



CHEETAH NEWS November

Welcome to our first issue of cheetah news. This goes out locally, as well as to our supporters worldwide. We hope this will keep everyone interested updated with our activities and findings. We'd like to encourage people to write in with their cheetah stories and experiences. In fact, you may have suggestions for us in ways we can help protect the cheetah, reach rural communities or raise money for this unique species' conservation. We are based at Mokolodi Nature Reserve just outside Gaborone, so feel free to call in if you would like more information.

JWANENG RESEARCH CAMP

Our first research camp has been completed at Jwaneng Game Reserve, thanks to the generosity of Jwaneng Mine. They required their resident population of cheetah in the reserve to be monitored. When we contacted Leon Bousman and Chris Motsholapheko for information on cheetah in their area, they were very enthusiastic to become more involved. Consequently, they gave us the use of one of their camps for researchers to stay in and built us 4 transit stations for the temporary holding of cheetah to be relocated. We have to say a big thankyou to them for playing a lead role in cheetah conservation. We moved into camp this month. So far one mother with 5 cubs has been collared and is being monitored on a daily basis to build up information on behaviour, home range and prey selection. We are currently attempting capture of the two big males which have been seen in the area. This is the first study of its kind on Botswana's cheetah.

CHEETAH CAPTURE

Field researcher Ann Marie Houser reports: "After we noticed repeated tracks of a mother and cubs in the deep sand along a road, we placed the trap there and used a live goat (rented from the local village) in a separate cage as bait. The following morning we had captured the mother! She was quite relaxed, sitting up, with 5 cubs of about 5 months of age playing outside the cage.

When we approached the cubs fled into the bush. We quickly anaesthetized the mother, weighed and measured her, took tissue and blood samples, inserted a tiny ID transponder, and placed a radio-collar and ear-tag on her. She was released early in the evening after she had made a full recovery from the anaesthetic. After an exciting ordeal the goat was also returned to its village!

The next morning we found her signal and her tracks along with the smaller tracks of her cubs. Since then we have found her everyday, and she has killed an impala and a young hartebeest. She is ranging about 1.3-2.2kms each day. She is an exceptional mother to have successfully reared 5 cubs to this age, as cubs often have a high mortality.



Collaring and tagging anaesthetized cheetah

SURVEY

We have designed a survey to gather information on farming management practices, predator occurrence on farms and farmer perceptions to predators, particularly farmers. If you are a landowner please contact us and we will send you out a survey. This information is vital to build up an understanding on the status and distribution of cheetahs in Botswana and will be used towards the creation of a management plan for species survival considering the needs of the rural communities.

FARMER MEETINGS

Ghanzi

We attended the recent Kalahari Game Festival at Kanana Farm in Ghanzi, where we had a stall and display about the project. We were promoting non lethal methods of predator control and livestock management. We discussed the project with a number of farmers and distributed the survey. We have tentatively located 2 possible study areas in the

Ghanzi farming district, resulting from meetings with interested farmers. Thankyou to all who came to talk with us about cheetahs on their land!

Tuli Block

We attended a Farmers Association meeting in Tuli, on 25th October. We made a presentation, discussed the projects role with farmers and distributed the survey. We were well received and through this we have found 2 potential release sites.

EDUCATION

We have developed information sheets on successful farming management practices that can be utilised to decrease predation. Our initial focus being to encourage farmers to make changes in farming practices and see if this helps the problem. Only in the event of a proven problem animal will we capture and relocate to a suitable release site. Please contact us if you would like to be sent this information. Also, if you are interested in being a potential release site.

We have completed educational booklets on cheetah conservation. These will be utilized first at Mokolodi Nature Reserve's Education Centre. We aim to distribute them to schools throughout Botswana when resources become available. Please contact us if you would like them for your school.

VOLUNTEERS

October saw us welcoming our first volunteer to help with the research work at Jwaneng. Jenny Cousins stayed for one month and had a huge range of experiences in that time, including capture and release of a cheetah, monitoring, visiting farms, flying in a microlite, to mention a few. If you would like more info on our volunteer program see our website at www.cheetahbotswana.com/volunteers.

INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT

The project coordinator Rebecca Klein was invited to attend the Expo for Wildlife Conservation Network in California, US from 8th– 12th October. She made a presentation on the project. Other speakers included: Dr Jane Goodall, Dr Douglas Ian Hamilton of Save the Elephants, Dr Laurie Marker of Cheetah Conservation Fund, Dr Claudio Silerro of the

Ethiopian Wolf Conservation Program amongst others. So we were very pleased to have been chosen to take part!!! It was a great opportunity to raise awareness of the project, meet well established conservationists and hopefully potential donors!!

NEW WEBSITE

Big thankyou to Mike Matson for producing www.cheetahbotswana.com Where you can learn more about our activities.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

- Help us to distribute the survey to any farmers, landowners, game reserve managers you may know.
- Send us your cheetah sightings, past, present and future
- Raise awareness for predator conservation. Botswana still has a rich biodiversity and it is up to all of us to protect it!!

UPCOMING

We are being featured in the November newsletter of our supporters Wildlife Conservation Network. See their website at www.wildnet.org. A WCN supporter who visited Botswana and saw CCB's impressive work has offered a \$5000 grant to MATCH any contributions to CCB (of any amount) through to December 31, 2003. If you are in the US and are interested in making a contribution, call WCN at 650-949-3533. All donations are fully tax deductible.

CONTACT US

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Thanks to Donors:

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