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Abstract: Farmers, friend or foe, have the most direct impact on current cheetah survival rates outside of protected areas. Each project contributing to this article actively engages farming communities and shares information aimed at reducing farmer-predator conflict. Programs include education about livestock and wildlife management techniques, the importance of biodiversity and a predator's place in a healthy ecosystem, as well as relocating problem animals. These facilities also commented that farming communities express a recognition of predator conservation, but are reluctant to endure stock loss. Sharing innovative management techniques such as the Cheetah Conservation Fund's (CCF) Anatolian Shepherd livestock guard dog program has a positive impact on farming communities and improves the cheetah's chances.

# Educating the African Nations

*By Annie Beckhelling  
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“In Africa, Oddly, Animal World Is Terra Incognita.” So read a heading in the *New York Times* of an article by Marc Lacey, and those of us who have the privilege of working closely with African learners unfortunately can testify to the truth of this statement. Field workers and conservationists engage tirelessly to find solutions to cheetah challenges, but without the support of all the stakeholders of this elegant African predator, these efforts may prove to buy time for the cheetah but not a secure future. Each and every citizen who has the power to vote in countries where the cheetah still ranges free is an important stakeholder who can support or undermine *in situ* conservation efforts. We can equip citizens to make informed choices, and build pride in their diverse African wildlife heritage, so critical to the survival of the cheetah. Education is the key. Southern Africa is home to many energetic programs using the cheetah as a learning tool and introducing the uniqueness of this beautiful cat to farmers, learners and teachers.

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Anatolian protecting livestock from predators.  
*(photo: CCF)*



CCF’s Laurie Marker and Chewbacca show learners the value of a play tree. *(photo: De Wildt)*

techniques such as the Cheetah Conservation Fund’s (CCF) Anatolian Shepherd livestock guard dog program has a positive impact on farming communities and improves the cheetah’s chances.

Today’s learners are Africa’s future citizen and it is here that environmental education can have a powerful impact on perceptions and attitudes. Education outreach is an economical and practical way to carry information to schools. The 19,000 learners reached by CCF’s outreach program compared to the 3,000 visiting their excellent educational centre in Otjiwarongo in 2004, demonstrates the value of this approach in countries where distances are large and the cost of transporting numerous learners, even

larger. Skilled presenters deliver curriculum-linked lessons using the cheetah as an example for subjects such as science, mathematics and language. With numeracy, literacy and sciences being key concerns in many emerging African democracies, the ability to integrate lessons into those learning areas gives presenters better access to contact times with learners at schools.

CCF has a multi-level program and delivers a teacher's resource guide concentrating on biology, but also including diverse other subjects such as mathematics, English and social sciences, which can be taught conventionally during the school year. Another approach, "*Meet The Cheetah*", is a result of a CCF and Cincinnati Zoo and Botanical Garden collaboration. This is a small, colorful, simple learning booklet teaching cheetah facts through the medium of game activities and comic strip parables. This gift to students in Namibia becomes a treasured possession and informs by fun. The message on the back page however, underwrites the serious intent of this resource and relates the information to learning standards both in the United States of American and Namibia.

Cheetah Outreach and The De Wildt Cheetah and Wildlife Trust in South Africa face different challenges. South African schools are mostly under-resourced with little or no access to electronic or copying machines. Contact time with learners must be directed to the learning and critical outcomes set out in the education department's curriculum as well as skilling learners. Natural Science was chosen as the medium of AAWARE (Animal Awareness for World and Regional Education) active learning resource built by South African teachers and Cheetah Outreach. There being no other means of visually demonstrating, a full color A1 poster pack accompanies the resource to assist the teacher delivering the lesson to set up the activity. With eleven official languages translation was another key issue. AAWARE is currently available in the four languages used by learners in the provinces in South Africa in which De Wildt and Cheetah Outreach conduct outreach programmes.

Mokalodi Cheetah Conservation Project in Botswana has two simple activity guide books (*Cheetahs: the Shy Cats* aimed at learners aged 5-10 and one for the older 10-15 year old age group), and also conducts outreach programs as well as receiving learners at their home facility. In Zimbabwe, Marwell Zimbabwe Trust has adapted CCF's teacher's resource to comply with Zimbabwe's learning standards. The resulting resource, "*Living with Cheetah, Project for Primary School Children*" will be demonstrated and distributed at teacher workshops.


Capacity building within the teaching community through workshops as well as fellowships in the United States in partnership with the Smithsonian Institution's National Zoological Park's Conservation and Research Centre, is also a crucial part of this wide kaleidoscope of effort. Indeed, reading the acknowledgement at the front of each resource underlines the power of partnerships. Each African facility, each American facility acknowledged has a key role in the delivery of our environmental education promises.




Jennifer Buff from SI-NZP CRC and Haily Summerforf from Fort Worth, TX were key presenters at this South African workshop. (photo: Jennifer Biff, Smithsonian)

## CHEETAHS: A predator's role in the ecosystem

**TEACHER'S RESOURCE GUIDE**

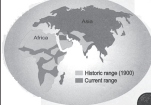


## Cheetah FAST FACTS!




**Cheetah • *Acinonyx jubatus***

The fastest animal on land, the cheetah can reach speeds up to 70 mph (110 kmph). Sadly, this cat is also one of the fastest disappearing animals. Less than 15,000 cheetahs remain in the wild.



■ Historic range (1900)  
■ Current range

- **Range:** Pockets in Africa and Iran
- **Weight:** 80-120 lbs (36-55 kg)
- **Height:** 30 in (75 cm)
- **Prey:** Small antelope, young of large antelope, warthog, hare, gazel birds
- **Status:** ■ **ENDANGERED** (IUCN/Conservation)



## Help for a Hunter

Cats have to be good hunters and cheetahs are one of the best. Finish drawing the following body parts on the cheetah and color it.



**Tail**  
When chasing prey, sometimes the cheetah has to turn in another direction in a split second to stay close behind the prey. The cheetah swings its tail to one side to keep a firm balance in high speed runs.

**Spots**  
Cheetahs have a coat of fur with black spots that helps them fit in to their habitat. This camouflage keeps them from being seen by prey they might be chasing up and over other predators such as lions and leopards.

**Eyes**  
Cheetahs are not the only animals that hunt in the grasses. The cheetah has excellent night vision for spotting prey. They can see things up to 1/3 miles away. They would have a tough time seeing that far away with binoculars.

**Claws**  
Cheetahs are the only animals that lack the retractable claws. The cheetah has excellent night vision for spotting prey. They can see things up to 1/3 miles away. They would have a tough time seeing that far away with binoculars.

**Long legs**  
Long legs allow the cheetah to move farther and faster than it could with shorter legs.

Conventional learning and individual fun learning underwrites the conservation message in Namibia. (credit: CCF and Cincinatti Zoo and Botanical Garden)

## Spot the Differences

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afsonderlikke kenmerke



**Tiger**  
Tiger  
Tiger



**Lion**  
Lion  
Lion



**Antelope**  
Antelope  
Antelope



**Lion**  
Lion  
Lion



**Cheetah**  
Cheetah  
Cheetah



**Leopard**  
Leopard  
Leopard





## aaware

Animal Awareness For Word And Regional Education


### TEACHER'S RESOURCE

### NATURAL SCIENCE

INTERMEDIATE  
PHASE  
(Grade 4-6)

## Adaptations for speed



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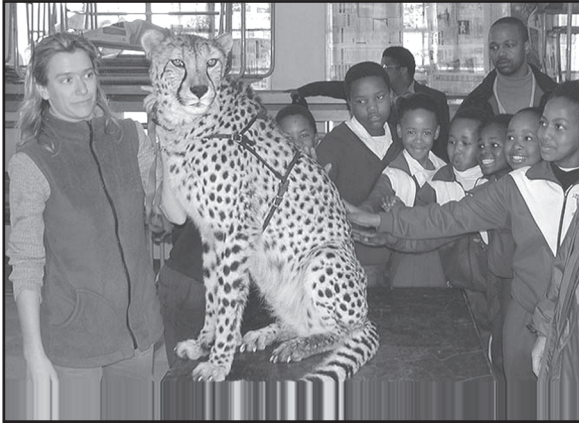
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Colorful posters supplement the natural science resource in South Africa. (credit: Cheetah Outreach)

Often I reflect on an incident which occurred some years ago when I was sharing my home at night with a cheetah ambassador. Standing at the fence, separating a local community from our home, stood a small boy. He never directed his gaze at me, but focussed entirely on the purring cheetah. To



me his words are an eternal spur, “It’s beautiful! What is it?”. The power of the presence of a living, breathing predator to have an immediate and transforming effect is well known to those of us who have shared partnerships with these astonishing animals. As in America, our cheetah ambassadors are perhaps our most powerful allies. CCF’s Chewbacca, De Wildt’s Byron, Shadow at Cheetah Outreach, I salute you all.

And what do our clients think:

“I want you to know how much I enjoyed you lerson (sic) and how you changed my life. By just putting my hand on Byron my life changed in an instant”

*Loato Mokoena*

“I want to tell you that your education have change me. Your education have change me to respect animal and to take animals like a human being. Your message is very bueatiful. (sic)”

*Mpho Tladi*

“Byron the cheetah, God must bless you.”

*Thuli*



De Wildt’s Handsome Byron  
(photo: De Wildt)

In Africa animal world is *terra incognita* no more.