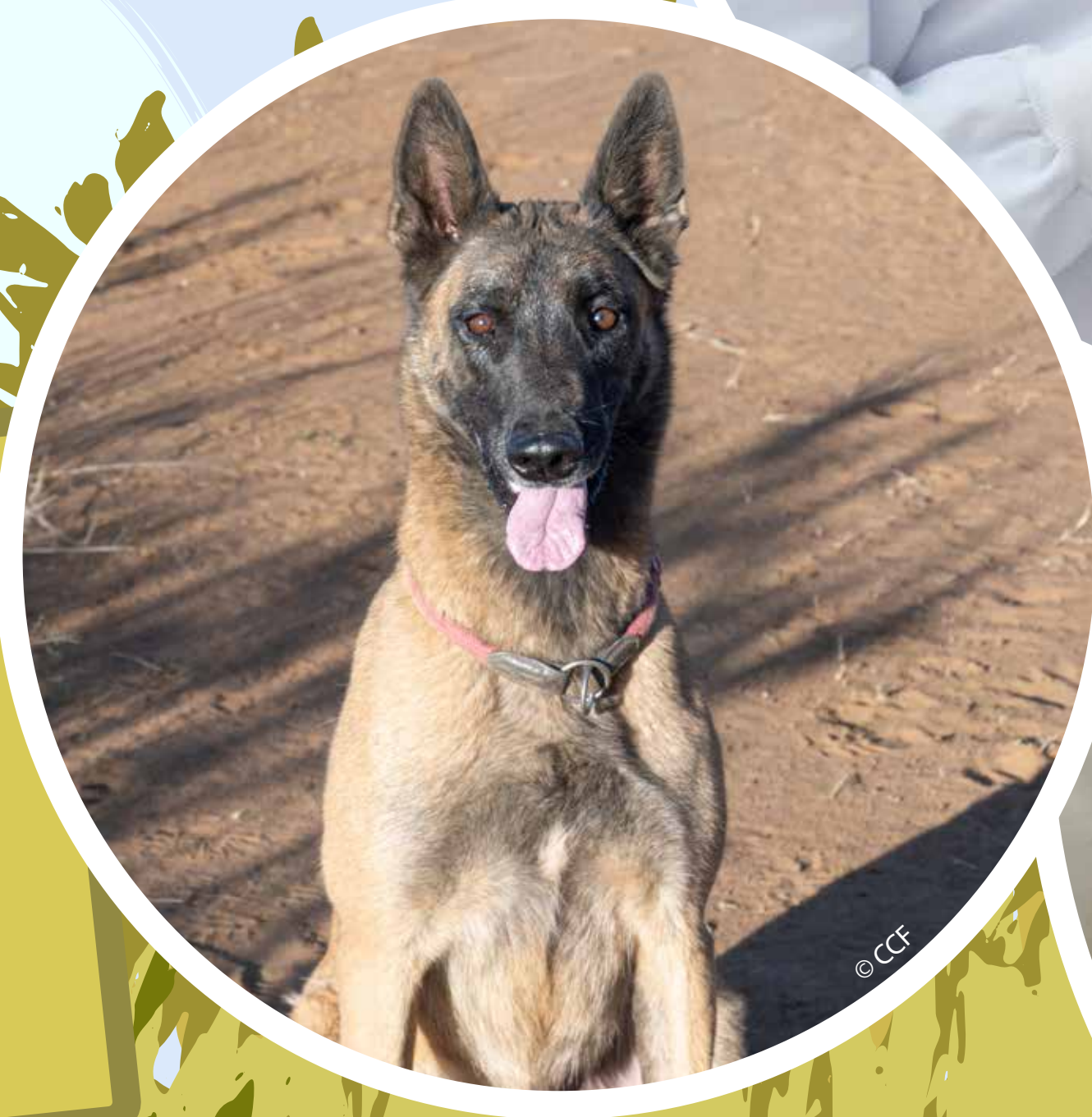
Understanding the size and distribution of cheetah populations is an important prerequisite to implement effective measures for the conservation of cheetahs in the wild. In addition to CCF's activities and management efforts in the field, modern laboratory techniques and medical research also play an important role.

The genetic analysis of cheetahs

Carried out in CCF's professional genetics lab, research is an important part of cheetah conservation. Among other things, DNA from cheetah scat and tissue samples are evaluated scientifically. The feces proved to be a real treasure trove: based on the various DNA samples, scientists can determine how many cheetahs live in a certain area, what prey the animals fed on and how the distribution patterns of individual cheetahs look. These are useful pieces of information to learn how the cheetah population is doing and to protect it even better.

These studies also reveal how unfortunately there is little genetic variation in wild cheetah populations. As population numbers continue to decline and individual populations are often isolated by habitat fragmentation, mating of closely related cheetahs is becoming increasingly common. Consequently, inbreeding produces health issues in their offspring with an increased mortality rate, and later in life reproductive difficulties.

To ensure the survival of the cheetah, it is vital to preserve genetic diversity. To assist with this, CCF has begun to set up a sperm and egg (oocyte) bank. CCF's scientists collect oocytes and sperm from cheetahs that need to be examined and medically treated in CCF's veterinary clinic. The samples are then stored in a deep freezer.



The scientists get animal support for collecting the cheetahs' droppings: specially trained scat detection dogs sniff out the cheetahs' droppings in the savannah.

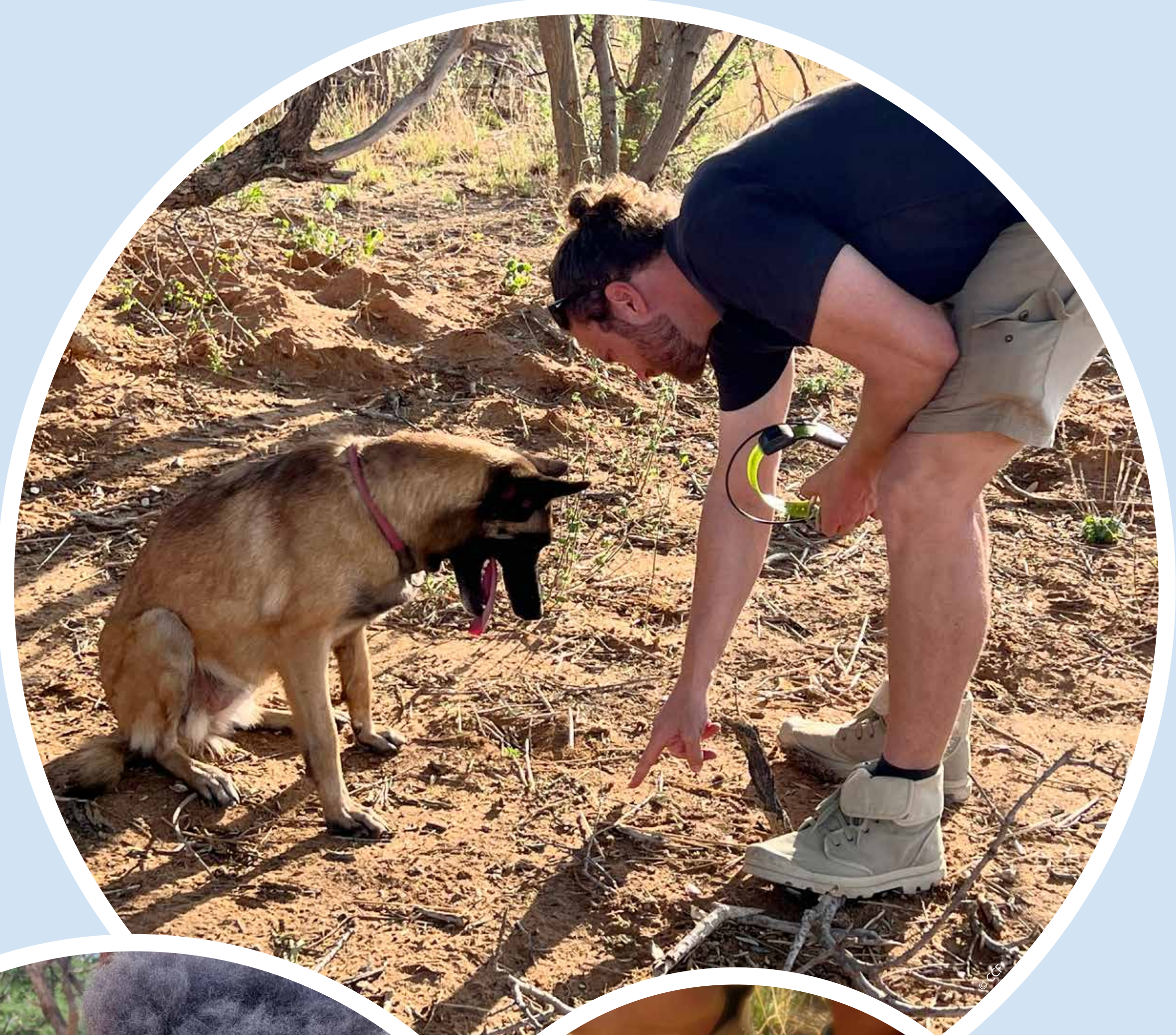


WILDLIFE DETECTION DOGS HELP PROTECT CHEETAHS

Super Noses

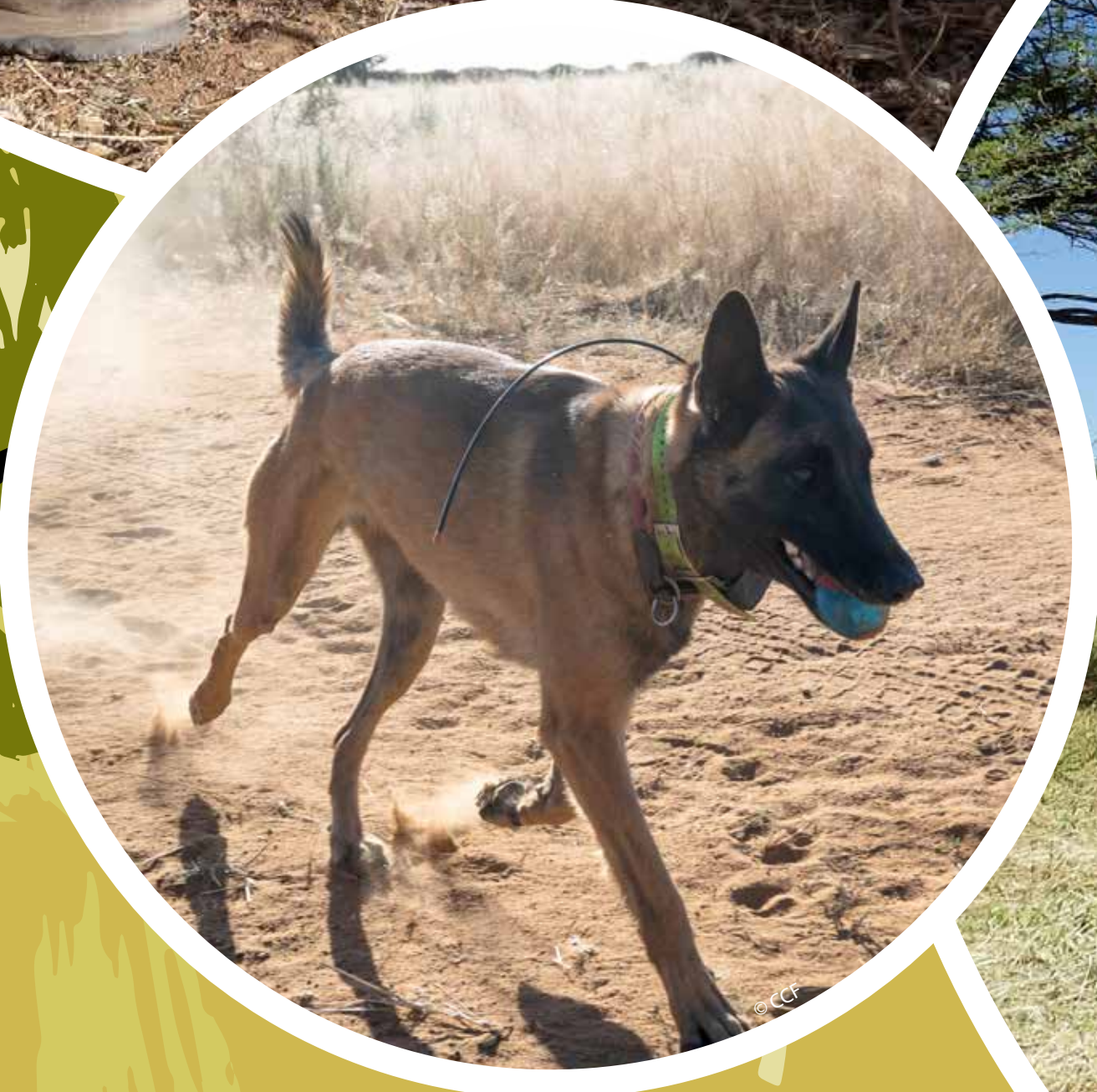
Effective strategies for cheetah conservation in the wild rely on knowing where they are present and understanding their way of life. Only then proper conservation measures can be introduced, such as effective livestock management to protect farmers' livestock. Cheetahs are very elusive wild animals and difficult to observe in the wild, so specially trained detection dogs assist in surveying the cheetah population. However, these dogs do not detect the cheetahs themselves, rather they are trained to sniff out cheetah scat.

Dogs perceive their surroundings mainly by smell. Their sense of smell exceeds that of humans many times over. Therefore, and because they are quick learners, dogs are ideal to help detect anything smelly. This of course is true for cheetah scat. Cheetah scat has enough DNA traces to identify individual cheetahs as well as residues of digested prey animals. Thus, not only cheetahs but also their prey can be determined by analyzing fecal samples. So, farmers can be informed that cheetahs mainly feed on wild animals, not livestock. Consequently, livestock farmers can be encouraged not to immediately shoot cheetahs on their farmland out of fear for their livestock.



Detection dogs are also used to protect other species, such as elephants and koalas. In many countries, specially trained "species protector" dogs are used by custom authorities at airports to detect smuggled animals and plants in luggage and cargo.

Among other things the dogs can detect ivory carvings, tortoise shell jewelry, predator skins, orchids, cacti, and live animals in suitcases.



SPECIES PROTECTION AND EXOTIC PETS - what should I look out for?



The illegal pet trade in cheetahs poses a significant threat to their population, as the demand for these exotic animals as pets contributes to their decline in the wild. Cheetah cubs are often taken from their natural habitats and smuggled across borders, resulting in high mortality rates during transit. The survivors, once sold, face a life of confinement, improper care, and a lack of opportunities to display their natural behaviors.

This illicit trade not only depletes the wild cheetah population but also undermines conservation efforts aimed at preserving this iconic species. To help combat the illegal cheetah pet trade, tourists and locals alike must be made aware of the detrimental impact it has on cheetah populations and avoid supporting the demand for these animals as pets.

Livelihood Development and Sustainable Tourism

Supporting craftspeople and livelihood development in cheetah range countries is a key aspect of responsible tourism. By purchasing handmade goods from local artisans, tourists can contribute to the local economy and help create sustainable livelihoods for communities in these regions. This, in turn, can encourage communities to engage in conservation efforts and reduce their reliance on activities that may harm wildlife, such as poaching or habitat destruction.

When visiting cheetah range countries, tourists should focus on making responsible choices that contribute to the well-being of both local communities and the environment. This includes selecting eco-friendly accommodations, engaging in sustainable travel practices, and participating in wildlife conservation initiatives.

By choosing to purchase items like pottery, stone sculptures, or wickerwork (e.g., hats or baskets), tourists can support local artisans and avoid contributing to the exploitation of endangered species (e.g. "petting farms"). A bottle of local wine or other regional products can also make thoughtful souvenirs. Through responsible tourism, travelers can play a crucial role in supporting the conservation of cheetahs and the livelihoods of those living in their range countries.



ANIMAL WELFARE DURING YOUR VACATION



More and more, animals are suffering at the hands of tourists. For the most daring picture and the most likes on social media, photographers try to get as close as possible to the action - which becomes a big problem, especially in the wild and in safari parks. Many tourists don't have second thoughts about their living subjects. Unfortunately, this bad and hurtful habit is growing rapidly.

Keep your distance!



Safari guides take their demanding clients ever closer to the animals and illegally often drive off road, without respect for young animals, habitats, and the stress level of the animals. In Kenya, four young cheetahs were run over by a tourist bus during one such maneuver.

No selfies either with wild or trained animals – please avoid animal shows!

Business with trained wild animals, such as elephants, “dancing” bears or birds of prey, is thriving. Tourists are willing to spend a lot of money on a photo with animals. In doing so they are ignoring the need for individual animal and species protection in general. Animals in captivity, that are trained for the entertainment of tourists, e.g., for elephant rides or animal shows, often experience cruel mistreatment and are rarely kept in animal-friendly shelters.



Whale watching, turtle hatching - a booming business

For many animal lovers a dream comes true: watching whales in the ocean or witnessing little sea turtles hatch and find their way to the sea. It's a booming business and the number of tour operators is increasing - however, not every operator pays attention to the welfare of the animals!



TIP: Find out in advance about responsible tour operators, the animal viewing routine and standards so the animals will not be disturbed.



ILLEGAL TRADE WITH EXOTIC ANIMALS

Illegal wildlife trafficking is one of the biggest worldwide threats to wildlife. Along with human trafficking, drugs and arms trade, illegal wildlife trafficking is in the top four categories of organized crime worldwide. Every year, more than 120 million wild animals are smuggled and sold on the black market at horrendous prices. Estimated annual sales of this dirty business range from \$8 billion to \$21 billion. Main markets are the U.S., Asia, the Gulf States, and the EU.



The illegal wildlife trade not only threatens entire species populations, but it also means tremendous suffering for the individual animal. When young animals are poached for the illegal wildlife trade, the mothers are usually killed to get hold of the young.



The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) regulates international trade in more than 35,800 animal and plant species. Depending on their classification in the convention's appendices, international trade in these animals or plants as well as products is prohibited. Even though trade is prohibited, the list of affected species is increasing.

Keeping wild animals as pets is a worrying, ever-growing trend. Whether cheetah, slow loris, parrot, monkey, Bengal cat or otter – everything seems possible and the more exotic the better. For example, among turtle enthusiasts, radiated tortoises – endemic to Madagascar – are in high demand. This has brought these amazing reptiles to the brink of extinction. Experts are worried if the decline of this species continues, it will be extinct in the wild in about 45 years. In fact, turtles are among the most endangered animal species anywhere.



A truck with smuggled radiated tortoises and one in natural habitat



A long, agonizing transport follows and often ends with the death of the traumatized animals.

Those that eventually end up as exotic „pets“ are usually not kept in a species-appropriate manner. They often succumb to illness, suffer abuse, and usually die young. But as long as there is a demand, this bizarre and disgusting trade will continue to boom.



Cheetah cubs trapped in baskets and boxes

Wild animals
are not pets.
Wild animals
belong in the wild!

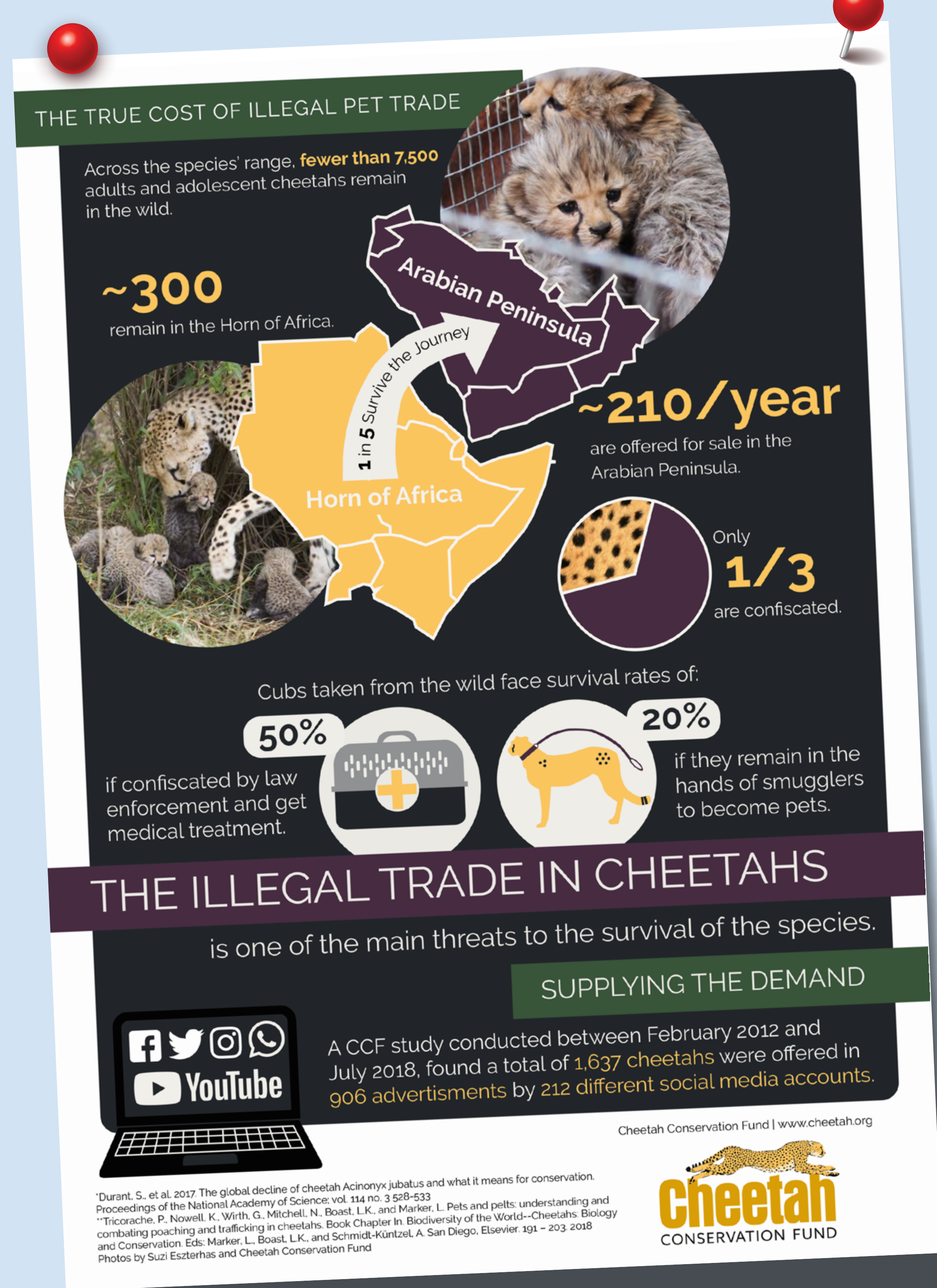


CHEETAHS ARE NOT PETS

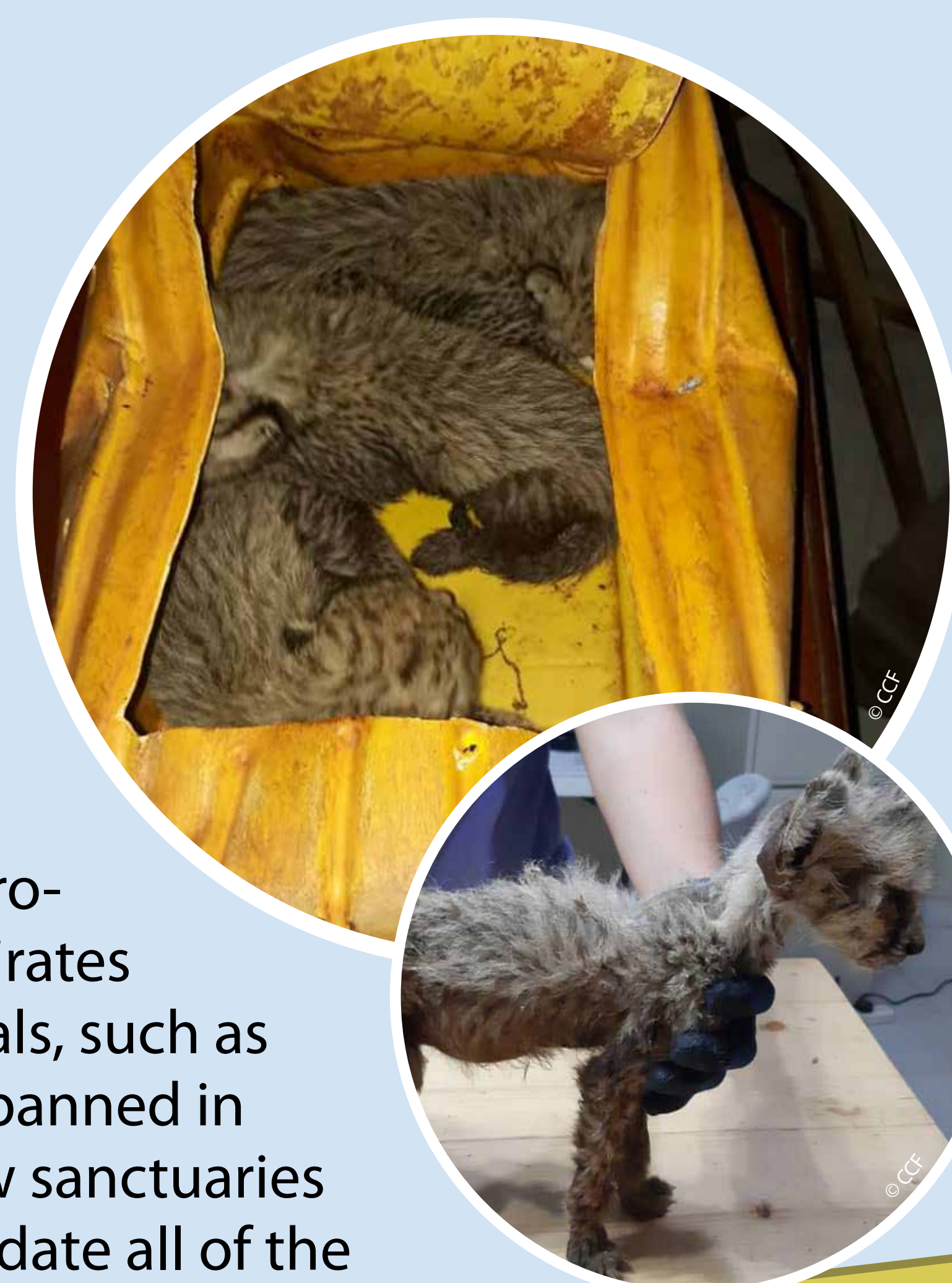
Since around 2018, hundreds of cheetah cubs have been recorded as being trafficked from the Horn of Africa over to the Middle East to be sold as exotic pets. Since the animals are difficult to breed in captivity, demands for them as exotic pets are mainly satisfied with cubs taken from the wild. The mothers are either chased away or shot in order to take the cubs. Unfortunately, only 1 in 5 cubs usually survive the journey as they are not cared for properly while in transit. Once the animals reach their destination, they often still perish due to unnatural conditions, inadequate care, or medical issues sustained from their time being trafficked. One of the illegal trade routes for young cheetahs cuts through Somaliland, a semi-autonomous region in northwestern Somalia. It is vital for the survival of the species in the wild that this horrible act of smuggling is stopped.



Cheetah cub rescued from the illegal wildlife trade



In the past years, CCF has achieved some milestones with the support of dedicated donors. The authorities in Somaliland are now taking the issue of illegal wildlife trafficking very seriously. The many seizures in recent years and the first convictions of wildlife smugglers are proof of this. In the United Arab Emirates (UAE), the keeping of wild animals, such as cheetahs, tigers, and lions, was banned in 2017 and included opening new sanctuaries across the country to accommodate all of the relinquished animals. Since then, the UAE has enforced this rule diligently.



Saved from illegal wildlife trade: cheetah cubs in Somaliland

The Cheetah Rescue and Conservation Centre (CRCC) in Geed-Deeble Somaliland was built by CCF with the financial support from grants and donors. Rescued cubs get medical treatment, are lovingly cared for, and are allowed to portray natural behaviors in spacious enclosures. The rearing of the abused cubs is a great challenge and their survival is often uncertain. When they are rescued from the clutches of the smugglers, the traumatized cubs are malnourished, dehydrated and very weak.



Expanded cheetah sanctuary in Geed-Deeble, Somaliland with spacious outdoor areas, climbing facilities, shelters, a veterinary clinic, and a quarantine area



With a donation you can make a difference for this important work to save the cheetah.
<https://cheetah.org/donate/>



THE WAY BACK TO FREEDOM



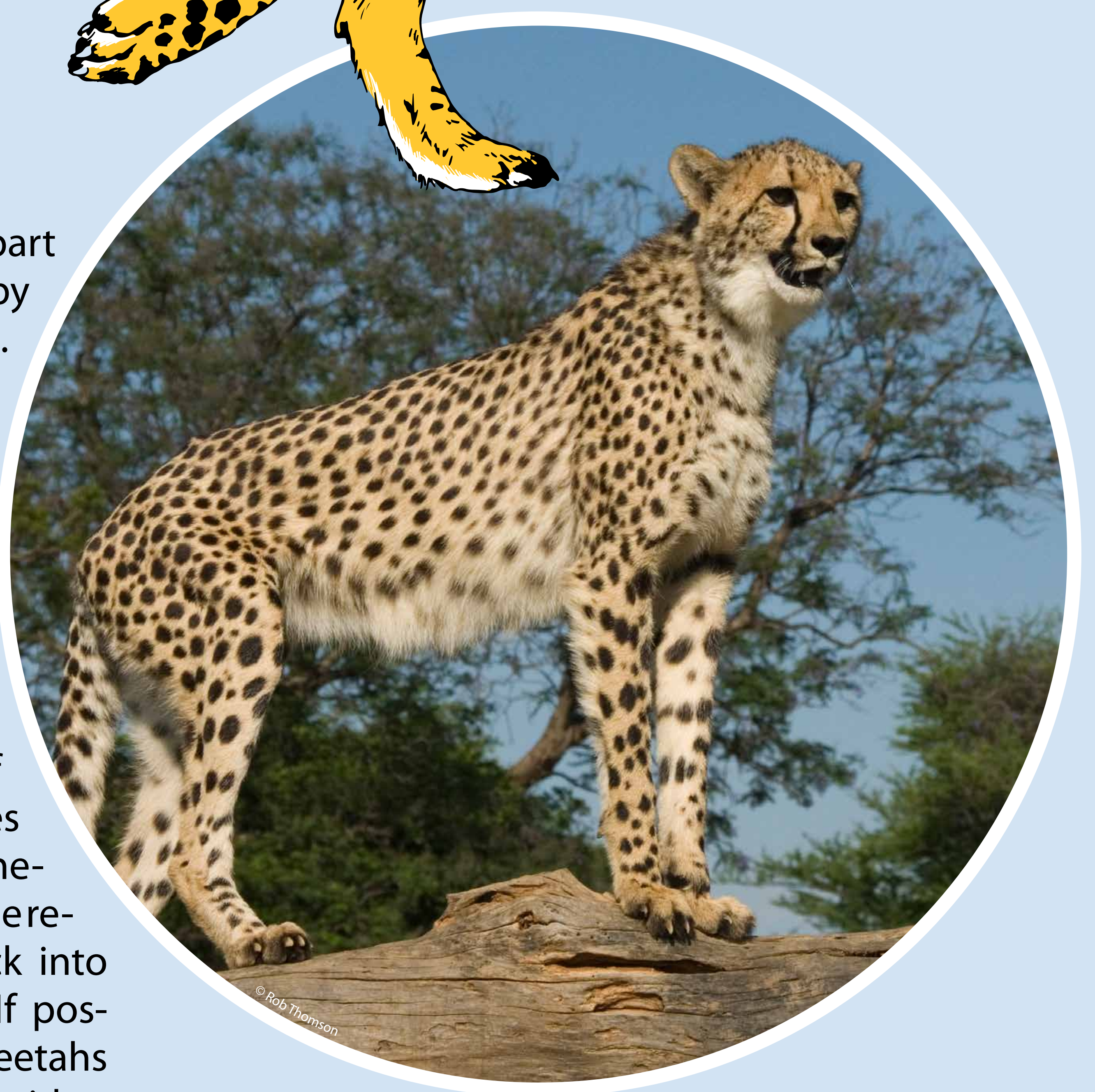
Rescue, Rehabilitation, and Reintroduction of cheetahs

CCF's on-site operations on farms in Namibia are an essential part in cheetah conservation. Time and again, CCF staff are called by farmers to release a cheetah from a live trap set up on their farm. This shows the importance of good cooperation and communication at eye level between CCF and the farmers.

This is the only way to save the cheetahs. Depending on the situation, the rescued cats are examined either directly on site or in CCF's animal clinic. If necessary, they get medical treatment and are cared for. If a cheetah proves to be fit and healthy, it can be released back into the wild. If possible, cheetahs are fitted with a satellite collar to track the animal's future movements, which makes research and protection easier.



A cheetah gets medical examination and treatment, and is fitted with a radio collar



Freedom

The reintroduction of adult cheetahs into the wild is usually no problem if they haven't been in human care for too long. They might have become too accustomed to people and especially to being fed by them. It's a different situation with cheetah cubs that were separated from their mother at an early age. The cubs must learn how to hunt and therefore stay with their mother for up to two years in the wild. Only then they can fend for themselves. Therefore, many of these cubs must be reared at CCF's sanctuary by our dedicated animal care professionals.



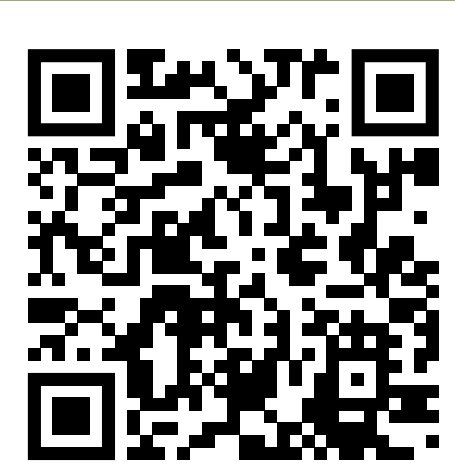
A CCF study shows that from 2004 through 2018, well over 75% of all cheetahs released by CCF succeeded to live independently in the wild. Crucial to this success is CCF's AGA-supported research that gives valuable insights into cheetah behavior and habitat use.

Female cheetahs released back into the wild raised cubs successfully, even in the second generation. This certainly is gratifying evidence of how important rewilding is for cheetah conservation.



Sponsor a cheetah!

More infos on:
<https://cheetah.org/get-involved/ways-to-give/sponsor/>



A female cheetah with a radio collar and her cubs in the wild

THERE IS HOPE FOR THE CHEETAH!

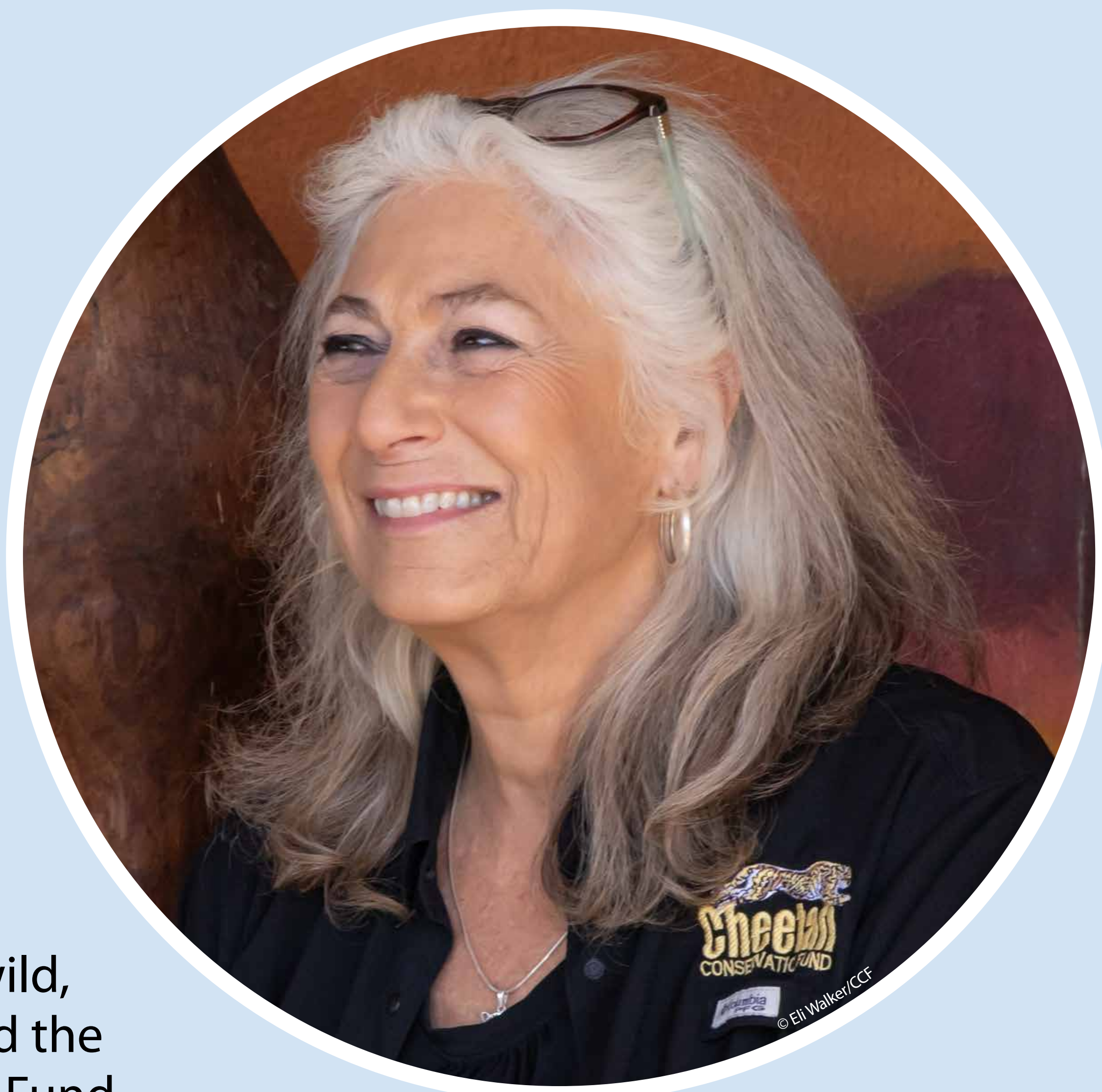
Cheetahs face many dangers - but there are also reasons for hope, because many people, conservation organizations and governments are working together to protect these endangered cats. One very special person is **Dr. Laurie Marker**, a world-renowned cheetah expert.

For decades, the US born conservationist has been living in Namibia, her adopted country and has dedicated her life to the protection of the cheetah. It all began in 1977, when Laurie visited Namibia for the first time. She learned that cattle farmers were trapping and killing hundreds of cheetahs every year to protect their livestock. In the 1980s, more than 7,000 cheetahs were killed. Peaceful, nonviolent approaches to resolve this conflict didn't exist. To give the cheetah a future in the wild, Dr. Laurie Marker founded the Cheetah Conservation Fund (CCF) in 1990. Since then, she has

dedicated herself to creating a worldwide understanding of cheetahs and has made significant contributions to protecting the world's fastest land animal.

Scientific research, development of conservation concepts, as well as environmental education are essential to ensure the cheetahs' survival in their natural habitat. CCF's environmental education center in Otjiwarongo, Namibia, is open to tourists 364 days of the year.

For further information please visit **cheetah.org**



"We must put an end to the illegal wildlife trade and the killing of cheetahs. Otherwise, the cheetah could be wiped out by humans in just a few years. Help us by supporting AGA and CCF in their efforts to protect the cheetah – Together we can change the world to save the cheetah."



The German NGO Aktionsgemeinschaft Artenschutz (AGA) e.V. – in English Action Campaign for Endangered Species – was established in 1986, originating from the „Save the Turtles“ campaign launched in 1981.

AGA, known for its relentless commitment to protecting endangered species and their habitats, extends beyond just rescuing turtles. Working internationally with local partners like CCF, AGA ensures effective and sustainable implementation of species conservation projects. This work is made possible through the support of donors, sponsors, and dedicated volunteers.

For more information on the projects of AGA:

<https://www.aga-artenschutz.de/>



This exhibition was created by the Aktionsgemeinschaft Artenschutz (AGA) e.V.

Conception & Text: Birgit Braun & Sonja Käßmann (AGA e.V.)
and edited by Cheetah Conservation Fund
Design: Stephan Kieninger (Freework Grafik-Design GmbH)



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