

# Workshop on Cheetah Conservation in Kenya



30 –31 July 2003

Mbweha Camp  
Delamere Estates  
Nakuru

Sponsored by:  
Cheetah Conservation Fund  
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## **Welcome and Introduction**

*Mary Wykstra – CCF Kenya Representative*

### **Purpose of Workshop**

Since December 2001 Cheetah Conservation Fund has been working in Kenya. In the first year our focus was the Nakuru Wildlife Forum and the development of education and awareness activities. This year we have been comparing our analysis of the Nakuru region to Machakos and have done a little bit of comparison with Laikipia. (More on all of that later in the workshop). CCF works in affiliation with the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) to understand issues of cheetah survival in Kenya. Our projects are working cooperatively to assure that all data can be used in the development of policies inside and outside of parks and reserves. We are developing education materials that will disseminate information to all levels of audiences.

Through our travels we have met many people interested in the long-term survival of cheetah. This ranges from KWS to other research institutions to private individuals. We all know the cheetah is an endangered species. We all know some or all of the unique characteristics that make the cheetah such an amazing animal. We all have ideas on how to work towards the future survival of the cheetah as a species.

As we develop CCF's programs in Kenya we would like to encourage cooperation among those interested in research, conservation and survival of cheetah. In this workshop it is our goal to present all of you with information on international goals of the Global Cheetah Master Plan, to inform you of ongoing projects and to link our ideas to gain the most from cheetah projects and programs in Kenya.

Each participant was asked to write briefly what he/she hope to gain from this workshop and what they feel they can contribute to the workshop (results in appendix 1). From this information we plan to formulate discussion sessions for the end of the workshop and for future workshops.

### **Introduction of presenters, institutional representatives and international participants**

- Cheetah Conservation Fund: Dr. Laurie Marker - CCF Executive Director based in Namibia, Amy Dickman –Senior Research Assistant in CCF Namibia, Mary Wykstra – CCF-Kenya Project Coordinator, Cosmas Wambua – CCF-Kenya Research Assistant.
- KWS representatives: Martin Mulama – Assistant Director of Research and Planning, Bernard Ngoru – Masai Mara Cheetah Project, Dr. Adeela Sayyid – KWS Veterinarian and Curator of Nairobi Orphanage and Safari Walk, Bernard Kones – KWS Researcher, Catherine Wekesa - Sr. Warden of Hells Gate National Park.
- Institutional and International Representatives: Dr. Sarah Durant - Serengeti Cheetah Research, Elena Chelysheva - Moscow Zoo in Russia (research assistant in Namibia 1999-2000 and in the Mara 2002), Dr. Fumi Mizutani - International Livestock Research Institute, Andrew Stein - Laikipia Predator Project, Philip Muruthi – African Wildlife Foundation, Shivani Bhalla – Save the Elephant.
- Other Participants: Amanda Perret, Grahame Dangerfield, Lynne Munro, Johnathan Scott, Rob Mills, Nigel and Karin Doherty, Johnny Harris, Benson Lengalen, Lamumba Mutiso, Sarah Brookes, Bernadette Higgins, Carol Entwistle, Simon Combes, Catherine Querner.

### **Thank you to the sponsors**

Thank you to African Wildlife Foundation for sponsoring printing of materials and agendas for the workshop. Thank you to Mbweha Camp and Delamere Estates for providing friendly staff and the venue.

## **WORKSHOP ON CHEETAH CONSERVATION IN KENYA**

*Executive Summary by Dr. Laurie Marker*

A workshop on Cheetah Conservation in Kenya was held on the 30 of July – 1<sup>st</sup> of August at the Mbweha Camp in Elementaita within the Nakuru Wildlife Forum. The Cheetah Conservation Fund-Kenya (CCFK) organized the workshop. Nearly 40 people attended the workshop that brought together international cheetah experts and Kenyans interested in cheetah conservation, including several members of the Kenyan Wildlife Service (KWS), representatives from four of Kenya's Wildlife Forums, four NGO's including officials of the African Wildlife Foundation and Save the Elephant Trust, along with the Director of the Serengeti Cheetah Project, Dr. Sarah Durant and the Executive Director of the Cheetah Conservation Fund, Dr. Laurie Marker.

Since 2002, the KWS's cheetah group, under the direction of Martin Mulama, and the CCFK, headed by Mary Wykstra, have been working cooperatively to gain an understanding of the number and demographics of cheetah in Kenya. The workshop aims were to put Kenya's cheetah research into a global context, and to bring together people who are interested in cheetah conservation in Kenya.

According to Wykstra, "the workshop hopes to encourage cooperation between existing and proposed projects through linkages and following guidelines set by the Global Cheetah Master Plan". A Global Cheetah Master Plan, which has provided guidelines for collaborative cheetah studies and international breeding programmes was developed in 2002 through the Global Cheetah Forum. The topics of discussion at this workshop included Research, Management, and Education. The KWS Director of Research and Planning, Dr. Richard Bagine, although not in attendance, sent an inspirational speech for presentation to the workshop delegates about Kenya's commitment to cheetah conservation and to present the goals of KWS concerning cheetah conservation/research.

Dr. Laurie Marker, Director of Cheetah Conservation Fund in Namibia, and representative of the IUCN Cat Specialist Group, was the guest speaker at the workshop and presented information on the Global Cheetah Master Plan, model programmes developed in Namibia for cheetah outside protected areas and the future of cheetah throughout its range, as well as an international perspective on the difficulties of captive breeding and management, although important as a backup to the wild population.

Mary Wykstra and Cosmas Wambua talked about CCF-Kenya cheetah research on ranch/farm land outside of protected reserves and parks focusing on the Nakuru Wildlife Forum area and the Machakos area. CCF's focus in 2002 was on the Nakuru Wildlife Forum region in the central Rift Valley Province to evaluate past and present cheetah sightings and conflict issues. In 2003 CCF is conducting comparative evaluations of farming communities in other regions where cheetah sightings are more frequent.

Several members of KWS also made presentations. Martin Mulama, KWS Assistant Director of Research and Planning gave an over view of the current research projects in Kenya. Bernard Ngoru, head researcher for the Masai Mara Cheetah Project, presented results from the past year's studies, including the identification of over 35 cheetahs in the Mara ecosystem. David Kones, KWS researcher, discussed his census finding of cheetah in the Samburu and Marsabit areas. Dr. Adeela Sayyid, Curator of the Nairobi Orphanage and SafariWalk and KWS Veterinarian for the Masai Mara Cheetah Project, presented the protocols for biomedical collections and condition of the Mara cheetahs she has handled. KWS and CCF have cooperatively initiated collection of biomedical samples of cheetah in the Masai Mara and developed a protocol for collection in other regions.

Other talks were presented by Dr. Sarah Durant and Dr. Fumi Mizutani. Dr. Durant talked about the long-term cheetah research conducted in the Serengeti National Park. Dr. Mizutani talked about human and predator conflict issues in the Lkipia area.

Although neither KWS nor CCF currently have the resources to conduct detailed research in all regions of Kenya, there are several individuals and organizations that have expressed an interest in assisting with the development of research, conservation and education programmes through out Kenya. With increasing information on cheetah/human conflict issues it is important for CCF, KWS, and other researchers and interested parties to continue working cooperatively to develop protocols for research techniques, handling, capture, sampling and relocation of problem cheetahs. It is our hope that through this workshop and the opening of communication between interested parties we can develop linkages that will support cooperative data collection and distribution of information for the general conservation and education for the long-term survival of Kenya's cheetahs.

- The Cheetah Conservation Fund is an international non-profit trust dedicated to the long-term survival of the cheetah and its ecosystem. The Fund's activities include research on cheetah demographics, ecology, biology, human impacts affecting its survival, non-lethal predator control methods and education. It actively works with African farmers, schools and communities, and conducts international research on cheetah demographics, ecology, biology as well as the human impacts affecting cheetah survival.
- The goal of CCF in Kenya is to carry out field research for the conservation issues in Kenya on areas of commercial farming and high human population where cheetah numbers appear to be declining. Dealing with conflict issues between humans and predators is complicated as translocation means moving potential problem animals from one area to another.

For more information on CCF's research and education, please contact:

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- Website: <http://www.cheetah.org>

# **KENYA WILDLIFE SERVICE GOALS ON CHEETAH CONSERVATION AND RESEARCH**

*Prepared by Dr Richard Bagine*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) is a state corporation charged with the responsibility of conserving and managing Kenya's wildlife resources. It is, therefore, responsible for Biodiversity conservation ensuring that natural resources remain in optimum conditions for the multiple activities the government and the people demand of them.

Further, the KWS has a mandate to safeguard and ensure international conventions, protocols, treaties and agreements on the management and conservation of wildlife resources are adhered to.

## **KWS MISSION**

"The mission of Kenya Wildlife Service is to work with others to conserve, protect and manage Kenya's biodiversity through sound scientific principles that are financially self-sustainable for the benefit of the people of Kenya and as a world heritage".

KWS therefore focuses in conserving and management of endangered species and threatened ecosystems.

Cheetah is listed in appendix 1 of the CITES but unlike Rhinos and elephants, very little has been done to stop the declining trends of the cheetah population. Lack of information, funds and well-developed programs impact heavily on cheetah population.

Regardless of being in appendix 1, we in Kenya are yet to hear of Cheetah sanctuaries, where cheetahs are bred, protected and rehabilitation monitored.

## **MANAGEMENT MEASURES CURRENTLY IN PLACE**

Like all other threatened species, KWS will endeavour to use all possible and available resources to ensure that conservation of the country's cheetah population is achieved.

**Security measures** - Inside the protected areas, the protection measures are taken. These include, anti poaching, security patrols, and gathering intelligence information in addition to gathering scientific information. However, this has not deterred the wildlife population from declining.

**Human-wildlife conflict mitigation measures** - KWS believes that wildlife cannot be conserved outside protected areas simply by imposing laws and order and ignoring peoples needs and rights. KWS prefers strategies that encourage integration of wildlife management objectives with those of landowners and stakeholders. This approach aims at establishing sustainable wildlife utilisation as a viable land-use option in areas outside national parks and reserves. Some landowners, view wildlife as a liability imposed upon them by the government and should be kept away from them.

In its endeavour to forge strong relationships, KWS encouraged formation of wildlife associations and development of eco-tourism ventures in early 1990s in areas neighbouring parks and reserves. Control and management of problem animals is still a big challenge to KWS and required a concerted effort from all sectors.

**Cheetah research and monitoring** - The primary objective of cheetah research and monitoring projects is to establish management strategies and develop integrated action plans for implementation by the parks and reserves managers. The broad objectives of the studies are therefore:

- ❑ To establish population status & distribution of cheetahs
- ❑ To document threats and challenges affecting the species
- ❑ To determine magnitude of threats
- ❑ To review and analyse factors influencing the population decline

Monitoring is geared towards gathering and disseminating of information on:

- ❑ Individual movement patterns
- ❑ Recruitment & mortality
- ❑ Development of individual database
- ❑ Liaising with management in mitigating problems and challenges
- ❑ Working with stakeholders/communities in resolving human-cheetah conflicts
- ❑ Development of mechanisms for intervention to ensure sustainable conservation
- ❑ Establishment of integrated database and development of mechanism for scenario building and prediction and data dissemination

**Education and community awareness** - Mans' relationship with the environment depends on the image or the environmental perception he carries. It is the intention of KWS to make people aware of the threats facing cheetahs in the country. Together with other stakeholders, residents living with cheetahs especially outside protected areas will be enlightened and educated. Target groups include; schools, colleges, pastoralists, ranchers and tour operators.

It is imperative, for the pastoralists, tour operators and the general public to change their attitude and behaviour, which in some instances is detrimental to the survival of cheetahs.

**Veterinary services** - Being in appendix I, reported cases of sick, injured and abandoned cubs are attended to on case to case basis by the KWS veterinary unit, that is based at KWS headquarters. Disease surveillance and cases of cheetah rehabilitation are practised where necessary.

## **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, the perception of people towards conservation of cheetah in Kenya will depend on the integrity of the ecosystems that support and sustain them. With economic gains, cheetahs' life support systems should be protected and those programs, activities that threaten the integrity of such ecosystems must be avoided or subjected to environmental impact assessment in order to balance human needs and other competing interests.

Our ultimate goal is to stop any further cheetah population decline in Kenya.