

CHEETAH Tracks



The Newsletter of Cheetah Conservation Botswana

February 2008

Livestock Guarding Dogs
Competition Success

Botswana hosts
International
Cheetah &
Wild Dog
Workshops

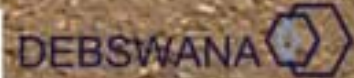
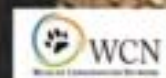
Plus...

Community Outreach
and Education Reviews

Leopard Rehabilitation
Progress

CCB takes delivery of
new vehicles

More new CCB
community resources
near publication



THE HOWARD G. BUFFETT FOUNDATION





Rebecca Klein

Greetings to everyone. I hope 2008 has got off to a really tremendous start for all our friends and supporters here in Botswana and around the globe? Botswana is in the middle of the rainy season and a greater level of rainfall has also coincided with a further increase in pace here at CCB.

The year of 2007 proved to be another period of growth for the project and its current initiatives, as well as for the development of new programmes. While extremely busy it has nevertheless been an exciting time of progress and achievements which have all been born of your generous contributions and support.

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As many of you will already know, 2007 held its share of set-backs for us and since our last edition of this newsletter we have had to report the sad loss of our surviving rehabilitated cheetah, Decu. But while we report on that unfortunate incident in these pages, this issue of *Cheetah Tracks* also reveals brighter news and wider progress. Our new education book for secondary school children has made it into print and is now starting to see use by schools! Further new community and education resources are now also coming on line too! These include

resources in both English and Setswana. As part of our livestock guarding dog initiative, CCB also held a national competition in an effort to discover farmers who might currently be using dogs to protect their livestock. You can read much more about that here too! The winning farmer, Rre. Nkoketsang Mothobi, was presented with his prizes in October and his young son, Castro, appears on the cover of this issue of *Cheetah Tracks*!

In October, I was accompanied by Ann Marie to represent CCB at the annual Wildlife Conservation Network (WCN) Expo in San Francisco. As always, this was a favourite opportunity to further promote our efforts in endangered species conservation. CCB has been a WCN partner for some 5 years and the level of support gained through them and its network of supporters has had an impact of such a considerable scale that our progress to date would, otherwise, have been significantly checked. Much of what we have achieved so far simply could not have emerged without such reliable backing, nor without the interest and thoughtfulness of their associates and supporters.

CCB is a partner organization of the international Global Cheetah Forum. Focusing upon the wider species conservation effort, the group has been developing clear plans for the future conservation of the wild cheetah population with the Southern African Range Wide Strategic Planning Process for Cheetah & Wild Dog. In December, the forum met at Jwana Game Park in Jwaneng. Participants from the key African range states attended, before moving on to Gaborone for a National cheetah and wild dog workshop.

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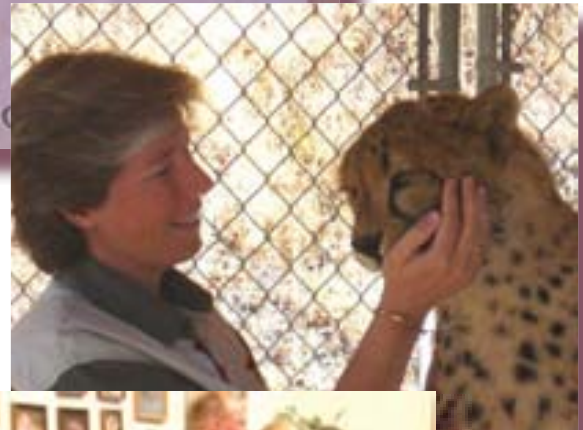
During October, CCB again benefited from the steadfast consideration of the Howard G. Buffett Foundation when we were awarded three brand new Toyota 4X4 vehicles. CCB's recent growth and a better ability to reach more rural communities has been matched by greater demands upon an aging vehicle fleet and increasing operating challenges that have followed. This outstanding award now makes it possible (together with fleet operating support from the Predator Conservation Trust, Virginia Safari Park, Panther Ridge, Reston Zoological Park, the Zoological Society of Washington, Cougar Mountain and Richmond Metro Zoo) to forge ahead with scheduled community activities without being ruled by the vagaries of operating only older vehicles. This wide recognition of just how important vehicles are to our work, given the scale of investment required, is immeasurable on any usual scale of gratitude, but we thank you all nevertheless.

To conclude, we should not forget the people here on the ground every day, the CCB staff and volunteers who do such a wonderful job in their many and varied roles. Thanks go to Sally Gould who recently stepped in briefly to hold the fort in Ghanzi and who has worked to continue developing good community relations in the area. We have recently been joined by two new members of staff, Winnie Bagwasi (who has already been volunteering for us at Mokolodi for a year) and Morulaganyi Kokole, who will become permanently based in Ghanzi. They are already becoming essential members of the CCB team.

Finally... thank you to you all for the on going support and contributions which continue to be vital to the growth of CCB and the future of cheetah conservation in Botswana.

Thank you,

R. Klein



Top : *Ann Marie, Trudy Klein and Rebecca Klein* at the WCN Expo in San Francisco during October.

Middle : *Ann Marie* with *Tango*, ambassador cheetah with Project Survival, in California.

Bottom : *Rebecca* with 11 year old *Claudia Leue* at a CCB fundraiser in California staged by Project Survival last October. A supporter of the Sierra Endangered Cat Haven, *Claudia* donated her Birthday and allowance money to cheetahs, before continuing to raise funds amongst family and friends.



Orphaned Cheetah *Decu*

As many of our supporters and web site subscribers will know, the last survivor our trio of rehabilitated cheetahs was killed near the village of Lerala, near Machaneng in the Tuli region of Botswana, in August 2007.

The local Department of Wildlife & National Parks (DWNP) office had been called to attend after the young cheetah was spotted close to the village. Initially thinking the cat was a leopard, Decu was shot by the attending DWNP officer as he considered the animal to be a threat to public safety.

Subsequent enquiries have established the full circumstances surrounding the shooting. Discussions between CCB and the DWNP have taken place to ensure that the otherwise successful and productive working relationship between our organizations is not undermined and continues to foster wider, on-going collaborative working between us.



Decu

Orphaned Leopard *Botshelo*



Botshelo in February, now weighing 30-35kg.

The orphaned leopard rescued from Ghanzi in October 2006 continues to make good progress at Jwaneng and is nearing the release phase of her rehabilitation. At the turn of the year a large male leopard began to visit her enclosure during the night. While making repeated attempts to dig under the enclosure and also to climb the fence, entry nevertheless remains denied to the persistent male. This picture of *Botshelo* was taken, as usual, by a motion camera. After fitting a suitable collar, donated by the SPOTS Foundation in the Netherlands, she will likely be released at an appropriate location during April.



Global Cheetah Forum Botswana Workshops

In December, Jwana Game Park and facilities provided by Debswana became the venue for the Southern Africa Range Wide Conservation Planning Initiative for Cheetahs and Wild Dogs. Delegates from nine other African nations joined those from Botswana with the key aim of developing a strategy to ensure the long term survival of cheetahs and wild dogs across the remainder of their natural range.

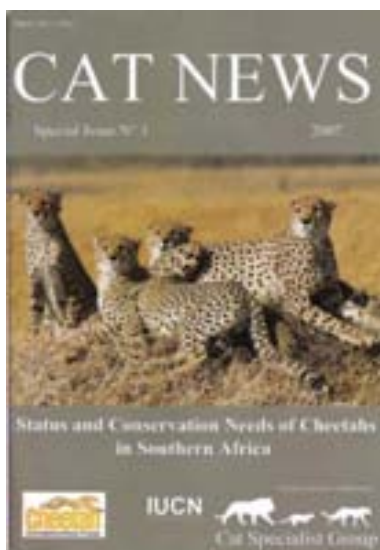
Organized by the Global Cheetah Forum, CCB assisted with on the ground logistics and support for attendees. The week-long event was opened by Botswana's Minister of Environment, Wildlife and Tourism, the Honourable Kitso Mokaila, who enthusiastically discussed the developing strategies for providing a road map to achieve a sustainable future for these threatened species. Following the successful completion of the workshop, delegates then transferred to Gaborone prior to attending a three day national workshop, with discussions based upon the amalgamation and fine tuning of regional strategies into those of individual nation states.



The process was especially important for the development of a National Cheetah and Wild Dog Strategy for Botswana - now at the review stage and hopefully available in the middle of this year. We wish to thank all the visiting delegates, who during a brief respite, took time to visit CCB facilities here at Mokolodi Nature Reserve and to meet members of our staff.

Delegates of the Cheetah and Wild Dog Range wide Conservation Initiative at Jwaneng, in December.

Publication Cat News



The conclusion of the two strategic planning workshops coincided with the publication of a special edition of *Cat News*. Published by the IUCN's Cat Specialist Group and as a result of the previous regional cheetah workshop, held at the facilities of CCF in Namibia in December 2005, this issue focused upon the Status and Conservation Needs of Cheetahs in Southern Africa. CCB contributed by providing a Status Report for Botswana. Together with these special publications, a Cheetah Compendium has also been launched on the Cat Specialist Group web site at:

www.catsg.org





Research Review *Ghanzi & Jwaneng*

Though Ann Marie and Lorraine have spent much less time actually 'out in the field' recently, they have been extremely busy nonetheless. A number of papers are being prepared for publication, concerning the previous 4.5 years of study. Those preparations are time consuming, requiring detailed review of all the data collected and the statistics calculated. Papers on spoor, home range behaviour and cub rehabilitation will be included.

Monitoring of the cheetahs utilizing Jwana Game Park in Jwaneng has been aided by the use of camera traps (see picture right). The concrete slab became a popular marking point for a new male cheetah and a known and ear-tagged female cat for a period of time, as well as by a caracal during the hours of darkness.

In Ghanzi, Sally Gould stepped in to volunteer at short notice during late 2007, continuing with farm visits and spoor survey work in the area. Spoor surveys assist in establishing movement patterns and population densities for cheetahs, leopards, hyenas and lions and usually run for periods of around three months. Also in Ghanzi, we have had the opportunity to conduct three cheetah work-up sessions. The first two subjects were males, subsequently trans-located from farm properties to chosen locations within the Central Kalahari Game Reserve (CKGR) - one in September 2007 and the second in January 2008. The third session also took place in January, this time on a female with five 10 month old cubs. Following the fitting of a satellite collar to the mother, this group was also trans-located to the CKGR with the support of the Department of Wildlife & National Parks.



Top : A cheetah caught by camera trap within Jwana Game Park.

Centre : The work-up of one of five cubs in Ghanzi in February, later released with their mother in the Central Kalahari Game Reserve (CKGR).

Above : Ready to go, a view of the previous male cat through the spy hole in the squeeze box, pre-release and fitted with a satellite collar.



Livestock Guarding Dogs Competition

Supported by the United Nations Global Environment Facility, CCB is promoting the use of livestock guarding dogs in Botswana as an effective method of non-lethal predator control. Dogs have widely been shown to be successful predator deterrents and as a starting point for setting up a guard dog programme for farmers here, CCB held a national competition last year. Its purpose was to discover if guard dogs are currently being used by any local farmers and if so, to establish their effectiveness.

The competition to find the 'Best Guarding Dog in Botswana' was promoted through the national farming press and on radio. We received a very encouraging response to the promotion and approximately 75 of the respondents were livestock farmers who stated that they were, either, currently using dogs or were very interested in introducing them.

Following telephone interviews with those farmers, conducted by our Community Conservation Coordinator, Thabang Segaletsho, site visits took place at the farms of the five chosen finalists. Their operations and use of dogs appeared to best fit the criteria for the successful use of this method of deterring predators and protecting livestock.

The overall winner of the competition was Rre. Nkoketsang Mothobi, who's farm is located in Boteti, area 4B on the eastern perimeter of the Central Kalahari Game Reserve. Rre. Mothobi has a goat and cattle operation. The goat herd is of a considerable size and as part of a wider farm management programme, it is protected by a number of livestock guarding dogs. Rre. Mothobi's farm is in a region of Botswana which contains a number of predator species, including lions,



leopards and cheetahs, yet he is adamant that he has experienced no losses to predators since introducing the dogs!

While Rre. Mothobi was the outright winner on this occasion, we believe that all the farmers interviewed as part of this competition and who are trying this method to protect their livestock, can also share in its success. Their predator deterrent efforts also stand as laudable examples of individual efforts to adjust to sustainable farming methods that will benefit everyone without harming predators.

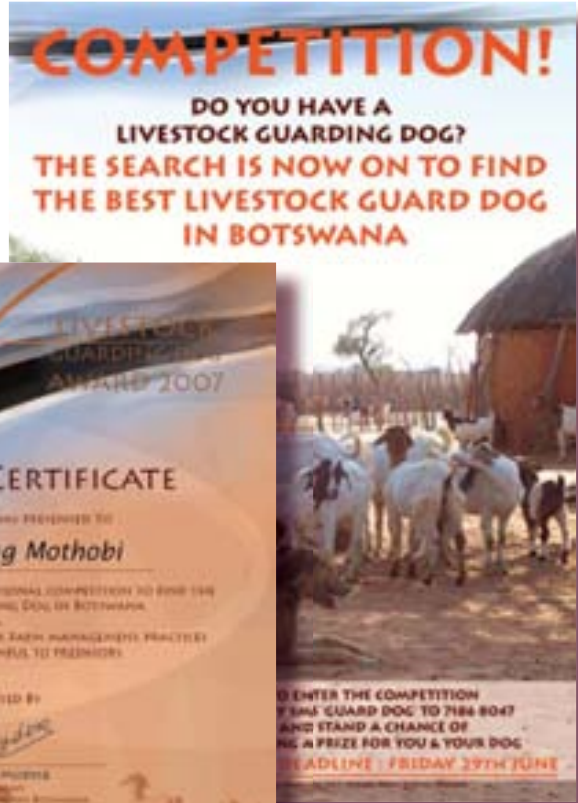
The competition prizes were presented by CCB chairman, Sedia Modise, on Saturday 13th October, in a brief ceremony outside the cheetah enclosure here at Mokolodi Nature Reserve. The prizes included farm tools and equipment, as well as health care supplies for his dogs and a weekend in a chalet at Mokolodi Nature Reserve for the winner and his family, which included evening dining at the restaurant. Many of the prizes were sponsored by local companies

Winning farmer, Nkoketsang Mothobi (left) and Rre. Sedia Modise, Chairman of CCB.



and CCB is extremely grateful to Mokolodi Nature Reserve, Mokolodi Restaurant, Haskins and Virbac for their support. The prize giving ceremony also received coverage in the Botswana Daily News.

The interest generated by the competition and the importance of this particular method to protect livestock and deter predators, as part of a sustainable farming operation, is such that CCB now intends to run the competition again and repeat it as an annual event.



Previous Page : *Rre. Mothobi* receiving his winners Certificatate from CCB chairman *Sedia Modise* at the presentation on 13th October.
Above Right : The farming press promotion and the winners Certificate.
Below and Right : *Rre. Mothobi's* farm and livestock guarding dogs.





Community *Thabang Segaetsho*



The last few months have seen me spending considerable amounts of time with the rural communities who's dealings with predators can be a major topic of concern. Discussions, interviews and community workshops, staged with working partners at the Departments of Wildlife & National Parks and Animal Health & Production, have all continued to make progress in helping communities to address their concerns and promote non-lethal predator control.

Amongst our most recent successes, as previously reported, is the creation and staging of CCB's first Livestock Guarding Dog Competition. Though this necessitates many phone interviews and a number of site visits to investigate current usage of dogs, the competition achieved its objectives and I thank all the participants around Botswana, national radio and farming press, as well as those supporters already identified who donated prizes. Planning has now started for a re-run of the competition.



The staging of Problem Animal Control (PAC) workshops has continued. Events in Ghanzi, Charles Hill, Ncojane, Hunkukwe, Kang and others in the Southern District and across the Kweneng region, require travel over great distances and often on only dirt roads. These are, together with individual site visits at dispersed locations and agricultural shows (such as the one held recently in Letlhakane), nevertheless essential to meeting our objectives .



Assisting my colleague, Wabotlhe Letubo, at Teacher Training Workshops and promotional events such as the recent Kgotlha Expo held in Gaborone, remain an opportunity for me to discuss wildlife issues with a wider audience.

Top : PAC Workshop delegates discuss proceedings.
Centre : 'On the road', accompanied by vehicles from the Department of Wildlife & National Parks.
Above : A full house for a recent PAC Workshop.



Further to my recent activities in the field, I have also attended the previously mentioned Southern African Range Wide Strategic Management Process for Cheetahs & Wild Dogs workshop in Jwaneng, as well as being involved in the recruitment and selection of our new Community Conservation Officer. To be based in Ghanzi, Morulaganyi Kokole is going to be an important role-player in long term predator conflict resolution efforts in a key area of Botswana and I welcome him to the team.

Thabang

Above Right : Rural farmers discuss predator conflict issues.

Right : *Thabang Segaetsho* discusses his work with CCB with a visitor to the Kgotla Expo in November 2007.



Education Wabotlhe Letubo



Recent months have been marked by a number of events within CCB's Education Programme. School presentations have of course continued, still focusing on the Southern District where human/predator conflict is at its highest. Increasingly, new CCB resources are coming onto line, enhancing the effectiveness of school presentations and the involvement in activities by children. The availability of the *Spirit of the Kalahari* DVD has now been supplemented by the new predator education book and leaflets identifying the difference between leopards and cheetahs.

Of the recent period a number of events and promotional activities have taken place. These have included participation in the World Environmental Day proceedings in Ghanzi, a student environmental rally in Takatokwane, the Annual General Meeting of the Association of Environmental Clubs of Botswana, and workshops staged by the Department of Environmental Affairs (on desert encroachment) and by the Jwaneng District Education



Department on the progress of Environmental Education in their schools. With my colleague Thabang Sagaetsho, I also attended the annual Kgotla Expo, this year staged in Gaborone. CCB was presented with first prize at the event, for the Best Presented Exhibit. Our programme of Teacher Training Workshops continues apace. Ghanzi Region schools were this time invited to participate in the latest event, staged at Charles Hill. We are again grateful to Cathryn Hilker, the Angel Fund of Cincinnati Zoo and Cheetah Outreach for their support of this important component of our Education Programme. Staff from Mokolodi Nature Reserve's Education Department, as well as from the Department of Wildlife & National Parks (DWNP) also took part. We are particularly indebted to DHL, who have played an important role in the transportation of educational resources for us. We sincerely appreciate their generosity.

CCB's working relationship with the People & Nature (PAN) trust continues to develop. Based near Ghanzi, the organization provides amongst other services, educational camps with an environmental theme for disadvantaged children from across Botswana. Following the Charles Hill Teacher Training Workshop, I spent some time with the children, introducing them to activities about the predators of Botswana.

As part of celebrations to mark World Wetlands Day on the 2nd February, CCB was invited to attend an event in Maun. A two day conference on the implementation of the Okavango Delta Management Plan was followed by a march from Maun to Big Tree on the banks of the Thamalakane River. There, an exhibition was staged by some fifty participating groups. Minister of the Environment, Wildlife & Tourism, the Honourable Kitso Mokaila, was accompanied by the Director of the DWNP and arrived by boat to tour the event. CCB again obtained 1st position for its exhibit. Education professionals were presented with copies of the



Spirit of the Kalahari DVD and our new education book. Many other visitors to CCB on the day also seemed keen to make use of our predator identification leaflets and children were presented with CCB pencils. Finally, I have been conducting a number of follow-up visits to educational establishments. CCB resources have been well received and are being well used since initial delivery. Only with your support, we can continue to produce and reproduce these important resources and keep delivering them into classrooms, where today's children have it within them to influence the long term future of the cheetah in Botswana.

Wabotlhe

Opposite Bottom Left : Children at PAN explore the difference between the cheetah and the leopard. Top Photographs : Participants of the recent Charles Hill Teacher Training Workshop. Above : *Wabotlhe* receiving a shipment of education resources at Mokolodi Nature Reserve with the generous support of DHL .



Community & Education New Resources



With support from Debswana and the Peoples Trust for Endangered Species, CCB published its predator education book, *CHEETAH: A Predator Resource for the Students of Botswana*, at the end of June 2007. The book has been developed for use by Secondary level students in both urban and rural communities alike. Containing five chapters and activity sections, the aim of this richly illustrated resource is to develop greater awareness about predators and their habitats and to remove some of the mystery and fear surrounding them, so as to encourage a positive outcome for the long term future of predators here in Botswana. The book is also available to view and download from our web site. CCB is also making preparations for the publication of its second book, *The Predator-Safe Livestock Guide*, at the end of March 2008. To be published in the smaller A5 format and with the support of the WSPA, this booklet is designed for use by farmers as an introduction to farming methods which are not harmful to predators. Its sections include introductions to the use of kraals and barriers, livestock guarding animals and fencing, as well as a quick references to all the main predator species' found in





Botswana. The booklet will also be available to view and download from the CCB web site. New CCB leaflets have also seen publication recently, commencing with the 'Spot the Difference' hand-out pictured above, available in both English and Setswana. Following in their footsteps will be yet more community and education resources, all of which will be made freely available to local communities (pictured right and below).



All of these resources have been created and designed in house by Brian Jones and reproduction quality has been further enhanced with the support of local printing company, Impression House.



Brian's article about the work of CCB, *The Bridge to a Cheetah Eden*, available to read and download from the CCB web site, also saw publication in the November 2007 issue of *Africa Wild*.





CCB Opportunities International Research Students & Administration Volunteers

This year, CCB is offering opportunities to MSc and PhD students who may be interested in conducting research into the cheetah population of Botswana. Field research placements will be for a maximum of 12 months and open to MSc and PhD candidates only. Candidates should have a good academic record, hold a BSc or MSc degree, have a particular interest in cheetah related research and be able to obtain enough financial support to conduct and adequately complete the field research component of their studies in Botswana.

Also this year, CCB is offering limited, short term volunteering opportunities to non-residents of Botswana. We are currently only inviting applications from individuals who possess administration skills, with qualifications and/or proven experience, to assist in the daily project operation side of CCB. Placements are office based, will be for a period only of 1-2 months and

successful applicants will be based here at our main office situated within Mokolodi Nature Reserve. Monthly volunteering fees do apply and this is an ideal opportunity for those with skills often overlooked for placements with wildlife conservation projects in Africa.

For full details and application forms for both these opportunities, visit the Volunteering page of our web site at www.cheetahbotswana.com

The CCB kitchen and gardens at Mokolodi Nature Reserve.



Cheetah Art Alison Nicholls



Alison Nicholls is a watercolour artist specializing in African wildlife and landscapes. A former resident of Zimbabwe, she has a special relationship with southern Africa. A member of Artists For Wildlife, she regularly donates her work to silent auctions at conservation fund-raising events. Grant funding awards are used to conduct painting expeditions resulting in work which is also used to raise awareness and funds for wildlife conservation. Alison's beautiful cheetah paintings have been used in just that way and amongst her beneficiaries from the resulting funds, is CCB.

To find out more about Alison and her work visit: www.natureartists.com/artist_biography.asp?ArtistID=1185



Thank You to...

As ever, it is the constant interest, encouragement and support of all our donors here and around the world who's contributions fuel our efforts here on the ground. Special thanks to everyone who continues to support us in these growing times for CCB and most recently to:

The Howard G. Buffett Foundation
 Wildlife Conservation Network (WCN)
 Debswana
 UNDP Global Environment Facility
 AZA Conservation Endowment Fund
 Cheetah Outreach
 Mokolodi Nature Reserve
 The People & Nature Trust
 Thornhill Primary School
 Project Survival
 WSPA
 Cheetah Conservation Fund (CCF)
 SPOTS Foundation
 The Angel Fund (Cincinnati Zoo)
 Disney Wildlife Conservation Fund
 Beagle Foundation
 Panther Ridge
 Toledo Zoo
 Virginia Safari Park
 Cougar Mountain
 Metro Richmond Zoo
 The Predator Conservation Trust
 Zoological Society of Washington
 Impression House

DHL
 Botswana Radio RB2
 Farming Magazine
 Super Signs
 Ngami Toyota
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 Joyce Montfort
 Carole Coppock
 Patty & Jim Beers
 Brenda Messenger
 Sonia Kao
 Nancy & Eric Vandermeij
 Kent & Gloria Marshall
 Henry Blackiston
 Laura Atkins
 Maria Louw

Equipment New Vehicles!



Always displaying a keen interest in the continuing growth and development of CCB and its programmes is the Howard G. Buffet Foundation. Reliable and good quality equipment will play an essential role in our increasing effectiveness and we are all at CCB extremely grateful to the Howard G. Buffett Foundation for the recent donation of three new Toyota vehicles.