

## MANY VISITORS TO WSPA/AFRICAT EDUCATION CENTRE

There has been an overwhelming amount of interest from groups wanting to visit the WSPA/ AfriCat Environmental Education Centre since its opening in late April. July was our busiest month, with six groups coming to learn more about predators, their importance in the ecosystem and to focus on more general environmental topics such as litter control and recycling, deforestation and water conservation.

Thanks to Edler Kaura and the Earthwise Environmental Club from Paresis Secondary School in Otjiwarongo and to Mathilda de Klerk and her group of Voortrekkers from Otjiwarongo for their interest in attending. We have also been working with peer counsellors from the Ministry of Youth and Sport who assist both the in-school and out-of-school youth of their communities. Thanks to Kim Davidson for organising the groups from Omaruru and Okakarara and to Sue Yarger for bringing her group all the way from Opuwo.

A group of twenty teenagers from the Oakham School in the UK also visited the Centre as part of a six-week adventure holiday in Namibia. Other stops on their trip included a week at the Waterberg Plateau Park helping Trygve Cooper with the construction of his wilderness shelters, a week in Etosha, and hiking around the Brandberg and through the Fish River Canyon.

The WSPA/AfriCat Environmental Education Centre has also hosted two seminars, one for the Ministry of Environment and Tourism's Large Carnivore Management Forum, of which AfriCat is a member, and a sales seminar for the staff of Cymot.

Schools are now on a break between terms, but we look forward to a busy schedule at the Centre again next term as we already have groups of students and teachers scheduled from other schools around Namibia, as well as Brownies and Boy Scouts.

Any groups wishing to arrange a visit to the Centre should contact AfriCat at 0651 304563/4/6.

*Sidney Schultz*

### UPDATE ON BLIND CHEETAH

In this year's first newsletter we reported on a blind cheetah, a mother of 3 cubs, who had been operated on to have cataracts removed. In December last year, only one of her eyes could be operated on due to the presence of infection in the second eye.

In April, Dr Gary Bauer, a veterinary ophthalmologist from the Animal Eye Clinic in Cape Town, returned to perform the operation on the second eye.

She was put on cortisone and antibiotics for 12 days following the operation and after 5 days we could tell that the operation had been a complete success. Except for the first 70cm directly in front of her eyes, where vision would be blurred due to the removal of the lenses, her eyesight had been restored.

It has been amazing to watch the transformation from a confused and stumbling cheetah to a confident mother proudly walking around with her cubs.

It is now time to find this family a new home where she can be radio-collared in order to monitor her progress and whether she now succeeds in teaching her cubs to hunt.

*Carla Conradie*

### ROXETTE'S ARRIVAL

In May we fetched an 8 week old, female leopard cub from Kalkfeld. The farmer found it swimming in a reservoir, managed to catch it and put it in the salt room for the night. She had obviously lost her mother, who may have been shot or poisoned. Roxette was extremely thin, only weighing 2.8 kilograms when she arrived. Her nose was running and her fur falling out. We put her into a crate for warmth and security, until we were sure she was going to survive and also eating well. She was then introduced to Boris, a 3 month old leopard, who we told you about in the last newsletter. Roxette took a while to venture out of her crate but ever since they have been the greatest of friends.

*Carla Conradie*

### NEW TIGRESS CAMP

Don't think from the title of this article that AfriCat are trying to save tigers in Namibia. This new 150-hectare cheetah camp has been named in honour of Tigress Productions, a UK based film company. Tigress paid for the costs of the camp in return for the opportunity to film cheetahs. The camp was intended to be a new home for Chinga, Caeser and Chui together with Nandi and Cheetah. Unfortunately Chui and Cheetah do not get on as well as we had hoped, so in the interim they alternate this new home until such time as they get on a little better.

*Carla Conradie*

### CHEETAH LURE

In January we told you about the cheetah lure that had been set up on the airstrip, where Nandi and Cheetah successfully tested it out.

Since then we have purchased extra components to make up a second lure in the TUSK Cheetah Rehabilitation Camp.

On the first attempt the 6 cheetahs in the camp didn't quite know what to make of this thing whizzing along the ground but after a while they got the hang of it, with Conchita and Spike showing the most interest. Even a Pale Chanting Goshawk sitting in a nearby tree eyed out the moving target and joined in by swooping down to catch it.

We did have to adjust the angles of the course, as a 90 degree turn proved too much for even a cheetah to handle. They were so intent on catching the lure that when it changed direction, they carried on going straight for a while before they noticed the lure had gone off in another direction. *Carla Conradie*