CHEETAH OUTREACH TRUST CONSERVATION PROJECTS
END OF YEAR REPORT DECEMBER 2024

(COMPILED BY DEON CILLIERS, CYRIL STANNARD AND DYLAN DOBBINS)

January 2025

INTRODUCTION:

The goal of the Cheetah Outreach Trust's numerous conservation efforts is to mitigate livestock losses on farms where cheetahs roam free and to advance the conservation of South Africa's free roaming cheetah populations within the farmland landscape. The Livestock Guarding Dog Project, which was started in 2005, is one of the major initiatives of the Trust. The Trust has deployed 389 individual livestock guarding dogs in 19 years, mostly in South Africa, within the free roaming cheetah distribution range. These canines lessen conflict between farmers and cheetahs as well as other predators by guarding the livestock against predation from predators.

The Cheetah Outreach Trust has broadened its conservation efforts by working on several projects pertaining to free-roaming cheetah conservation in addition to the Livestock Guarding Dog Project. This has brought the Cheetah Outreach Trust projects in line with the growing internationally accepted integrated conservation focussed project development. In order to track the presence and/or absence of cheetahs and other predator species including brown hyenas, leopards, spotted hyenas, and African wild dogs, one such program uses camera-trapping on farmed regions. In regions where their existence is not yet tolerated, the Trust also helps with the relocation of predators like brown hyenas, cheetahs and leopards. Discussions with farmers about long-term predator and livestock management techniques, such as the deployment of livestock guard dogs, are made possible by these relocations and interventions.

The Cheetah Outreach Trust continues the collaring of cheetahs in their natural habitat in order to better understand the behaviour of free-roaming cheetahs and how they interact with livestock guarding dogs and livestock herds as well as other farming activities. This makes it possible to monitor their natural movements across international borders and across farmland areas. The knowledge acquired about cheetahs living on farms is expanded by sharing the information with the farming community, other cheetah conservation organizations, and conservation authorities.

In addition, the Trust has initiated South Africa's first Free Roaming Cheetah Census in collaboration with the Ashia Cheetah Conservation Project, the University of Stellenbosch, and Groningen University. This census effort, supported by the SA Hunters, Provincial Conservation Authorities, the PHASA Foundation, and farmer associations, aims to collect information on free-roaming cheetah populations. The census data will provide significant insights on cheetah distribution and help develop effective conservation policies for free roaming cheetahs in South Africa.

Fostering tolerance towards predators, including cheetahs, and securing predator-tolerant habitat for these species outside of protected zones on farmland within the natural distribution range of free roaming cheetah are the long-term objectives of the Cheetah Outreach Trust's work with farmers. With the use of livestock guarding dogs, among other non-lethal predation management techniques, the Trust hopes to reduce hostilities between farmers and predators. It's important to remember that, according to recent research, cheetahs currently inhabit only 10% of their historical distribution range, with 77% of their range occurring outside of protected areas. Consequently, comprehensive ongoing and continued research within the constant changing farmland landscape focussing on cheetah and other predators is necessary to give farming communities current and pertinent knowledge, promoting a better understanding and co-existence with these predators in the farmland landscape, thus creating tolerant areas where cheetah and other predators are able to co-exist with the farming communities.

LIVESTOCK GUARDIAN DOG PROJECT

PROVISION AND MONITORING OF LIVESTOCK GUARDING DOGS:

Since the Livestock Guarding Dog Project began in 2005, the Cheetah Outreach Trust has been closely monitoring the livestock guard dogs' development and working abilities. This monitoring strategy includes frequent visits, phone calls, and surveys for the farmers who received these dogs. This ongoing monitoring has been critical to the project's overall success, allowing the Trust to evaluate the dogs' effectiveness in lowering livestock losses and resolving conflicts between farmers and predators.

The Cheetah Outreach Trust only provided nine puppies from the Irwin's Guardian Stud between December 2023 and December 2024. Five of these puppies were placed in South Africa's Western Territory, and four in the Eastern Territory. 11 puppies remain to be provided from the 20 placements planned for 2024 in the coming year. The reason we did not meet our quota of placements was due to a bad year of breeding with our females, which included false pregnancies and small litters born. Irwin’s Guardian Compton, our young breeding female, was also mated but did not have any success.

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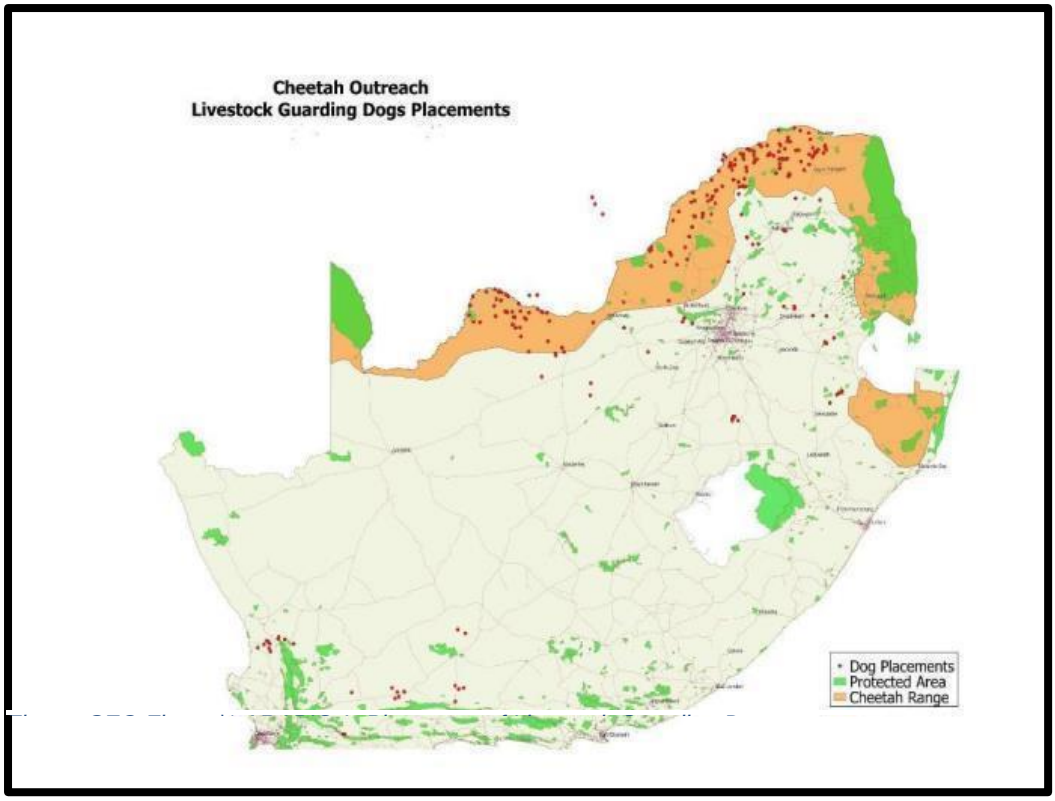

CURRENT STATUS OF ALL LIVESTOCK GUARDING DOGS PLACED.

The Cheetah Outreach Trust continually monitors all livestock guarding dog placements to ensure their effectiveness and address any potential issues. For the first year after placement, monthly visits are undertaken to thoroughly study the dogs and swiftly address any concerns that may arise with appropriate corrective methods. After the first twelve months, dogs under the age of two are visited and observed twice a year, whereas older dogs are visited once a year. This enables the Trust to maintain continual connection with the farmers and the dogs that guard the livestock.

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By the end of December 2024, the Cheetah Outreach Trust had provided 396 Livestock Guarding Dogs. Of these provided, 329 were considered successful, with the dogs actively working and protecting livestock. However, 67 dogs provided have had to be rehomed due to behavioural difficulties since 2005. This translates to an 84% successful provision rate. See figure 2 for details.

The current status of the 329 successful lgds provided is summarised here. 35% are still actively working and defending livestock, 12% have retired, 51% have died while on duty or as a result of old age, and 2% have been relocated outside the cheetah range. Continuous monitoring and assessment of livestock guarding dog provided help to improve the project's performance in decreasing livestock losses. See Annexure 1 for details of all livestock guardian dogs provided.

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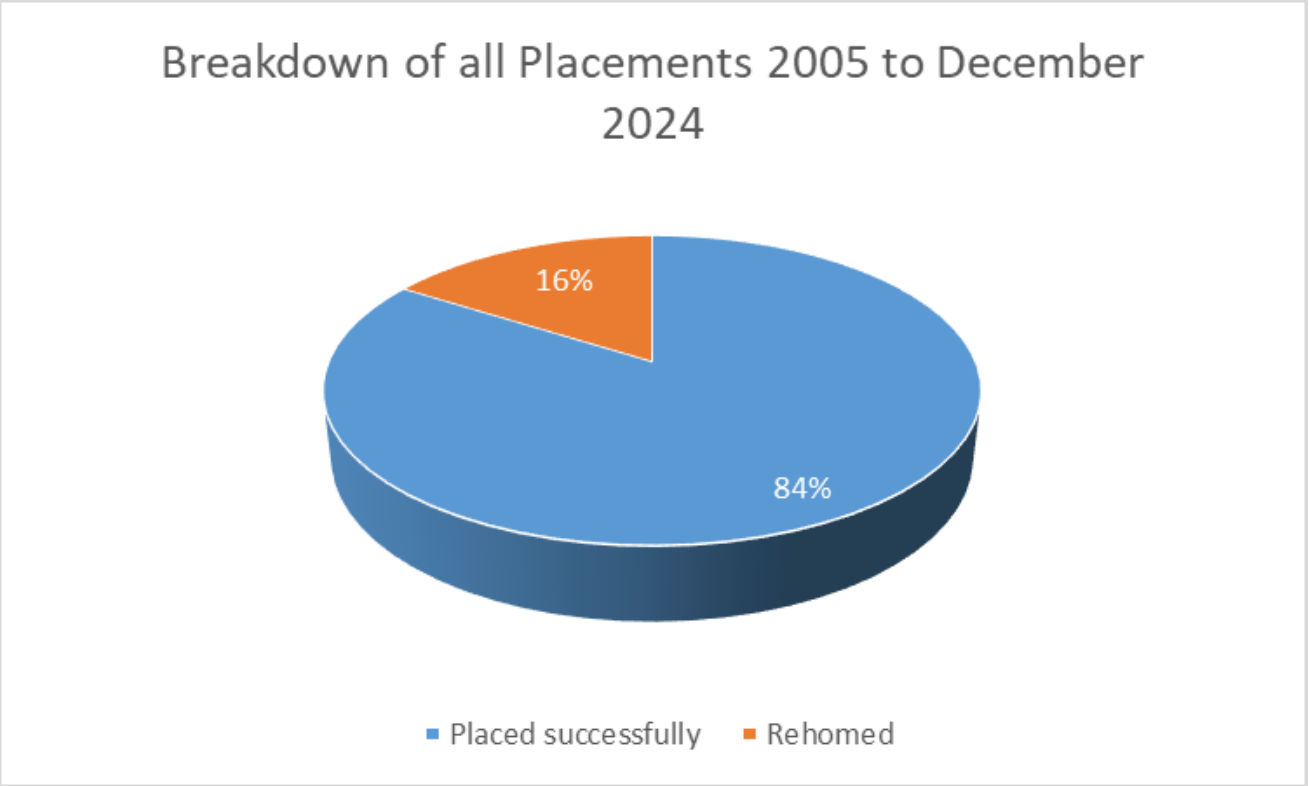

Figure 2: Current status of Livestock Guardian Dogs

Due to the slow breeding rate of the breeding dogs at the Irwin's Guardian Stud we are behind on new placements at this stage and therefore livestock guardian dogs that have retired or died in service cannot be replaced at the rate required. Ultimately the percentage of dogs working and those that have died and retired should be similar.

As previously stated, 50% of livestock guardian dogs placed on farmlands had perished in service between 2005 and December 2024, a period of 19 years. This is a 51% mortality rate, which may cause alarm if not explained. The majority of deaths were caused by snakebite in the early years of the placements. Since then, snake aversion training has been implemented, which has significantly reduced the number of deaths caused by snakebite during recent years. Some of the dogs have died for unexplained reasons, which occurs when the livestock guardian dogs fail to return to the kraal and the carcasses are only discovered a day or two later, having decomposed owing to the heat to the point where the cause of their deaths cannot be ascertained. A tiny number of livestock guardian dogs have not returned, but bodies have not been recovered, so we choose to classify them as missing rather than speculate on the reason. Carcasses that have been discovered but have no definite cause of death are classed as unknown for the same reason. The remaining causes are self-explanatory, as illustrated by the graph in Figure 3.

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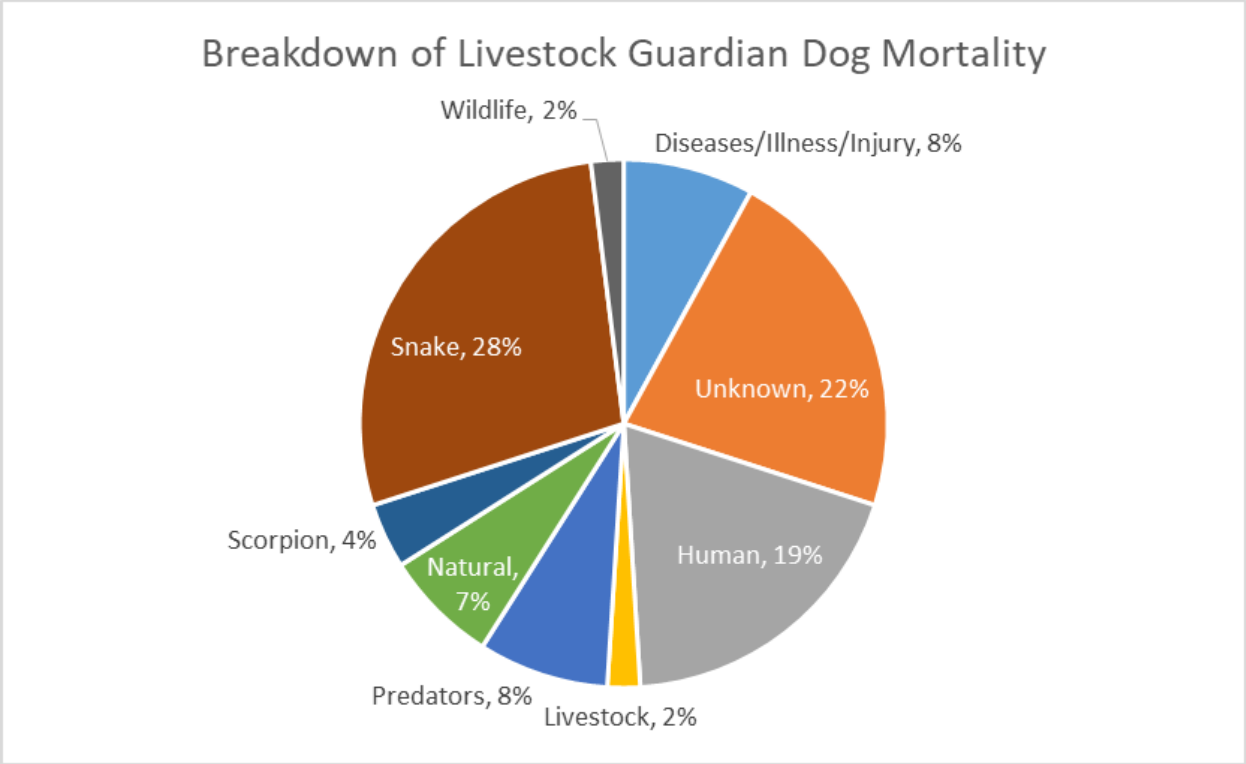

Figure 3: Mortality of successfully placed livestock guardian dogs 2005 to December 2024

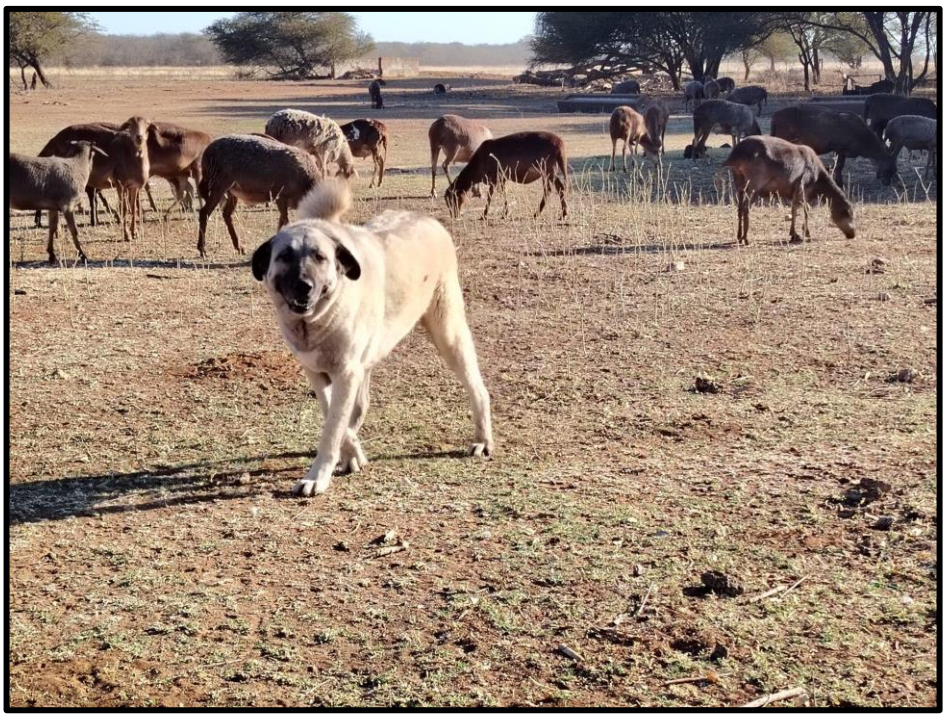

Figure 4: IG Freya with her sheep

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Figure 5: IG Jackson with farmer and herder and Dylan Dobbins of the COT at placement.

SPONSORS FOR THE PLACEMENT OF LIVESTOCK GUARDIAN DOGS IN 2023

We are very grateful to the following sponsors and donors who made it possible to place the following individual livestock guardian dogs during June 2023 to June 2024:

Irwin's Guardian Bodey	Tom Archipley and Paige
Irwin's Guardian Wasabi	Wasabi Warriors
Irwin's Guardian Coco	Marjolein and Willem de Kant
Irwin's Guardian Phoenix	Kate Ball
Irwin's Guardian Pedro	Kate Ball
Irwin's Guardian Turk	Steve Turk
Irwin's Guardian Rula	Maria Wiesner
Irwin's Guardian Patrick	Cheetah Outreach Cc
Irwin's Guardian White	Valerie Melville

IRWIN'S GUARDIAN STUD BREEDING FACILITY

The Irwin's Guardian Livestock Guarding Dog Breeding Facility, based on the Green Dogs Conservation property near Alldays in Limpopo Province, had been running effectively for several years. This partnership ended in August 2023, and the Irwin's Guardian Stud was relocated to a new location in the Northern Cape Province. Hannelie Liebenberg, an experienced and reputable Anatolian breeder and new conservation partner, now manages the breeding dogs on behalf of the Cheetah Outreach Trust. Virbac, an animal health firm, sponsors the immunizations that the breeding dogs at Irwin's Guardian Stud undergo on a monthly basis. Ultra Pet happily sponsors the food for all of the canines involved in the breeding effort, and the Cheetah Outreach Trust regards Ultra Pet as a valuable partner in this work. Wildlife Warriors and Toerbroers provided financial support for the new facility's construction.

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During the beginning of the year, Irwin's Guardian Ester gave birth to a litter of two puppies, both of whom were successfully placed with eagerly awaiting farmers in the Eastern Territory of the Limpopo Province. Late in 2024 both Irwin's Guardian Ester and Irwin's Guardian Tiaki each had a litter of pups. Tiaki only had three puppies of which one passed away soon after birth due to natural causes. These litters were placed at the end of December with eagerly waiting farmers in the Western and Eastern Cheetah Territory. Irwin's Guardian Compton was mated with Irwin's Guardian Scout but did not fall pregnant. We are thrilled to learn that both Irwin's Guardian Tiaki and Irwin's Guardian Ester may be expecting litters soon. Plans are to import three (one female and two males) new Anatolians from the USA which will be sponsored by FIAA in the second half of 2025 to supplement the current breeding stock at the Irwin's Guardian Stud. Irwin's Guardian Scout has been used on breeding loans with Hanri Anatolians. One female pup resulting from one of the breeding's will be kept back for the Irwin's Guardian Stud as future breeder as the female used is genetically unrelated from the new pups to be imported and she has proven to be a good breeder as well.

Figure 6: Some of the puppies from IG Ester born end of 2024

Figure 7: Irwin's Guardian Annie, one of our future breeders

The snake proofing which was done with the assistance of Toerbroers and sponsored by the John Horseman Trust, FIAA, and the National Zoo Canberra has proven very successful up to date with no incidences of snakes entering into the breeding enclosures.

The Livestock Guarding Dog Project and the Irwin's Guardian Livestock Guarding Dog Breeding Facility are made possible by the partnerships and sponsorships the Cheetah Outreach Trust has developed with organisations such as Virbac and Ultrapet, as well as the collaborations with Toerbroers, Wildlife Warriors, and the Hanri Trust. These partnerships and sponsorships are highly valued by the Trust.

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PREDATOR CONFLICT WORK:

During 2024, seven leopards were rescued from trap cages and relocated to safe release areas where they could disperse from. An adult female leopard was fitted with a satellite collar sponsored by Tumbeta Game Reserve. She managed to travel over 230 kilometres in a period of three weeks, even venturing into Botswana after which she returned back to the area where she was released. The female leopard that was confiscated by the Bloemfontein SPCA and relocated for rewilding was released. She remained in the safety of the Big Five Game Reserve where she was released. Unfortunately she moved out of the reserve and was found dead soon after. Analysis of her stomach content proved to have Carbufuran - an agricultural chemical. This was reported to the SAPS for investigation. In order to keep farmers from just shooting or illegally trafficking in these leopards, funding is vitally needed for the seemingly never-ending and underfunded rescue efforts of leopards. Wild Africa has undertaken to fund the rescue and relocation of leopards by the Cheetah Outreach Trust in future and have already covered the cost of many in 2024. PHASA Foundation has provided two satellite tracking collars to be fitted onto relocated leopards to monitor them post release.

Our conflict mitigation work is focused on a multi-disciplinary and integrated approach which benefits not only cheetahs but also other predators that share the landscape within the farming areas to ensure broader biodiversity conservation within these farmland areas.

Figure 8: Leopard female fitted with satellite collar prior to relocation

FREE ROAMING CHEETAH CENSUS PROJECT

The Free Roaming Cheetah Census (FRCC) project was initiated by Cheetah Outreach Trust and partner organisation Ashia Cheetah Conservation to assist the Cheetah Outreach Trust to expand their efforts across the landscape where cheetah occur on farmlands (which is enormous). Stellenbosch University and Groningen University with PhD students were brought on board to deal with the mass of incoming data and formalise the outputs from the work. The FRCC is the biggest and most comprehensive survey of cheetah presence and associated predation costs to landowners across all free-roaming cheetah range in South Africa ever done. With adequate support and resources (Thank you Ashia Cheetah Conservation) to see it through properly the status of the free roaming cheetah in South Africa can be scientifically determined across the natural range and conservation focused policies taking into consideration the co-existence needs of the farming communities can be developed to ensure the long term conservation of cheetah on farmlands in South Africa. There is currently not enough information available about the current status of cheetah on farmlands and previous studies only provided a rough estimate of what is thought the be the status of free roaming cheetah in South Africa. Very little scientifically based data is available highlighting the impact these cheetahs have on farming practices and once again this is part of what the FRCC is aiming at addressing. The survey is taking place over a fixed schedule of 3 years with regular and summary feedback to landowners and partners.

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The FRCC is now two thirds completed and with the results obtained, the Cheetah Outreach Trust will have a much stronger relationship with landowners for the conflict mitigation and intervention work and will have adequate data to lobby policy change with Conservation Authorities where required. As part of the FRCC's range usage and life history studies, a male cheetah was caught in the Swartwater region in February 2024 and collared with a Spoortrack satellite collar provided by Ashia Cheetah Conservation. Unfortunately, a local farmer recently shot this male cheetah. When the farmer saw that the cheetah had a satellite collar on, he got in touch with us. Camera trap data from the specific area has shown that two new male cheetahs have moved into this vacant area and are visiting the scent marking tree which was frequented by the cheetah male that was shot. A female cheetah was captured and collared in the Lephalale area and a few months later a male cheetah was captured close by and also collared and released. All the cheetah tracking collars were provided by Ashia Cheetah Conservation. The collared male is part of a coalition of four male cheetahs. These cheetahs have also been seen on the camera traps that have been setup in the area. Recent photos retrieved from the camera traps have indicated that one of the four is missing from the coalition.

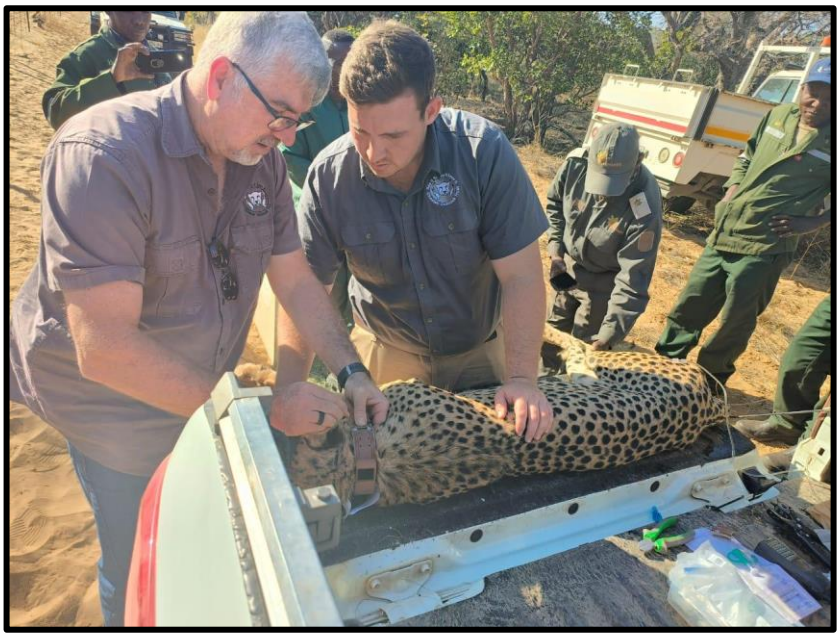

Figure 9: Female Cheetah fitted with Spoortrack collar

Figure 10: Male free roaming cheetah released with collar as part of the FRCC

We are currently focusing on the farmland area east of Alldays and Pontdrift toward the Kruger National Park boundary from the perspective of the Cheetah Outreach Trust as partner in the FRCC, doing farmer surveys and setting up camera traps for monitoring. Camera traps are checked on a monthly basis and photos are submitted to the researchers for analysis. At this stage the Free Roaming Cheetah Census covers an area of 19 million hectares of farmland. This area is covered with our partners

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Ashia Cheetah Conservation together with our own field staff. There are currently 113 active camera trapping sites consisting of 226 camera traps. 299 landowner surveys have been completed since the start of the Free Roaming Cheetah Census. The data of 25 collared cheetah is used for movement and range use analysis.

Figure 11: Cheetah on FRCC camera trap

BUSHMANS KLOOF WILDERNESS RESERVE & WELLNESS RETREAT CAPE LEOPARD PROJECT

Figure 12: Rocky enjoying a break in the late afternoon in the Cederberg area

In order to safeguard herds on farms in the free-roaming Cape leopard habitat in the Cederberg Mountains outside of Clanwilliam, the Cheetah Outreach Trust and Bushmans Kloof partnered to launch a Cape Leopard conservation initiative in 2018. The project uses Anatolian Shepherd dogs to guard flocks of livestock against predation from the Cape leopard. Bushmans Kloof provides funding for the project, and the Cheetah Outreach Trust places, monitors and provides husbandry care for 25 dogs over the course of five years, or until they pass away from old age or retirement.

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The Clanwilliam area farming community has valued the involvement of the Cheetah Outreach Trust since its initial placement of the first livestock guardian dogs in 2018. Every one of the 25 dogs has been assigned to a separate region of the Cederberg Mountains, each farm having either a resident leopard or a high level of leopard activity. Out of the twenty-five canines, fourteen are still in service, eight passed away, and three had to be removed because of undesirable behaviour. The project is running well and all the farmers have had positive experiences with their dogs. They all agree that the usage of the dogs has been to their financial and emotional benefit. The emotional benefit comes from not having to worry about predation on their flocks. The Cheetah Outreach Trust will continue to oversee the project and farmers during the project's maintenance phase, which will run until the last dog retires.

Figure 13: Ajay with his flock in the Cederberg area

VISITORS TO THE CHEETAH OUTREACH TRUST

- A talk on the Cheetah Outreach Trusts' project was given to Wild Wonders and guests in Hoedspruit.
- Ron Magill from the Ron Magill Conservation Endowment and Zoo Miami visited with guests at the Cheetah Outreach Facility and a talk was given to Ron and his guests on the work of the Cheetah Outreach Trust. Ron presented the Trust with a cheque of support for which we are very grateful.
- Robert Irwin of the Australia Zoo and Wildlife Warriors visited Cheetah Outreach and met up with Cheetah Outreach Trust Conservation Manager Deon Cilliers and Executive Trustee Annie Beckhelling.
- Robert Johnson of the Rare Species Fund met up with Deon Cilliers at OR Tambo Airport for a project catch up.

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Figure 14: Robert Irwin with Annie Beckhelling and Deon Cilliers

FUNDRAISING

This year saw some serious funding challenges for the Cheetah Outreach Trust. We managed to acquire the support of new supporters and donors and this has made it possible to see the year through with our conservation projects.

The 5 day vacation for five people, donated by the Neptune's Lodge and Beach Bar at Barra in Mozambique as lucky draw fundraiser, was won by Robert Johnson of the USA. He has donated the vacation back to us as an auction prize for our upcoming Golf Day Fundraiser in 2025.

We have been very fortunate to have received assistance from Wildlife Warriors to purchase a replacement vehicle for our Field Officer who works in the remote areas of the Western Cheetah Territory.

Figure 15: New Field vehicle made possible by Wildlife Warriors

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A Golf Day Fundraiser is planned for the 4th of April 2025 at the Akasia Golf Club in Pretoria, Gauteng. This is the first Golf Day Fundraiser that the Cheetah Outreach Trust will be having in Gauteng and we are positive that the turn up to support us and our work will be above expectations. We are calling on our supporters that play golf in Gauteng to come and join us on the day.

We are extremely grateful to all our donors and supporters, local and abroad, current and new who support our conservation work as this work would not be possible without your commitment.

CHEETAH OUTREACH TRUST USA

The Cheetah Outreach Trust USA has recently been registered as a 501(c)(3) in the United States, allowing USA-based donors and supporters to contribute financially to our work. The Cheetah Outreach Trust board is entirely volunteer based, and they will assist with fundraising events and logistics during future visits to the United States by Cheetah Outreach Trust SA team members for donor and conference visits. This is a significant step forward for the Cheetah Outreach Trust in terms of extending the message about our goal and vision for cheetah conservation in South Africa. Please see the COT USA website www.cheetahoutreachtrust.org

The board members of the Cheetah Outreach Trust USA are as follows and it is a pleasure to introduce them not only as board members but also as cheetah friends.

- **Lobat Asadi, President**: Lobat Asadi, PhD is a writer, professor and actress based in Los Angeles, California. Asadi means "from the lions." Lobat is an Asiatic cheetah expert and is certified in Nature Based Solutions by the International Union of Conservation for Nature ("IUCN"). She works in the entertainment industry and also lectures for top universities, including Harvard. Lobat provides cheetah and Persian cultural consulting for films and documentaries, and has appeared in National Geographic Magazine. Her upcoming book, "Marita the Cheetah" is based on the true story of an orphaned cheetah cub that her father rescued and raised. Lobat was born to a mother from Azerbaijan descent and her father was a tribal indigenous wildlife conservationist and IUCN Big Cat Specialist Group member. Her father, Dr. Hormoz Asadi, worked tirelessly to save the rare Asiatic cheetah from extinction. Lobat

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brings her worldly, academic and creative abilities to COT USA to help raise awareness about the global plight of cheetahs, and to help save Africa's cheetahs.

- **Lily Maynard, Vice President:** Lily Maynard, Ph.D., is the Director of Global Conservation at the Cincinnati Zoo and Botanical Garden. Spending years in zoos, including working as a conservation manager at Disney's Animal Kingdom, instilled her passion for wildlife. Lily received her B.A. in Biology from Smith College. She completed her master's in Wildlife Ecology and Conservation, and doctorate in the Human Dimensions of Conservation, at the University of Florida. Her research focuses on collaborative conservation, behaviour change, and strategic impact for wildlife. She has worked in Africa, Asia and the Americas on community-driven conservation projects. She strives to follow each community's lead by asking what support or resources they need. She then facilitates opportunities for their livelihoods in tandem with conservation to help wildlife and people thrive together.
- **Beth Newman, Secretary:** Beth earned her Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Arts from Stockton University, and her Juris Doctorate from Harvard Law School. She then practiced corporate law at multiple national law firms, most recently at Cooley LLP in San Diego, California specializing in venture capital transactions, mergers and acquisitions, and public securities offerings. Beth has spent many years volunteering for numerous animal welfare organizations, and has always had a special place in her heart for cats: large or small, wild or domestic. She has been on multiple safaris in Africa, experiencing countless animals in their natural habitats, including cats such as cheetahs, lions and leopards. Beth has passed her passion for animals on to both of her children, one of whom is a zookeeper.
- **Alan Binder, Treasurer:** Alan brings over 40 years of financial expertise to the Board of Directors as the former Executive Vice President and CFO of Paragon Restaurant Group and former Chairman, President and CFO of Procume Group. With a background in accounting, finance, and operations, he has a proven track record of managing budgets, ensuring fiscal responsibility, and supporting strategic financial planning. Alan is passionate about the ability to protect and enhance the lives of animals living in the wild, particularly any carnivore species. Alan has previously held leadership positions in corporations, a country club and is currently nominated to be Treasurer and a Board member of the Kindness Initiative, a charity for the benefit of people living below the poverty line. He has successfully improved financial processes, managed budgeting and financial reporting and set up accounting and banking for a start-up non-profit organization. Alan holds a Bachelor of Commerce degree from the University of the Witwatersrand and an MBA from Columbia University. He is dedicated to leveraging his skills to support the mission of Cheetah Outreach Trust USA and have a meaningful impact in the wildlife and agricultural communities. In his free time, Alan enjoys playing golf and spending time on safari in different parts of Africa. He has fulfilled his passion for wildlife by going on safari in excess of 50 times. Alan grew up in South Africa and spent most vacations going to "the bush" on safaris or working and relaxing on relatives' farms.
- **Ron Magill:** Ron has worked with wildlife for over 45 years. He was the host of HITN's national wildlife documentary program, "Mundo Salvaje con Ron Magill." As Zoo Miami's Goodwill Ambassador, he has made frequent television appearances on many programs including, "National Geographic Explorer"; the Discovery Network's "Today Show", "Good Morning America", "The Late Show"; CBS's "This Morning", "Dateline" and "CNN" as well as on Spanish networks Univision and Telemundo. In addition, Ron is a Nikon USA Ambassador and has written and produced many wildlife articles and award-winning photographs that have appeared in publications and galleries around the world. He has traveled extensively throughout Africa, Asia and Tropical America while developing and directing conservation projects and Emmy-Award winning documentaries focusing on the wildlife of those regions.
- **Wendy Debbas:** Wendy studied at Fresno State University where she graduated with a degree in International Agriculture. After graduating, she worked with her husband Guy to develop a line of gourmet chocolate and they launched their chocolate company, "Debbas Gourmet". Gourmet chocolate is made for Williams Sonoma, Costco, and many others. In 2002, Wendy visited Project Survival's Cat Haven where she started volunteering. Wendy has 22 years of captive exotic cat husbandry experience which she gained at Project Survival. She has been responsible for the daily care, feeding, handling, and training of all species of cats there. Training volunteers, conducting tours and hand rearing of cubs are also a part of her responsibilities. Wendy has made TV appearances with ambassador cats and is involved with all aspects of fundraising. She has been on the board of Project Survival for 18 years. In 2004, Wendy met Deon Cilliers at DeWildt. The first Cheetah that Wendy worked with ("Tango") was trained as a cub at Cheetah Outreach. She has spent many months in Africa and has raised funds for several cheetah projects. In Brazil, Wendy participated in a jaguar capture/collaring project with Dr. Ronaldo Morato of Cenap/Icmbio. Cats, especially cheetahs are her passion.
- **Cindy Wheeler:** Cindy is a seasoned graphic web designer and illustrator who is devoting her skills to her favourite animal, big cats. She worked in South Africa at the Cheetah Outreach facility as a Volunteer, and has worked with big cats in multiple capacities since that time.
- **Candice Dymek:** Candice earned her Bachelor of Science from University of Pittsburgh. She has worked with wildlife for over 20 years and has always had a passion for nature, wildlife, and all animals; especially carnivores. For many years she has supported and volunteered at many wildlife organizations; wild and domestic. Candice is currently a Senior Wildlife Care Specialist at the San Diego Zoo working with various species of carnivores, marsupials and ungulates. At her previous facilities she focused on educational programs, breeding, raising young and training of many species including small and large carnivores. This included cheetah, which sparked her passion to help raise awareness and support wild cheetah populations. Candice is a member of the American Association of Zookeepers,

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American Zoological Association, International Rhino Keepers Association and Animal Behaviour Management Alliance.

- **Advisory Board Members**
    - **Jackie Navarro:** Jackie is a veteran of the wild animal world. Her personal safari began in 1989 taking her from California Polytechnic University into various roles such as zookeeper, zoo educator, trainer, behavioural consultant, presenter, show producer and consultant. Jackie has been affiliated with several zoos including Columbus Zoo, Charles Paddock Zoo, Santa Ana Zoo, and the San Diego Safari Park, where she presented in front of thousands. These experiences combined with a need for grassroots wildlife education programs in southern California eventually led her to the formation of her own wildlife education organization, Wild Wonders, Inc. in 1991. Currently, Jackie travels throughout the United States with her animal ambassadors, charming children and adults alike through personal appearances, performances, media opportunities, and other related interactions. She has a genuine love of animals, children and a desire to educate people about the natural world. Jackie is an Institutional Member of the American Association of Zookeepers, a Professional Member of the Zoological Association of America, and President of the Association of Professional Wildlife Educators. Jackie is also a member of the American Zoological Association, the California Association for the Gifted, California Kindergarten Association, and International Zoo Educators.
    - **Deon Cilliers as representative of Cheetah Outreach Trust SA**

IN SUMMARY:

Under the leadership of our Executive Trustee Annie Beckhelling and her right hand Trustees Jeremy Burman, Liesl Smith and Jackie Navaro, the Cheetah Outreach Trust has made tremendous progress in the conservation of free-roaming cheetahs in South Africa in 2024. The Cheetah Outreach Trust is incredibly thankful to ALL of our faithful supporters, who have continued to support our conservation efforts despite the fact that many of our contributors have encountered financial difficulties themselves.

Our collaboration with like-minded cheetah conservation organizations (Ashia Cheetah Conservation) in South Africa has enabled us to initiate and participate in the Free Roaming Cheetah Census, with Stellenbosch University and Groningen University serving as the academics behind it. We would like to thank all landowners who have already provided information about free roaming cheetahs on their farms, as well as those who have made their farms available for additional research, including camera traps. Toerbroers and Vermont Sales have generously donated incredible prizes to three lucky farmers who participated in the Free Roaming Cheetah Census online survey. The lucky draw took place in December and two farmers were lucky enough to be drawn as the winners for the first and second prize. The first prize is offered by Toerbroers and is a weekend away with all expenses covered for two people to experience a Big Five game reserve in the Lowveld of South Africa while experiencing the excitement of moving through the bush with the resident cheetahs on the property. Mr. Witte Beetge, farmer from Musina in Limpopo won this amazing once in a lifetime opportunity. The second prize winner was Mr. J.P. Oosthuizen, a farmer from Swartwater in Limpopo and he won an amazing fully stocked toolbox donated by Vermont Sales. The free roaming census will continue in 2025, with ourselves and our partners working tirelessly in the field to collect the necessary data.

Figure 16: Winner of second prize in FRCC lucky draw: J.P. Oosthuizen with toolbox donated by Vermont Sales

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Although the reality of losing collared cheetahs to illegal shooting by farmers is heart-breaking taking in consideration the time and effort it takes to capture these shy and elusive cheetah on farmlands, the data relating to these shootings remains valuable for the FRCC as it indicates the impact of illegal killings on this already threatened and very vulnerable free roaming cheetah population. It also highlights the need for more proactive conservation awareness and conflict mitigation work within areas where these cheetahs occur and finding solutions which will benefit the conservation of free roaming cheetahs as well as the livelihoods of the farmers that have to co-exist with these cheetahs. Ongoing collaring and long term monitoring of the free roaming cheetah is a very important aspect in the long term monitoring and conservation of these free roaming cheetah.

The relocation of the Irwin's Guardian Stud to its new location in the Northern Cape resulted in fewer puppies for placement as livestock guardians than we expected, which can be attributed to the stress of the move as well as adjusting to a new environment. This year saw three litters born at the Irwin's Guardian Stud. We are confident that we will achieve further success in this area in 2025 and the fact that new breeding lines will be imported from the USA which are sponsored by FIAA will make 225 an exciting year.

Figure 17 Irwin's Guardian Patrick learning to be a livestock guardian with his goats

As members of national predator forums such as the Cheetah Advisory Group, the Wild Dog Advisory Group, and the Leopard Consultative Forum, we continue to provide advice on matters pertaining to the conservation of predators. We are part of the process of developing a Biological Management Plan (BMP) for cheetah together with SANBI and other role-players. This BMP will be included into legislation and policy for South Africa.

Although we had several major setbacks in 2024 including the loss of some major donors due to a shift in their funding focus which has created a major deficit in our funding, we continue with our conservation work within the cheetah distribution range. The establishment of the Cheetah Outreach Trust USA is a long overdue and exciting chapter for the Cheetah Outreach Trust and should make fundraising and support from the USA easier. The addition of our junior field officer who was employed this year through dedicated funding from an anonymous donor has made it possible to expand our footprint and to further contribute with surveys and camera trapping towards the Free Roaming Cheetah Census. Dylan Dobbins who was employed as Junior Field Officer was also chosen for the prestigious Cincinnati Zoo and Aquarium Fellowship program where he will receive further training over the next two years for his future as conservationist.

We are very grateful to generous donors for reacting to some of the items on our wish list below. Thanks to Wildlife Warriors for purchasing replacement vehicle for our Western Territory Field Officer and for John Horseman Trust, FIAA and National Zoo Canberra for contributing to the shade netting and snake proofing of the Irwin's Guardian Stud and for Toerbroers for making staff available to help with the snake proofing of the enclosures. We welcome all our new supporters locally as well as internationally who have come on board after the establishment of the Cheetah Outreach Trust USA.

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OUR WISHLIST FOR 2025

- Camera traps x40 @US$200 each
- SD cards x 150 (for camera traps)
- Sponsors for fuel for field officers - 6000km per month
- Tyres for field officer vehicle (3 ply - 265/60/18 (8 tyres)
- Caps and T-shirts for field officers and to distribute to farm workers
- Portable printer, does not need to be a 3 in 1 a printer/scanner will do (x2)
- Portable 1 TB Hard drive for storage of photos from camera traps (x2)
- Sponsor awareness trip for Conservation Manager to Australia and New Zealand
- Donating towards general program costs – salaries, maintenance, etc.
- 12 volt to 220 volt inverters for use by field officers in the field to power laptops. (x3)
- Printing cost of farmer livestock guardian dog training manual.
- 5 ml syringes and needles for vaccinations of livestock guardian dogs. (500)
- Smart trap control units for two capture cages.
- Garmin GPS Devices. (x3)

OUR LONG TERM DONORS

THE FOLLOWING ZOO'S AND FACILITIES IN THE USA HAVE CONTRIBUTED THROUGH THE ZAA AMP PROGRAM:

African Lion Safari, Alabama Gulf Coast Zoo, Animal Adventure Park, Austin Zoo, Carson Springs Wildlife Conservation Foundation, Cat Haven Project Survival, Frank Buck Zoo, Metro Richmond Zoo, Montgomery Zoo, Natural Bridge Wildlife Ranch, Nova Wild, Pittsburgh Zoo, Safari North Wildlife Park, Six Flags Great Adventure, Southwick's Zoo, Tanganyika Wildlife Park, Virginia Safari Park, Wildlife World Zoo, Aquarium, and Safari Park, Wild Wonders

We also express our gratitude towards the John Horseman Trust for long term support to our conservation work.
All of our donors (long-term, short-term, and one-time donations) and supporters who provide services, products, and equipment in kind are critical to the success of our conservation programs, and they are friends and partners in our conservation efforts and triumphs.

"Look closely at nature. Every species is a masterpiece, exquisitely adapted to the particular environment in which it has survived. Who are we to destroy or even diminish biodiversity? – EO Wilson, the late Edward O. Wilson, the world renowned biologist and multiple Pulitzer Prize winner.

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