

D I S T R I B U T I O N   A N D   S T A T U S   O F  

---

C H E E T A H   I N   Z I M B A B W E  

---

By  
  
Vivian J. Wilson  
Chipangali Wildlife Trust, Zimbabwe  
  
and  
  
Member of the Cat Specialist Group of I.U.C.N.  
Member of the Parks and Wildlife Board of Zimbabwe

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Why a Survey of the Cheetah in Zimbabwe?

At a meeting of the Parks & Wildlife Board held in Harare in November 1985, Dr. G. Child, then Director of the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Management, submitted a Board Paper "A case to permit the hunting of cheetah by high paying foreign sportsmen". See Appendix "A".

The position of the cheetah as a predator of domestic livestock was discussed and there was also a suggestion that in some areas of Zimbabwe, cheetah numbers had increased considerably over the last few years and the species was becoming a problem by preying on domestic livestock.

However, it was agreed that as very little is known about the cheetah in Zimbabwe, and even its distribution and status was not adequately known, a detailed survey should be undertaken.

It was therefore agreed that on behalf of the Parks & Wildlife Board, I would undertake the survey of the distribution and status of this animal in Zimbabwe. In addition, information on its role as a predator of domestic livestock should be investigated and data collected on its natural prey and its feeding habits, its breeding season and numbers of young born, numbers seen together, etc.

### 1.2. Questionnaire Forms Printed (See Appendices "B", "C" and "D").

After the Board meeting and on my return to Bulawayo, and following discussions with the Director of National Parks and Wildlife Management and the Chairman of the Parks Board, I had thousands of two different questionnaires printed, together with an explanatory letter. I was about to distribute these questionnaires to ranchers etc., when it was reported by the Chief Ecologist, Dr. D. Cumming, that the Research Branch of National Parks already had a co-ordinator of cheetah ( Mr. G. Sharp), who had been looking into the very same problem since 1980.

In February 1986, I wrote to the Chairman of the Board seeking clarification on whether the survey should be continued or not and Dr. C. Saunders replied on 12th March 1986, indicating that Mr. G. Sharp and I should work together on the project. (See his letter, Appendix "E").

### 1.3. Visit to Gary Sharp at Chipinda Pools

As advised by Dr. Saunders, I visited Mr. Sharp at Chipinda Pools in April 1986, and we agreed on a joint plan of action.

I then commenced with my part of the survey and concentrated on the Midlands, West Nicholson and the North-western parts of Zimbabwe, and Gary Sharp concentrated on the S.E. lowveld. However, even though Gary Sharp was responsible for the S.E. lowveld, I did send questionnaires to some of the ranchers in his area, in order to obtain an overall picture of the distribution of cheetah in Zimbabwe.

It was agreed that we would both submit preliminary reports on our respective areas and that the final report for recommendations to Government would be a joint one by Gary Sharp and I.

This paper therefore represents a report on the areas covered by myself together with my own recommendations.

In order to obtain a clearer picture of the cheetah situation in Southern Africa as a whole, I visited South West Africa/Namibia in July 1987 to have a look at their cheetah problem and also visited the De Wildt Cheetah Breeding Centre near Pretoria.

## 2. THE CHEETAH

As a result of a considerable amount of work done in South West Africa/Namibia and now our own preliminary survey in Zimbabwe, it is clear that these two countries presently support the last remaining large and healthy "free" cheetah populations in Africa.

In South West Africa/Namibia it is suggested that 95% of the cheetah population occurs on private land whereas in Zimbabwe it is felt that perhaps about 80% of the entire population is on private land.

Cheetah are extremely shy and secretive animals, especially on farm land where they are hunted continually, and even though the species is diurnal in nature, it is very seldom seen.

From work done by Mr. D. Morsbach in S.W.A./Namibia, it was found that males have a home range of ca. 800 km<sup>2</sup> and females almost double that size at 1 500 km<sup>2</sup>, and that the home ranges shifted from year to year. It is also known that cheetah moved considerably from one farm to the next and very seldom remained in the same area for long. However, females with small cubs would remain in the same area for several months until the cubs were large enough to move with them.

Females are generally solitary animals but do remain with their cubs until they are about 18 months of age, at which time the males in the litter would go off by themselves and females would separate, thus becoming solitary and breeding animals.

Males on the other hand form 'batchelor' groups and these would remain together as a group of which one or more would mate with a female in oestrus. Males were either solitary or more usually consist of groups of from 4 - 7 animals.

In Zimbabwe the main natural prey of the cheetah is thought to be the young and sub-adults of the larger antelope, such as kudu, sable, tsessebe, and occasionally even zebra. Also immature and adult reedbuck, duiker, steenbok, impala and warthog. They will also feed on hares and game birds and a wide variety of smaller species. However, the prey species taken depends entirely on the size of the cheetah group and the availability of food.

In National Parks and Game Reserves, cheetah numbers are lower in areas where large predators, such as lion, leopard and hyena occur as these carnivores are not only competing predators, but they will also catch, kill and eat cheetah whenever possible.

Map 1 shows the distribution of cheetah in Zimbabwe. At a first glance it appears as if cheetah occur in several distinct populations or areas in Zimbabwe. However, at the present time and with the limited amount of ground covered by the survey, it will not be possible to say if this is in fact an accurate assessment of the distribution of cheetah in the country, and a lot more field work is necessary.

It is also very evident from the completed questionnaire that while cheetah do occur in fair numbers on some of the larger ranches, the greater majority of ranches in the country do not have cheetah at all.

92% of the farmers completing the questionnaire indicated that cheetah moved from their farm to adjoining ones and 17 farmers had reported to me personally that cheetah pass through both game and cattle fences without difficulty. In the case of game fences where the lower wire strands are very close together, the cheetah will climb up the fence and then squeeze through the fence where the strands are sufficiently wide enough apart.

#### 4.1.1. Southern Zimbabwe Lowveld

In the southern parts of Zimbabwe, forty one farmers reported the presence of cheetah on their properties, with an estimated population of 651 cheetah. (See Table 1).

After visiting many of the farms in the area and after discussions with dozens of farmers who know the area very well, it is evident that the 651 cheetah must be an exceptionally high figure.

We know for instance that there are very few cheetah on Nottingham and Sentinel ranches, and yet a figure of 45 animals is given. The same applies to many other farms.

We also know that cheetah move a great deal from one farm to the next and so the same few animals or groups are seen by several different farmers.

I would suggest that there is not more than a total of 250 cheetah in the entire southern parts of Zimbabwe.

#### 4.1.2. Midlands

Cheetah occur on at least 20 ranches in the Midlands area, and according to the questionnaire, the group size ranges from 0 or 'not sure' to a maximum of 12 animals, with a total population of 135 cheetah (Table 2).

The writer spent many days in this area and after questioning the owners/managers of the various ranches where cheetah are known to occur, is convinced that the cheetah is not as great a problem in the area as many people purport it to be.

As a result of continually moving from one ranch to the next, the same animals are often seen by several different farmers. Consequently, and again as is the case of the lowveld, the writer is of the opinion that the total cheetah population in the entire area must be less than 30 animals, even though returned questionnaires show the numbers to be 135 animals.

The majority of ranches did not regard cheetah as a problem. However, one farmer (Seymour-Smith) regarded cheetah as a nuisance even though he does not have cattle on his ranch or suffer any cattle losses. He did, however, feel that cheetah kill many of his sub-adult antelope.

#### 4.1.3. North-Eastern Zimbabwe

Completed questionnaires were returned from 29 farmers in this part of Zimbabwe in the area between the Harare/Chirunda road and the Harare/Mtoko road.

There were three 'possible' sightings of single cheetah in the Chinhoi area but in all cases there appeared to be some doubt about the information. One can therefore very safely say that if there are any cheetah at all in that part of the country, they must be very rare indeed - or possibly vagrants.

#### 4.1.4. North-Western Zimbabwe

Cheetah were reported from the following farms in the area:

1.	H.P. Bennie,	Hankano Ranch	4 cheetah
2.	H.A. de Vries,	Sikume Estates	6 cheetah
3.	D. Steffen,	Umkombo Ranch	10 cheetah
4.	A.J. Chatham,	Lugo Ranch	2 cheetah

There is also evidence that they occur throughout the Forest Reserves and several other farms in the area west of the Victoria Falls/Bulawayo road between Hwange National Park and the Zambezi River.

Returned questionnaires indicate a total population of ca. 30 cheetah on private land in the area. However this figure does not include the Matetsi Safari area and the Zambezi and Hwange National Parks and the Forest Reserves.

### 4.2 STATE LAND

#### 4.2.1. Hwange National Park

From evidence obtained from the staff of National Parks and from personal observations, it was found that cheetah occur in very few of the National Parks of Zimbabwe and it is only in the Hwange National Park that a secure population exists. Wilson (1975) estimated the population to be ca. 80 cheetah in 1973, and in spite of many sightings by tourists and the staff of the National Parks, there appears to be little evidence to suggest that it is any higher today.

I have visited the park continually, and at least 3 - 4 times a year since 1973, and on only one occasion have I seen cheetah recently. (December 1986 when 6 males were seen at Shumba Pan).

There is evidence that leopard prey on cheetah and spotted hyena could well represent a threat to the species in the Park.

Competition with the larger carnivore, e.g. lion, leopard and spotted hyena, must be considered as a real threat to cheetah and it is unlikely that the population will get any higher in the foreseeable future.

The cheetah population in the Hwange National Park should therefore be considered to be approximately 80 animals, while Mr. Gavin Best (Warden at Sinamatella) feels that there are not more than 12 cheetah in the entire Sinamatella area of the Park.

#### 4.2.2. Matetsi Safari Area/Kazuma National Park/Zambezi National Park

According to Mrs S.L. Worsley (Ecologist at Matetsi) cheetah are fairly common in the southern half of the Matetsi area, favouring the open grassland like Kazuma Pan and the large vleis on Units 3, 4 and 5. (See Map 2). There are also sightings of cheetah outside the Matetsi Safari and protected areas and they are known to occur on the Matetsi River Ranch and near the Fuller Forestry Headquarters on Waterford vlei.

In the northern parts of the Matetsi area along the Zambezi there are very few sightings. They have been seen on Westwood vlei, on Unit 7, along the Zambezi River in the Zambezi National Park and near the Kazungula flood plain.

Mrs S.L. Worsley (pers. comm.) estimates the Matetsi cheetah population to be ca. 60 animals and feels it is higher than the Hwange National Park population. She therefore feels that there are less than 60 cheetah in the entire Hwange National Park where I estimate the population to be about 80 animals. However, Ecologist Booth estimates the population of cheetah in Matetsi to be in the region of 100 animals, which is 40 more than suggested by Mrs Worsley.

The Matetsi area is one of the very few places in Zimbabwe that is known exceptionally well and is being thoroughly covered by two full time ecologists and even in this small area there is a difference of opinion ranging from 60 to 100 cheetah. This in itself is important as it shows how difficult it is to obtain accurate data on cheetah numbers.

Other data for the Matetsi area is as follows:

- a) Mr. Green Toto (Unit 6) Katombora Safaris, says " ± 30 cheetah on concession".
- b) Mr. Peter Johnstone (Unit 3) Rosslyn Safaris, says "cheetah come and go", and "kill my game".
- c) Mr. Piet Hougaard (Unit 4) Victoria Falls Hunters, says " ± 20 sightings in past six months".
- d) Mr. Piers Taylor (Unit 1) Trophy Hunters Africa, says "10 cheetah on concession".

It is interesting to note that the research staff in the area suggest that there could not be more than 2 - 3 cheetah on the concession occupied by Mr. Toto (Unit 6), where he says there are at least 30 animals.

#### 4.2.3. Matobo National Park

There are occasional sightings of cheetah in this National Park and surrounding hills.

The population in the entire area cannot be more than about 5 animals.

There are also occasional records of single females on the Matopos Research Station.

4.2.4. Chizarira & Matusadona National Parks & Chete, Chirisa Safari areas

Cheetah occur in both National Parks but as there are very few sightings it is impossible to give an estimate of population size. Again it would appear as if the population is very low. They have also been recorded in the Chete/Chirisa safari areas.

The entire population in the mid-Zambezi area along the shore of Lake Kariba indicates that there may be about 10 - 20 animals in the valley.

4.2.5. Mana Pools & Lower Zambezi

In the Mana Pools National Park and surrounding area there appears to be a very small number of cheetah.

Mr. Steven Pope (Chipembire Photo Safaris) feels there are less than 20 in the area and that he was the first person to record cheetah at Nyamatusi Plain (Mana Pools) in 1982.

Senior Ranger Andy Hunter says "there is a family of cheetah near the Chewore River mouth which was 6 in 1986, now only 2 seen - probably high predation disturbance and competition may be cause of reduced numbers".

4.2.6. Gonarezhou

Sherry (Departmental Records) estimated the population of cheetah in 1976 to be ca. 20 animals.

CONCLUSIONS

Unfortunately, due to commitments with many other projects here in Zimbabwe and elsewhere in Africa, it has not been possible to devote as much time to the cheetah survey as I would have liked.

However, I did manage to travel extensively in Zimbabwe and visited many of the farms where cheetah were a problem and also discussed the issue with many farmers, conservationists, biologists, government officials etc.

There is no doubt about it, that a great number of farmers are no longer prepared to have cheetah on their farms as they say that the species is of no economical value to them. As a result many cheetah are killed illegally and buried.

In some areas of Zimbabwe, and especially in the lowveld, (S.E. and S.W.) cheetah numbers appear to be increasing and are becoming a real nuisance.

It appears as if this increase of cheetah has been brought about by several factors, namely:

1. Reduction of large carnivores in the way of lion, leopard and hyena and therefore the only enemy of the cheetah is man.
2. Higher survival rate of cheetah cubs as a result of less predators and more food and considerable bush encroachment in some areas.

3. A large number of cattle and game fences increases the hunting success of cheetah where they have been seen chasing game into such fences in order to catch them.
4. Bush encroachment together with the large number of thickly wooded rocky outcrops have provided ample protection for the cheetah and consequently their cubs.
5. The hunting and disturbance that has taken place over the years has made the surviving cheetah more secretive and cunning, and cheetah generally do not return to a kill - which makes control of them even more difficult.
6. Finally, cheetah move vast distances and a group of cheetah or even solitary animals, will have a home range covering hundreds of kilometres. Therefore, once they have killed an animal and fed, they could be on an adjoining farm many kilometres away by the next day.

It was evident during the survey in the field, discussions with many farmers and ranchers, and from the results analysed from the questionnaires, that most people do not have any idea how many cheetah exist on their land at any one time. This is to be expected and quite natural. It is obvious that many farmers exaggerated the number of cheetah on their land - especially when many wished to emphasise that cheetah were a nuisance.

Others exaggerate numbers of cheetah on their land so they could possibly get a permit to hunt cheetah on licence, while some even reported the presence of cheetah on their land - even though they do not exist there.

A farmer who had purchased his farm only a few months previously, but lives in Bulawayo 200 km away, indicated that he had 17 cheetah on the farm and that even though they had not as yet killed any livestock, they would do so in the future. He made it quite clear that he did not want cheetah on his land! After I had discussions with the previous owner (who had lived on the property for 10 years prior to his selling it), and with adjoining land owners, it was evident that no cheetah whatsoever existed in the area anyway.

It was found to be almost impossible to give any accurate figures of cheetah numbers due to many factors, especially as they are so secretive and extensively hunted. Taking all things into account, I am therefore of the opinion that the cheetah population in Zimbabwe can be broken down as follows:

1. N.W. Zimbabwe	ca. 120 cheetah
2. Midlands	ca. 30 cheetah
3. Southern Zimbabwe	ca. 250 cheetah
4. Middle Zambezi Valley	ca. 30 cheetah
5. Gonarezhou	ca. 20 cheetah
6. Other areas	ca. <u>20</u> cheetah

Total: ~~500~~ 470



On the other hand the questionnaires that were returned indicated a total population of ca. 1 000 cheetah.

A very similar situation exists in South West Africa/Namibia. The official figure of cheetah in that country (as a result of a questionnaire sent to farmers) was about 6 000 animals, and yet after a very detailed study carried out by Mr. D. Morsbach, and after capturing and marking many animals and fitting them with radio collars, he estimated the population to be about 2 000 to 3 000 animals. (See Appendix F - which is a photocopy of a letter to me from Mr. Morsbach which is most important and self-explanatory).

More detailed cheetah research in Zimbabwe is essential if we are ever to achieve any meaningful results.

#### DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Cheetah in Zimbabwe are classified as "Specially Protected Species" and as such may not be hunted or killed without authority from the Director of the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Management, and are also an Appendix 1 animal with CITES.

The majority (80%) of farmers who own cattle ranches in Zimbabwe with cheetah present on their land, regard the species as a 'problem animal' and feel that the cheetah is a threat to their livestock and will not tolerate this loss. There are also a small number of game ranchers who view the cheetah as a 'nuisance' as they kill the young and immature wild antelope. They are now keen to preserve game animals as they can see the economical value of game on their land which is used for safari operations.

In addition, many farmers view the cheetah as a predator with no commercial value whatsoever, and as such, is of no benefit to them to allow cheetah to remain on their properties.

Then there is also the continued antagonism of farmers towards the staff of the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Management, and international wildlife authorities, especially CITES, who work to protect the cheetah.

One rancher, Mr B.K. Cawood of Mwenezi wrote to me as follows - and I quote "Deaths of calves since the beginning of December to 25th March 1987 were 15 calves with another five badly mauled" and "In the 1984/85 calving season I lost 32 calves out of a total of 130, over 25%. Is it not time for the 'ardent conservationists' to put their money where their mouths are and help pay for our cost of feeding the cheetah in order to ensure their survival. To be honest, I can no longer afford these losses and will now start destroying all vermin" unquote.

As a result of cheetah having no commercial value, the farmer is of the opinion that the animal has no place on his farm - and he does not want it.

In view of the fact that in Zimbabwe the cheetah is a 'Specially Protected Species' - internationally regarded as an 'endangered species' and is a serious threat to cattle farmers as a result of killing livestock - and has no commercial value to the farmer, many are quietly and illegally killed each year without the authority and knowledge of the National Parks staff.

These animals are disposed of by burying them on the farms and nothing more is heard of the incident.

As a result of this unsatisfactory action an extremely valuable animal and resource is wasted.

After discussing the situation with many people in South Africa, S.W. Africa (Namibia), Zimbabwe and elsewhere, I would like to suggest various measures to conserve the cheetah in this country which we hope will satisfy some of the farmers who are losing cattle to cheetah, and also satisfy international wildlife agencies.

My recommendations are as follows:

1. Specially Protected Species

I believe it would be disastrous to remove cheetah from the 'Specially Protected Species' list as this would appear as if Zimbabwe is not interested or has no concern for such an endangered species. It would not look good in the eyes of the international community. I therefore feel that it should remain a 'specially protected species'.

2. Limited Hunting on Licence on a Quota System

I sincerely believe the farmer who suffers stock losses as a result of cheetah predation should be compensated for such losses and I feel the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Management should allow a limited number of cheetah to be shot on licence to registered safari operators. This could be done on a quota system, worked out by National Parks, and farmers suffering stock losses can apply for a permit to shoot a certain number of cheetah each year. This quota permit system should only apply to the areas of Zimbabwe where there are great stock losses - e.g. in the Mwenezi/Beitbridge/S.E. Lowveld/West Nicholson areas.

~~The Department of National Parks and Wildlife Management should also apply to CITES for a quota so skins of cheetah shot on licence can be imported into the United States, Europe etc.~~

3. Capture of Cheetah

Many farmers and National Parks staff support the idea of capturing problem cheetah instead of destroying them. I recently visited South West Africa/Namibia to see exactly how this is done there, and I am convinced that we can do the same here in Zimbabwe. I would therefore recommend that whenever and wherever possible, cheetah should be captured and used as suggested in No. 4 below.

4. Cheetah Breeding Centre

In view of the fact that there could be a decline in cheetah numbers in Zimbabwe due to the possible issuing of hunting licences, I would recommend the establishment of a cheetah breeding centre. This would ensure the survival of the species in captivity and if a large enough group is established and bred successfully in captivity, they could be re-introduced back into the wild if it was ever necessary to do so.

To this end I would offer facilities at Chipangali Wildlife Orphanage in Bulawayo as a possible breeding centre.

5. Special Cheetah Area

~~I recommend that a large area be set aside for cheetah where no hunting, capturing etc., is carried out and where, even if some stock losses do occur, no licences are issued to shoot the offending cheetah.~~

I believe that the north-western part of Zimbabwe incorporating the area between the Victoria Falls Road and the Botswana border and from the Zambezi River to the southern boundary of the Hwange National Park be considered as that area.

The area should also include the Ngamo and Sikume forest reserves. (See Map 3, Area 1).

6. Research

I would suggest that much more detailed research on cheetah is undertaken. As the behaviour of cheetah can vary in different areas of its distribution - more detailed knowledge in Zimbabwe is required.

I would therefore recommend that two separate areas of investigation be considered:

a) N.W. Zimbabwe: (Map 3 - Area 1)

This area would support an undisturbed cheetah population where an abundance of wild animals exist and a small number of domestic stock.

b) South East & South West Lowveld: (Map 3 - Area 2)

In this area cheetah should be hunted on licence by safari operators, captured for the breeding programme and shot on permit as a stock killer. In other words, an area of maximum utilisation of the species.

7. Permits to Shoot Cheetah which are Stock Raiders: (Map 3 - Area 3).

In view of the very small cheetah population in the Midlands area, I recommend that no safari hunting is allowed. However, if cheetah do kill livestock, a special permit to shoot the offending animal should be issued by the Department - as is the case at the present time.

Vivian J. Wilson

Director - Chipangali Wildlife Trust,

TABLE 1 - WEST NICHOLSON/BEITBRIDGE/MWENEZI/TRIANGLE AREAS

Ref. No.	Name	Name of Ranch	Size of Ranch (Hectares)	Length of residence	No. of Cheetah
1	T. Nicolle	Mt. Orquill & Longueville	13 000	30 years	12
2	B. Steyn	Janee	30 000	9 years	30
3	J.M. Rorke	Ladi	13 000	6 months	10
4	Dudley Rogers	Olympus Block Tshabezi Ranch	8 800 9 100	38 years	12
5	L.E. Stanton	Mashura	14 000	6 years	12
6	Dwala Ranching Company	Dwala	10 000	2 years	20
7	I. du Plessis	Jonsyl	15 000	10 mnths	17
8	Guy Hilton-Barber	Atherstone Nyati	16 000	26 years 5 years	Nil 6
9	J.A. McLellan	Oakley Block	22 000	6 years	?
10	J.R. Watson	Makado	12 000	26 years	4
11	Willie Botha	Driehoek	12 840	27 years	6
12	R. Stringfield	Lemco	500 000		250
13	P.J. Fourie	Fantasie Farm	82 500	6 years	25
13 a	Christo J. Schimper	Edenvale	18 000	15 years	9
14	F.J. van der Sande	Umjanjele Sarahuru Derwoud	13 200 8 385 5 000	Since ? birth	15 7 8
15	H.H. van de Venne	Limburgia	11 421	28 years	9
16	F.B. Brits	Sosonye	4 450	6 years	7
17	B.K. Cawood	Anzac & Excelsior	10 000	7 years	Many
18	R.G. Hawkins	Quagga Pan	5 291	6 years	15
19	A. Fraser	Chipangai Solomon Dorrington	40 000	18 mnths	Lots!
20	W. Mitchell	Lesanth	43 000	30 years	15
21	R. Roth	Kayalami Bea Duwi	15 000 15 000 18 000	5 years	?
22	D.C. Lynn	Mopani	17 000	3 years	16
23	G.A. Viljoen	Turf	8 097	6 years	?

TABLE 1 - WEST NICHOLSON/BEITBRIDGE/MWENEZI/TRIANGLE AREAS (Continued)

Ref. No.	Name	Name of Ranch	Size of Ranch (Hectares)	Length of residence	No. of Cheetah Come/Go
24	H. Boshoff	Malumba	34 000	20 years	10
25	C. Bristow	Maringudzi	5 816	7 years	?
26	G.W.J. Kloppers	Alko & Baobab	8 600	6 years	?
27	C. Bristow	Notttingham	70 000	7 years	15
28	C. Bristow	Sentinel	81 000	7 years	30
29	P. Masango	Arda Kezi	208 519	2½ years	17
30	J. Hunt	Georgie Tuli Meeting Tuli River	23 000	27 years	7
31	L.P. van der Merwe	Botha Rus	14 000	6 mnths	?
32	L.W. Sparrow	Bangala	12 000	1 year	3
33	E. Naude	Maranatha	13 000	2 years	?
34	C.S. Style	Buffalo Range	32 000	3½ years	?
35	L.C. Hallamore	Triangle Ltd.	75 000	8 years	10
36	C.M. Sparrow	Lone Star	30 000	38 years	20
37	B.R. Burbridge	Hippo Valley Estates	60 000	25 years	4
38	R.G. Wilhelm	Mokambi & Stelmarcoe	11 000	4 years	9
39	R.C. Bennett	Chivumburu	14 530	14 mnths	11
40	N. Haddon	Ironwood	30 000	7½ years	6
41	R. Yeatman	Chipimbi	10 500	7 years	4
				Total:	651

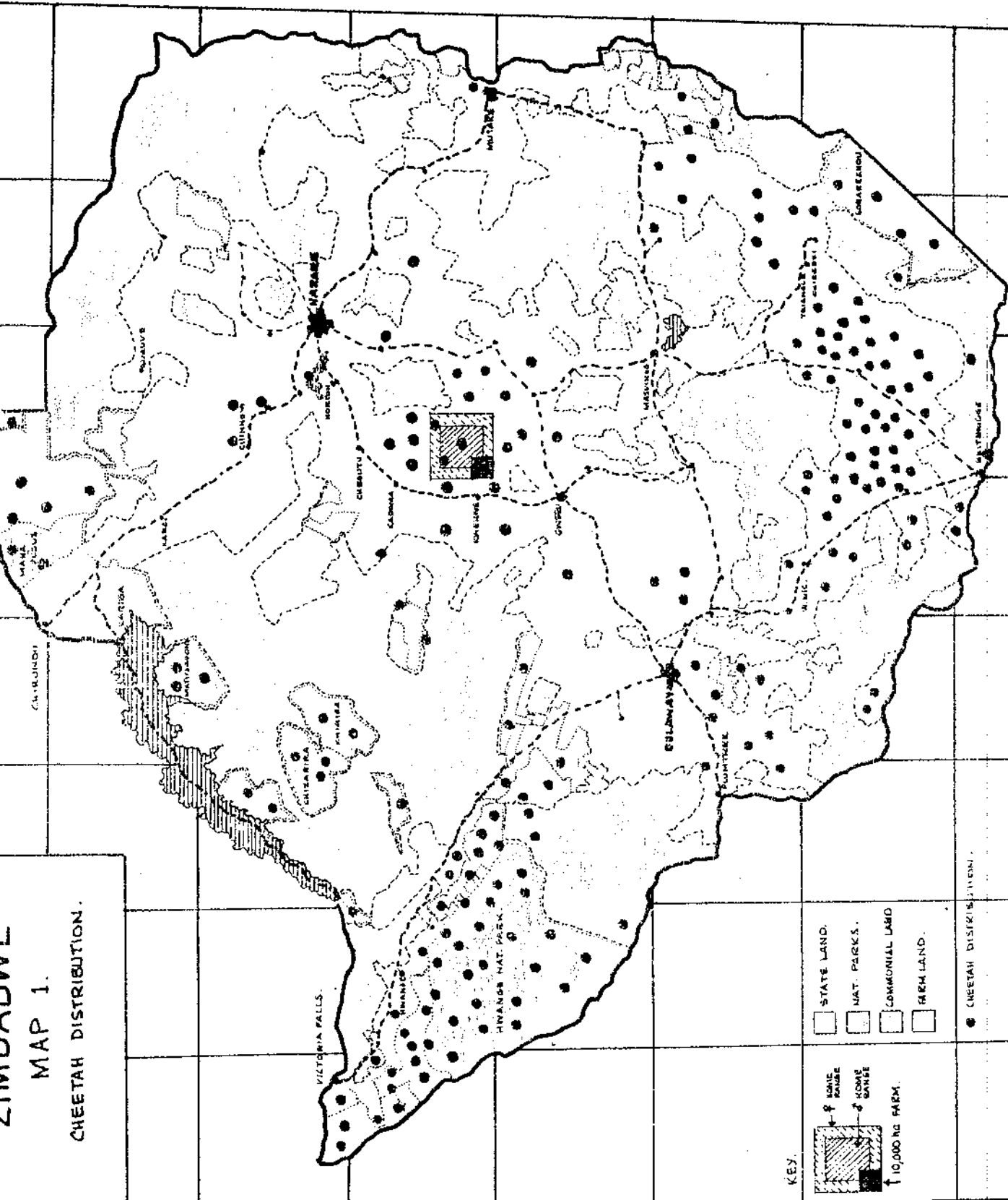
TABLE 2 - MIDLANDS AREA

Ref. No.	Name	Name of Ranch	Size of Ranch (Hectares)	Length of residence	No. of Cheetah
42	Robert D. Swift	Bemthree	7 452	16 years	10
43	Daniel Mead (Manager)	Brompton	13 000	2 years	2
44	Mr David Stahura	Chomureza	7 600	1 year	8
45	A.O. Alcock	Utah & Bembezaan	8 600	15 years	6
46	N.J. van den Bergh	Benholm	4 011	4 years	2
		Borrowdale	1 833	6 years	5
47	F.W. Adams	Bannerlands/Tembevale	6 000	30 years	1
48	Mrs J. Whaley	Makuzi	8 000		10
49	Union Carbide	Union Carbide	46 500	24 years	10
50	Mr J. Zurnamer	East Range/Lorraine/Sebakwe/Pavlova	21 000	1½ years	8
51	R.D. Small	Pitscottie	65 000	22 years	12
52	James Baird	Diamond	14 000	5 years	7
		Mananzwa	5 000		
53	Trevor Rorke	Doreen's Pride	12 000	30 years	3
54	Mr John Kok	Kelvin Grove	13 000	6 years	10
55	P.D. Seymour-Smith	Iwaba	9 811	28 years	10
56	O.F. Lewis	Damvuri	12 239	37 years	12
		Rockbar	5 854		
57	Rodney Tapson	Sultana	23 000	30 years	?
58	Basil Hallam	Lovedale	6 000	67 years	Nil
		Wyldegrove			
59	Paul Davy (Manager)	Milsonia	14 000	4 years	?
		Elephant Hills	7 500		
60	P.J. Burke	Circle G	8 500	23 years	9
61	J.E. Beckett (Pvt) Ltd.	Sanjo	5 000	20 years	10
TOTAL					135






ZIMBABWE

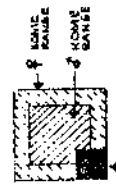
MAP 1.

CHEETAH DISTRIBUTION.

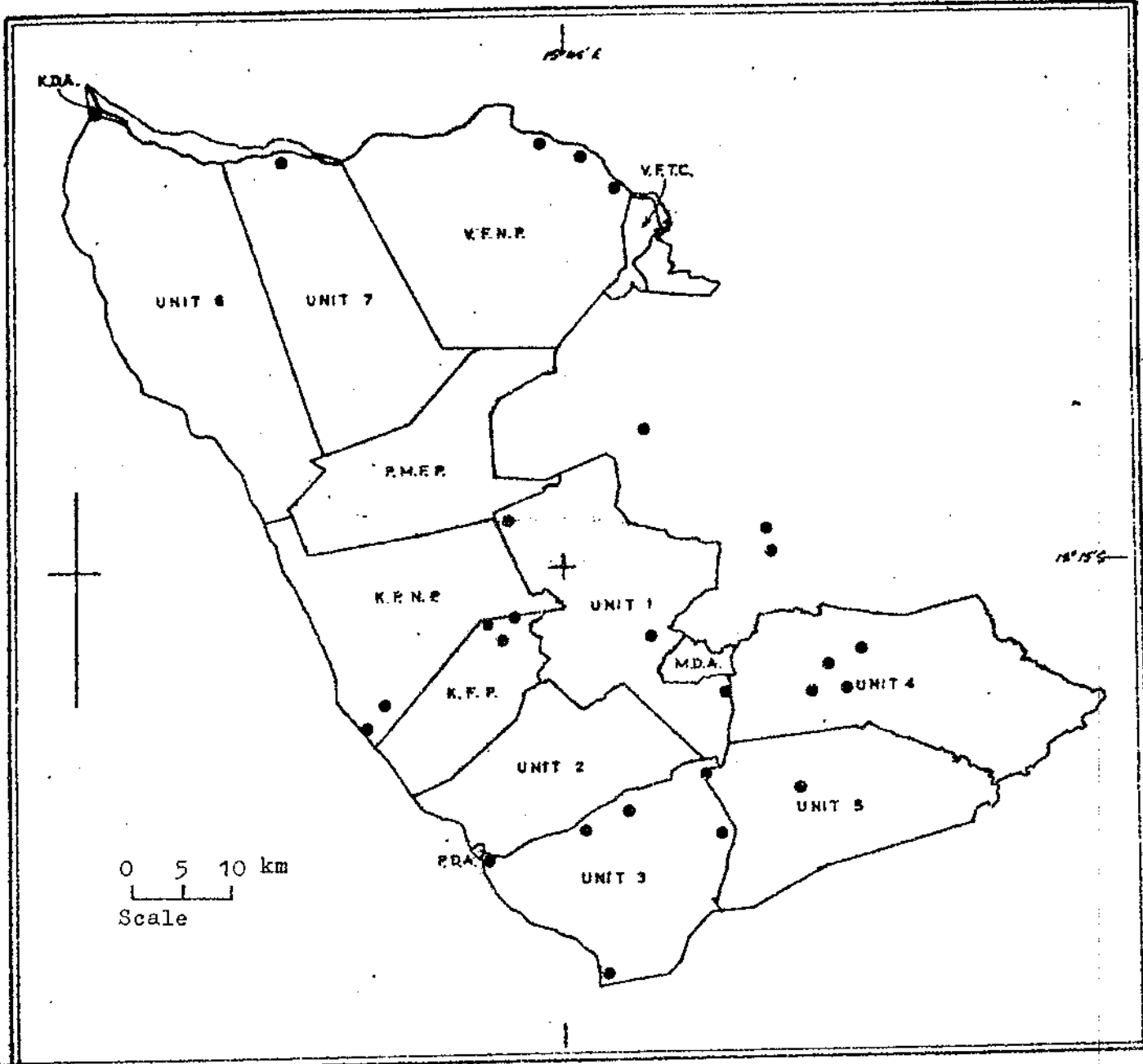


KEY.

-  STATE LAND.
-  NAT. PARKS.
-  COMMONIAL LAND
-  FARM LAND.
-  CHEETAH DISTRIBUTION.



MAP 2

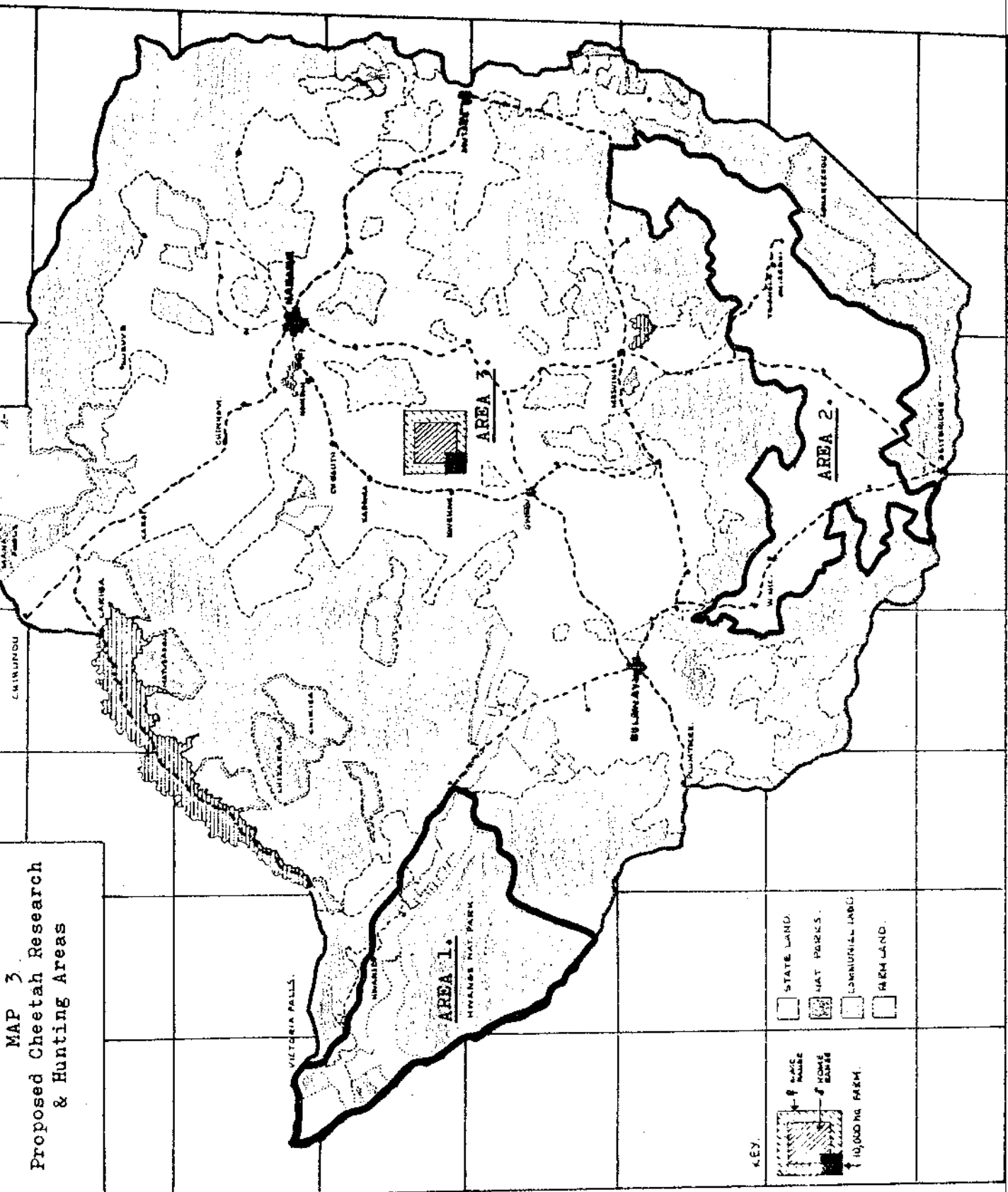


● DISTRIBUTION OF CHEETAH SIGHTINGS IN THE MATETSI PARKS AND WILDLIFE COMPLEX 1985-86.

Information provided by Mrs. Sue Worsley.



MAP 3  
Proposed Cheetah Research  
& Hunting Areas



KEY.

	STATE LAND
	NAT PARKS
	COMMERCIAL FARM
	10,000 HA FARM

BOARD PAPER

A CASE TO PERMIT THE HUNTING OF CHEETAH BY HIGH PAYING FOREIGN SPORTSMEN

Following the drought there has been widespread heavy predation on domestic livestock by hyaena, leopard and cheetah. The hyaena problem seems to be most serious on Communal Land and the Masvingo problem-animal-control units eliminated at least 58 in October alone. There have been few complaints against leopard, but many against cheetah although stock losses, mainly calves, have been heavy due to both species. Cheetah is a Specially Protected Species and some 200 are known to have been destroyed illegally and left to rot on the veld by generally conservation conscious farmers. It has been virtually impossible to obtain evidence against these farmers.

The divergence in landholder attitudes between cheetah and leopard appear to emanate from the difference in legal status of the two species. Whereas farmers have the right to use leopard and can thus compensate for the social cost of having the species on their land, this is not possible in the case of cheetah. As a consequence they tend to be destroyed on sight and this breach of legislation is condoned by public opinion which explains the withholding of evidence against the perpetrators.

Zimbabwe can not afford to forego the loss of potential benefits represented by the wasteful destruction of 200 and perhaps many more cheetah. While less attractive than a leopard as a huntable trophy it is nevertheless a valuable addition to the potential range of animals that could be hunted on many properties. The availability of this additional hunting would go some way to off-setting the financial losses from cheetah predation and to encouraging landholders to tolerate the species.

Cheetah is an Appendix 1 of CITES and it might be wise if hunting of the species is to be permitted to allow only a limited off-take for commercial purposes. To this end it is proposed that Zimbabwe should apply a self imposed quota of no more than 100 skins to be exported from the country in any one year. Exports could then also be limited to no more than one skin per bona fide hunting client per year and could be limited to clients who declare at least \$200 000 on their CITES 9 forms for hunting in this country. This would serve the dual purpose of ensuring that exports are limited to genuine sportsmen and that exports could not promote the spotted-cat skin fur trade. The last is a major fear of animal welfare groups in major market countries.

Whether or not their home countries will permit sportsmen to import cheetah trophies will be a matter of negotiation between the sportsmen and their CITES Management Authorities. If limited controlled exploitation is permitted Zimbabwe would certainly argue in favour of market countries permitting the import of hunting trophies.

Should the Board concur with the suggestion that strictly limited numbers of cheetah should be permitted to be hunted by foreign sportsmen then there are two methods by which this off-take could be regulated. They are:-

1. The species could be retained as a Specially Protected animal and landholders wishing to permit foreign clients could be issued with a permit to take one or two specimens for this purpose. CITES export permits would then be limited to 100 skins from these permit holders, or

2. The species could be delisted as a Specially Protected Species but a high measure of control could still be effected through the control on exports.

While the second alternative may be preferable in the spirit of the Parks and Wild Life Act, 1975, it might lack credibility in the eyes of importing countries. The first method may therefore be preferable, at least while Zimbabwe seeks international acceptance of this limited and restricted trade in cheetah skins and while we gauge landholder reaction to the proposal at home.

In offering its advice the Board should be aware that Zimbabwe is one of a group of range states that are party to CITES which have been criticised by importing countries for being "too use orientated" towards its wildlife. Already we have successfully negotiated the controlled export and acceptability of crocodile and leopard parts and derivatives by importing states and the addition of cheetah might serve to "outlive our welcome".

Against this is that protectionism and attempts to destroy internal trade have failed as is well illustrated by the rhino saga in Africa. This is also well illustrated by the divergent attitudes to cheetah and leopard by landholders in this country, where the social costs of tolerating such predators is perceived to be high by the people best able to conserve them.

The Board's considered advice would be welcomed by the Department.

G.F.P. Child  
DIRECTOR

GFIC/CS

19th November, 1985

APPENDIX "B"

Chipangali Wildlife Trust

P.O Box 1057

BULAWAYO

ZIMBABWE

SURVEY OF THE DISTRIBUTION AND STATUS OF CHEETAH IN ZIMBABWE

At a meeting of the Parks and Wildlife Board held in Harare in November 1985, the position of the cheetah as a predator of domestic livestock was discussed. There was also a suggestion that in some areas of Zimbabwe, cheetah numbers had increased considerably over the last few years and the species was now becoming a problem by preying on domestic livestock.

However, it was agreed that as very little is known about the cheetah in Zimbabwe, and even its distribution and status is not adequately known, a detailed survey should be undertaken.

It was therefore, agreed that on behalf of the Parks and Wildlife Board, I would undertake the survey of the distribution and status of this animal in Zimbabwe. In addition, information on its role as a predator of domestic livestock should be investigated and data collected on its natural prey and its feeding habits, its breeding season and numbers of young born, numbers seen together, etc.

We would therefore, appreciate your participation in this survey and I would be most grateful if you would please be good enough to complete the attached questionnaire and return it to me as soon as possible.

Even if you do not have cheetah on your land, I would still be grateful for a nil return.

This project is sponsored by the Chipangali Wildlife Trust (Zimbabwe) and the World Wildlife Fund (Switzerland) and is being undertaken on behalf of the National Parks and Wildlife Board of Zimbabwe, of which I am a member.

PLEASE HELP BY RETURNING THE ATTACHED QUESTIONNAIRE, TO THE ABOVE ADDRESS, AND I LOOK FORWARD TO HEARING FROM YOU.

Yours very sincerely

VIVIAN J. WILSON

APPENDIX "C"

SURVEY OF THE DISTRIBUTION AND STATUS OF CHEETAH IN ZIMBABWE

Please help by answering the following twenty questions, and return to Chipangali, P O Box 1057, Bulawayo.

1. Your name: .....
2. Postal Address: .....
3. Name of Farm/Ranch/Property: .....
4. Size of Property: .....
5. How long have you lived on the property?: .....
6. Do cheetah occur on the property?: Yes/No \*
7. Approximately number of cheetah on your property?: .....
8. Are cheetah numbers increasing/decreasing/static?: \*
9. Do cheetah prey on your domestic stock?: Yes/No \*
10. How many domestic livestock did cheetah kill in 1985?: .....
11. What species of domestic stock were killed by cheetah in 1985?: (Give details)  
.....  
.....
12. Do brown hyena, spotted hyena and leopard occur on your land?: (Give details)  
.....  
.....
13. Do the above three predators prey on your domestic livestock?: (Give details)  
.....  
.....
14. If the answer to 6 above is no, why do you think there are no cheetah on your land?:  
.....  
.....
15. Are cheetah a nuisance on your land?: Yes/No \*
16. Do cheetah move from your property to adjoining ranches?: Yes/No \*
17. Do cheetah breed on your property?: Yes/No \*
18. Is Wildlife in general plentiful on your land - (Give details)  
.....  
.....
19. Could I please have permission to visit your property?: Yes/No \*
20. If I did visit your property, would I see cheetah?: Yes/No \*

Signature .....

Thank you so much for your co-operation

\* Delete inapplicable.

# CHIPANGALI WILDLIFE TRUST

## CHEETAH SURVEY

1. In my opinion the Cheetah in Zimbabwe has a population status of:
  - (a) ..... abundant
  - (b) ..... satisfactory
  - (c) ..... rare
  - (d) ..... potentially endangered
  - (e) ..... unknown
2. I regard the cheetah as:
  - (a) ..... a nuisance and threat to livestock
  - (b) ..... with indifference
  - (c) ..... a valuable species
3. In my opinion the best **regulated** use of the cheetah in this country is:
  - (a) ..... as a game animal
  - (b) ..... as a fully protected species
4. In my opinion, the **controlled harvest** of cheetah by sport-hunting would have:
  - (a) ..... adverse effects on populations
  - (b) ..... an insignificant impact on populations
  - (c) ..... a positive influence on populations
5. It is my impression that poaching or illegal hunting is currently:
  - (a) ..... significant and increasing
  - (b) ..... significant and steady (not increasing or decreasing)
  - (c) ..... significant and decreasing
  - (d) ..... insignificant
6. It is my opinion that the effect of sport-hunting on cheetah would:
  - (a) ..... curtail poaching/illegal hunting
  - (b) ..... be insignificant on level of poaching/illegal hunting
  - (c) ..... enhance poaching/illegal hunting
7. Concerning the foreseeable future of the cheetah in Zimbabwe I would:
  - (a) ..... prohibit all trophy hunting
  - (b) ..... discourage trophy hunting
  - (c) ..... encourage trophy hunting
8. My experience and/or qualifications in judging the population and conservation-management status of the cheetah include: (check as many as applicable)
  - (a) ..... professional hunting for ..... years
  - (b) ..... game warden or enforcement agent for ..... years
  - (c) ..... wildlife biologist and/or administrator for ..... years
  - (d) ..... ranch manager for ..... years
  - (e) ..... other (Please specify) ..... for ..... years

Additional comments:.....

.....

Name:..... Signature: .....

Address:..... Date: .....

.....

.....

Telephone:.....

PLEASE RETURN TO: V. J. WILSON, P.O. BOX 1057, BULAWAYO, ZIMBABWE.

## THE PARKS AND WILD LIFE BOARD



Ref. \_\_\_\_\_

All communications should be addressed to

The Secretary,

P.O. Box 8365, Causeway

Telephone 707624

The Chairman,

P.O. Box 17, Triangle

Telephone 255

12th March 1986

Vivian J Wilson Esq  
 Director  
 Chipangali Wildlife Trust  
 P O Box 1057  
BULAWAYO

Dear *Viv*The Cheetah Problem

Thank you for your letter of 28th February 1986, and for the enclosures.

I am pleased that you have written to me, as there has apparently been insufficient communication between all those concerned. Let me say right at the outset that myself and my Board would wish your work to continue, but it is just as well to clear the air and get off on the right foot from the start.

My thoughts could be summarised as follows:

- (i) Gary Sharp is the primary co-ordinator for cheetah in Zimbabwe, and has been since 1980, has accomplished some sound preliminary work, and is very much aware of the current problem.
- (ii) As the key man in the Gona re Zhou, our second largest National Park, and as the only Ecologist in the south-east of the country, Gary has a very heavy primary work load. This situation is greatly aggravated by the restricted time and financial and logistic resources at his disposal.
- (iii) We appear to have an escalating "cheetah problem" in various ranching areas, and the Board and the Department are faced by a dilemma which we cannot solve without further information and understanding.
- (iv) We need to know more about our cheetah, about their numbers, distribution, status, breeding biology, feeding and predation habits, and their population dynamics, in relation to trends in climatic conditions, habitat changes, and land use patterns.
- (v) We also need to know much more about the problems, attitudes, and practices of land holders with cheetah on their properties.
- (vi) You, as a member of the SSC cat specialist group of IUCN, have the interest, the credentials, the time, and the financial resources which will enable the necessary field work and closer study in problem areas to be carried out. You also have the sanction of the Parks & Wildlife Board and the Director of National Parks & Wildlife Management to pursue this matter.

Page 2

You therefore must continue, and I would strongly suggest the following:

Your first task should be to visit Gary Sharp at Chipinda Pools, and to discuss a sensible strategy with him.

You should concentrate on the problem ranching areas in the south-east lowveld, the Midlands, and possibly north-west Matabeleland.

When you come to turn your attention to segments of the Wild Parks and Wildlife Estate, where we have a lack of information, but no apparent problem, you will require to obtain from Dr Cumming a research permit, and obviously to liaise and co-operate as fully as possible with David Cumming and his staff, as well as Parks personnel in the management branch. The Director will undoubtedly assist you here.

Gary Sharp will presumably wish to publish in time his findings and his recommendations in respect of Zimbabwe's cheetah population. You would not wish to pre-empt or prejudice this work. I would regard your work and the additional time, expertise, and resources which you will be able to bring to bear on the problem, as not in conflict, but complementary to Gary's work.

I would suggest that you consider a joint publication, as a member of the Parks and Wildlife Board in collaboration with the National Parks Ecologist with primary responsibility for cheetah.

When you visit Gary, I suggest that you should discuss this matter candidly with him. He has sent me a copy of the letter which he wrote to you at about the same time as you wrote to me.

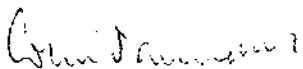
I believe that we are fortunate in having two mature, sincere, and committed people who could assist in providing insight into the fascinating dilemma which we face in respect of our cheetah, and I look forward to a close liaison between all those concerned who are genuinely interested in the problem.

When you do come to the lowveld, please come and stay with me, but get down to see Gary as a matter of priority.

I look forward enormously to hearing of progress in your work, so please get cracking and let me know of anything else which I can do to assist.

Kind regards

Yours sincerely

  
Dr C R Saunders  
CHAIRMAN

cc Dr G F T Child, Director of National Parks & Wildlife Management  
Dr D H M Cumming, Chief Ecologist (Terrestrial)  
G J Sharp Esq, Ecologist (Terrestrial), Chipinda Pools



DEPARTEMENT VAN LANDBOU EN NATUURBEWARING  
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND NATURE CONSERVATION

0/97 (6)

DIREKTORAAT NATUURBEWARING  
EN ONTSPANNINGSOORDE

Navrae / Enquiries: D. Morsbach  
Telefoon / Telephone: (061) 37552/3  
Teleks / Telex: 50-908-3180



DIRECTORATE OF NATURE CONSERVATION  
AND RECREATION RESORTS

Verw. nr. / Ref. no.  
U verw. nr. / Your ref. no.  
12 January 1987

Mr. V.J. Wilson  
Chipaugali Wildlife Trust  
P.O. Box 1057  
Bulawayo  
ZIMBABWE

APPENDIX "F"

Dear Mr. Wilson,

I obtained your address from the IUCN's CAT NEWS.

I was very interested to read in the Aug. '86 edition of the cheetah survey to be undertaken by you and Gary Sharp of the National Parks Department as a result of proposed plans to allow trophy hunting on cheetah.

Here in S.W.A./Namibia we have the identical problem with cheetah.: One of the biggest and healthiest remaining "free-roaming" cheetah populations of which 95% occur on private farmland. Farmers of course view the cheetah as the major problem animal, and kill them in ever increasing numbers.

I have just completed a two-and-a-half year fieldstudy of cheetah on private farmland, with the following three main objectives:

1. What is the population size and status of cheetah on private farmland?
2. What are the actual livestock losses caused ?.
3. What conservation/control methods could be used to ensure the future survival of this population on private farmland ?.

We radio-collared 16 cheetah in a study area of 100 000 hectares of private farmland, and collected information on mainly movement, home-range and diet (natural prey and especially live-stock losses caused)

Appendix "F" Continued

With the basic information on movement, homerange sizes and densities now known (for the first time), I'm busy with a survey to determine a very rough estimate of the population size in S.West. I'm using experienced and older farmers from each farmers association; All our field personnel in each district as well as the stock inspectors from the Veterinary department who visit all farms in the country three times a year. This information is given per "block" (approx. 600km<sup>2</sup>) indicated on a map, rather than per farm. This would then be used with our departmental data on cheetah killed from our permit system, in conjunction with my personal observations from the various districts of the past 2½ years.

As mentioned, these results would still only be a very rough estimate, the best we can do at the moment. Previous estimates were based on questionnaires sent to every farm in the country and these results were taken as the "official" number of cheetah for S.W.A - said to be "6000". However my preliminary estimate at this early stage of the current survey seems to be no more than 2000 - 3000. I am sure you can imagine what "official reaction" I am getting ???! - Nobody believes me !! -

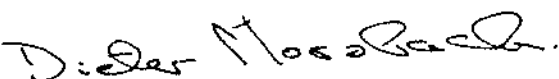
So, I was really very pleased (but with sympathy) to read of you being in the same difficult situation - with the near impossible task (??) of giving a estimate of cheetah numbers for Zimbabwe !!.

How do you go about it ??, are there any other method than to rely on the guesses from the locals plus a good deal of thumb sucking on your part ???.

I would greatly appreciate any communication, comments, advice from you as to the best method for a reliable cheetah survey on private farmland in your situation with cheetahs and the farmers, and especially your thoughts on using trophy hunting as a conservation method for cheetah on private farmland ??.

With best wishes, and the very best of Success with your survey !!! - I'm looking forward to hearing from you,

Yours sincerely



D. Morsbach

Senior Problem Animal Research Officer.

Official communications  
should not be addressed  
to individuals

Telephone: 707624  
Telegrams: "PARKLIFE HARARE"



Ref.: .....  
DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL PARKS  
AND WILD LIFE MANAGEMENT  
P.O. BOX 8365, Causeway  
Zimbabwe

13th October 1988

Mr. Peter Jackson,  
Chairman,  
Cat Specialist Group,  
1172, Bougy-Villars,  
SWITZERLAND.

Dear Mr. Jackson,

Hunting of Cheetah on licence : Zimbabwe.

Following the drought in Zimbabwe several years ago there has been widespread heavy predation on domestic livestock by cheetah.

Cheetah is a Specially Protected Species in Zimbabwe and as a result of preying on livestock many are destroyed illegally and left to rot on the veld and it has been almost impossible to obtain evidence against these farmers.

Experience suggests that cheetah are now far more common in the southern half of the country than they were twenty years ago and as a result of large numbers of domestic animals being killed by cheetah, farmers are no longer interested in preserving this species.

Therefore Zimbabwe cannot afford to forego the loss of potential benefits represented by the wasteful destruction of hundreds of cheetah.

It has been suggested that farmers who have suffered great stock losses as a result of cheetah predation should be permitted to take off a limited number of cheetah for commercial purposes. This could be part of the normal hunting safaris on the private land on which the cheetah occur and exports could be limited to no more than one skin per bona fide hunting client per year; and could be limited to farmers who have stock losses on their land.

The Parks & Wildlife Board intend discussing this subject at its next meeting which is to be held on 17th - 18th November 1988. It is anticipated that a decision will be made at that meeting concerning the hunting of this Specially Protected Species.

Mr. Peter Jackson,  
Cat Specialist Group,  
Switzerland.

- 2 -

13th October 1988

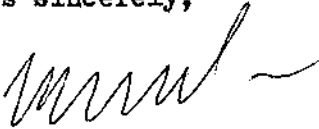
---

The Parks & Wildlife Board would welcome your advice and would be grateful to know how the Cat Specialist Group would view this development? We would also welcome any other suggestions that you may have concerning stock losses by big cats.

\* Enclosed please find photocopies of several letters from farmers in Zimbabwe which clearly shows the extent of the problem in this country.

Please would it be possible to have a reply by 15th November 1988 and we look forward to your valuable advice.

Yours sincerely,



Vivian J. Wilson  
Chairman  
Parks & Wildlife Board.

Encs:

sc