

ISSUE N°
17
1st 2019

CHEETAH STRIDES

The newsletter of the Cheetah Conservation Fund



Photo by Jennifer Leigh Warner

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DONATE

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info@cheetah.org
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VISIT

CCF's Research and Education Centre
Otjiwarongo, Namibia
open 364 days per year
www.cheetahecolodge.com

CCF's Headquarters USA
200 Daingerfield Rd.
Alexandria, VA. 22314

Monday - Friday
9:00 am - 5:00 pm
www.cheetah.org

Keep up with the cheetahs on social media!



@CCFCheetah

VOLUNTEER

Contact us to learn more about volunteering in the United States to help save the cheetah across its range in Africa.
volunteer@cheetah.org

KEY DATES

DR. MARKER'S USA SPRING TOUR
CALIFORNIA
PALM DESERT
LIVING DESERT TALK
MARCH 20

NEW YORK
ITHACA
CORNELL UNIVERSITY VISIT
APRIL 8

NEW YORK CITY
BRONX ZOO MEETAH CHEETAH
APRIL 13

WASHINGTON, DC
COCKTAILS FOR CHEETAHS
APRIL 15

MASSACHUSETTS
BOSTON
FRANKLIN PARK ZOO
APRIL 18

BRIAN BADGER'S EVENTS

NORTH CAROLINA
GREENSBORO SCIENCE CENTER TALK
MARCH 6

SOUTH CAROLINA
CHARLESTON MUSEUM TALK
APRIL 13

CHAPTER EVENTS

CALIFORNIA
WCN SPRING
APRIL 13

EARTH DAY CELEBRATIONS AT OAKLAND ZOO & SAFARI WEST
APRIL 14

FOR MORE INFO AND TO SEE THE UPDATED SCHEDULE.
WWW.CHEETAH.ORG/EVENTS/



NOTES FROM THE DIRECTOR



2019 has begun, and we're off to another remarkable year! Dr. Bruce Brewer and I have just returned from Europe, where we met with CCF's international partners and gave lectures to raise awareness for the plight of the cheetah. We made presentations to the public and to various EU and UN organizations, visiting 14 cities in seven countries in just over two weeks.

In Namibia, our CCF Centre is humming with activity! Our Model Farm is

busy with the birth of baby goats and sheep, and five Livestock Guarding Dogs were just placed in their new farm homes. The new school year has begun, so our education team is on the road visiting schools in the towns and villages with cheetah conservation lessons.

2019 also marks the 25th anniversary of our Livestock Guarding Dog (LGD) program. To celebrate we are declaring 2019 CCF's Year of the Livestock Guarding Dog.' Throughout the year, we will include more stories about how these wonderful dogs are helping save cheetahs and other predators in Africa.

Sadly, cheetahs continue to be taken out of the wild. On a single day, CCF received cubs in three countries; a four-week-old orphan in Kenya, a six-month-old confiscated in Somaliland, and a year-and-a-half-old cub confiscated in Namibia. The activity at our cheetah 'safe house' in Hargeisa, Somaliland, has stepped up, and we are now caring for 14 cheetahs. One of the cubs intercepted from wildlife traffickers in 2018, Moonlight, recently underwent emergency surgery to repair a broken leg. See page 4.

At our Centre, we are caring for 37 cheetahs. This reminds us of what a huge job we have, and why your continued support is crucial! Although we're not happy about the circumstances, we are grateful we can care for them, and your donations make this possible.

As I write, CCF will be collaring and releasing four female cheetahs into the wild at Erindi Reserve. We are preparing for a science seminar at our Centre, and I am re-packing my bags for the annual CCF USA spring tour. Please check our website regularly, www.cheetah.org, for updates.

On behalf of CCF, thank you for your ongoing support. Together, we can create a permanent place for cheetahs on Earth!

The signature of Dr. Laurie Marker, written in a flowing cursive script.

Dr. Laurie Marker
Founder & Executive Director

P.S. Hope you like our new newsletter format!

HELP US KEEP THE CHEETAH WHERE IT BELONGS

in the wild.



CCF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION OUTREACH PROGRAM (EEOP)

CCF launched its Future Conservationist of Africa (FCA) environmental education outreach program initiative for 2019 in January, and as of mid-February, our Education Team has already reached 21 schools, 77 teachers and 6,494 students between Otjiwarongo and Windhoek with its presentations on cheetah conservation – and they are just getting started. The program targets upper primary students (grades 5–7) and secondary school students (grades 8–12) with information to help students and teachers understand the role predators play in balancing healthy ecosystems. FCA course content addresses negative attitudes and misconceptions about cheetah and other predators and seeks to foster a better understanding and appreciation for Namibia's wildlife.

The CCF Education Team -- Annetjie Siyaya, Ignatius Davids and intern Nomagugu Ndlovu --and their presentations have become so well known that schools are now requesting dates months in advance. No matter the location of the school, the excitement on the faces of the young learners is the same; they are eager to learn about cheetahs, predators and ecosystems, which makes each presentation slightly different. CCF's Education Team finds this interactive approach to teaching and learning to be the best way to engage with students.

To assess the effectiveness of CCF's FCA, the team administers questionnaire that every student fills out before and after the presentation. The pre- and post-questionnaires contain the same questions. This information enables us to measure the students' knowledge baseline, before and after the presentation. The questionnaire contains questions like:

"How do you feel about cheetahs?"

"Why do you feel that way?"

"If you see a cheetah near your farm/house, will you kill it?"

These types of questions give insight into students' perceptions about wild cheetahs. By asking the same questions in pre- and post-questionnaires, the

team can determine if they changed negative perceptions into positive ones. Changing negative perceptions is critical, as the students are future leaders of Namibia.

Students are very inquisitive and interactive during the presentations. Most are amazed that a cheetah can the speed of 110km/h in 3 seconds, but when shown a video of a cheetah hunting and making a kill, they understand. For young students, this is very exciting and for older ones, they learn how the cheetah's structure is perfectly suited for its function of speed. Excitement of the learners is one factor that makes the FCA a success.

To help students understand cheetah and other wild species belong in the wild, the team uses hypothetical scenarios. For example, the discussion might begin, *"How would you feel if an elephant took you away from your mother as a baby to live with the elephant's family? Could the elephant family teach you how to be a human?"*

At almost every school the education team visits, at least one person will ask if it is okay to keep a cheetah cub as a pet. Using the elephant hypothetical, the team can then talk about what people should do when they encounter cheetah cubs in the wild. By having the students place themselves in the situation of a poached cub, an empathetic bond is formed with wildlife, and practical knowledge is gained.

Following their presentation, the team administers a questionnaire for teachers, asking them to rate and evaluate the program and presents them with the CCF Teacher's Resource Guide with lesson plans around the predator's role in the ecosystem. The guide is particularly well received because it is cross-curricular. The materials for are also popular because of the wildlife puzzles and activities.

FCA will continue on the road this year, reaching as many schools in cheetah range towns and remote farming villages of Namibia as possible. Instilling early appreciation for wildlife, shaping the leaders of tomorrow –those are the best strategies for making CCF's impact in Namibia sustainable.



Photos Opposite page: Ignatius Davids teaching the students of Waterberg Primary School from Okakarara about predators and ecosystems.

This page: (left) Grade 5 students of DHPS Windhoek filling out questionnaire.

(right) Grade 6 student at Abraham Iyambo Primary School in Windhoek explains what would happen to the prey population if predators were removed from an ecosystem.



CARING FOR CHEETAHS IN SOMALILAND

Taking care of cheetahs is not easy. And when there are 14 cheetahs in need in Somaliland, a country far from CCF's Centre in the Horn of Africa, things get even more challenging.

Somaliland is the main trafficking route for cheetahs poached in East Africa and smuggled through the Horn of Africa into the Arabian Peninsula to supply the illegal pet trade. Since 2005, CCF has worked to stop the trade, and with that, the number of confiscations has gone from 0 to more than 50. Until 2016, we assisted in transferring confiscated cheetahs to sanctuaries in other nearby countries, but last year the government decided that cheetah must remain in country. Now, CCF focuses on building capacity locally to provide confiscated cheetahs with the best possible care.

CCF now has a small team in Somaliland caring for the cheetahs, as well as other animals intercepted from traffickers, including caracals, vultures, and gazelles. Our cheetah caretaker, Nujuum, is a fifth-year veterinary student with a great passion for wildlife. She is assisted by Abdi, who cuts and prepares the meat for the carnivores. They are both managed by Guenther, a longtime CCF associate and CCF's Patricia Tricorache.

Last November, CCF entered a partnership with University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine Cluj-Napoca in Romania, the University



of Veterinary and Pharmaceutical Sciences Brno in the Czech Republic (UVPS), and Vétérinaires sans Frontières Czech Republic (Czech Vets without Borders, VSF-cz). The European partners send volunteer veterinarians for one-month periods to help with the animals' care, in addition, they lecture on their respective fields of expertise for veterinary students at the University of Hargeisa.

This partnership has proven to be one of the best things that have happened to us, confirmed when one of the cheetahs under our care, Moonlight, recently suffered a bad break to her leg. The CCF team and volunteer vets immediately went into action. They obtained authorization to have the cheetah x-rayed at a human hospital. They learned Moonlight's calcaneus, or heel bone, was broken, and would require surgery to give her the best chances of walking again. After making sure Moonlight could not do any further damage to her leg, the team consulted with local orthopedic surgeons. It was determined that due to the cheetahs' high level of activity, the surgery would have to be a bit more specialized than what was feasible in Somaliland. Again, the partners responded, with VSF-cz arranging to bring in Dr. Robert Srnec, an orthopedist and neurosurgeon from the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine at UVPS and his very specialized equipment, to perform the surgery.

The CCF team and volunteer vets Patrycja and Iulia transformed a room in our cheetah safe into an operating theater. The surgical procedure involved osteosynthesis using a plate and rod fixation, and from all indications, was a success. Moonlight got on her feet the next day and is improving under the watchful care of the CCF team in Hargeisa. Our deep gratitude goes to everyone who helped make this possible.



Photos: *Opposite page:* (top) Moonlight before surgery, kept in a quiet enclosure in a leg wrap. (bottom left) Normal leg (bottom right) Broken leg.

This page: The surgical team in action to fix Moonlight's leg.



2019 - CCF'S YEAR OF THE LIVESTOCK GUARDING DOG

DOGS ARE NOT ONLY MAN'S BEST FRIEND, IN NAMIBIA THEY ARE MAN'S BEST EMPLOYEE, TOO!

In 1994, Dr. Laurie Marker, with the help of Dr. Ray Coppinger from the Livestock Guarding Dog Association, initiated one of CCF's most successful conservation programs as an experiment to reduce conflict between farmers and cheetahs, using Anatolian shepherd and Kangal Livestock Guarding Dogs. Twenty-five years later, CCF's Livestock Guarding Dogs are considered one of the most effective tools available to help Namibian farmers reduce livestock losses to predation. They are also credited with helping improve biodiversity and human livelihoods while saving countless cheetah and other predators' lives.

CCF's Livestock Guarding Dogs are highly regarded in southern Africa for being effective at their job. In Namibia, farmers using CCF LGDs report a drop in predation losses ranging between 70 to 100 percent. For communal subsistence farmers, even the loss of one animal can be financially devastating – so having a CCF LGD is truly life-changing. In Namibia, there is a 1 to 2-year waiting list for farmers seeking an LGD.

To mark the 25th anniversary of our LGD program in Namibia and honor these canine conservationists, Dr. Marker has declared 2019 to be CCF's Year of the Livestock Guarding Dog.

"In southern Africa, CCF's LGDs help farmers mitigate conflict and co-exist with wildlife on shared farmland habitat. By celebrating this milestone and sharing information with our audiences, we hope to raise so much awareness that by the end of this year, the whole world knows about Livestock Guarding Dogs. They are our most vital, 'paws on the ground' partner in cheetah conservation," said Dr. Laurie Marker, CCF Founder and Executive Director. "Please help us by sharing information with your family, friends and through social networks."

Throughout the year, CCF will feature special content on its cheetahstrides.org website and social media channels about these imposing yet loyal,

protective animals with their incredibly loud bark. In the U.S., ambassador Livestock Guarding Dogs will be included with some of Dr. Marker's presentations and at CCF special events. In Namibia, CCF's Ambassador Livestock Guarding Dogs will help educate visitors at our Field Research & Education Centre. Leading up the anniversary in 2018, CCF cooperated with several television productions about the dogs. Two will be released later this year.

CCF's successful track record mitigating farmer-carnivore conflict with man's best friend is the result of more than 25 years of research and development, including scores of interactions with rural farmers. Today, CCF Livestock Guarding Dogs are more than just the norm – they are in great demand.



Photos: Opposite page: Since 1994, CCF's LGD program has placed more than 650 dogs with farmers throughout Namibia at little or no cost.

This page: (left) To support LGDs, CCF teaches farmers and students about their proper use and care during educational outreach. (right) CCF LGDs are raised in the goat pens of CCF's Model Farm, so they'll bond with the species they will one day soon protect.



LITTLE KNOWN CCF LIVESTOCK GUARING DOG FACT:

The legacy of the dogs in Namibia was secured by Sam Nujoma, Namibia's first President and CCF's first International Patron. Two of the first dogs CCF trained and placed guarded the President's goat herds.



KEEPING CHEETAHS IN THE WILD

ELWOOD, CYCLONE AND KAMIN RELEASED AT ERINDI GAME RESERVE

Learning how to live and survive in a truly wild environment after a couple years in captivity is always an adjustment for any released cheetah. CCF's protocol for the rearing and release of a captive-raised, wild-born cheetah yields the highest probability of success in this situation. While success is indicated, risks are involved, and there are factors only nature controls. But from the perspective of conservation biology, these risks are outweighed by the prospect of perpetuating the species and providing animals with natural lives in the wild.

In early January, the CCF Cheetah Team decamped to prepare for the soft release of three male cheetahs onto Erindi Private Game Reserve. Cyclone and Kamin are the offspring of Zinzi, a wild-born, captive-raised, released female that was killed by a leopard in 2016. Because her cubs were only 11 months-old, CCF reclaimed them (they would not have otherwise survived) and brought them back to the Centre. Elwood and his four sisters arrived at the sanctuary at five months of age, also in 2016. The decision was made by the Cheetah Team to bond Elwood with Cyclone and Kamin, so they could one day be released as a coalition.

On January 20, CCF Cheetah Curator Eli Walker opened the gates into the wild from the 100-hectare enclosure. From the bed of a CCF truck, the team observed the coalition as they warily exited the holding pen, lured by the scent of a fresh impala carcass, to nourish them for a few days into their new transition into the wild. Less than 48 hours later, the coalition began exploring their new environment in search of food and water and have since been hunting regularly.

"Learning how to live and survive in a truly wild environment after a couple years in captivity is always an adjustment for any of our released cheetahs," said Eli Walker. "Most of the cheetahs at our CCF Centre will never get this opportunity. But for the small handful that do, we will do everything we can to ensure their survival."

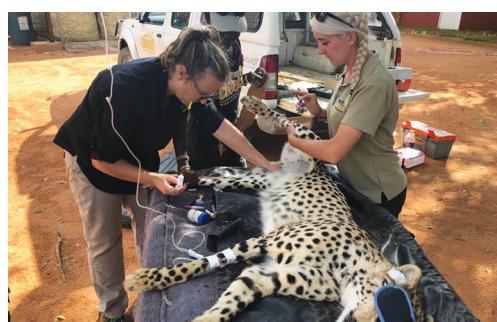
Unfortunately, cheetahs in the wild face threats, and little can be done to prevent nature from taking its course. About one week after release, the coalition found a waterhole around midnight. While they were drinking, a leopard managed to sneak up behind them, catch and kill Cyclone. Since this event, Elwood and Kamin have become much more cautious navigating their new environment, and they appear to be doing quite well.

EVALUATING NEW CANDIDATES

Since the calendar year began, CCF has received three cheetahs from the Namibian Ministry of Environment and Tourism (MET), all were wild-caught cubs being held by people without permits. While CCF's mission focuses on keeping wild cheetahs in the wild, CCF ensures that cheetahs receive the care they need and deserve, no matter their status or circumstances under which they arrive at our Centre.

At the end of January, we received two young cheetah cubs, one male and one female estimated to be 6 or 7 months of age. Fortunately, both cubs had only been in captivity for a short time with minimal human contact. That makes them potential candidates for release. Both very feisty and always hungry! The cubs will stay at CCF until they are at least two years of age, at which point their candidacy for rewilding will be reassessed.

CCF's most recent arrival is Savannah, an 18-month-old female that had been hand-raised. MET confiscated and transferred her to the CCF Centre in early February. Though she is quite a nervous cheetah, Savannah is getting to know her keepers, and she seems to be in better spirits daily. It is unlikely Savannah will ever be released.



Photos: Opposite page: Cheetahs released into Erindi, supplemental feeding helps in the initial release and monitoring - photo by Bart Balli

This page: (top left) CCF staff picking up cheetahs confiscated in cooperation with the Ministry of Environment and Tourism. (top right) Cheetahs in transportation crate on the trip back to CCF Headquarters. (bottom left and right) Veterinary care and evaluation.

CCF MAKES CASE FOR CONSERVATION AT COUNCIL OF EUROPE

Dr. Laurie Marker and Dr. Bruce Brewer, CCF's General Manager, traveled from Namibia to Strasbourg, France, to deliver an address at the Council of Europe (COE) annual conference. The three-day event, held Jan. 29, 30 and 31, brought together representatives from 47 European nations to explore issues of global importance, including human rights, democracy and the rule of law in Europe. Dr. Marker's presentation focused on the nexus between human and animal rights, and how the well-being of all living species is tied together.



"We must change the way we are living if we hope to save the cheetah. We need a strategy that protects wildlife and habitat, while fostering economic development and improving quality of life for human communities."

- Dr. Laurie Marker, January 31, 2019
COE Annual Conference in Strasbourg, France

"CCF has many strong alliances in Europe, but we need more to help us win this fight. Addressing the COE enabled us to get our message out to European leaders and potentially millions of others in less than two hours," said Dr. Marker.

Founded in 1949, the COE is an organization of European nations representing approximately 820 million people. Its European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) was established in 1959 in Strasbourg with the mandate to enforce the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. While there is no explicit right to a healthy environment, the Court has developed a strong jurisprudence on environmental issues through its interpretation of civil and political rights that are included in the Convention.

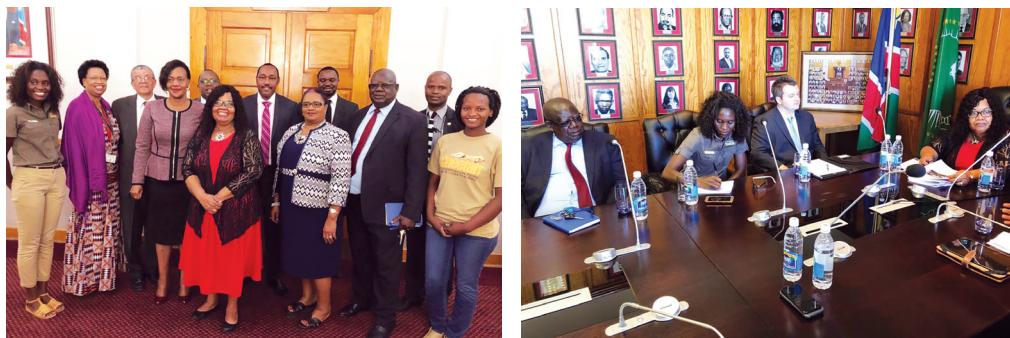
Hosted by the City of Strasbourg, the Drs. attended three days of events around the conference to drive awareness for the cheetah's plight. On Jan. 29th, the Drs. met members of the Strasbourg Rotary Club. On Jan. 30, the City of Strasbourg sponsored a Town Hall reception for 50 dignitaries with remarks by Dr. Marker. There, the City presented the Drs. with a donation in the name of 'Alsace for Cheetah,' the region of France where Strasbourg is located.

On Jan. 31, the final day of the conference, Dr. Marker delivered her powerful address to COE members, 'Biodiversity and Ecosystem: A Case Study on the Cheetah in Africa.' She stressed how globalization is making the plight of the cheetah everyone's fight.

"COE provided CCF with the ultimate European audience," said Dr. Marker. "We are grateful to COE and the City of Strasbourg for this wonderful opportunity."

CCF PRESENTS LGD PROGRAM TO KENYAN MINISTERS OF PARLIAMENT

On February 13, a delegation from the Parliamentary Conservation Caucus of Kenya met with the Namibian Conservation Parliamentary Caucus (NACOPAC) in Windhoek to discuss Namibia's communal conservancy model. The meeting was held at the Namibian Parliament and organized by the International Conservation Caucus Foundation, a group that advances U.S. leadership in conservation through public and private partnerships, of which CCF is a founding member. The exchange was facilitated by the Hon. Bernadette Maria Jagger, NAC OPAC Chair.



Annetjie Siyaye, CCF Research and Education Manager, and Nomagugu Ndlovu, a CCF student researcher, shared CCF's conservation strategies for mitigating human-wildlife conflict and developing human communities in rural, communal conservancies. The quickly discussion focused on CCF's Livestock Guarding Dog Program, as the Kenyan delegates were notably impressed with the dogs' ability to reduce livestock farmers' losses to predation. Since launching the program in 1994, CCF has bred, trained and placed more than 650 of these guarding dogs with Namibian farmers at little or no cost, and those farmers have reported reduction in losses ranging over 70 percent.

"For rural small stock farmers in Kenya that operate under a conservancy system, CCF Livestock Guarding Dogs may prove effective there as well in helping reduce conflict," said Annetjie Siyaye.

Namibia's conservancy system is widely considered the African model. Namibia has 86 registered conservancies that operate under a community based, natural resource management (CBNRM) system. CCF teams work with the leadership of local conservancies in north-central Namibia to deliver farmer training, wildlife education, and livelihood development training, all with the goal of co-existence.

Members of both delegations shared their thoughts on conservation, but everyone agreed that Namibia is indeed a leader in community based natural resource management, and CCF Livestock Guarding Dogs are a high-value asset for small stock farmers.

Photos: *Opposite page:* Dr. Laurie Marker and Dr. Bruce Brewer attend a welcome ceremony in Strasbourg, France.

This page: (left) CCF Staff welcomes Kenya Delegation. (right) Left to right: Hon. Werner Kalipi, Ms Annetjie Siyaya, Mr Daniel Tanner, Hon. Bernadette Jagger.

Kids CORNER



STORIES FEATURING THE WORK OF CCF'S YOUNG SUPPORTERS FROM AROUND THE WORLD.



The Poschman Twins from Aspen, Colorado, Willow and Isabella meeting Dr. Marker. They have started two non-profits, Kids Saving Elephants and Kids Saving Big Cats.

The twins became Gloria Barron Prize for Young Heroes honorees in 2016. They invited Dr. Marker to Aspen for a fundraising event in 2018.



Amena and her family visited CCF on holiday from their home in Malawi. She became inspired by Dr. Laurie Marker after researching global conservationists in a class project for her school. The project sparked her wish to visit CCF. She even got the chance to meet with her inspiration and talk about cheetahs.



For Drew King's 6th birthday he wanted a cheetah sponsorship. His mom got him a sponsorship with a purring cheetah and he named it Khayjay! Drew was so happy that he sent us photos of himself with his cheetah friend - snoozing and playing. So cute!

Do you have a story about a young supporter that you would like to share? Send us an email including a short description and some photos and we will include it in an upcoming issue of *Cheetah Strides* or on our website!

Email: info@cheetah.org



INTERNATIONAL HOOF CARE MONTH AT CCF

February is International Hoof Care Month! CCF's farrier Manfred visits us every six weeks to trim the hooves of our seven horses. This month we wanted to share him in action.

Dr. Marker grew up riding horses in US and rides daily in Namibia joined by staff and interns. The horses help us monitor predator movement around CCF's campus by following spoor (tracks) on the trails where cars do not drive. The horses help teach Namibian interns about proper care. Some have been around horses on their family's farms but don't know how to correctly care for them, like checking their feet for injuries or foreign particles (rock, sticks, thorns etc.) that could cause lameness. Helping hoofed livestock and farm animals stay healthy and on their feet is critical in preventing predation.

CHEETAH STRIDES CHALLENGE

A screenshot of a sign-up form. At the top right, there is a dropdown menu labeled "Quantity" with the value "1" selected, indicated by a yellow arrow pointing to it. Below the dropdown is a blue button with the number "1". In the center of the form, the text "All Cheetah Conservation Fund Communications" is circled in yellow. At the bottom, there is descriptive text: "The most cheetah news you can possibly get! Choose this option to receive bi-annual 'Cheetah Strides' magazine and bi-monthly 'Notes from the Field' e-newsletters, call-to-action messages, and event invitations."

Sign-up for *All Cheetah Conservation Fund Communications* for a chance to win two tickets to a VIP event during 2019!

Steps:

1. Visit <https://cheetah.org/sign-up/>
2. Choose All Cheetah Conservation Fund Communications and enter your information.

Anyone who signs up during the month of March will be entered into a chance to attend a *VIP CCF event of your choice, with a guest, during CCF's 2019 Spring or Fall tours.

Already get all of our communications? Ask your friends to sign-up. If they send an email to info@cheetah.org and let us know you referred them, you will be entered to win too!

*Tickets must be redeemed at an event during the 2019 Spring or Fall tours.



PO Box 2496
Alexandria, VA 22301

•2019•

**25 YEARS OF DOGS
SAVING CHEETAHS!**

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Cheetah Conservation Fund
LIVESTOCK GUARDING DOG PROGRAM

25 Years

