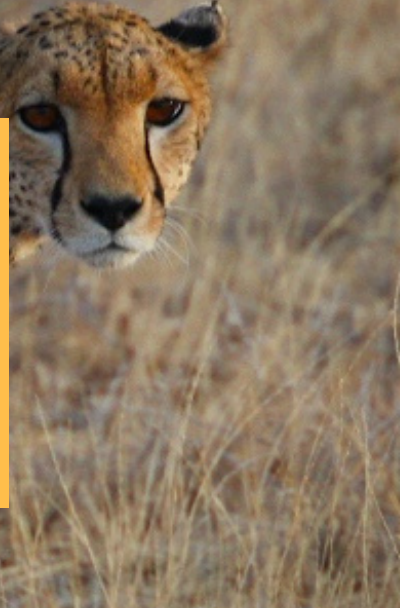


# ACTION FOR CHEETAHS IN KENYA

## NEWSLETTER



### DIRECTOR'S NOTE BY MARY WYKSTRA



In August, we completed a multi-year project to assist first responders assist community members with conflict mitigation. When we initiated our field sites in Salama (2005) and Samburu (2010) our aims were two-fold: 1) Research cheetah status and sustainability in different land use categories – subsistence settlement, pastoral community and commercial landholding, and 2) Mitigate human wildlife conflict and resource competition. ACK Field officers in the Salama site used materials from other predator projects (Namibia, South Africa, Tanzania) to mitigate predator conflict through investigation and documentation. Over time we developed spreadsheets and laminated cards that each officer carried in the field. To reduce the number of loose sheet we combined the resources into one booklet –the Conflict Mitigation Toolbox.

The project formally began in 2018 with Colorado State University student, Sonora Balkam. By 2019, we had our first draft and in 2020 we initiated a training programme with participants from three regions of Kenya that represented audiences for whom the Toolbox was targeting. Participants were given a two-day training course on use of the Toolbox and asked to use it for several months, and then to provide feedback on the functionality of the Toolbox. Through their feedback we updated the book and can now extend the Toolbox to other conservation organizations with need for a detailed means to investigate and provide alternative solutions to conflict. When using the methods and solutions in this Toolbox the level of conflict can be reduced dramatically – in our Salama site less than 20% of the people who received targeted solutions had a repeat conflict.

It is never easy to be the first responder to such conflicts, and our greatest challenge is in reducing the rate of retaliation as non-lethal solutions are discussed with the community. As long as people and wildlife share land, we will never eliminate conflict completely, but we can mitigate it and reduce its impact on people's livelihoods. Congratulations to all who have been involved in the development of this resource.



*ACK Staff with Taita-Taveta Rangers following Conflict Mitigation Toolbox Training*

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## Fieldwork

2022

**Transects:** ACK field officers use walking transects as a method of collecting data within our study site. A transect is a path along a landscape where one systematically records observations. Each field officer conducts four transects of five kilometers in length and 400 meters in width. The transects were selected based on a set of criteria to best represent a robust sample of the area.

In August 2022, five field officers completed 140 transects covering a total distance of 700 km! They record wildlife, domestic stock, and prey species in order to document changes in wildlife trends over time. Using statistical software, DISTANCE, analysis provides long-term trend analysis to evaluate density, abundance and distribution of cheetahs and other wildlife. To date, we collected data between 2014-2022 within the Meibae Community Conservancy to give a good picture of the status of predators and prey in relation to human activities.



*ACK field officer, Dominic Loltianya walking along one of the transects in his area as he surveys for sightings of prey and tracks/sightings of predators.*

## Communities in Conservation

2022

**Action for Cheetahs in Kenya is thankful to the Nkiseu Football Club for their assistance and support. They were given two footballs to practice with.**



Field officer Chris Lentaam thanks the team for their support of cheetah conservation in the Meibae Community Conservancy.





## Ecological Trip

AUGUST 2022

The 40 primary school children who were sponsored in 2021 by Lewa Conservancy (through Disney Conservation Fund) continue implementing what they learned on their trip to Lewa. A follow-up session with the students demonstrated that the opportunity to visit the Lewa conservation area had a significant impact in their enthusiasm for environmental caretaking. The school is optimistic that the students will continue to embrace healthy environmental practices and strengthen their wildlife club. The students now grow maize, millet, sorghum and local vegetables in small gardens at the school while also cleaning up litter around the compound.



*Silango Primary students with their moist garden inspired by Lewa visit and KCHS project.*

## Kalamazoo Christian and Lolokwe High School

JULY 2022

Eighteen Kalamazoo Christian High School (KCHS) students from Michigan (USA) visited Kenya for the first time since 2018. The KCHS group was led by one of their teachers, Steve Dyke and chaperones Brian Keeley and Dr. Randal Dyke. The Lolokwe students were guided by their visit to our Meibae Community Conservancy camp was filled with interactive academic sessions with Lolokwe Mixed High School (LMHS).



The 3-day visit resulted in students working together to prepare a moist garden to support sustainable agriculture, tree planting, a fun football match, and a combined church service. A lifetime memories created as a result. Also, we are grateful to the headteacher Mr. Patrick and his team at LMHS for accepting to host the KCHS team. Finally, we thank the KCHS parents for supporting their children in this year's trip.



# Back to School, Adelaide!

August 2022

Adelaide Moturi (Education and Outreach Coordinator) said a temporary farewell to Kenya and the ACK team to pursue her Masters in Environment at Griffith University in Australia. We all wish her the best as she embarks on her studies. We thank all the well-wishers for the support they accorded her as she was preparing to depart. From Adelaide, she says "Asanteni Sana!"

## Born Free Foundation visit to MCC

SEPTEMBER 2022

ACK's long-term studies on deterrent lights as a tool for mitigating carnivore conflict - spanning 2015-2019 - are yielding interest from other organizations. Following our presentation at a Carnivore Strategic meeting in May 2022, the Born Free Foundation, based at the Meru National Park, were interested in carrying out a pilot program using deterrent lights. Born Free staff members visited ACK for 3 days to learn about our work, and to create benchmarks for their own program. We thank Julia, Mutinda, Saitoti and their project manager, Alois Wambua, for taking the time to visit us and share experiences and ideas on reducing human carnivore conflicts and we look forward to future collaborations with them.

*Born Free team and ACK team at a manyatta in the Lpus area of MCC.*



## Cheetah & Wild Dog Strategic Meeting

SEPTEMBER 2022

Cosmas Wambua (ACK Assistant Director) attended the Range Wide Conservation Planning for Cheetah and African Wild Dogs at Mpala Research Centre, Laikipia 26 to 30 September. Delegates from Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Somalia, Somaliland, South Sudan, and Djibouti represented the home range countries for the two species in Eastern Africa to review the last Cheetah and Wild Dog Strategic Plan. The meeting reviewed activities addressing different objectives and targets from the 2007-2017 Strategic Plan and confirmed the partners working towards the conservation of the two species.





## K9 Program Update

2022

ACK is grateful to K9 Conservationists for wrapping up their visits of the three inspiring young women who are making a name for themselves in the K9 Conservation world – Kayla Fratt, Heather Nootbaar and Rachel Hamre left our team stronger in understanding the power of K9 scent training. They were followed by Colorado State University professor, Jennie Willis who added additional K9 behavior skills to our programme. Together with previous consultants the team is well rounded and spent the months of August and September brushing up their skills and conducting practice searches on a larger scale in the Meibae Community Conservancy. Our gratitude to all of our current and past supporters can not be adequately expressed. Visit our [Shopify Website](#) to continue supporting the ACK Scat Dogs Saving Cheethahs.

## Fall Fundraising Tour

AUGUST - SEPTEMBER 2022

ACK Director, Mary Wykstra, visited the US for the first time since the Covid Pandemic. After three years off from the fall tour, we were honored by the support we received at various institutions. Mary attended the Aquarium and Zoo Association conference in Baltimore, Maryland where she met up with colleagues and re-kindled support for our programs.



*Mary Wykstra with CaLL board Treasurer Bob Cincneros (Curator - Utah's Hogle Zoo), Adrienne Crosier (Cheetah SSP and SAFE program coordinator) and Anne Schmidt-Küntzel (CCF cheetah geneticist).*



## Upcoming...

IN 2023

Follow us on Social Media to stay up-to-date with our current events and fundraisers.

Follow our Careers in Conservation networking events [here](#).

**Look for our Silent Online Auction coming May 7 - June 4, 2023!**

Now accepting donations through Venmo!

@CALL-ACTION4CHEETAH



## ACK Mission

ACK aims to promote the conservation of cheetahs in Kenya through research, awareness and community participation. ACK works closely with local wildlife authorities and land holders to develop policies and programmes which support wildlife conservation and human livelihoods for the long term development of sustainable human and wildlife zones.

ACK is a non-profit project working in affiliation with: Cheetah Conservation Fund, Kenya Wildlife Service, and the University of Nairobi.

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[www.actionforcheetahs.org](http://www.actionforcheetahs.org)