



SOUTHERN AFRICAN REGIONAL CHEETAH WORKSHOP HOSTED BY THE CHEETAH CONSERVATION FUND NAMIBIA

On the 6th & 7th December 2005, 32 people from 6 different countries attended the Southern African Regional Cheetah Workshop, held at the Cheetah Conservation Fund (CCF) outside Otjiwarongo. This workshop was facilitated by the Conservation Breeding Specialist Group (CBSG) Southern Africa, of the International World Conservation Union's (IUCN) Species Survival Commission.

This was the first regional cheetah meeting of its kind and was held under the auspices of the Global Cheetah Forum. The Global Cheetah Forum was developed in 2001 to bring together researchers, conservationists and stakeholders world wide to discuss solutions toward cheetah survival in the 21st century.

The workshop brought together experts in the field of cheetah conservation from the southern African region; including South Africa, Zimbabwe, Botswana and Namibia, as well as the co-chair of the IUCN's cat specialist group, Dr. Christine Breitenmoser.

Mr. Harry Schneider-Waterberg represented the Namibian Agricultural Union. He was impressed that *“issues were important enough that so many people came together and that through brain-storming and facilitated workshop planning so much can be accomplished and thought through.”* He also felt that *“the information that was shared was really good and much of it necessary to know... things that can be done for farmers and conservationists to make a plan for the cheetah's future in Southern Africa.”*

The workshop aimed at assessing and evaluating what has been accomplished in the Southern African region and setting new objectives for the future. Issues surrounding the development of methodologies for estimating cheetah populations, conservation of cheetah outside and within protected areas, human predator conflict issues and extension and education initiatives were discussed in depth. Strategies for improved collaboration and co-operation between the regional cheetah conservation organizations were also addressed.

Also focusing on human-based issues and developmental issues with regards to long-term species survival the attendees identified the need for a ***Cheetah Compendium***, which would combine all known information on cheetahs into a web-based program. The Cat Specialist Group (Cat SG) will

manage the compendium and CCF and Cat SG raised funds for this specific purpose. The aim is to have the compendium up and running within 6 months and it will provide a structure to work forward into the ***Regional Status Report for Southern Africa***, which will be completed during the course of the next year. Dr. Christine Breitenmoser, the co-chair of the IUCN's cat specialist group, responsible for the 36 cat species, stated, "*it is because of the work being done throughout the Southern African region that enough information is now available to compile a regional report. Therefore over the next year we will be bringing this information together for the **Regional Status Report of Southern Africa**. I have participated in the Global Cheetah Forum in the past and continue to be pleased with the co-operation between the different regions.*"

The workshop was sponsored by the Cheetah Conservation Fund, the Wildlife Conservation Network (WCN) and Classic Escapes.