

CHEETAH CONSERVATION FUND - KENYA

Newsletter

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KENYA CHEETAH PROJECT AFFILIATIONS

Mary Wykstra, CCF Kenya



Tsavo cheetah photo by Cherie Schroff.

2008 has been an exciting year for CCF in Kenya. Data from our first seven years guides the direction of our programmes and the launch of new partnerships for the benefit of the Kenyan cheetah and the people with whom the cheetah shares their land.

In 2007 the CCF Kenya focus was in evaluating the areas in which cheetah are present. Early in the year a National Wild Dog and Cheetah Strategic Plan was drafted in conjunction with wild dog and cheetah experts from Uganda, South Sudan, Ethiopia, Kenya and Tanzania. The National Survey was underway at the time, so only about half of the country had been evaluated at the time of the February meeting.

September 2007 marked the completion of the second priority regins which included Turkana, Samburu, Laikipia, Isiolo, Meru, Marsabit, Tsavo, Taita, Lamu, Garissa, Tana River, Wajir and Mandera. Even as the data is still under analysis, it was clear as to locations where cheetah populations still have a hold in their historic rangelands. Thus, as proposals came in for projects in Tsavo and Samburu, the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) agreed to permission for two projects to be affiliated with CCF and KWS. At the same time, CCF also endorsed the projects and both Principal Investigators launched their search for funding to support the studies they plan to initiate.



Chifuyu Beckett will focus here evaluation on cheetah stress and adaptations to human factors. Thus here primary study area will use the baseline information that CCFK has collected since 2003 in the Salama region. She will be assisting CCFK in launching a simultaneous evaluation of cheetahs in the Samburu region.

I will be the Principal Investigator for the Samburu region. As this is primarily National Reserve, Conservancy and Pastoral land we expect that cheetah behaviours and social structure will differ. Stress levels will be evaluated from fecal material, thus the researchers and scouts will be collecting fecal materials at the same period of time as the radio collars are put on to cheetahs. A first attempt in collaring will begin in August 2008.

The Tsavo area was also noted for frequent cheetah sightings. Cherie Scroff has been developing a study which will evaluate the effectiveness of direct cheetah counts in order to test spoor (track) and camera trapping methods for estimating cheetah numbers and density.



Cheetah spoor.

Cosmas will continue working with CCFK now that he has completed his Masters. He will be focusing on the monitoring of cheetah prey in relation to human settlements in Salama. With his skills in mapping and his new skills in rangeland management – Cosmas will manage the CCFK database and link the three areas of study together for the benefit of ecosystem conservation.

While the Salama programme is ongoing from our work in the Machakos Wildlife Forum since 2003, the launch of work in Samburu and Tsavo will be conducted from 2009-11 under the current plan. KWS has also used their baseline work in the Masai Mara to launch a new cheetah programme this year. The issue of mange was listed as a major threat to the cheetahs in the Mara. KWS Senior Veterinary Officer, Francis Gakuya, has begun his PhD work in evaluating the mange issue as it relates to sheep, domestic dogs, Thompsons gazelle and cheetah.

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NEXT ISSUE: Cheetah programs launched in Samburu, Mara, Tsavo and Salama

Issues 1-3 available on the www.cheetah.org web site!



RESEARCH

Research is the backbone on which policies and wildlife management decisions are made. CCFK research works with stakeholders to gather and analyze information on cheetahs and the issues that face their survival in Kenya.



CHEETAH AND LION SCOUTS

By Mary Wykstra, CCF Kenya

SALAMA

*Left: Kisenge, Jimmy, Mary, Pius & Lumumba – scouts use bike, camera, GPS & phone to collect data
Right: Jimmy and Chifuyu use tracking guide charts to identify predator spoor.*



Thanks to grants from the St. Louis Zoo and Classic Escapes Safari's the CCF Kenya staff took on three new part time staff. Cheetah Scouts, Joseph Kisenge, Pius Mutila, Jimmy Kitange were hired in the Salama region in May 2008. Among over 30 applicants these three stood out as the best for the job. Each are well connected in the community, have a strong desire to conserve animals in the region and a willingness to practice skills in tracking and community work.

With their track and conflict guides and training, these men will assist CCFK as liaisons with people in the areas of cheetah distribution on the Kiu, Aimi ma kalungu and Malili ranch subdivisions. Lumumba Mutiso remains the Community Liaison Officer, and with the help of the scouts will continue to collect data on cheetah sightings and livestock losses. The entire study area is now divided into four sections. This allows each person to cover a reasonable amount of space and to assist people in understanding the need for good livestock management.



SAMBURU

*Left: Samburu Reserve Rangers and Naturalists look through materials after a lion and cheetah seminar in Samburu.
Right: The Ewaso Lions Project team – Shivani Bhalla on right.*



Shivani Bhalla assisted with the National Cheetah Survey through funding and support via Elephant Watch and Save the Elephants in 2006. Samburu and Isiolo Reserve rangers were also allocated to assist in the surveys of Sambur, Isiolo, Turkana and Marsabit districts. The other survey partners with CCFK were East African Wildlife Society and Kenya Wildlife Service. The Samburu and Isiolo regions stood out in the survey as having a strong cheetah population. Partnerships with Save the Elephant's Ewaso Tracking Project and with the Ewaso Lions Project allow CCFK the opportunity to expand studies into a region where there is less permanent settlement and greater biodiversity.

Comparisons and contrasts with social and behavioural adaptations in these areas will assist in decisions on cheetah management and problem animal control.

Shivani is currently conducting her PhD on lions in the Samburu and Isiolo Reserve and surrounding region. She launched her studies in the region with an awareness seminar for Reserve rangers and guides. CCFK presented information on cheetahs at the same seminar. Lion Scouts were hired in the Westgate Conservancy and were also trained in cheetah track identification. The scouts and Shivani's research assistant, Rafael, also collect data on cheetahs to assist in baseline information in targeting cheetahs for the joint carnivore research in the Ewaso Tracking Project.

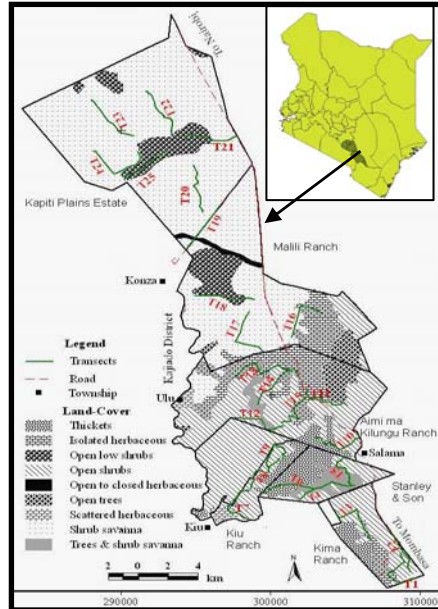
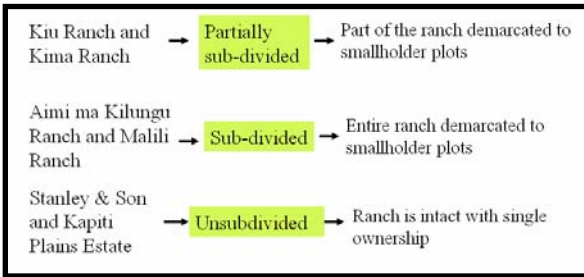


RESEARCH

MONITORING GAME

By Cosmas Wambua, Research Assistant

Wildlife transect counts were conducted in six ranches straddling both the Machakos and Makueni Districts of Kenya between October 2007 and March 2008. These farms were categorized based on the amount of sub-division that has occurred.



Unattended livestock are more common on the Malili plains, leaving them open for theft and opportunistic attacks from predators.

The results reveal that new settlements in the sub-divided ranches were highly influenced by availability of water and proximity to transportation infrastructure.

Wildlife encounters showed no seasonal difference, however, night game counts revealed that cape hare, duiker and steinbuck had higher night encounters among all the prey species considered to be preferred by the cheetah in some of the farms. More duiker and dikdik were recorded in the unsubdivided ranches during daytime compared to the partially sub-divided and sub-divided ranches. Overall wildlife sightings more than tripled during the night in ranches that had been sub-divided more than five years ago. This suggests that even animals that are not necessarily nocturnal became active at night as levels of human activity decrease in the partially sub-divided farms.

There was variation in the density of wild animals in three categories of the farms. The unsubdivided farms had a mean density of 9.55 animals/km² and 11.13/km², the sub-divided farms had a mean density of 6.87 animals/km² and 9.12/km², and the partially sub-divided farms had a mean density of 4.84/km² and 4.32/km² for dry and wet season respectively.

The results from this study provide baseline information on wildlife densities and distribution in the study area. This information will be used in evaluating the long term implications of sub-division of large ranches on wildlife as the game counts continue through 2009.

My gratitude's go to Cheetah Conservation Fund for making it possible for me to successfully finish my Masters degree in Biology (Ecological and Systematic Zoology) at the Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia. Thanks also go to farm owners and managers who permitted us to conduct the study on their farms.

Preferred Cheetah Prey (PCP) sightings Day vs. night

PCP Species	Day	Night
Cape hare	2 (1)	217 (99)
Dikdik	7 (13.2)	46 (86.8)
Duiker	18 (15.3)	100 (84.7)
Grant's gazelle	40 (57.1)	30 (42.9)
Impalla	21(46.7)	24 (53.3)
Reedbuck	8 (34.8)	15 (65.2)
Steinbuck	19 (18.8)	82 (81.2)
Thomson's gazelle	46 (43)	61 (57)
Total	161	575



Left: Duiker, although shy these were often seen on night counts. Right: Overuse of dams cause erosion and silting thus decrease the life of the water points.



COMMUNITY



DIP UPDATE

Mbukile Ngukile members receive thanks for their commendable dip management from the acaricide provider through promotional material and a face lift for the dip.



In the end of 2007, data from dip interviews and the dip records were compiled for programme review. Since their opening at the end of 2006, each dip was asked to show transparency and accountability using the tools provided in management workshops. Dip managers were trained on the purpose of tick control and the use of acaricide prior to the 2006 renovations at the four dip site.

At the July 2007 workshop each dip spent a few hours analyzing their shortcomings and identifying solutions to their Management issues. In December 2007 and in February 2008, the managers were asked to present the results achieved in the first year of operation. The two dips which could show the strongest improvement and most accountable management were the Mwanyani (Mbukile Ngukile Self Help Group) and N'gaamba (N'gaamba Self Help Group). A private donor gave incentive to these dips

for ongoing improvements in their management through funding for fencing. The fences will aid in management of the livestock and protection from stray cattle, goats and sheep as well as improving the security at the dip sites.

The Marwa and Kima dips were asked to continue making improvements within their management prior to release of the funds for their fencing. In all cases, the committees were also asked to assure community participation in their management and improvements. The sustainability of the cattle dips lies in the hands of the community representatives.

In the coming year, seminars on livestock productivity will be included in the programme. Partners through local and international livestock programmes are invited to assist in bringing information and ideas to the communities.

CHEETAH TREES



The goal of the project is to help communities understand that the environment which supports carnivores is the same environment which sustains the livelihoods of the people. The understanding and support of local people is key if these efforts are to succeed and benefit both wildlife and the communities. Just like healthy livestock, a healthy environment also improves

productivity. Land divisions in the last 20 years have caused deforestation and reduced water and grazing supplies.

Through support of Eco-Sys (www.ecosysaction.org), 1,500 trees have been planted From March through May at four schools, two of the most successful dips and one residence. Indigenous *Acacia sp.*, *Lucena sp.*, *Cassia saimea*, *Balanites sp.* and native *Croton*, *Neem* and *Jacaranda* were among the species planted. These trees are just a portion of the 100,000 trees pledged by Eco-Sys. Mike Wambua from the Kima tree nursery has assisted through giving advice to the tree caretakers. After one year, the most successful dip will receive safety equipment and supplement to their acaricide needs and some children from the school with the most success will be given a field trip to visit schools in Samburu where trees were planted through the Ewaso Lions Project. Through this project CCFK aims to show the community that conservation pays by assisting with the knowledge and understanding of the entire ecosystem which supports cheetahs.

*Left: Tree Nursery manager Mike Wambua teaches school children the importance of trees.
Right: EcoSys Director Chritian Pilard plants trees with community members.*



COMMUNITY

A RESIDENTS PERSPECTIVE

Joshua Mwai, Kiu Resident

I have lived in the Kiu Ranch for almost 3 years, since 2005. Since I came to the area I received reports about cheetahs. The reports were not good, but bad news to the residents who began arriving in 2003 to settle their deeded plots. I was told that cheetahs eat domestic sheep and goats.



MY OWN FINDINGS:

Due to the above mentioned reports I was interested in cheetahs to do a physical study to know whether it was true or not. I have been paying courtesy calls to the areas where cheetahs spend most of their time that is Aimi ma Kilungu, Malili and parts of Kiu Ranch. Most of the time cheetahs spent their time in Kamaku Hills in Aimi ranch and I have found that the above areas are historical homelands of cheetahs since the creation of the earth and also their territory. Another character of cheetah is that they are very kind comparing to other wild animals e.g. lion, leopard, hyena. Also cheetahs are very fast it can cover almost 70mph. When it gets its food it is forced by other carnivores to leave its prey. That is why cheetahs have chosen to live in ranches near people and away from National Parks.

MIGRATION

Cheetahs migrate as from February to May every year towards New Astra, Kapiti and Leukenya and come back from June and July. It starts moving when it realizes that their prey have moved due to the dry season in search of greener pastures.

WHEN CHEETAHS CAUSE DAMAGE

Cheetahs start causing damage as from December to March when the prey move away. Remaining prey is poached by illegal actions. Cheetahs target the brown and red goats or sheep assuming it is gazelle. Cheetahs also cause damage to shoat kids when you try to play or joke with them.



CAUTION

If illegal poachers can stop killing gazelles and other prey eaten by the cheetahs we can experience a more peaceful environment and live with cheetahs without conflict.

THANKS

I wish to thank the CCFK team headed by Mary and the entire fraternity of KWS for their efforts to make sure that cheetahs and other wild animals survive!

NOTE FROM CCFK

Thank you Joshua for caring about the cheetah and other wildlife! Many of the new residents in the area were not aware that cheetahs, prey and other predators were living in the area in strong numbers. The Aimi and Malili ranches have been referred to as the "little Mara" because of its similar landscape and biodiversity. The subsistence ranching which is common in new settlements is already changing the forests and plains of these ranching and having a severe effect on water shed, native plants and grasses. This year's drought makes it clear that the land is not able to handle this kind of pressure. For those of you who are still asking "how many cheetahs did you bring into the area?" My answer is NONE... as Joshua notes in his message, cheetahs and other wildlife were here. These animals do not belong to CCF, nor even to KWS, these animals belong to you... Kenya!



CCF would like to thank the following donors and partners for their support of cheetah conservation efforts in Kenya

THANK YOU!

Binder Park Zoo
Cheetah Friends Europe
Cincinnati Zoo Angel Fund
Cleveland Metroparks Zoo and Society
Classic Escapes
Columbus Zoo
Detroit Chapter American Association of Zoo Keepers
East African Wild Life Society
Hein Lapidaire
JH Safari
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Toledo Zoo, Zoo Keepers and Workers Union
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Utah's Hogle Zoo

Cheetah Conservation Fund
PO Box 1611 Sarit Centre
00606 Nairobi Kenya

We need your Help!
Support CCF

Visit the Cheetah Conservation Fund web site: www.cheetah.org for more information on worldwide efforts in cheetah conservation.

In Kenya you can assist through wiring funds to:
Mary Wykstra-Ross - Cheetah Conservation Fund OR
Bank: Barclays Bank of Kenya LTD
Nakuru East Branch
SWIFT #: BARKENXXXX
Code#: 03-027 Account #: 1275706

By Check: Cheetah Conservation Fund
PO Box 1611 Sarit Centre
00606 Nairobi Kenya

- **A day of cheetah tracking – \$25 (2000ksh)**
- **Sponsor a School Presentation - \$50 (3500ksh)**
- **Adopt-a-Dip (1 month) - \$100 (7000ksh)**
- **Become a CCF Member - \$250 (17500ksh) - \$1000 – (70000 ksh)**

