

# Newsletter

Summer / Autumn  
2007



## LISE HANSSEN'S NEW PROJECT

Many of our supporters will be very pleased to hear that Lise Hanssen has now started a new conservation project.

Following a limited funds donation to PCT, the Trustees were pleased to be able to make a grant of £1000 to Lise to fund a field trip and equipment for Lise to spend several weeks in the Caprivi region of Namibia where she did some preliminary investigations and put together the supporting documentation for her research permit application. With applications for a research permit in Namibia, the proposal needs to be supported by other documents and needs to have the support of the local community which can be gathered by the applicant prior to submitting the proposal, or left for MET to do. The more the applicant can do before submitting the proposal in terms of getting support from the local community, obtaining supporting facts and documents, the quicker and easier it is for MET to evaluate the proposal. As such Lise needed to talk to the local community in the study area to get their support and input, and also to discuss the proposals with all the other interested parties in the area.

On her trip Lise faced a number of obstacles including flooded roads, snakes, crossing rivers swollen with flood waters, and landmines ! The landmines are mainly located around the Angolan border and the base of the old 32 Battalion of the South African Defence Forces, but there are no records of exactly where they are so off-road driving is hazardous along the border strip.

Despite the fact that cell-phone coverage in that area is very poor (on one occasion Lise had to climb to the top of a termite mound to get enough of a signal to be able to send text messages), the bush telegraph seems to be very effective and Lise was able to meet up with a large number of people who were able to offer information or advice relevant to her project plans.

Lise has written a full report on her field trip which is too long to include in this newsletter, but which will be available on our website.

Lise's new project is based in Namibia's Caprivi region and aims to tackle conflict between large carnivores and people/livestock. The project will focus on the species responsible for over half the reported cases of human-wildlife conflict - surprisingly it is not the Lion but is actually the Spotted Hyena which causes as many problems as Lion, Leopard, Cheetah and crocodiles put together.

Turn to page 3 for more details on her project.

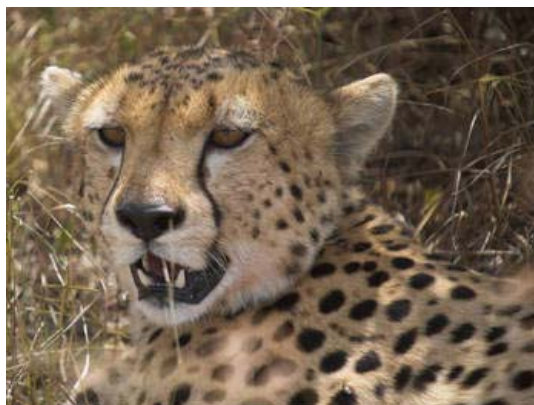


## PCT GRANT TO CHEETAH CONSERVATION BOTSWANA

In March 2007, the Trustees of The Predator Conservation Trust were pleased to be able to make a grant of £1000 to Cheetah Conservation Botswana towards the annual costs of vehicle parts, maintenance, tyres and fuel. A project like Cheetah Conservation Botswana (CCB) can not operate successfully without working vehicles to enable them to visit schools for educational visits, track cheetah, relocate problem animals, or liaise with the farming community.

Along with Namibia, Botswana has one of the last free-ranging populations of cheetah in the world making it an essential stronghold for the future of the species.

Cheetah Conservation Botswana has been set up as a long term monitoring project, incorporating practical conservation, scientific research and community participation. It is the first project to research cheetah in Botswana and is gathering data on home ranges, behaviour, their role in livestock conflicts, genetics and diseases at their research camp in the southern Kalahari. This information is vital to understand the status of Botswana's cheetah and the factors affecting their survival.



The project team have set up a research camp in Jwaneng, Southern Kalahari, a 20,000 hectare wildlife reserve. They are studying the resident population of cheetah in the area using telemetry, spoor surveying and direct observation. As well as working with the local community in the surrounding area, they are assisting them with farm management practices that will enable them to coexist with predators with the minimum of conflict.

As in Namibia, protected areas such as National Parks cannot be relied upon to conserve the species as cheetahs are often out-competed by high populations of stronger predators and pushed onto marginal land where they come into conflict with livestock farmers.

One of the project's focuses is reducing cheetah / livestock conflict and improving the attitudes of the farming community and their methods of predator control. Survival of the cheetah depends on the attitudes of these farming communities.

Education is an essential and important aspect of the project. Visits are made to all types of farming situations and support given to those experiencing problems. Schools are also visited to give presentations on the importance of predators in healthy ecosystems. Rural communities and predators can coexist if adequate methods are used to decrease conflict, such as better monitoring, effective corralling, using well trained guard animals and a good understanding of predator behaviours.

As a last resort the project team will relocate 'problem' cheetah off farmland where they are threatened, into safer areas, where they can be monitored.

However, coexistence is the ultimate aim, working together with the rural farming communities to ensure Botswana remains one of the best hopes for the survival of this unique, endangered cat.

A viable population of cheetah requires a suitable prey base and habitat. Therefore, as a flagship species, protection of the cheetah and awareness raising goes hand in hand with protecting the ecosystem on which they depend.



## **LISE HANSEN'S NEW PROJECT - POPULATION ECOLOGY OF SPOTTED HYAENAS AND SUGGESTED MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES TO RESOLVE CARNIVORE RELATED HUMAN WILDLIFE CONFLICT IN THE CAPRIVI REGION, NAMIBIA.**

Most Namibians depend on the land for their subsistence, but the presence of many species of large mammals, combined with settlement patterns of people, leads to conflict between people and wildlife. Large carnivores occur throughout the Caprivi and Kavango Regions and frequently cross international borders. In the Caprivi Region between 1996 and 2001, 246 predator incidents were reported, resulting in the death of 694 livestock equivalents. As the number of communal conservancies increased so has the systematic reporting of problem animal incidents through the event book system highlighting that previous reports on livestock damage were most likely under reported. Event book records show that between 2001 and 2006 some 2766 large carnivore incidents were reported of which 1401 were of spotted hyaenas, resulting in damage to 3125 livestock equivalents.

Whether problem causing hyaenas are resident within the communal area or originate from the park is unknown. Human – wildlife Conflict (HWC) is an issue of pressing conservation concern particularly when it involves threatened species, and accurately identifying the causes of such conflict is fundamental to developing effective resolution strategies. Long-term conservation of spotted hyaenas in the Caprivi and Kavango depends on their persistence in protected areas like Bwabwata National Park and in resolving human-wildlife conflict with the communities on the periphery.

Problem causing animals are and always will remain a challenge in Africa wherever people and wildlife live together. Sound ecological data, such as reliable population estimate, distribution and population demography are crucial in the implementation of conservation strategies and conflict resolution.

### **Project objectives**

- Determine the population demography and limiting factors of spotted hyaenas.
- Determine the demography and land use characteristics of the population.
- Study the social structure and population regulation
- Determine the genetic status of the populations
- Monitor the health and disease status of the population.
- Assess the extent of conflict between livestock owners and large carnivores and develop management strategies.
- Establish a training programme for members of the Kyaramacan Association to participate in field activities as well as ongoing monitoring of hyaenas.
- Assess and develop tourism potential of spotted hyaenas.

### **Project methodology**

#### **1. Demography, land use characteristics, social structure and limiting factors**

Spotted hyaenas will be immobilized and fitted with GPS and VHF collars as well as visual collars. At least two high ranking individuals in each clan will be collared with GPS collars due to the probability of clans moving across international borders and to establish the land use characteristics of the clan. Two additional individuals in each clan will be radio collared with particular attention to emigrating males in order to monitor their daily activities and movements outside the protected area. Radio collared hyaenas will be located regularly by aircraft followed by ground observations to record group composition.

Visual collars will be placed on additional hyaenas living close to the boundaries of the conservation area so as to assist with identification should they move out into communal and livestock farming areas or are killed as problem animals.

#### **2. Genetic status and disease**

The project will involve taking blood samples and collecting external parasites. These will be analysed by a number of people to provide information for us in this project as well as in other projects.

*(Continued on page 4)*

### 3. Human Wildlife Conflict

A survey will be conducted to assess the animal husbandry methods used throughout the communities of the Caprivi with particular attention to kraal construction and vigilance of livestock owners. Where possible, losses will be followed up in order to establish the species of problem animals and compare these to perceptions of the community. In collaboration with the community, livestock protection methods will be improved and implemented.

### 4. Community Training

Individuals from communities falling under the Kyaramacan Association will be identified and trained in research field techniques. These will include taking post mortem samples and techniques in radio telemetry for the ongoing monitoring of large carnivores as well as wildlife diseases within the Caprivi Region.

### FUNDING

We will be making a grant to Lise for her new project in the next few weeks and hope to be able to make a large enough grant to get Lise's project off to a good start. If you would like to make a donation towards Lise's project (or indeed any of the other projects we support) then please either get in touch or you can make a donation directly through our website.

### **PCT FUNDED LANDROVER GOES INTO OPERATION WITH THE PAINTED DOG PROJECT'S ANTI POACHING UNIT IN ZIMBABWE**

The anti poaching unit of the Painted Dog project in Zimbabwe recently took delivery of their latest vehicle - a landrover plus spare engine funded by the Predator Conservation Trust. After the slow process of shipping the vehicle to Africa, the vehicle is now in regular use and will help the anti-poaching team in their invaluable work.



*Members of the anti-poaching team with the PCT funded landrover.*

## **SUMMARY OF GRANTS MADE IN 2006-2007 FINANCIAL YEAR**

Our financial year ended on 30th June. The grants we made in the 2006 - 2007 financial year are detailed below.

Brown Hyena Research Project	£1,021.00
Lise Hanssen Caprivi Carnivore Project	£1,032.00
Cheetah Conservation Botswana	£1,021.00
Painted dog Project	£4,440.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>£7,514.00</b>

This figure is the largest of any of the four years we have been in existence, and would not have been possible without the generosity of our supporters. We would like to take this opportunity to thank all our supporters for their generous contributions

This brings the total amount of money sent to conservation projects in grants (up to end June 2007) to a total of **£24,040.80**

## **WEBSITE UPDATE**

Over the past few months the website has been receiving a steadily increasing number of visitors, and we are now receiving over 25000 visitors per month. We have added even more photographs and information to the site including updates from the various projects we fund, and information on various carnivore species.

## **PCT & AMAZON**

If you use Amazon.com or Amazon.co.uk for online shopping then you can now do this and raise money for PCT at the same time. Simply by visiting our website and following a link to Amazon from our site (there are banners at the top of the links page) then Amazon pay a percentage of the purchase price of anything you buy in that shopping session to PCT, and you just pay the same prices as you would if you went directly to Amazons site. This means that by following the link to Amazon from our site you can help raise more money for PCT without it costing you anything.

Also, we have now set up two online stores using Amazon's Astore technology - one for US customers and one for UK (International customers can choose which they prefer to use). These contain a selection of products such as books and DVD's that we believe will interest our supporters. The store is powered by Amazon and Amazon handles all the transactions.

## **BROWN HYENA PROJECT UPDATE**

Ingrid and her team have been continuing their difficult work trying to dart these shy animals and have had several frustrating darting trips where the Brown Hyenas have come within sight of the team (who were in the vehicles close to some bait), but didn't come close enough to be darted.

The team have had some successes though, and the new GPS collars that are being used have proved to make things easier for data retrieval. The collars store GPS data on the animals movements and whereas in the past this data could not be retrieved without removing the collar, the new ones allow Ingrid to download the stored information remotely - in at least one recent case this meant locating the animal by air and then attempting to concentrate on running the download while the pilot flew in tight circles to stay within range of the Brown Hyena.

The Brown Hyena Project's information centre has moved from its former location on Luderitz's waterfront to the Kolmanskop ghost town.

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