

ACTION FOR CHEETAHS IN KENYA NEWSLETTER



July – December 2019

DIRECTORS NOTES

Biodiversity is a term that represents the variety of living elements making up an ecosystem. During field work, ACK staff monitors more than just cheetahs. While on patrols and field exercises field officers help people and wildlife to manage a healthy environment.

Often we assist Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) and land owners with orphaned or injured animals. Chris Lentaam, helped Meibae Conservancy rangers rescue an orphaned greater kudu calf that was taken to Mt Kenya Rescue Center and, when old enough, will be released in the sanctuary. Kelvin Mwambilo called KWS and assisted the veterinary operation to remove an arrow from an ostrich's wing and release it where it resided in Salama.

Our team is passionate about their community and the diversity of wildlife that lives with cheetahs!

Mary Wykstra, Director

Photo: A male cheetah stalks a Grants Gazelle in Buffalo Springs National Reserve. M. Wykstra.



HIGHLIGHTS

Award-winning Documentary: ACK Salama staff were featured in the documentary “Disappearing Spots” alongside neighbouring land holders. The documentary won best TV Documentary at the 2019 Kalasha TV and Film Awards and has been chosen for an upcoming Conservation Film Festival in Los Angeles, USA. Thank you to the filmmakers at Sokomoto Images for choosing to bring attention to challenges facing cheetahs in developing areas!



Photo: Field Officer Jimmy Muli, and Director Mary Wykstra with Sokomoto Images journalist Teeku Patel in the Malili area of Salama. M. Wykstra.

Scat Dogs Saving Cheetahs: Scat puppies Artemis and Persephone travelled with the entire K9 Team to Samburu for their field training exercises including physical acclimatization and proper equipment use (learning to wear harnesses and boots!). Acclimation is the beginning of field work as a part of the national cheetah survey as we monitor the status of cheetahs on a range wide scale.

Vaccination Campaign: After several reports of distemper in the Samburu region, ACK and Ewaso Lions moved a portion of the planned vaccination campaign into the month of October. A total of 444 dogs and cats were vaccinated against rabies and distemper in Kalama and Westgate Conservancies. An additional 2500 vaccines will be distributed in 2020 in Meibae and Westgate.

Champions for Cheetahs: ACK hosted our 4th International Cheetah Day Football Tournament at Kiima Kiu Primary School on 7th December. Four ladies and four mens teams competed for the title while a good number of spectators participated in a variety of challenges during a rainy day. Congratulations to the cheetah champions – Konza City Ladies and Ngondini FC Mens! Thank you to Zeno Safaris-Sporting Conservation and Alive and Kicking for your generous donations.

Photo: Director Mary Wykstra and Salama Field Officer Stephen Musemi with the winning Ladies team for Champions4Cheetahs 2019: Konza Football Club.

Tony Wild



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Capacity Building: Lead Scientist Sara Blake attended the ICAM Dog Population Management conference in Mombasa along with ACK partners Dr. Shivani Bhalla from Ewaso Lions and veterinarians Dr. Stephen Chege and Dr. Moshin Likonowalla. Sara presented a poster on our Samburu vaccination campaigns and learned about similar efforts happening worldwide for improvement of data collection and disease monitoring.

Conflict Mitigation Training: Salama field officer Kelvin Mwambilo traveled out of Kenya for the first time to attend Conflict Resolution Training in Tanzania. Kelvin was among participants from Cheetah Conservation Fund (Namibia) and Ruaha Predator Project (Tanzania) who learned about the root of conflict and the tools to mitigate communities in conflict

FROM THE FIELD

Field officers in Salama and Samburu conduct regular patrols and transects each week, recording wildlife sightings and predator tracks. During the last 6 months of 2019, field officers Kivoi, Moses, Maxwell, Lentaam, Dominic, Jimmy, and Learkeri all found solid evidence of cheetah in their areas!



Photo: Above: Field officer Kivoi on patrol. Taofei Chen.

Below: Learkeri and Maxwell.



2019 FIELD STATS

1785 routine patrols

266 walking transects

39 conflict mitigations

21 community meetings

FUNDRAISING

Each year, Director Mary Wykstra travels to the US for an annual fundraising tour. 2019 highlights included major events at the Virginia Zoo, The Living Desert in Palm Springs (CA), Binder Park Zoo in Battle Creek (MI), the American Association of Zoo Keepers and Aquarium and Zoo Association conferences, Colorado State University, and Canasius College in Buffalo (NY).

Mary presented to over 3000 people at 15 facilities. COOL Crafts were sold at the events to support ACK community projects.

We are very grateful to Jessica Watters, Regina Bakely, and Holly Koppelberger for helping with connections and coordination of the events. Thank you to everyone who attended events to support ACK! You are the reason we are able to continue to research and protect Kenya's cheetahs!

ASANTE SANA!

with wildlife. Kelvin's report assists his colleagues in improved methods of conflict mitigation as well.



Photo: Kelvin with Benjee from Ruaha Predator Project supported by the Cleveland Zoological Society.

Strengthening Partnerships: Cosmas Wambua attended a consultative meeting at Wote to discuss NGO's and CBO's working in the various fields within Makueni County. The meeting was called by County Directorate of Liaison to identify areas of common interest where the county government and the organizations could partner for a common goal.



Photo: Cosmas (front row center) with Makueni stakeholders from humanitarian and county agencies working together.

STUDENTS&INTERNS

Maseno University: Our first social media internship began in October with Lulu Mandi. She helped us update our social media strategy, create a plan and posts for our social media platforms, and create and update staff bios. Lulu received her undergraduate degree after completing her communication project with ACK.

University of Nairobi: Master's student Jane Wanjira completed her field work and began analysis on the effectiveness of deterrent lights on reducing predator visitation to *boma* in Meibae Community Wildlife Conservancy.

University of Eldoret: Preliminary results of Peter Kibobi's linear ecology project were presented at the International Conference on Ecology & Transportation in the US. Peter's work on his final thesis continues and he hopes to graduate in 2020.

Colorado State University: During the fall tour Mary spent extra time with Professor Jennie Willis looking at long-term programmes that CSU could work on with ACK. Professor Willis will be visiting Kenya in 2020 to plan in greater detail.

Kenya Wildlife Service: Brian, Jane, and Peter presented preliminary findings from their respective projects at the Annual Carnivore Conference hosted by KWS to share our work with conservation colleagues.

EDUCATION & OUTREACH

Environmental Clean-ups: ACK organized a Salama market clean up in conjunction with our youth-focused Takataka project. In association with the Kilome Subcounty Environment Officer and the Department of Water Sanitation Environment and Climate Change, we engaged more than 50 participants in the activity!



Photo: Jimmy Muli, Salama senior field officer working with the Salama community during one of the community clean-up campaigns

Teachers Training Program: ACK sponsored Mr. Michael Muuo from Kiima Kiu Primary School to attend a training at Lewa Conservancy focused on equipping teachers with the knowledge and skills to effectively relay environmental messages to students.

GRADUATES

In addition to Lulu graduating from Maseno University, two of our 2018 interns also walked down the graduation aisle. Congratulations to Adelaide Moturi and Mercy Lipina who graduated with their undergraduate degrees in Wildlife Management from the University of Nairobi. Both completed their projects through ACK. Adelaide evaluated the lasting impacts of ACK activities on community perceptions of predators in Salama, while Mercy evaluated rabies knowledge and awareness from our vaccination campaign in Samburu.



Photo: ACK field officers work with students, other staff and volunteers. Kivoi Kitami with Education Coordinator Adelaide Moturi and students Lulu and Jane on a Walking Patrol in the Meibae Community Conservancy, Samburu.

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 not-for-profit project working in affiliation with: Cheetah Conservation Fund, Kenya Wildlife Service, and the University of Nairobi.

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