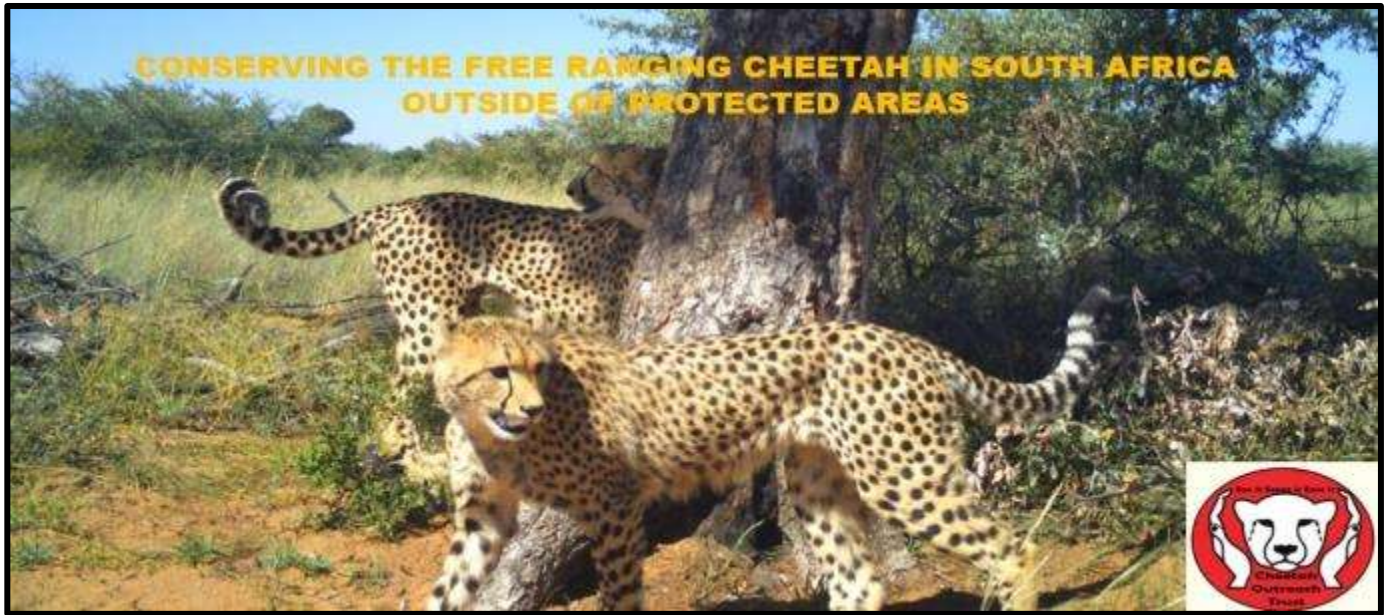


## NEWSLETTER: CHEETAH OUTREACH TRUST DECEMBER 2021



2021 is nearly on its back and what a year it has been for us at the Cheetah Outreach Trust! We continue to live and work under the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic and although South Africa has relaxed its lockdown restrictions and many countries are now allowing travel to and from South Africa, the effect of the pandemic globally continues to have a significant financial impact on our conservation outputs. This has however not stopped us making great new friends, alliances in the conservation field and entering and exploring new areas where we were told cheetahs are now seen in farmland areas. We continued to cut down on costs and expenses wherever possible due to uncertain future funding possibilities. This has made it more critical than ever to keep contact with our farmers to assist them in any way possible when they call on us. As a team, the Cheetah Outreach Trust staff have committed to deliver as much support as possible to farmers while keeping physical travel and other expenses to a minimum, in this effect telephone calls, texts and even social media is used to keep our supporters and donors and the farming communities informed of the status of the project.

### NEWS FROM THE FIELD:

#### Livestock Guardian Dog Project

We have been blessed with three litters of puppies that were recently born at the Irwin's Guardian Stud from three of our females, Garland, Ester and Tiaki. Ester arrived earlier this year at the Irwin's Guardian Stud as a donation from a private breeder and she has proven to be an asset as a breeding dog at the Irwin's Guardian Stud. Eight new puppies have been placed with eagerly waiting farmers during November, both in the Eastern and Western cheetah range in South Africa. Five of the puppies were placed on new farms and only one was a replacement. Khan, one of our oldest working dogs at the age of 12 years is now being retired and this has made it necessary for a young replacement. The farm that Khan and Goldie are working on is currently a cheetah hotspot and we are monitoring the situation very closely. The two pups placed in the Eastern range were also placed with older project dogs that are close to retirement age. Ultra Dog have continued the feeding support of our breeding dogs and Virbac providing vaccination and dewormer support to keep the breeding dogs at the Irwin's Guardian Stud and working dogs in the field in top notch health.

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The three young guardians that were placed earlier this year in the Western Range of the North West Province are all still doing very well. They are all now working and effective guardians. The farmers that have our livestock guardian dogs working and guarding livestock, continue to praise the success of the livestock guardian dogs which they received from the Cheetah Outreach Trust and the waiting list for new placements continues to grow. The Cheetah Outreach Trust has placed 349 livestock guardian dog puppies up to date.

The livestock guardian dogs in the Bushmans Kloof project are doing well and working well. Five new pups were placed with farmers in the Cederberg Mountains in early December 2021. All the dogs are still being monitored and they are doing their part as part of the bigger project to secure valuable farmer tolerant habitat for the Cape Leopard in the Cederberg Mountains. This is a cooperative project between the Cheetah Outreach Trust and the Bushmans Kloof Wilderness Reserve & Wellness Retreat.

### Cheetah Research and Conflict Mitigation Project

We had a major setback during the past few months. A while back we released 2 young cheetah males back into the wild population. They were doing very well and we monitored them as they moved through farmland in the North West Province and the Northern Cape Province as well as into Botswana. They initially stayed on the Molopo Reserve, where they were released, but then moved out onto farmland in the area. As they grew more confident, they left their area and made their way into Botswana. Here they moved around and it seemed they were doing well, when they entered an area near the town of Tshabong things changed. The collar stopped moving and we received a mortality notification from the collar. With no way to get to the collar, due to border closures, we reached out to friends and contacts in Botswana, with their assistance we located the collar on a farm where the collar was found under a bush. All indications were that the collar was removed for the cheetah. All evidence points to the fact that these two young males were caught alive by chasing them down until they collapsed of exhaustion, were tied up and loaded on a waiting vehicle and made their way into the illegal trade. The Botswana Police and Wildlife service have opened a formal inquest into the event and their investigation is ongoing.



*Officials from Botswana Government inspecting the area*



*Our lost cheetahs left us a clue*

We have been very fortunate through excellent cooperation with the North West Conservation Authority and farmers in the North West Province to collar and re-release a total of 6 groups of free roaming cheetah consisting of two male coalitions and two females in the Kalahari area in the North West Province. This has been made possible through the support of Ashia Cheetah Conservation, African Wildlife Tracking and Ubuntu Wildlife Trust. One of the coalition of males are two of the sub-adults that were removed as part of a group of four sub-adults.

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The two remaining sub-adults, one male and one female have been relocated to the South African Cheetah Meta-population under the coordination of the Endangered Wildlife Trust Cheetah Range Expansion Project to enhance the current genetic diversity in this fragmented and managed cheetah population. These four cheetah sub-adults were in temporary holding and care at the Ann van Dyk Cheetah Centre until their release and relocation back into the wild. We are very grateful to have the support of partner cheetah conservation organisations as well as the North West Conservation Authority to be able to expand our knowledge and research with the collaring of free roaming cheetahs in the North West Province. This clearly highlights the importance of cooperation between various role-players in the future of the free roaming cheetah in South Africa.



*Free roamer sub adult female released into Metapopulation Reserve*

A group of five sub-adult cheetahs were received from the North West Conservation Authority late in 2021. These sub-adults were captured by a farmer in the Kalahari area and he was not prepared to have them re-released on his farm. The mother was not captured and we are not certain what happened to her although we fear for the worst. These sub-adults will be kept in temporary holding for at least 4 months after which they will be moved to a cheetah wilding facility of Ashia Cheetah Conservation. One of the sub-adults arrived with a serious eye injury and the eye had to be surgically removed at the Old Chapel Veterinary Clinic.

The Van Zylsrus male had been moved to Waterval, a farm near Kimberley in the Northern Cape, here he was first kept in a small boma to adapt to the area and has since been released into a 250 ha camp with sufficient prey species for him to hunt. Although he is capable of hunting for himself, it was decided that he could not be released back into the wild due to his relaxed attitude to human presence. He will now be moved into the Meta-population under the coordination of the Endangered Wildlife Trust, where his wild genes will strengthen the gene pool in that population. Thank you Asia Cheetah Conservation for allowing us to put him under your care at Waterval and for closely observing him so that we could make the final judgment on his future.

It became necessary to change Zeena's tracking collar as soon as possible as the batteries were running out. It was decided that we would try and dart her on foot as we could track her with her GPS location, as well as telemetry signals. So early one fine December morning a group of us – Dr. Gert Coetzee, a local vet, his assistant, a North West Province conservation official, a tracker and Cyril from the Cheetah Outreach Trust set out to track and dart her. We started at her last GPS point and steadily followed her with the telemetry signal - she however had other plans for us! She took us on an epic hike through the dense bushland on the farms, always staying just out of sight. The first try ended in a 20 km hike, but we were determined to get her.

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So later the afternoon we tried again, we had her latest point and we were hot on her heels and were able to walk right up on her and her four cubs where they were resting under a bush. In the blink of an eye they were gone, disappearing gracefully into the bush, leaving us without a chance to dart her and in awe of her grace and determination to keep her cubs safe.

We needed to change our strategy and dart her from the air. There were a few problems - we did not have a chopper or the finances to hire one let alone pay for a veterinarian to do the darting. So we made a few calls and the following happened: Rhino 911 offered us the use of one of their helicopters and pilot, Nico Jacobs. Dr. Peter Caldwell from the Old Chapel Animal Clinic offered us his services and Asia Cheetah Conservation paid for the fuel for the 6.6 hour flight. Molopo Kalahari Safaris also offered us extra hands as well as the use of a vehicle to follow the chopper in the search for Zeena. She stayed true to her name and gave the pilot and Dr. Caldwell a hard time to try and dart her, but finally they succeeded and we were able to change her collar. Zeena is a very healthy mother of four and she and her cubs are doing well. This again shows what can be done if different organizations and farmers take hands and make the plan work for the benefit of cheetah conservation.



*Cyril, Dr Peter Caldwell (OC Vet Clinic), Nico Jacobs (Rhino 911) and Wimpie Weideman (NWP Nat Con) and Rudolf Graupner (Molopo Kalahari Safaris)*

### **NOTE OF THANKS AND APPRECIATION TO OUR DONORS AND SUPPORTERS:**

The support the Cheetah Outreach Trust receives from our loyal supporters and donor group is now more important than ever to ensure the stability in our conservation work for the next year and beyond. We are very sensitive to the fact that the pandemic has had a huge impact on the short term financial stability of everyone, including our supporters and keeping this in mind we are hoping for continued support to ensure that the Cheetah Outreach Trust can carry on our important conservation work - conserving the free roaming cheetah population in South Africa and making farmland more predator tolerant for cheetah and other predators. The Cheetah Outreach Trust thanks all its loyal supporters that have stood by us during this unprecedented time.

Any donations to support our conservation work would be greatly appreciated. As we are a registered Public Benefit Organisation (PBO) we can issue an 18A tax receipt for donations received from South African donors and 501c through our partners to US based donors. Should you require any further information regarding donations and or support, please feel free to contact [info@cheetahoutreachtrust.co.za](mailto:info@cheetahoutreachtrust.co.za)

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Please visit our website at [www.cheetahoutreachtrust.co.za](http://www.cheetahoutreachtrust.co.za)

Donations can be made via our portals:

<https://www.payfast.co.za/donate/go/ccfcheetahoutreachtrust>

<https://www.givengain.com/cc/livestock-guarding-dog-program/>

<https://www.backabuddy.co.za/charity/profile/cheetah-outreach>

Bank account wire details can be provided.



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