

CHEETAH Tracks

The Newsletter of Cheetah Conservation Botswana

DECEMBER 2008



Livestock Guard Dog Competition Success

Plus...

Wild Dog Rescue

**New Research and
Community staff**

**CCB in Kenya on
WSPA Exchange**

THE HOWARD G. BUFFETT FOUNDATION



Seasons Greetings to all our supporters and contributors
in Botswana and around the world from everyone at CCB.



Rebecca Klein

Greetings to everyone. I am pleased to inform our supporters, donors and friends, that our long awaited camp in Ghanzi is now almost complete. Ghanzi has one of the highest concentrations of cheetah numbers in the country and is also one of the highest conflict areas. Our new camp will be a vital satellite for our research and our community outreach and education programmes in and around the area. On behalf of the rest of the CCB team, I wish to thank Steve Gold and Bruce Roushe for pioneering the solar power initiative for us which has made it possible to establish the camp. The generous donation of solar panels is particularly appreciated, as the now operational system is the sole source of power for the camp.

On that note I would also like to take this opportunity to publicly welcome Lorraine Boast as the latest addition to our staff. Lorraine has been with the project as a volunteer since 2006 and is now our new Research Coordinator. We have also recently welcomed Phale Seele, our new Community Conservation Officer, to the CCB team. Both Phale and Lorraine are based at our new camp in Ghanzi.

In early October I found myself flying across the seas again for the annual Wildlife Conservation Network (WCN) Expo, in San Francisco. CCB's partner status with WCN continues to provided us with significant leverage to engage supporters and donors, so as we reach the end of another year we wish to pass special seasonal greetings to all at WCN and to their supporters as well.

The annual Expo was another wonderful week of events, workshops and presentations. A Safari evening held for participants at Akiko Yamazaki and Jerry Yang's stables was a particularly memorable event this year, followed by the Expo itself, this year staged at Mission Bay Conference Centre. Lastly the garden party at the home of Charles Knowles included live music, ambassador cats and inspiring conservation stories as attractions. Special thanks are also due to Marty Varon and Antonia de Matto, for driving me around and hosting my stay.

Houston Zoo was then my next port of call, for a lunch event and evening lecture to raise funds for cheetahs. The Zoo did an excellent job of organizing two great events and our sincere thanks go to everyone in Houston for their interest in CCB and for making me feel so welcome, especially Peter Riger.

Further support has also recently come from the UNDP's Global Environment Facility, Wilderness Safaris Trust, Angel Fund, Taronga Foundation, Predator Conservation Trust, Panther Ridge, Toledo Zoo and Banham Zoo. Thanks to all of you for your ongoing support! We look forward to transforming much needed funds into practical conservation for the cheetah in Botswana.

Enjoy the holiday season.

R. Klein

CHEETAH CONSERVATION
BOTSWANA

Private Bag 0457
Mokolodi Nature Reserve
Gaborone
Botswana

Tel/Fax :
Tel :+(267) 350 0613

Email:
info@cheetahbotswana.com



Top : WCN partner conservationists at an event in California in October.

Left: Rebecca Klein at the special fundraising event staged by Charles Knowles.

Above: New CCB team members, Lorraine Boast and Phale Seele.



Research Ghanzi

The research department has recently been focusing upon the construction and completion of the new camp in Ghanzi. Work commenced in July on land owned by the People and Nature Trust, an NGO that offers life skills training, environmental and agricultural education to young orphans from across Botswana.

The camp includes accommodation for six people, an office, veterinary clinic and cheetah holding enclosure. In the future CCB hopes to host teacher training workshops, farmer workshops, a livestock guarding dog demonstration site and education and research programmes at the site.

In addition, monitoring of the cheetah populations around Jwaneng and Ghanzi has continued. In August, we welcomed our first MSc student to the project. Mariska Snellman, from the Netherlands, conducted field research into the importance of wild game populations to predators on farmland. She completed her research in some three months, collecting interesting cheetah and leopard data along the way. Also in August, Lara Elson from Scotland served as a short term volunteer in Ghanzi and was even lucky enough to assist with a white rhino release on a local game farm! Patric Nsakalimba has also been assisting CCB in the area, with farmer meetings and problem cheetahs.

'Kealeboga', the cheetah caught across the border in South Africa is alive and well and has been moving in and out of Botswana. Unfortunately, collar malfunctions have been hindering data collection, but we hope to correct the situation in the New Year.



Top : The new solar power system at Ghanzi.

Above : Mariska Snellman.

'Botshelo', the orphaned leopard cub rehabilitated and released in April 2008, continues to thrive. Before release she had been entering 'heat' and had attracted the attentions of a male leopard in Jwaneng. There is now a possibility that since settling into her new territory in a Wildlife Management Area, her path may have crossed the path of a local male so she may now have cubs of her own.



Wild Dog Puppies Rescue



In July 2008, the Department of Wildlife & National Parks brought into our temporary custody nine African wild dog puppies. Rescued by a farmer in Ghanzi, the puppies were thought to be about nine weeks old. They were kept at our Ghanzi research base for about three weeks until long term facilities for their rehabilitation could be found.



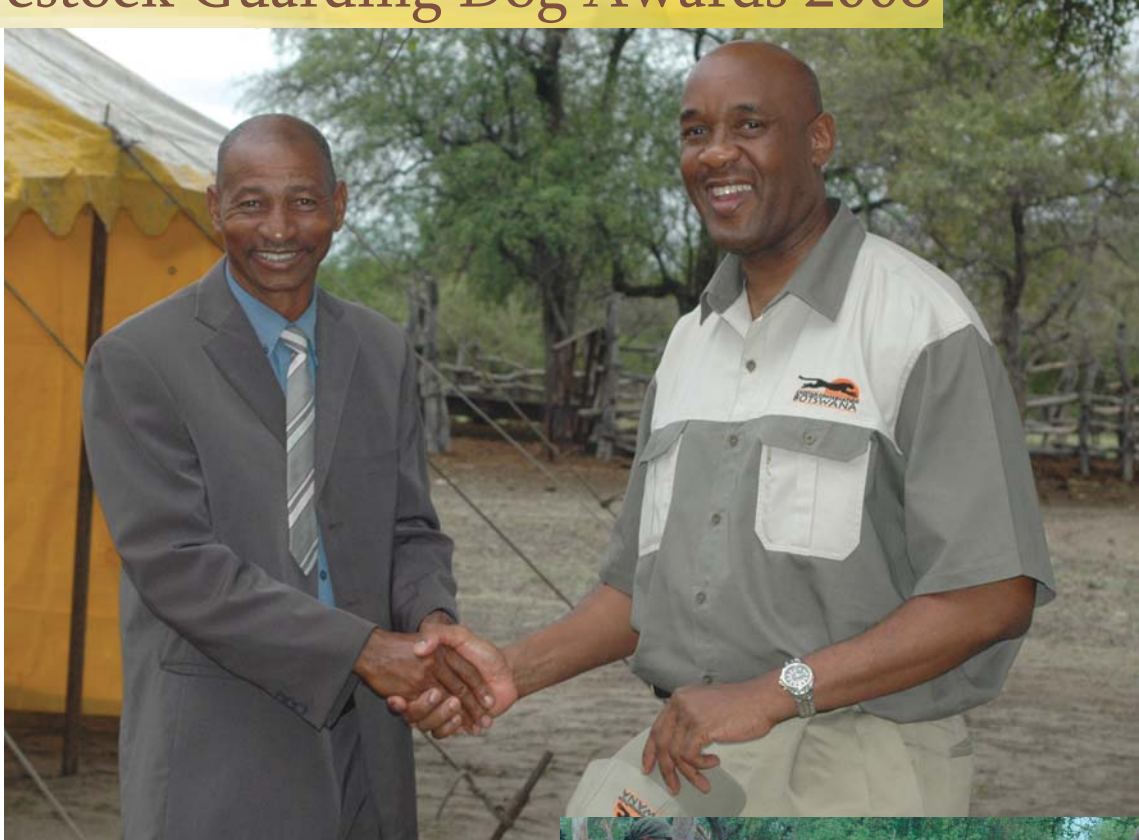
They moved to Mokolodi Nature Reserve for disease testing before being transported to a new home at the Limpopo-Limpadi Game Reserve. The latest news is that the young dogs continue to thrive and have settled in to their new home.



This Page: The nine wild dog pups.



Community Livestock Guarding Dog Awards 2008



Following months of interviews and farm visits, the Livestock Guarding Dog (LSGD) Competition Awards took place in Maun, on the 22 November. The event was a great success, receiving national coverage in the press and on television. This year's winner, Rre. Leatamo of Xobe, near Maun, invited CCB and the press to stage the awards event at his farm where three dogs protect 250 goats. The venue also provided a practical demonstration of the dogs in action.

Proudly donning a CCB shirt for the event, our guest of honour was Botswana's Minister of Environment, Wildlife & Tourism, the Honourable Kitso Mokaila. The honourable Minister was also accompanied by the Director of Animal Production, representatives from the regional office of the Department of Wildlife and National Parks, as well as local dignitaries and community leaders.

Over a hundred members of the local community were also present, as were Elijah Leatamo's family.

With an increase in participation to 197 farmers this year, the annual competition has become an extremely effective way to showcase and promote local farmers who are taking on non-lethal methods to control predators in their area.



Top: Rre. Leatamo greeting Minister Mokaila on the morning of the prize giving ceremony.

Above: Rre. Leatamo and sons feeding his guard dogs before they leave with the goats for grazing.



The day was a resounding success and we wish to extend our sincere thanks to the local community for their warm reception, as well as to the sponsors of the event and prizes, Wilderness Safaris, Air Botswana, Haskins and Virbac. We would also like to thank all the farmers who took part in this year's competition, who's growing interest and participation is a strong indicator that non-lethal solutions to predator conflict do receive serious consideration amongst those affected.



Above: Prize giving by the Minister and by Wilderness Safaris, before a group photo call.





Community Kokole & Phale visit Namibia

CCB with the support of Cheetah Conservation Fund (CCF) is embarking on a staff training initiative, to equip its team members with fresh ideas and practical techniques to better execute their programme objectives.



Our Community Conservation Officers, Morulugani Kokole and Phale Seele, both recently attended the course in Namibia. The training focused mainly on Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM), Human Wildlife Conflicts and Social Assessment Survey methods, as well as leadership skills and planning conservation on a large scale.



The course covered topics such as genetics, animal health and capture and release techniques. It also included radio telemetry, vegetation analysis, feeding ecology and human wildlife conflict.

Field trips to communities living in wildlife populated areas were also included, such as one to the Nyae Nyae Community Conservancy - located some 550km north east of Otjiwarongo near the boarder with Botswana. The area is predominately occupied by the San (Bushmen) people, who mainly depend on hunting and gathering for their daily livelihoods.

The second field trip was to Etosha National Park. This protected area was established in 1907 and just finished celebrated her Centenary celebrations last year.

Top: CCB's Community Officer's Morulaganyi Kokole (left) and Phale Seele (right) with Minister Mokaila.



Community ...and Winnie visits Kenya

With support from WSPA, Marketing and Administration Officer, Winnie Bagwasi, recently participated in an exchange visit to the Lewa Wildlife Conservancy, in Kenya. The objective was to acquire an insight into community development initiatives in and around Wildlife management areas, with particular emphasis in the resolution of Human/Wildlife conflict through alternative livelihoods programmes.

Established in 1995, LWC works as a catalyst for wildlife conservation including endangered species such as the black rhino, Grevy's zebra and the cheetah. This is supported by community conservation initiatives and is perhaps one of the best examples of establishing a successful link between conservation and community. Just like most, if not all communities in Botswana, the communities surrounding Lewa are livestock farmers.

Winnie visited two of the twelve cattle bomas in the conservancy, as well as local communities now introducing new business initiatives.

The Northern Rangelands Trust (NRT) and its marketing division, NRT Trading, promote enterprise development amongst local communities, with particular emphasis on women. CCB is currently exploring options for starting an alternative livelihoods programme of its own and the NRT visit was particularly useful as we look at the options for the diversification of rural community income, which will have a significant role to play in combating human/wildlife conflict here in Botswana.



Winnie's visit to Kenya has brought a new insight into that process. The enhancement of traditional skills; identifying low environmental impact raw materials; creating product marketing links; increasing accessibility to products, are all questions to consider carefully in the process of finding and securing sustainable sources of income for rural communities.



Education Wabotlhe Letubo

In August, Jwaneng became the new operating base for Wabotlhe's Community Education Programme. This has enabled her to be closer to communities directly affected by conflict with local predators. Future plans include a new predator playground in the park at Jwaneng and the development of the further development of the education centre, as well as the possible construction of model kraals, to aid the local farmers who need to construct their kraals.

Since the last newsletter, school visits have continued as have our successful programme of Teacher Training Workshops. Wabotlhe has been conducting follow-up visits to schools surrounding Tsabong, after the Teacher Training workshop held there earlier this year.

In September, Wabotlhe visited South Africa, to take part in an Environmental Educators course at Umgeni Valley, near Durban. The course covered environmental education theory, auditing, research, ecosystem study methodologies, as well as environmental education in the rural context. Attended by twelve participants from SADC countries, the course also included the design of an evaluation tool to enable CCB to measure the effectiveness of its Teacher Training Workshops.

Following her attendance of an Association of Environmental Clubs of Botswana workshop in Maun, Wabotlhe then staged another Teacher Training Workshop, this time at Molepolole for over fifty teachers from the Kweneng District before returning once again to Maun. This visit was to attend the GEF Small Grants Programme Stakeholders Meeting, to give a presentation on the CCB's programmes and progress.



Top: Participants of the Environmental Educators course at Umgeni Valley.

Above: Teachers at CCB's Molepolole Teacher Training Workshop.



Thank You to...

As you reach the end of this newsletter and we all reach the end of another year, everyone at CCB wishes to thank the many people who have helped and supported us all in our efforts during 2008. It is the constant interest, encouragement and support of all our supporters here and around the world who's contributions fuel our efforts here on the ground. We hope that you enjoy seeing the fruits of, what really are, your contributions and consideration through the pages of this newsletter.

2009 is already promising to be another year changes and of further progress. We wish you all a happy holiday season and New Year. Special thanks to everyone who continues to support us and most recently to:

The Howard G. Buffett Foundation
 Wildlife Conservation Network (WGN)
 Debswana
 Wilderness Safaris
 The Office of the
 Minister of Environment, Wildlife &
 Tourism
 Wilderness Wildlife Trust
 UNDP Global Environment Facility
 AZA Conservation Endowment Fund
 Cheetah Outreach
 Mokolodi Nature Reserve
 The People & Nature Trust
 Project Survival
 WSPA
 Cheetah Conservation Fund (CCF)
 SPOTS Foundation
 The Angel Fund (Cincinnati Zoo)
 Disney Wildlife Conservation Fund
 Beagle Foundation
 Panther Ridge
 Toledo Zoo
 Houston Zoo
 Toronga Foundation
 Virginia Safari Park
 Cougar Mountain
 Metro Richmond Zoo
 The Predator Conservation Trust
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