

CHEETAH Tracks



The Newsletter of Cheetah Conservation Botswana

December 2009

VICTOR 'S FREEDOM

SPIRIT OF THE
KALAHARI
THEATRE
LAUNCH

Plus...

FINAL THREE ON LSGD
COMPETITION

CCB HELPS IN RESCUE
OF TWO CHEETAH
CUBS NEAR
SEKHUTLANE VILLAGE

CCB COMMUNITY AND
EDUCATION
OUTREACH AT
SEKHUTLANE VILLAGE





Rebecca Klein

Greetings to everyone. Winter is over and the first rains are almost upon us. The time when the grass is green and the rivers are flowing and breeding season for wildlife of all kinds starts. The past few months have been eventful despite the winter cold. Justice and freedom finally arrived for Victor, our male cheetah rescued from poachers. He is now living free, back in the Kalahari.

The two orphaned cubs under our care, are progressing well thanks to efforts of our Ghanzi staff and are due for release in 2010.

The arrival of summer coincides with some new arrivals to CCB. Boitumelo Mokgosi has joined the team as our new Administration officer. She loves animals and nature and is very excited about working for the project. Boitumelo has travelled to the U.S.A where she participated in volunteering programmes for Feed the Hungry. She has also volunteered for several projects here in Botswana. She brings much enthusiasm to her new role.

To support efforts in developing local skills through practical experience, for graduate students, CCB is participating in the Government's Graduate Internship programme. We welcome Tapologo Connie Sebati to CCB. She has a Bachelor's Degree in Tourism Management and she will be gaining experience in the Marketing department during her year with CCB.

“JUSTICE & FREEDOM FINALLY ARRIVED FOR VICTOR”



Above: Tapologo Connie Sebati doing her intership as Marketing and Admin Assistant Officer for CCB.

These past few months have been of growth for me as well. I have recently under gone excellent capacity building thanks to a scholarship from Kinship Conservation Fellows. The month long course on business management for conservationists in Washington, U.S.A focuses in business management skills for field-based conservationists. It was an excellent class and many thanks to Kinship for selecting CCB to take part in this extremely beneficial training.

One of our main highlights was the Spirit of the Kalahari theatrical production launch in Gaborone this past winter in June. The production showcases the message of cheetah conservation to the public. Spirit of the Kalahari is scheduled for a roadshow to farming communities in the frontline of Human Wildlife Conflict in the Kalahari region.

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All is well in our ongoing programmes of research, community outreach and education. CCB is excited to be collaborating with Conservation International on developing a Human Wildlife Conflict manual for farmers in the Kalahari region, where they are currently engaged in the Western Kalahari Conservation Corridor initiative.

Please read on to learn more about the recent activities of CCB. It has been an action packed few months! Many thanks to all of you, our supporters, who contribute in so many ways, for believing in the work of CCB and helping to conserve Botswana's most endangered large cat!

Last but not least, many thanks and a very heart felt Bon Voyage go to Brian Jones, our outgoing Marketing Development Coordinator, who after 4 years of service with us has moved on to start his own graphics design business in Botswana. He is responsible for the wonderful CCB resources that are key to our community outreach and education programmes. He was very hardworking and a dedicated member of our team. Brian, thank you for all your hard work over the years and best of luck in your new initiative.

Thank you,
Re a leboga!

R. Klein



Top : Boitumelo Mokgosi, CCB's new Administration Officer

Bottom : Lobone Creations director Lydia Moate, was the Master of ceremony at the SOK event.



Research *Tlotlo & Kgotso*

Our Research camp in Ghanzi is custodian of two orphaned cheetah cubs. The cubs were part of a family group of a mother and three offspring which became separated when the mother was seen pursuing goats adjacent to the village of Sekhutlane, in the Southern District. The two cubs were caught by members of the local community, and the Department of Wildlife and National Parks (DWNP) were able to recover them to a holding facility at Dithopo Ranch in the Kweneng District.

Soon after the cubs were captured DWNP involved CCB and traps were set in the area where the family group had been spending time, in an effort to capture the mother and remaining cub so as to reunite the family group. It has subsequently not proved possible to capture the mother and the remaining cub. After thorough physical examination, they were transported to CCB's facility in Ghanzi. Read more about CCB's involvement with the Sekhutlane Community post capture under the education section.



Top: newly arrived cubs Kgotso and Tlotlo feeding.



Community *Victor's release*

Illegal Trade

Approximately two weeks after "Victor", the male adult cheetah was rescued from poachers, the court case was held in Tsabong court. In the interest of justice Victor had to appear at the court, as evidence to support the government's prosecution case against the defendants. The two defendants pleaded guilty to illegally capturing and holding the cheetah, and were prosecuted.

Victor's short stay with CCB

Before Victor's court case and release, CCB's Jwaneng team, took care of the cheetah. CCB's team was also present at the court case. When Victor first arrived at the camp, very dehydrated and afraid, the team was nervous. They fell in love with him almost instantly, a resilient animal that had been through so much trauma and yet still fighting to survive. Victor was able to recover well enough to travel to Tsabong and the Kalahari Transfrontier Park where he was released.

Victor is the lucky one. It is estimated that 50-60 cheetah illegally leave the country annually, many passing to South Africa where they will become permanent captives, part of illegal hunting operations or shipped on to international destinations. Authorities in Botswana have taken this threat to cheetah seriously and are embarking on an anti-poaching campaign that is already starting to yield results.



Above: Victor leaps towards freedom!

Victor was fitted with a GPS satellite collar in order to monitor his success, post release. With the assistance of the DWNP he was released into the Kalahari Trans Frontier Park. Four months later, data from his collar shows he remains alive and well.

The successful prosecution of poachers and combating illegal trade of wildlife species, many of which are classed as endangered, involves huge investment in time, money and collaboration between stakeholders. CCB would like to thank all those individuals which enabled Victor's release. Happy hunting Victor and produce many offspring!!!



Community Mobile Workshops

Our Community programme in Ghanzi is doing great work. Phale Seele CCB 's community outreach officer in Ghanzi is busy doing farm visits where he is conducting small mobile workshops. On one of these visits he met, a former hunter and herder, Mr Motlose Xau. His tracking skills and knowledge of predators is admirable. He uses an ancient technique passed on through generations in his tribe to differentiate predator spoor using your fist.

The technique is simple and can be easily learned by herders at one of the community outreach workshops. This is one of the highlights of working with the community, the workshop provides a platform for an exchange of information and a sharing of ideas on challenges facing farmers and wildlife. This two way sharing of information is essential to develop best practices.

CCB works with the community to impart knowledge on good livestock management techniques that help reduce predation, through farm visits and workshops. We also use cheetah sighting questionnaires to gather information on cheetah in the region. In Ghanzi, CCB has in the past quarter received reports on a number of sightings, one being of 5 cheetahs, a mother and 4 cubs of about 3-4 months old. Its the largest group we have heard of in the region for some time. Ghanzi has a substantial number of commercial farm lands, and some communal farming land. There is a high level of human wildlife conflict in the area.



Top: Phale showing herders techniques to help identify Predators.

Center: CCB community outreach mobile workshop.

Bottom; Phale sharing information with Mr Xau.



Community LSGD Competition



The 2009 Livestock Guarding Dog (LSGD) competition started in June and as in the previous year, it was promoted on RB2 radio station which covers a nationwide audience. Entry to the competition was done by short message service (sms) of the words “guarding dog” to the number given on radio, from these entries a telephonic interview followed. Based on the results of the interview a shortlist was compiled and farm visits followed to determine the final three for the prize giving ceremony. CCB Community Outreach Coordinator Morulaganyi Kokole has been visiting the competition entrant’s farms throughout the nation. We now have our three finalist dogs from Dikgonnye, Rakops, and Ghanzi.



The winning prize includes a donation by Wilderness Safaris of a free holiday at one of their luxuries lodges in the Okavango Delta, including air shuttle into the delta and a basic veterinary medical supplies hamper. The prize giving ceremony will be held in the first week of December at the winning dog’s farm. We wish good luck to the final three and hope this initiative will encourage other farmers to consider the use of non-lethal methods of predator control such as LSGDs to enhance good practices of livestock management which may go a long way in reducing human wildlife conflict and promote the conservation of wildlife.

Top: Another of our top three Finalists in the Livestock Guarding Dog competition:

Left: Livestock Guarding Dog at work .

Our community outreach officer, was in Sekhutlane where Tlotlo and Kgotso were rescued, for an educational talk on possible mitigation methods as solution to existing predator problems and to present certificates of commendation to the community for saving, not killing the young cheetah, despite the perceived threat to their livestock . An international supporter who was moved by the community’s compassion, funded this initiative.



Education At Sekhutlane

Following our first story on the two cheetah cubs Tlotlo and Kgotso, CCB's Education Coordinator, Wabotlhe Letubo accompanied the community outreach team back to the village for a presentation to school children and community on the importance of wildlife, with particular emphasis on cheetah. The first presentation was at the village primary school followed by a presentation to the community at the Kgotla where the Chief was presented with certificates of commendation by CCB on behalf of the people.

From Sekhutlane, in a collaborative effort with the Department of Wildlife and National Parks in Kanye and the District Educational Office, we held a teacher training workshop in Kanye for 53 teachers. As in other workshops we used CCB's teacher's resources as a guide to their conservation and environmental education syllabus.

In between workshops CCB education team was invited to attend the Global Environment Day commemoration held in Lobatse. At the event CCB won first position for Best Environmental Practices in Development.



Top : CCB wins first prize for Best Environmental Practices in Development at the World Environment Day commemoration held in Lobatse

Centre : CCB's teacher training workshop at Kanye, Ngwaketse district of Botswana.

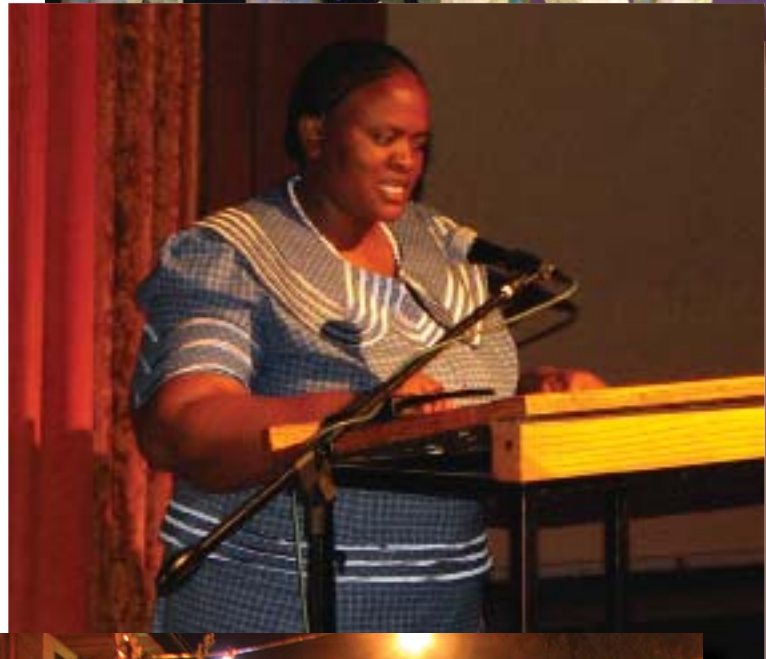
Above : Wabotlhe doing a school presentation at Sekhutlane village, where the two cubs Tlotlo and Kgotso were rescued.



Spirit of the Kalahari Theatre

In June, CCB in partnership with Lobone Creations launched “Spirit of the Kalahari” theatre production. The theatre was wonderfully performed with song and dance by a local group, Moremogolo Theatre Group. The theatre is scheduled to go on the road as a show for rural farming communities of Kgalagadi/Kalahari. Raising awareness on predator species such as the cheetah and promoting human and wildlife co-existence. The Gala Event was well attended. Our guest of honour Chief of the Batlokwa tribe and Chairman of the house of Chief, Puso Gaborone, commended this initiative, that encourages Botswana to promote the message of conservation for its rich wildlife.

Elsie Mvimi representing United Nations Development Programme’s (UNDP), Global Environmental Facility (GEF), Small Grants Programme, in her welcome address, stated the importance of conservation of natural resources for the nation, inclusive of predators. She said CCB through this project is playing a vital role in Botswana to promote conservation, an initiative that their organization is proud to support.



Top: Moremogolo Theatre Group performing SOK theatre production.

Right: UNDP-GEF Small Grants Programme Ms Elsie Mvimi’s welcome address at the Launch.

Below: Guests mingling just before the show.

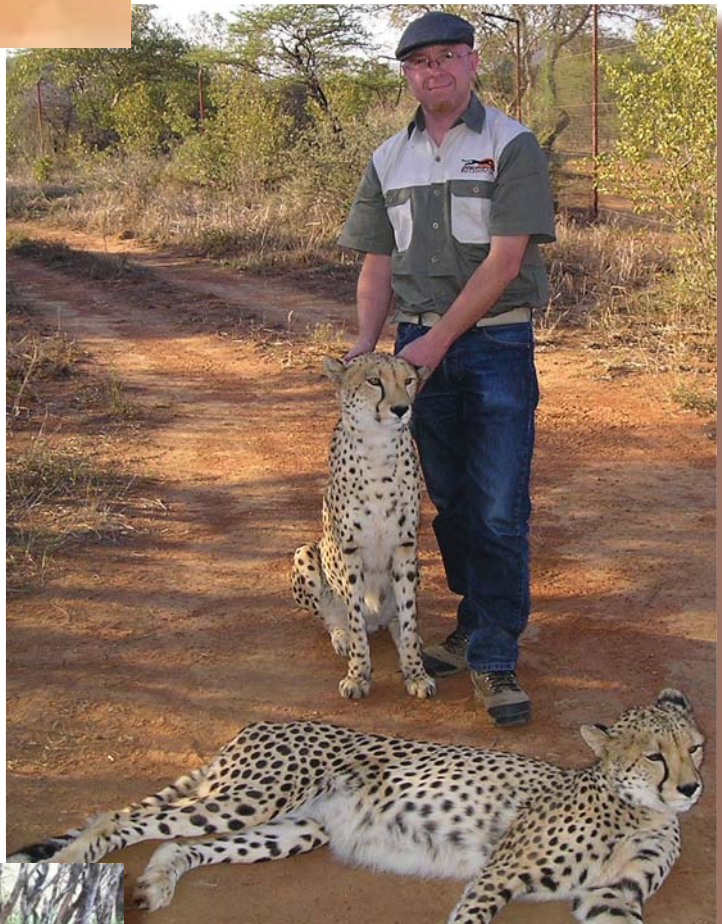




Brian Jones

Brian Jones joined CCB in September 2005, originally serving as a volunteer. A talented artist, graphic designer and published writer, Brian was responsible for creating CCB's local community education resources. He was very passionate about his work, a definite team player.

He is passionate about nature and gardening, during his time with the project, he spent most of his spare time creating a beautiful indigenous garden around the staff kitchen, which we named Brian's Garden. He was a wonderful colleague, he shared so much with us and will always be a friend. He will be dearly missed.



Top: Brian with Duma and Letlotse, Mokolodi Nature Reserve Ambassador cats.

Left: Brian's Garden at CCB staff residency.

Above: Morning glory flowering in Brian's garden.



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 long-term volunteer placements to local Batswana and short term volunteer opportunities are available to non-residents of Botswana. Monthly volunteering fees do apply and this is an ideal opportunity for those who wish to gain experience 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.





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:

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