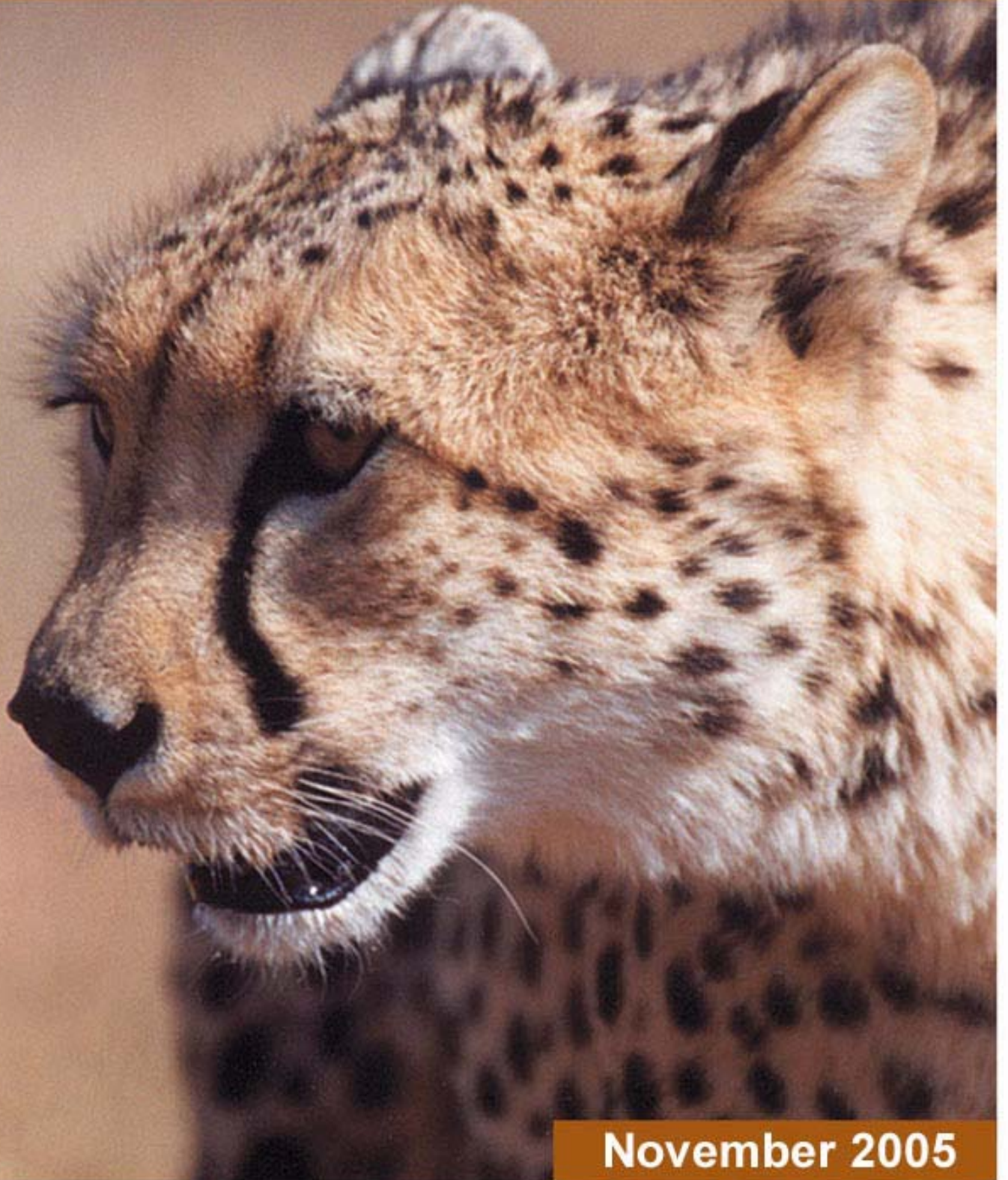




# Cheetah Tracks

*The Newsletter of Cheetah Conservation Botswana*



**November 2005**





### **'Notes from the Field'**

**We are planning to further augment our newsletter with a new, monthly update service entitled *Notes from the Field*.**

**Please visit our website to register your e-mail address if you would like to receive these updates.**

### **Cover Photograph**



Mokolodi Nature Reserve resident, Duma.

Courtesy of Hilton Izzet.

### **CHEETAH CONSERVATION BOTSWANA**

Mokolodi Nature Reserve  
Private Bag 0457  
Gaborone  
BOTSWANA

e-mail : [info@cheetahbotswana.com](mailto:info@cheetahbotswana.com)

Tel : +(267) 350 0613  
Cell : +(267) 7262 1077  
Fax : +(267) 316 5348

## **Introduction**

**W**elcome to Cheetah Conservation Botswana's new look newsletter, *Cheetah Tracks*. There have been a number of developments since our last bulletin and with the continuing growth of the project, it is our sincerest hope that the newsletter will now become more regular.

Firstly, we'd like to take this opportunity to welcome and introduce to you some of our new personnel. Elizabeth Travers (Lizzy) re-joined the project as a volunteer in June, following on from her short term service in 2004. A Zoology and Marine Zoology graduate from the UK, Lizzy is this time with us for a year and is providing invaluable support to Ann Marie as a research assistant and volunteer camp coordinator at Jwaneng. Also from the UK, Brian Jones arrived in September. Based at Mokolodi, Brian is helping to strengthen our promotional and fund-raising activities.

In May, a huge welcome went out to Thabo Mokokonyane. Thabo joined us as our Education Coordinator, after working as a guide at Mokolodi Nature Reserve for several years and completing his Diploma in Wildlife Management in South Africa. Thabo was then followed by the arrival of local volunteer Modiegi Bakane (BK), who arrived in July. BK has completed his BSc in Wildlife Biology and now plays an essential role in our community and education activities. Their knowledge and endless enthusiasm are great assets to the project.

The contributions being made by these people and indeed others, who you will meet as you read this newsletter, are allowing CCB to make significant progress in preventing cheetah losses and in promoting the long-term recovery of their numbers in Botswana.

*R. Klein*

Rebecca Klein  
CEO, Cheetah Conservation Botswana



***Naledi and her two cubs at Jwaneng in June, prior to their physical exams and the fitting of Naledi's radiocollar.***

## *Jwaneng Research Camp*



*Nala at Jwaneng, about to undergo an ultrasound scan to confirm her pregnancy.*



*Nala being fitted with her cell phone collar by Dr. Kyle Good and Ann Marie Houser.*

It's all been happening at Jwaneng! We've seen a lot of cheetah activity during the last six months and some positive and not so positive events. In May, with the microlight back in the air, we were able to locate two collars worn by our second female-with-cubs and by one of our male-coalition-of-three. The collars had been cut from the cats and thrown into the bush. The realisation that the cats must have been killed by members of the farming community was painful. Though enquiries revealed no culprits, several visits to the local community have nevertheless enabled us to assist in the development of improved farm management techniques and local farmers will be invited to the tribal lands conference, 'Sharing the land with Predators', to be held in Jwaneng early next year.

While highlighting the endangered status of the cheetah, it is only by engaging constructively and positively with farming communities that we can hope to prevent repeated retaliatory killings in future. Positive results do come from our farm visits. In a number of cases, for example, we have been able to demonstrate to farmers that cheetah had not been responsible for creating problems, and to further assist by providing information to help make their land more 'predator proof'.

Several cheetah groups have regularly been sighted at Jwaneng, including a mother with two cubs back in May, a mother with three cubs and another group of three cheetah. The recent increase in cheetah activity has coincided with the end of winter in August and most recently two groups, comprising a mother with five cubs and another with four cubs, were seen in very close proximity! We've also had the good fortune to catch a number of cats. In June, Naledi and her two cubs were caught and the mother's radio collar has allowed us to find her within the park and to the south. In September, Nala, a pregnant female, was caught and collared and though she has remained in the area since her release we have yet to make visual contact again – so as to determine the progress of her pregnancy. We all hope that she will remain in the park, at least during the early part of motherhood. In late October, we also succeeded in catching a mother with four cubs!

## *Home Range Study*



*A final check of the collar.*

Nala has been fitted with a cell phone collar. From the data transmitted after her release, we have been able to see that she spent some time in the park before heading north. Though we were concerned that she was transiting through commercial farming areas, no problems were reported and she has now returned to the park once more. If only we could show them where to go!

The new cell phone technology is impressive. Data, at one time only gathered after many hours of tracking and driving around, is now available to us at prescribed times of the day via a mobile phone. With the next issue of *Cheetah Tracks* we hope to include some home range maps, following the upgrading of our mapping software – made possible thanks to a generous donation from ESRI. Many thanks to Charles Convis, for his assistance.



## Ghanzi Research Camp

Thanks to the invaluable support of donors and new volunteers, we have now been able to establish our much needed research camp at Ghanzi. An area of high predator/farmer conflict, we were of course very keen to maintain a presence in this area and we are excited about representing cheetah interests there.



Orphaned cub Alice, at Jwaneng after her first kill.

The new voices for the cheetah at Ghanzi are Jennifer Johnson, Mark Lundgren, from the United States and Louise Egerton, from the UK, all donating their skills and expertise to the project for a year. In the front line of cheetah conservation in Africa and after working extremely hard to establish a viable camp, they are now developing vital links with the local community. By conducting surveys with livestock farmers, a reasonably accurate assessment – of their attitudes towards predators, current farm management practices and the predator species with which they experience problems – can be obtained. The response to this programme of building important working relationships has, so far, been positive. The baseline information gathered via surveys will enable us to build up a picture that can more clearly identify both current and potential problems and to follow-up by providing targeted assistance which can help the community to coexist with predators. We've already received a call to assist a farmer at Thakudu, who is experiencing problems with three cheetah. Instead of killing them, the farmer has requested that we catch, collar and then monitor the cats on his farm. Thank you!



Decu, Gracie and Alice in their enclosure at Jwaneng.

## The Orphaned Cubs

We are thrilled about the progress of the cubs, which remain healthy and are growing fast. In May, we introduced the male, Decu, to the two females, Gracie and Alice, following his convalescence at Mokolodi. Having taken to each other, they are now bonded as a sibling group and have recently been introduced to live prey – in the form of chickens and rabbits. Impressed at how quickly they have learned to kill, we feel there is every chance of success as we work towards the commencement of the next stage in their rehabilitation. The cubs remain at Jwaneng as plans progress to that next step, a process which, we hope, will lead to their eventual release. More about the cubs in the next issue of *Cheetah Tracks*.

(Right) Cheetah cub versus chicken.



## Community & Education



*BK and Ann Marie during a kraal inspection.*



*BK enthusing a class about predator conservation.*



*Thabo presenting to a class in Gaborone.*



*Students in Jwaneng display prey specimens.*

In concert with our farm survey work at Jwaneng and Ghanzi, CCB has also been visiting farms and cattle posts in other areas of the southern district – distributing information on various methods of farm management that can help to reduce livestock losses. The staging of our cattle post owners workshop, early in 2006, is also aimed at providing support in the prevention of predator/livestock conflict.

In August, CCB was invited to make a presentation to the Botswana Cattle Producers Association. Together with Mark Bing and Jane Freeman (predator friendly farmers who are determined to obtain a better deal for both farmers and predators) and Leopard Ecology & Conservation, CCB is currently exploring the development of a 'Predator Friendly Beef' initiative in Botswana. The idea, to provide a financial incentive for livestock farmers who adopt certified non-lethal methods of predator control, was well received at the meeting – although it was acknowledged by all that a considerable amount of work will be required to make the project operational. We hope that, in developing this initiative, discussions with the Cheetah Conservation Fund in Namibia will prove useful and that we can learn from their experience as we begin to construct a suitable scheme here in Botswana.

Thabo and BK have been extremely busy with their programme of interactive presentations recently, visiting over twenty schools in the last five months. These presentations highlight the plight of the cheetah while placing the species in the wider predator and ecological context. Tailored to all age groups, the talks have proved so popular that schools now call us to make an appointment for a visit. School groups visiting Jwana Game Park at Jwaneng and Mokolodi Nature Reserve now also benefit from cheetah presentations.

Thabo, BK and Brian represented Cheetah Conservation Botswana at the 4<sup>th</sup> biennial African Environmental Education Conference, held in Gaborone between the 8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> of November. Hosted by the Kalahari Conservation Society, the event explored the role of educators in the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development. Thabo and BK gave one of the most stirring and memorable presentations of the three day event, providing the international audience with a vivid example and insight into a grass roots conservation education programme.

## Zimbabwe Workshop

In September, Rebecca and Ann Marie attended the Shashe-Limpopo Predator Research Group meeting at Sentinel Ranch, Zimbabwe. Established in 2004, the group monitors populations of large predators in the Shashe-Limpopo confluence area – the proposed site of the Botswana, Zimbabwe, South Africa trans-frontier park. The workshop was an important opportunity to discuss predator conservation in this key wildlife habitat.



## Awareness Raising



Thabo conducting an interview with a farmer for Reuters Television.

Monthly attendance at the local cattle auction and fair has recently been supplemented by our presence at the Otse Trade Fair and the Jwana Game Park Education Fair, plus a Sunday Talk at Mokolodi Nature Reserve. At the Jwana Game Park event, CCB even managed to win a cash prize for the best stall.

The media are increasingly becoming a vital part of the awareness raising process, enabling us to reach a much wider audience. Reuters Television spent some time with us in August, covering the cubs, a farm visit and a school presentation for the wildlife section of 'Africa in Focus'. Recently aired on South African television, the programme is scheduled to appear on Botswana TV in December.

CCB has also been given airtime on a local radio station, GabzFM, in October. The morning studio interview with Thabo was then followed by a live phone-in and discussion about the plight of the cheetah and human/predator conflict. The response was very positive and led to the recruitment of several new local volunteers.



The Lobone Dancers performing Dibatana for guests at an event in Gaborone in September.

CCB and Lobone Creations are collaborating in an exciting new creative project to highlight the plight of the cheetah in Botswana. The staging of a new theatrical and media production, entitled '*Spirit of the Kalahari – sharing the land with predators*', is designed to unite communities across the country with performances of traditional dance and music.



Recognising the ability of artistic performance to engage with and lift the human spirit, we believe that a partnership with Lobone Creations in the development of a production which portrays the consequences of human/predator conflict and highlights the benefits of coexistence, can only enhance efforts to influence human behaviour towards predators.

Lobone Creations are a production company that promotes the rich cultural heritage of Botswana. Formed in 2001 by Lydia Moate and operating from Tlokweng, near Gaborone, the company collaborates with local communities, businesses, governmental and non-governmental organisations, in the staging of performances by twelve young and talented singers, dancers and poets. In September, Rebecca and Brian attended a performance for invited guests which featured songs from their new album – including *Dibatana*, a song about living together with cheetahs. We are currently looking for both local and international sponsors to assist in funding a tour of '*Spirit of the Kalahari...*' and the production of an accompanying DVD.



Lydia Moate (centre) with Rebecca and the performers of Lobone Creations.



*WCN conservationists Shamari, Rebecca, Iain Douglas Hamilton and Tony DeMatto.*

## Fundraising

Rebecca once again attended one of the most important events of our fundraising calendar in October, the Wildlife Conservation Network's (WCN) annual Expo in California. WCN is dedicated to promoting grass roots conservation programmes around the world, focusing on endangered species. The event brings effective conservation programmes together with potential donors, fostering long-term support for threatened species.

This year's Expo was attended by Jane Goodall of the Jane Goodall Institute, Iain Douglas Hamilton of Save the Elephants and Claudio Sillero from the Ethiopian Wolf Project, Laurie Marker of Cheetah Conservation Fund, as well as a number of other well known programmes. It is a great honour for Cheetah Conservation Botswana to be included in this group from the conservation world and our continued inclusion has, this year, resulted in the project receiving generous donations totalling \$17,890 from WCN. We are extremely grateful to all of the donors who have supported our work here in Botswana this year and who continue to do so every year.

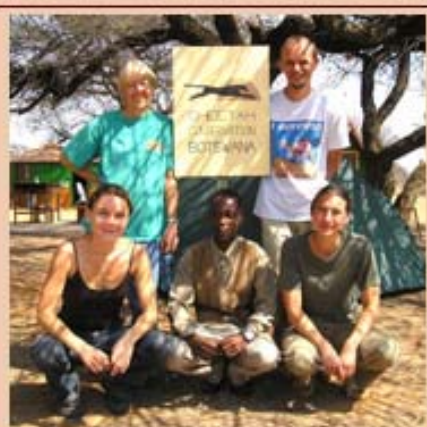
Before leaving the United States' Rebecca paid a visit to Leopards Etc., who have also become supporters of CCB, en-route to the UK and visits to Tusk Trust, Banham Zoo, the Clothworkers Association and Leeds University Biology Association. In closing, we would like to express our sincerest appreciation for the support we continue to receive from our international donor organisations and individuals. **We would be unable to assist the cheetah population in Botswana without you!**

## Thank You to...

*Very special thanks are due to :*  
**The Howard Buffet Foundation**  
**Wildlife Conservation Network**

*Cheetah Conservation Botswana also owes a debt of gratitude to all of our donors, sponsors and supporters, both locally and internationally :*

- |                                 |                                      |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Debswana                        | American Zoological Association      |
| Mokolodi Nature Reserve         | Bill & Pat Miller                    |
| Barloworld                      | Cheetah Conservation Fund            |
| Sarah Banks &                   | WILD Foundation                      |
| Crystal Digital Print           | Banham Zoo & Suffolk Wildlife Park   |
| Inktec Ltd                      | Idea Wild                            |
| Lobatse Canvas                  | Tusk Trust                           |
| First National Bank of Botswana | Cincinnati Zoo                       |
| Nata Timber                     | Columbus Zoo                         |
| E-quip Services                 | Peoples Trust for Endangered Species |
| Dave & Elsibeth Derman          | Rob & Barbara Dicely                 |
| Gelita Kapata of the            | National Endoscopy Services Inc.,    |
| Gaborone Private Hospital       | Clearwater, USA                      |
| GabzFM                          | Stephen J. Roth                      |
| Farming Magazine                |                                      |



*(Clockwise) : Kyle, Dr. Pascal Mesochina, Dr. Rachael Berzins, Modiegi Bakane and Rebecca.*

In August, CCB received a visit from Pascal Mesochina and Rachael Berzins. They came on a fact-finding trip in preparation for establishing a cheetah project at the Pendjari National Park, in Benin. We look forward to future collaborations!