



ACTION FOR CHEETAHS IN KENYA YEAR END SUMMARY 2018



The staff of ACK is grateful to our friends and supporters. We look forward to continued support and partnerships in 2019!

January 2018

- Volunteer **Alicia Steger** visited the field Staff in Samburu and Salama on patrols to monitor wildlife movements and mitigate conflicts.
- ACK Staff members, **Mary Wykstra** (Director), **Noreen Mutoro** (PhD Student), **Chris Lentaam** (Field Officer) and **Evans Odudo** (Canine Programme Coordinator) attended the *Pathways: Human Dimensions in Conservation* conference in Namibia. Evans was selected for a scholarship on Leadership in Conservation training. Chris, Mary and Noreen presented on Conflict Mitigation, Digital Data Collection and the National Cheetah Survey (respectively).
- An additional seminar on cheetah conservation was conducted at the *Cheetah Conservation Fund* facility, giving each attendee the chance to share and plan for further collaboration with our Namibian colleagues.
- Samburu staff participated in the *Great Grevy's Zebra* rally in the Meibae region.



Photo: CCF and ACK team members at the CCF facility following training and information sharing in Namibia

February 2018

- **Sarah Omusula** and **Holly Koppelberger** represented ACK at the *Zoos and Aquariums Committing to Conservation (ZACC)* conference in Florida.
- Cheetah cubs were reported in the Buffalo Springs, Salama, Athi and Samburu research sites. Scat dogs and field officers collected scat for genetic analysis.
- Three cubs that were taken by herders were successfully returned to their mother within 24 hours. ACK and Meibae rangers followed the mother for several days to assure she was safely travelling with her kittens.
- Sixty students from schools in the Salama area who participated in last year's pilot of our education workbook were taken to Nairobi to visit the *ANEW Giraffe Center, Sheldrick Orphanage* and the *Nairobi Safari Walk* to learn more about Kenya's wildlife through support from ANEW.
- Highway monitoring in the Salama area reported three hyena hit by vehicles along Mombasa Highway. **Peter Kibobi** began data analysis and further data collection for his thesis with the *University of Eldoret*.



Photo: These cubs were returned to their mother and monitored as she moved with them after their reintroduction.

March 2018

- ACK distributed cheetah balls & calendars to twelve schools as a part of its ongoing campaign to raise awareness in partnership with *Alive and Kicking*.
- **Brian Mlamba** (MSc Candidate, *Kenyatta University*) processed 174 scat samples for range wide population analysis and relationship analysis in the Mara in collaboration with *Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS)* and **Dr Elena Chelysheva** (*Mara Meru Cheetah Project*).
- The ACK Canine Team along with Mary and Noreen completed one month at the *Mpala Research Center* in Laikipia, our second field exercise away from our base facilities. Despite heavy rains, the dogs found two cheetah scat samples in 10 days of searches.
- Mary presented information on the status and threats to Kenya cheetahs to the *Kenya Professional Safari Guides Association*.



Photo: Evans Odudo and Warrior taking a break during scat search in Laikipia.

April 2018

- ACK staff worked with the *Northern Rangelands Trust Disease Monitoring Unit* to collect samples for determining the cause of an outbreak that killed Over 60 dogs in the Meibae Conservancy – distemper was determined to be the cause.
- The ACK Canine Team spent one month in the *Galana Conservancy* and although again hindered by rains, located three cheetah scats in 6 days of field searches.
- With heavy rains across the country, our Salama and Samburu Field officers documented an increase in prey species as the green grasses blessed the Kenya ecosystem.
- The Education Team started a WhatsApp group to share a monthly environmental /species day with wildlife and environmental club teachers.



Photo: Two adult males on a kill in the Galana Conservancy – scat found by the dogs the next day.

May 2018

- ACK participated in a Carnivore Awareness Day organized for Samburu managers and rangers by affiliate PHD student **Titus Adhola** at the Kalama Conservancy (via *Rufford Foundation* and *Nat. Museums of Kenya*).
- A solar system and iron sheet roofs were installed at our Meibae field Camp to enhance our ability to staff the facility full time.
- We purchased a second field vehicle to allow the Canine Team to have more frequent access to the modified transport vehicle.
- We received a grant from *AGA Germany* to upgrade our canine facilities and field work kennels.
- We attended & presented at the Meibae Community Conservancy AGM.
- Three undergrad interns, **Cheryl Umalla, Mercy Lipina & Adelaide Muturi** were accepted to develop projects through the University of Nairobi.
- Mary, Noreen and Peter were accepted as members to the *IUCN Connectivity Conservation Specialist Group* and the *CCSG Transport Development Groups*.



Above: Women from the Meibai community express their gratitude for the accomplishments of the Conservancy and their partners.

June 2018

- The Canine team invited supporters and advisors of our training to attend a three day seminar to complete the handling, care and field protocol for our scat detection. **Javan Amaienda** was hired as a secondary handler.
- Three new field officers were hired and trained into our Samburu field team - **Maxwell Lemartile, Dominic Loltianya** and **Stephen Lemeleny**. **Limaro Lebulkat** was hired as a part time camp caretaker.
- Two new field officers were hired and trained into our Salama field team - **Kelvin Mwambilo** and **Stepen Musemi**.
- **Sonora Kameron** (MSc, *Colorado State University*) completed an internship developing our Conflict Mitigation Tool Kit for print in 2019.
- Peter completed his field work road surveys and interviews, and began analysis of highway mortality along Mombasa Highway.



Above: We combined field officer training with the opportunity for Sonora to discuss the Conflict Mitigation tool kit with the field staff.

July 2018

- The *Kalamazoo Christian High School* (Kalamazoo, Michigan) & *Kiima Kiu Secondary* Students focused on environmental health to develop posters on our impact through plastic waste reduction.
- **Sokomoto Images** completed footage for a "Give Nature a Voice" segment called *Disappearing Spots* highlighting the Amboseli to Nairobi corridor for cheetah movement to air in September on Nation TV.
- Six cheetah cubs were orphaned as a result of Human-wildlife conflict when warriors from the Konza area near the newly completed railway - an impact of corridor loss. ACK and ol Jogi animal rescue teams were given authority to raise the cubs with hopes for a semi-wild life in the rhino sanctuary at *olJogi*.
- The newly hired employees and interns completed their training and laying out field work for thesis projects.



Photo: Kalamazoo and Kiima Kiu students presented their poster ideas for consideration as printed awareness material for the community.

August 2018

- By 4 August five of the six cubs died from distemper likely contracted by dog bites from the community dogs that had been used when the mother was hunted and killed. One cub survived and represents threats of development, human wildlife conflict, disease and the plight of orphaned cheetahs in need of a professional sanctuary.
- **Sara Blake** remained with the remaining cub to work with staff on training and rehabilitation plans.
- **Mary Wykstra**, ACK Director left for the US to raise awareness and funds for ACK.
- The Canine Team completed six weeks of intensive training and field searches in the Meibae Conservancy with a search of one week at the ol Jogi Wildlife Rehabilitation area, finding four cheetah scat samples.



Above: The six cubs were scattered by dogs as the warriors attempted to find and kill them. Some of the cubs suffered bite wounds through which they may have contracted distemper.

September 2018

- Mary conducted the fall tour in Michigan, Washington DC, Virginia, Indiana, Louisiana, California, Washington, Oregon, Utah, Colorado, and Ohio (25 presentations at zoos, universities and special events including AZA and AAZK).
- **Holly Koppelberger**, **Phyllis Davis**, **Jessica Watters** and **Sonora Kameron** joined the tour to assist with craft sales, presentations and travel logistics. Sonora presented her completed Tool Kit at the AZA conference.
- Mary was accepted as an affiliate of *Colorado State University* and worked with **Jennie Willis** on proposals for long term partnership projects.
- Mary joined **Laurie Marker** and 15 co-authors in a book signing for the *Cheetah Biology* book that was published in December 2017.
- The Salama, Samburu and Canine field teams worked with the local interns to conduct field work and interviews for thesis projects on rabies awareness in Samburu (Mercy), effectiveness of long term outreach in Salama (Adelaide) and parameters for canine scat detection (Cheryl).
- A cheetah was killed by a vehicle on Mombasa Highway near the Kapiti Estate. This was the 19th cheetah since 2005 to be documented by ACK in this stretch of the highway.



Above: Sonora Kameron and Mary Wykstra at the AZA poster presentation session in Seattle Washington.

October 2018

- Students completed their field work and began analysis for their thesis submissions.
- Field staff mapped areas for rabies vaccination campaign.
- Planning committees for the Rabies Vaccination Campaign in Samburu and International Cheetah Day Football Cup put final details into motion.
- **Francisca Kasuku** met with the *Wildlife Clubs of Kenya* to complete the publishing plan for the education workbooks.
- **Sarah Omusula** met Mary at the *Columbus Zoo* to present on the successes made possible through continued financial support.
- **Noreen Mutoro** returned from coursework in Germany to initiate her PHD field work using the detection dogs and field staff to collect cheetah scat across several regions of Samburu and Isiolo counties.
- A mother was reported to be moving her cubs from a flooding waterway in the Barsalinga region of the Meibae Conservancy. Staff confirmed the mother had five cubs and successfully moved them to safety.



Photo: The mother moved her cubs several times in the 14 days after the rains until the cubs were able to follow her to safety.

November 2018

- **Jay and Giona Weston** and **Shawnee Jensen** (*Utah's Hogle Zoo*) and **Lisa Melnik** (*Akron Zoo*) assisted with vegetation surveys in Salama, joined the rabies vaccination campaign in Mebae and travelled to Amboseli, Sweetwaters and Samburu National Reserve on their *Classic Escape Adventure Safari*.
- Seven volunteer veterinarians provided the professional services for the Rabies Vaccination Campaign in collaboration with *Samburu County, Meibae Community Conservancy, African Network for Animal Welfare, Grevys Zebra Trust and Northern Rangelands Trust Disease Monitoring Unit*. We vaccinated 697 dogs, 216 cats, 19 donkeys and 1 camel during the three day campaign (9 – 11 November).



Photo: Over 2000 people die annually from rabies in Kenya – dogs are responsible for over 80% of the human infections. Through vaccination of 70% of the dogs, rabies can be eliminated.

December 2018 and Accomplishment Summary

- We celebrated International Cheetah Day on the 8th of December at the *Tumaini Secondary School* with mens and ladies football tournaments in collaboration with *Alive and Kicking*.
- Field work began in Samburu county to conduct four months of scat detection work.
- The field staff completed over 1000 field patrols and 200 walking transects to monitor cheetahs in our two field sites.
- The Canine Team completed 40 days of field work collecting over 20 cheetah scat samples from across Kenya.
- The Research Team processed over 200 scat, tissue and blood samples for genetic analysis.
- The Education department provided monthly material to 30 schools to assist with environmental education in the Salama and Samburu communities.
- Sports and Conservation activities included the Cheetah Day and Kenya vs US (Kalamazoo – Kiima Kiu tournaments) in Salama and installation of five fields of football (soccer), netball and volleyball in Samburu, and the donation of over 75 Alive and Kicking balls to schools and youth groups.
- 300 trees were planted in the Salama area at various community events.



Photo: The Kiu Ladies and the Tumaini Men's Football Clubs were this year's Champions for Cheetahs – sports brings unity and an opportunity to share the conservation message.