



CHEETAH NEWS – January

Happy New Year to all of you!

JWANENG RESEARCH CAMP

It has been difficult times over the last couple of months at Jwaneng. Beginning with the loss of 3 cheetahs to anthrax in late November. Sad as this was at least it alerted us to an anthrax outbreak in the park. CCB and park officials are now attempting to contain the outbreak to affected areas. Local farmers in the area have also been alerted. Anthrax is a natural part of African ecosystems. It exists at low levels in the soil, occasionally flaring up when conditions are right. Namibia and Zimbabwe are also having reported anthrax outbreaks. Although a natural population limitation, anthrax does pose a threat to cheetah numbers in affected areas. CCB has been monitoring the deaths in the park, so far there have been 3 cheetah we know of which have contracted the disease. Cheetah are particularly susceptible among the big cats and usually get it from eating infected meat. We are keeping a close eye on the situation and will keep you updated.

CAMERA TRAPS

On a lighter note. We have 4 camera traps set up around Jwaneng. Thanks to the WILD Foundation and Sierra Club. After some initial positioning experiments we've had some good photos. The following was taken in December and was a nice

Christmas present for us! One of the 2 cheetah drinking has a CCB ear tag.



They are approx 1 and 1/2 years old, and it turns out they are 2 of the cubs from (001-Jenny) the first mother with 5 cubs that was caught back in October 2003.

GHANZI RESEARCH CAMP

We are pleased to announce the commencement of our new research camp in the Ghanzi farmlands. This area has long been known as a cheetah problem hotspot. For the last 2 years we have been making regular visits up to talk to farmers, but it became clear that a permanent presence was required. A generous offer was given by one of the livestock farmers in the area that we set up camp on his property.

Then to staff it, we had one of our past volunteers Dr Jennifer Zerbel and her husband Jay come out last November to get things moving. The camp is simple, with 3 safari tents and kitchen area. Along with an enclosure for temporarily housing cheetah. It will be an invaluable addition to the

project. Allowing us to give a rapid response to farmers' calls for assistance, or to save an orphaned cat.

Educational programs will also be started in the schools and workshops for farmers on how to live with predators with the minimum of conflict.

MEDICAL UPDATE

CCB would like to start incorporating gastric endoscopy exams in our workup of wild caught cheetah before their release. This information will be useful as gastritis is common in captive cheetah and a limiting factor in their survival in captivity. It is hoped the results found in the wild population can help understand this condition. Dr. Kyle Good was invited by DeWildt Cheetah Breeding Centre in South Africa to attend one of their annual endoscopy exam sessions last year to learn more about the procedure.



Dr Kyle Good working on a wild cheetah
She found it very helpful. Many thanks to the veterinarians on hand who were willing to share their knowledge. Now all we need is an endoscope! Anyone willing to contribute toward the endoscope will be

most appreciated. Special thanks to DeWildt for their great hospitality and willingness to help. Dr Good is also busy collaborating with Dr Chanda Marobela from the National Veterinary Laboratory concerning anthrax in cheetah.

On the disease front, the samples we have collected so far will be sent to South Africa to investigate the prevalence of various diseases in wild cheetah. Many thanks to the Howard Buffet Foundation for assisting us with the costs of these procedure.

CCB will collaborate with Animal Research Centre in South Africa on genetic research. In order to add the Botswana perspective to what is known about the relatedness of these cats.

COMMUNITY

Visits continue to be made to communities and farms in the Southern district to gather information on predator presence and livestock problems. Perceptions of cheetah are not good overall and there is a need for education on how to live with predators and their importance in the ecosystem. To address this CCB is organizing a workshop in Jwaneng on February 25th for farmers. Kalahari Conservation Society and Khutse Leopard Trust are working with us to put this workshop on. Cheetah Conservation Fund (CCF) in Namibia is generously sending Bonnie Schumann who has been working on this issue for several years and put on successful workshops on this topic. We are looking forward to her input. Since

the beginning we have received a lot of great support and advice from CCF. Mike Sento, president of Botswana Veterinary Association will be speaking; as well as Glyn Maude of Makgadikgadi Pans Brown Hyena Project, Monika Schiess Meyer of Khutse Leopard Project and Rebecca Klein from CCB. There will be demonstrations on how to identify different predators and information on effective methods that can be used to protect livestock. It is hoped that we will receive some good feedback from the attendees and continue to develop positive relationships with the farming community.

In November CCB was invited to attend the Southern District Farmers Association meeting. A short talk was given by Rebecca and Mmusi and a stall was set up providing information and the chance for one on one discussions. Although the farmers were skeptical as to whether they could really coexist with cheetah and other predators, they were interested in the techniques CCB was promoting and several agreed they would consider using some of them. Through this we met the editor of Botswana's new farming magazine. They were very supportive and have agreed to let us submit regular articles on different forms of non-lethal predator control.

EDUCATION

Predator talks at Mokolodi Nature Reserve have started this school year, with presentations, info booklets and other learning materials.

Mokolodi Nature Reserve raised some funds for cheetah conservation at their bike race and with it we are teaming up to improve the playground at Mokolodi, transforming it into an educational 'predator playground'. Schools in the Jwaneng area have also been visited and talks scheduled in the coming months.

Mmusi Tutwane did a great job teaching schools visiting the reserve at Jwaneng. Unfortunately, this must be put on hold for the time being due to the anthrax outbreak.

WORKSHOPS

CCB attended the Shashe-Limpopo Predator Research Group workshop in October along with several other predator conservation groups. It was a very productive meeting, focusing on prioritizing action needs for the conservation of predators in the area. What was known about predators in the area was summarized and where gaps in the knowledge existed, actions were proposed.



Tuli Block in Botswana

On the Botswana side, CCB is working in the Tuli area which is bordered by South Africa and Zimbabwe. We've made visits to farms and hope to set up a camp there in the future. This whole area is proposed as a

transfrontier park. This would be a great move for predator conservation on in all 3 countries.

Workshops of this kind are vital to allow conservationists to come together and share their knowledge and ideas.

LOCAL SUPPORT

WESTWOOD WALK

Special thanks go to Westwood School for organizing a very successful sponsored walk in November. Last year they raised 20,000 pula for cheetah conservation which went towards radiocollars and a vehicle. This year they raised 14,000 pula in their walk for wild dog. This money will go towards the coming workshop in February to address the predator/livestock conflict in the Southern district. In this area the main predators are cheetah, wild dog, leopard and brown hyena. Thanks to Westwood for all your hard work and support for predator conservation!



Registering for the sponsored walk



INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT

Rebecca Klein attended Wildlife Conservation Network's Expo last year in October, as a guest speaker. CCB is a partner project of WCN, along with a host of wonderful conservation projects such as

CCF in Namibia, Snow Leopard Conservancy, Save the Elephants, Ethiopian Wolf Conservation and others. We are honored to have been chosen to take part once again. WCN's support has been invaluable to our project. Many thanks to them and we encourage any of you in the US to attend the Expo, it is a great event for conservation of endangered species. See their website on www.wildnet.org.

Thanks to the following WCN supporters who have donated to CCB since the Expo in October. Cliff Kernohan, CGMK Foundation, Mr & Mrs Good, Brian and Rene Hollins, Linda Tabor Beck, Lise Buyer, Ingeborg Gfroerer, Laura and Michael Gleeson, Kennon and Bob Hudson, Theresa Grieve, Paul Paulochik, India Sanjuan, Martin Varon, Ann Ellis, Linda Thompson, John Tyler, Chrissie Klinowski, Patty and Jim Beers, Jerry Brown, Brad Blumenthal and Kirsten Carter. Thankyou for choosing CCB and helping us on our mission to protect Botswana's cheetahs.

CCB was also successful in acquiring a grant from the American Zoological Association which goes towards increasing our community outreach work capabilities. Many thanks go to our regular supporters, Banham Zoo in the UK. Banham and their sister zoo Suffolk Wildlife Park, have been supporting us since the beginning of the project. Thanks for making it possible! Thanks also to Toledo Zoo in the US for their regular donations.

Without international support from

organizations, zoos and individuals there would be no cheetah project in Botswana and it would remain just a dream for us. So thanks to all of you, it really is a collaborative effort!

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!
- Make a donation, however large or small, everything makes a difference.
- Help us organize an event to raise funds.

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