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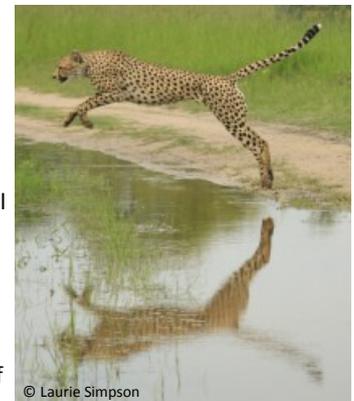
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Dear reader,

2013 has been a very productive year for Cheetah Conservation Project Zimbabwe. We carried out our questionnaire based population survey, continued to receive cheetah sightings and pictures from all over the country, followed up on conflict and were able to respond to several requests to educate children about cheetahs.

In the past year we, again, received an incredible number of cheetah sightings from all over the country (p. 2 & back page). Apart from the fact that sightings and pictures provide us with scientific data on cheetah occurrence and numbers, it is a pleasure to be able to follow some of the cheetahs throughout their lives and receive the incredible pictures people take.



© Laurie Simpson

The questionnaire based field survey took most of our time. In April we started interviewing the first people close to home, in the Victoria Falls and Matetsi region. This gave us an opportunity to test our method before we were in the middle of nowhere at the other side of the country. Once we knew the method gave us what we needed, we hit the road and travelled throughout the northwest of the country, visiting all the National Park, safari, Forestry and Campfire areas.

Together with our students we managed to cover 81 000 km² of land (21% of the country), an area twice the size of my little home country the Netherlands. On a professional level, the field survey has enabled us to collect lots of valuable data on cheetah and other carnivores (p. 5-7). On a personal level, we have been able to see some of the most beautiful places of Zimbabwe. But foremost, we have met incredibly nice and helpful people, who in the most remote areas of the country, with often very limited resources, are trying to protect the precious wildlife that is left. With the constantly growing human population, and the resulting conflict and pressure on wildlife areas, this is far from an easy job.

Now that we know the questionnaire based field survey provides us with reliable data, we will expand it to other parts of the country. Although our final report will therefore only be published in a few years time, I am happy to present you with an update on our work and preliminary results for the northwest of Zimbabwe (p. 5-7). I hope you will enjoy the read.

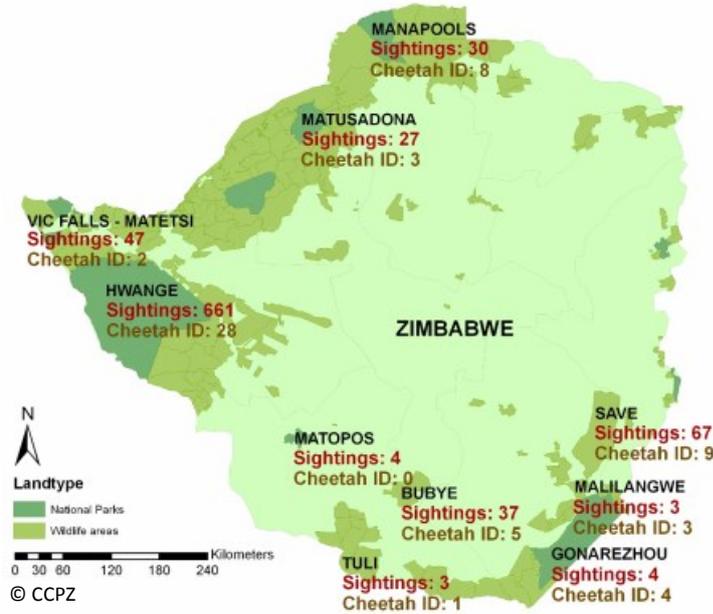
Our population survey would not succeed without help from others. I would therefore like to end with a big thank you to our sponsors and everyone who has supported our work by taking the time to answer our questions, sending us cheetah sightings and pictures, or sharing their data! Together we are slowly but surely putting the pieces of the Zimbabwe cheetah puzzle together.

Best wishes,

Esther

Dr. Esther van der Meer
Project director & senior researcher

Cheetah sightings & pictures



In 2013 we received 364 sightings and 1301 pictures (compared to 523 sightings and 1625 pictures in 2012, many of which were historical sightings). We are happy that people continue to help us find the cheetahs of Zimbabwe by sending us their cheetah information. Thanks to this support we have so far been able to identify 63 adult cheetahs in the country. The map on the left gives an overview of the sightings (2012-2013) and identified cheetahs.

“ Thanks to the sightings and pictures we receive we have been able to follow several cheetahs throughout their life ”

Seeing cheetah cubs grow

There are several cheetahs that we have been able to follow via sightings and pictures. The most recent ones are a mother with three cubs in Hwange National Park. They were first seen in March 2012, by then the cubs were ± 2-3

months old. Throughout the year we have received many sightings of these animals. They are now approximately 18 months old and ready to disperse from their mother (see pictures below).



Female cub HNP012 in July 2011 (bottom) and almost two years later in April 2013 (top)



Cheetah female with cubs in Hwange National Park in September 2012 (bottom) and one year later in September 2013 (top)

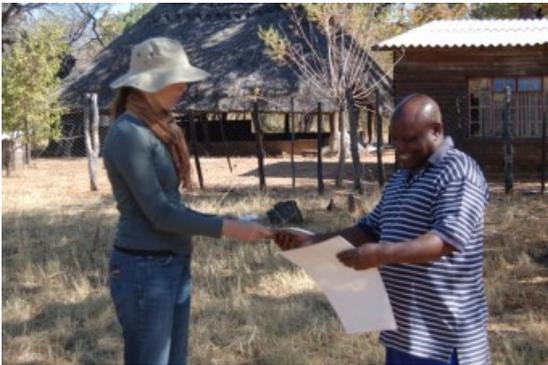
We have also followed the movements of another Hwange female and her three cubs. They were first seen on the 1st of July 2011, the cubs were then ± 6 months old. On the 8th of May 2012 the cubs were seen without their

mother. After they dispersed they roamed all over the park. At the end of January 2013 the two sisters and one brother all went their separate ways and were sighted on several occasions (see above).

Cheetahs causing trouble

Since the start of our project we have been approached three times by people experiencing conflict with cheetahs. In 2013 two cases of human-cheetah conflict were reported to us. In both cases we visited the area to get an insight in the problem and talk to people about solutions. We left 'how to live with predator booklets' (kindly donated by the Dambari Wildlife Trust) with tips on how to improve husbandry procedures in order to reduce livestock depredation.

The first case involved livestock losses on a commercial farm in the south of the country, due to cheetahs and several other carnivores. We advised the managers to first of all determine which animals are the main cause of the livestock losses. We left information on how to reduce conflict



and will be in touch to see whether we can be of further assistance.

The second case was a case of a cheetah with cubs, killing goats in the communal areas along the southern border of Hwange National Park. The problem cheetah was reported to us by Forestry Commission.

We visited the area and explained that while the cubs were too small to follow the mother the cheetahs would stay in the area, but as soon as the cubs are old enough they were likely to leave. Fortunately, everyone was happy to give the cheetahs some time. We stayed in touch with these people and after a month the cheetah and her cubs had indeed left the area and the problem was solved.

Caught on camera



Initiative Leopard Project, Hwange Lion Research and the Victoria Falls Wildlife Trust for sharing their pictures with us.



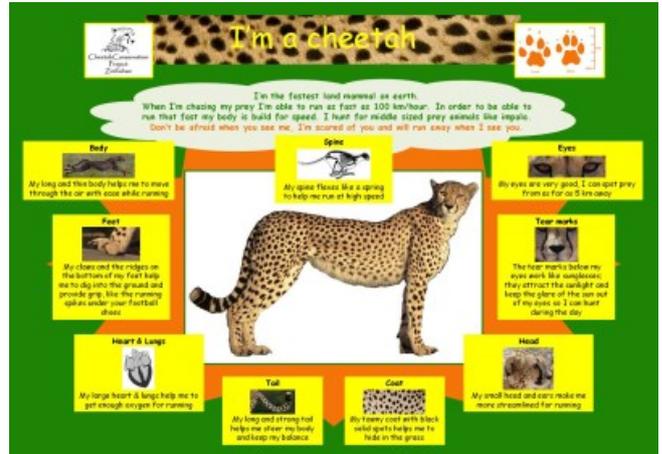
Several of our colleagues kindly send us cheetah pictures from their camera trap surveys. We would like to thank the Bhejani Trust, the Dambari Wildlife Trust, the Darwin

Fun and (cheetah) games



We once a while get requests to educate children about cheetahs. When the field schedule allows us to, we obviously respond positively to these requests. In 2013 we have given three presentations for children in conservation clubs, and have organised a cheetah day at the Mukuvisi woodland centre.

On the 15th of March we organized Cheetah Day at the Mukuvisi Woodlands Education Centre in Harare. The day was attended by 80 primary and secondary school children, an additional 100 pre-school children came to see our life size cheetah. We had developed several games related to an aspect of cheetah ecology or conservation. In total we presented the children with seven games plus a cheetah movie. The day ended with a quiz and every school



cheetah poster'. Cheetah Day was kindly sponsored by the Harber Charitable Foundation.

At their request we have provided the conservation clubs of the Victoria Falls Wildlife Trust, Dambari Wildlife Trust, Children of the Wilderness, Sango, Painted Dog Conservation and the Lowveld Wild Dog Project with cheetah education material.



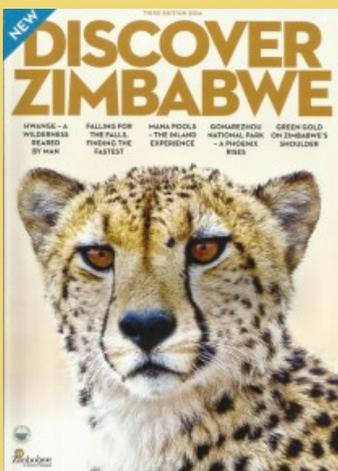
went home with a certificate of attendance, a cheetah life history game and several educational posters. Each child received a cheetah game form with various puzzles and an 'I'm a



All about cheetahs

We feel it is important to keep people updated about what we are doing. Not only to make sure that people remember to send us cheetah sightings and pictures, but also to bring science closer to home. We therefore regularly give updates on our cheetah work in the local media.

This year we have shared preliminary results of our survey in the Zambezi Traveller, a local newspaper. We have published articles in Ndeipi, Greenline and National Geographic NL, wrote for several blogs and mailing newsletters, and finished the year with fabulous coverage in Discover Zimbabwe. Via our facebook page ([facebook.com/CheetahZimbabwe](https://www.facebook.com/CheetahZimbabwe)) and website (cheetahzimbabwe.org) we give regular updates on our field work and cheetah sightings, which has resulted in an increase in followers and us receiving several cheetah sightings via internet.



The Cheetah Team



Honestly



Cynthia

During our field work we have been assisted by students from the department of Forest Resources and Wildlife Management of the National University of Science and Technology (NUST) in Bulawayo.

Mucha Badza joined us in 2012. She finished her attachment in July 2013 and is now back at the

university for one more year of lectures and projects, before she obtains her BSc from NUST. Cynthia Mapendere and Honesty Ndlovu already have their BSc's from NUST. They were both keen to join us for a field trip to gain experience. The field work gave the students the opportunity to learn

more about methods used to estimate carnivore population densities. For us they were a valuable asset to the field team.



Mucha

“ Most people correctly identified a cheetah ”

Table 2. Percentage of respondents who correctly identified species

Species	Correct ID
Aardwolf	21%
African wild cat	39%
African wild dog	88%
Bat eared fox	30%
Black backed jackal*	34% (full name) 72% (incl. jackal)
Brown hyena*	39% (full name) 81% (incl. hyena)
Caracal	32%
Cheetah	89%
Leopard	91%
Lion	99%
Serval	22%
Side striped jackal*	23% (full name) 57% (incl. jackal)
Spotted hyena*	52% (full name) 96% (incl. hyena)

*In the local languages there is no differentiation between the different species

On the road

From April until November the Cheetah team has been on the road to interview people about cheetahs and other carnivores in the northwest of Zimbabwe.

In total we interviewed 419 people, covering an area of 81 000 km². This gives us a sample density

of 1 interview /178 km² (some people were interviewed about several areas). Good coverage, considering that the cheetah population in other countries has been estimated on an average of 1 interview/1958 km² (Tanzania; 1 int/2396 km², Kenya; 1 int/2587 km², Malawi; 1 int/890 km²).

We predominantly interviewed wildlife professionals in protected, non-protected and communal areas (Table 1). At each field station we collected additional information from patrol and sighting reports, and human wildlife conflict reports. We only conducted interviews with spokespersons in the local communities when; 1) there was an indication that cheetahs occurred in the area based on interviews with wildlife professionals and/or conflict reports, 2) no data were available via our collaborations with other projects. Apart from collecting data, we spent a considerable amount of time on *in situ* education. After each questionnaire we gave respondents the opportunity to ask questions, explained how to identify the thirteen canids and felids in the carnivore

Table 1. Profession of respondents

Profession	nr
Campfire staff	18
Forestry Commission staff	15
National Parks staff	254
Hunters and trackers	47
Safari guides	42
Village heads	10
Other	33
Total	419

montage and gave general information about carnivore behaviour. With the senior staff we spent time talking about carnivores, conflict mitigation, and easy ways to implement research components within existing protocols. At each station we left material explaining how to identify carnivores plus, in areas where human-carnivore conflict occurred, we left booklets explaining how to mitigate this conflict.

The majority of the people correctly identified a cheetah (89%) (Table 2) and was able to answer questions about its behaviour.

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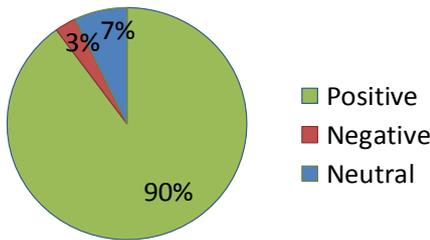


Fig 1. Attitude of people towards cheetahs

Almost half of the people (45%) incorrectly assumed cheetahs often kill livestock. Nevertheless, most people felt positive about cheetahs (90%) (Fig. 1). They like cheetahs because it is a beautiful (25%), rare (13%) animal that attracts tourists (17%) and is no prob-



In conversation with Mr. Mwinde at the Binga Campfire office

lem to people or livestock (19%). For an overview of cheetah and carnivore oc-

currence see Table 3 (page 7), plus Fig. 3. More than half of the people who correctly identified a cheetah had actually seen one (56%). With the questionnaires we collected 476 additional cheetah sightings. Based on the interviews and sightings we received throughout the year, we can conclude that there are two viable cheetah populations in the northwest of Zimbabwe;

One population of ± 40-50 adult cheetahs in Hwange National Park and the land bordering this park (Fig. 2).

One population of ± 10-15 adult cheetahs in Manapools National Park, with cheetahs occasionally moving along the shoreline to the neighbouring concessions (Fig. 2).

Although cheetahs are present in Matusadona National Park (Fig. 2), this popu-

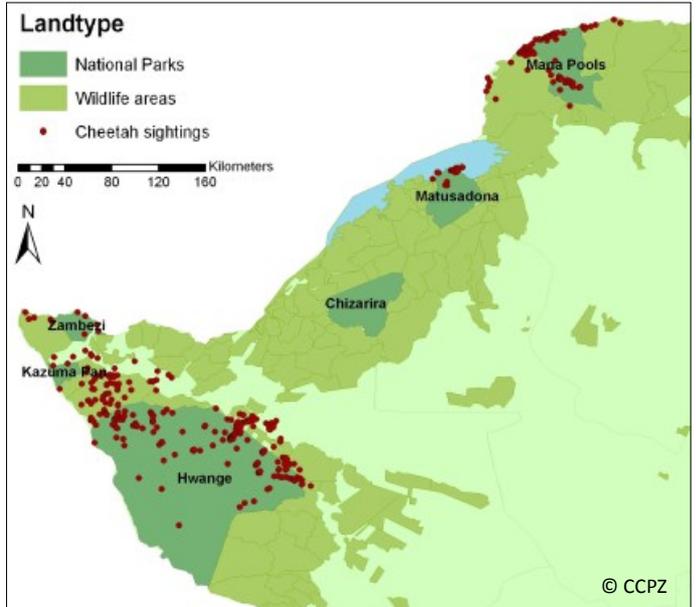


Fig 2. Cheetah occurrence northwest Zimbabwe

lation seems to isolated and very small (± 3-5 adult cheetahs), and is therefore unlikely to be viable.

The coming year, we will expand our survey to the southwest of the country. This area used to harbour high cheetah numbers and experienced regular human-cheetah conflict. We are looking forward to finding out what the current status in this part of Zimbabwe is.

“ In total we covered an area of 81 000 km² with a sample density of 1 interview per 178 km² “

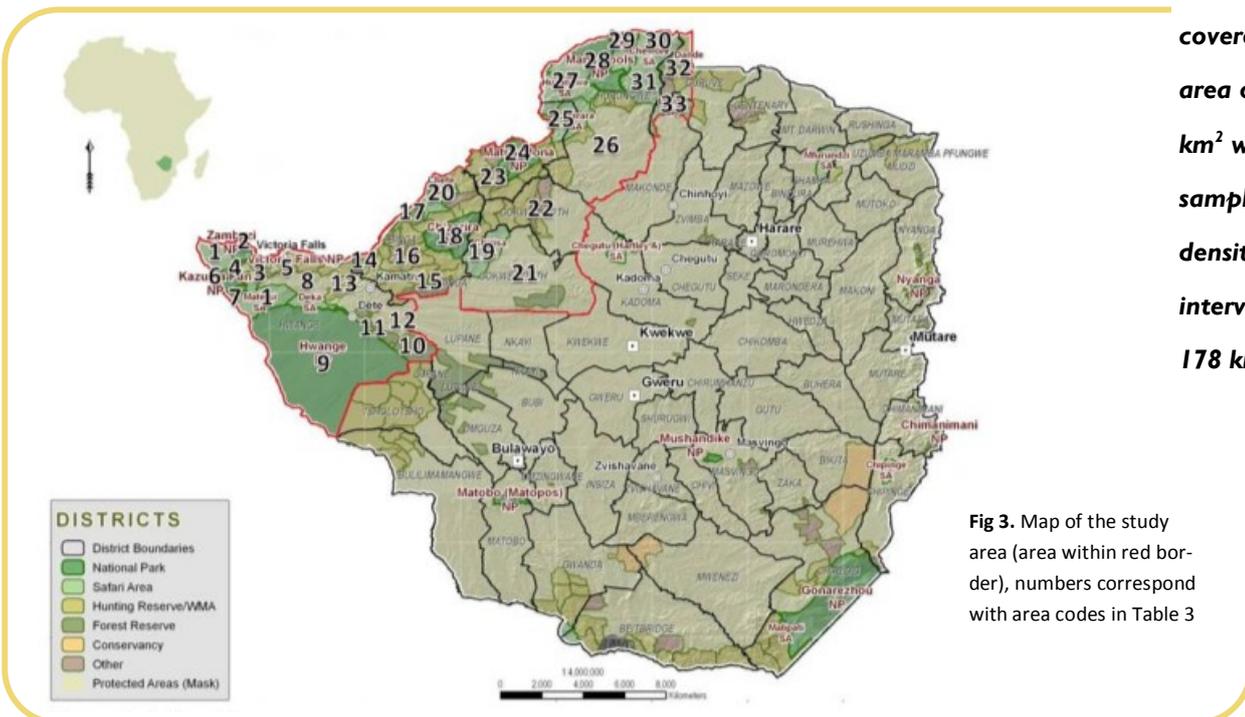


Fig 3. Map of the study area (area within red border), numbers correspond with area codes in Table 3

Sighting highlights

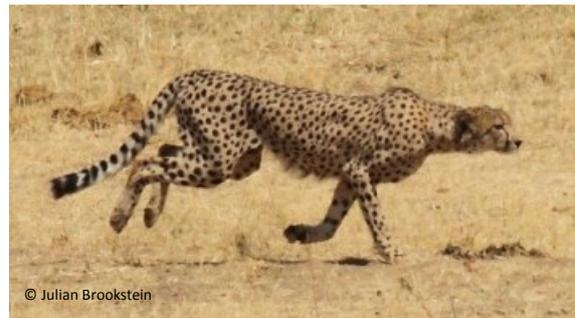


© Jane Hunt
Two new males in Hwange National Park

Jane Hunt spotted two new cheetah brothers. It was the first time in seven months that we received pictures of unknown Hwange cheetahs. In 2013 many people captured adult male

HNP010 in action. Kurt Haas send us an incredible video showing this male chasing a water-

buck... and this male being chased by waterbuck (see our facebook page). Julian Brookstein and Rodney Norton also witnessed HNP010 in action and shared their incredible pictures with us. There are some



© Julian Brookstein
Male HNP010 in action in Hwange National Park



© Rodney Norton
There goes male HNP010 again

notorious tree climbers in Hwange, as can be seen on the pictures from Marleen Post and Susan Andelt, both male HNP009 and HNP018 enjoy a tree with a view.

Have you also seen a cheetah in Zimbabwe? Let us know via cheetah@cheetahzimbabwe.org or www.cheetahzimbabwe.org or [facebook.com/CheetahZimbabwe](https://www.facebook.com/CheetahZimbabwe).



© Marleen Post
Male HNP009 enjoying the view



© Susan Andelt
Male HNP018 in his tree



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IBAN NL91ABNA0452520800

Cheetah Conservation Project Zimbabwe (CCPZ) was founded in 2012 by Dr. Esther van der Meer . The aim of the project is to help to conserve cheetahs through research, education, collaboration and capacity building. CCPZ tries to improve the knowledge on the conservation biology of cheetahs and to promote co-existence between cheetahs and the people of Zimbabwe. CCPZ sees research as a tool to improve the conservation strategy of the cheetah and tries to build capacity in conservation by working with Zimbabwean students.

Cheetah Conservation project Zimbabwe is affiliated to the National University of Science and Technology and works in conjunction with the Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority.

Cheetah Conservation Project Zimbabwe is sponsored by:



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