

On the 6 and 7 December 2005, 32 cat experts from several countries attended the Southern African Regional Cheetah Workshop, held at the Cheetah Conservation Fund (CCF) near Otjiwarongo, Namibia. Yolan Friedman and Brenda Daly from the IUCN/SSC Conservation Breeding Specialist Group Southern Africa facilitated this first regional cheetah meeting of its kind, organised under the auspices of the Global Cheetah Forum. The Global Cheetah Forum was developed in 2001 to bring together researchers, conservationists and stakeholders worldwide to discuss solutions toward cheetah survival in the 21st century.

Workshop participants were experts in cheetah conservation from South Africa, Zimbabwe, Botswana and Namibia, and the co-chair of the IUCN/SSC Cat Specialist Group Christine Breitenmoser. The workshop reviewed and evaluated accomplishments in cheetah conservation in the Southern African region to date and identified further achievable objectives. Topics such as the methodology for estimating cheetah populations, conservation of cheetah within and outside protected areas, human-predator conflicts, and advanced education initiatives were discussed in depth. Concepts for improved collaboration and co-operation between the regional cheetah conservation organizations were also addressed.

The participants agreed on the need for a Cheetah Conservation Compendium, which should combine all available information on cheetahs into a web-based KIMS. Beyond ecology, the Compendium should also feature human based and developmental issues with regards to a broad approach to long-term survival of the cheetah. CCF and Cat SG raised funds for the Cheetah Conservation Compendium that will be designed and managed by the Cat SG. The aim is to have the compendium up and running within 6 months.

It will be a working tool for the Regional Status Report for Southern Africa, which will be completed in 2006. The amount of work recently completed throughout the Southern African region now allows compiling status reports and make a regional assessment. A responsible coordinator was assigned for each range country.

The Cat SG will facilitate the drafting of the country chapters and the regional assessment. Based on this in-depth analysis of the situation, a conservation strategy for the cheetah in southern Africa will be developed, allowing the countries to design their specific action plans.