

WILD CAT

Issue 01



Cheetah cubs turn one!

Edie and Dakari are celebrating their first birthday!

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From the **DIRECTOR**

I'm really excited to launch the first edition of our 'Wild Cat' newsletter. The newsletter will allow us to keep all our incredible sponsors and supporters up to date on projects, exciting developments, new births, and so much more. We're incredibly grateful to each and every one of you, and hope you enjoy reading about what we have been up to.

On a personal note, it was incredible to get back to Botswana in March and finally marry my beautiful wife Kahlia, after years of delays – thanks Covid! On top of our wonderful wedding and catching up with our friends and family at Mashatu, we were able to get an update on some of our projects and how they wrapped up over the last few years. Excitingly, while we were over there, we were able to lay plans for our 'Hosted Trips' to finally make a comeback in 2024. These trips will give you an opportunity to fall in love with Botswana and the unique wildlife over there, just as we have over the last 15 years! You'll find heaps more information on those further in the newsletter. I hope to see you there.

Back at the centre, winter has provided some cooler weather for the Cats. Which means we have seen a little more activity from them all. We're well on our way to spring though, which is my favourite time of year and I hope to see lots of supporters through the doors to share our mission with!

On that note, thank you to each and every one of you for your support over the years. We are so grateful to have you along for the ride. So please tell a friend about us, donate, come and visit, spread our message on social media, whatever you do makes a difference and helps us to protect the forgotten wild cat species.

Yours Sincerely,



Ben Britton | Director
Wild Cat Conservation Centre



OUR MISSION

To protect and ensure the survival of wild cat species through the provision of education and carrying out of research, and dedication to conservation breeding programs.

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12 MONTHS ON: EDIE AND DAKARI THE CHEETAH CUBS

Celebrating their momentous first birthday on September 1st, we're thrilled to take this opportunity to provide an update on Edie and Dakari, the cheetah cubs whose arrival in 2022 captivated hearts across Sydney. Edie and Dakari, born to Mum Emmy, and Dad Duke, were the first ever cheetah cubs born in Sydney. An incredible milestone for the Wild Cat Conservation Centre!

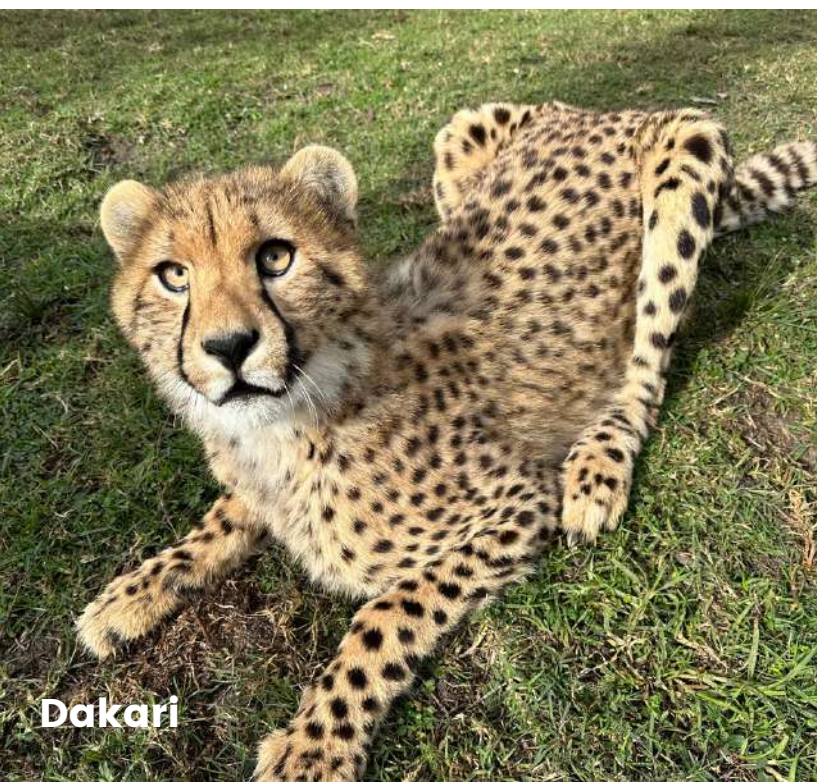
Mum Emmy continues to do an excellent job raising her two cubs. Their development over the last 12 months has been nothing short of spectacular. Dakari in particular has shown his vigour and vitality by outgrowing his sister, a prime example of how the intriguing nuances of sexual dimorphism presents within cheetahs. Although the difference between male and female cheetahs might not be as apparent as in other big cat species, such as lions, the slight disparities in size and features make each cheetah uniquely their own.

In the wild, cheetah cubs would typically disperse around 14 months of age. Often, the mother cheetah would go off to hunt and simply not return. In recent weeks, Emmy has begun to spend more time away from Edie and Dakari, allowing them to explore their surroundings and develop their independence. This transition signifies a significant step forward in their journey, a glimpse into their future as self-sufficient predators of the savannah.

Excitingly, Dakari is preparing for the next chapter—a journey that will take him to the expanse of Monarto Safari Park in South Australia. Here, he will form a coalition with another male cheetah. Often in the wild, male cheetahs will form these coalitions with their male litter mate or another male cheetah in the area. This is important for survival and dominance in their territory.

Dakari's genetic make-up will play an instrumental role in the regional cheetah breeding program within Australia, highlighting his significance beyond his individual existence. Dakari's unrepresented genetics will prove vital in creating the next generation of cheetahs, within the insurance populations held around Australia.

For Edie, her next adventure may see her take an even longer journey. Though more news on that soon!



Dakari



Edie

POO PROVIDES THE ANSWERS

The Wild Cat Conservation Centre is proudly home to the only breeding program for clouded leopards in the country. This vulnerable species is rapidly declining from South-east Asia, meaning that international breeding programs are critical to their survival. The Wild Cat Conservation Centre proudly partners with other organisations around the globe in securing critical genetics of the species for future generations.

Two of the clouded leopards that call the centre home, Mark and Moana, have crucial genetics for the programs longevity. For this reason, over the last 12 months since their arrival from Pittsburgh Zoo, the team have been working hard to prepare the duo for breeding. Successful breeding will be an Australian first and a proud moment for all involved. Known to be notoriously fickle and one of the most difficult cats to breed, the team have been monitoring Moana's oestrus cycle through her faeces.

This process has allowed staff to track Moana's cycle and make changes to her environment to support the breeding process. We track her cycle by placing a small amount of taste safe blue food dye in her food, so that staff can identify her faeces versus Mark's faeces. These are then collected, stored, and then broken down for a hormone analysis to be undertaken. This analysis tracks the rise and fall of both oestrogen and progesterone, indicating that she is cycling and if any mating has taken place.

So now, with that all said, it's over to you Mark. We hope to hear the pitter patter of paws soon!



ZOO AND AQUARIUM ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE

Ben and Kahlia attended the ZAA (Zoo and Aquarium Association) Conference in Christchurch this month.

Ben spoke on our cheetah program and the unique way in which we care for our cheetah, putting cats first and ensuring that we provide choice and agency in their every day. This unique handling of cats in captivity, is critical to the success of our rewilding programs. Ensuring that where possible the animals maintain their wild natural behaviours.

The presentation was well received by colleagues, encouraging them to evolve their thinking around

cheetah management in captivity, with high praise from Professor Ngaio Beausoleil, Animal Welfare Science and Bioethics Centre School of Veterinary Science – Massey University.

Following on from Ben's well received presentation, Wild Cat Conservation Centre Director, Kahlia alongside, Park Manager Tamblyn, presented at the Australasian Society of Zookeeping conference. They discussed the benefits of implementing a co-raising approach for captive cheetah.

They also received high praise!



JOIN US ON A WILD CAT CONSERVATION TRIP

Our Wild Cat Conservation Trip is for those of you who love wild cats and want to help conserve them.

Join Wild Cat Conservation Centre founder, Ben Britton, on the African savanna and immerse yourself in the heart of big cat country. With a career spanning two decades working with creatures big and small, exploring the world with National Geographic, and conserving wild cats, Ben is an expert on all things cats.

Starting at the beautiful Mohave Bush Camp in the Northern Tuli Game Reserve, you will spend 3 days with Ben learning about wildlife conservation in Africa. You will be on foot, immersed in the African wilderness, in the heart of big cat territory!

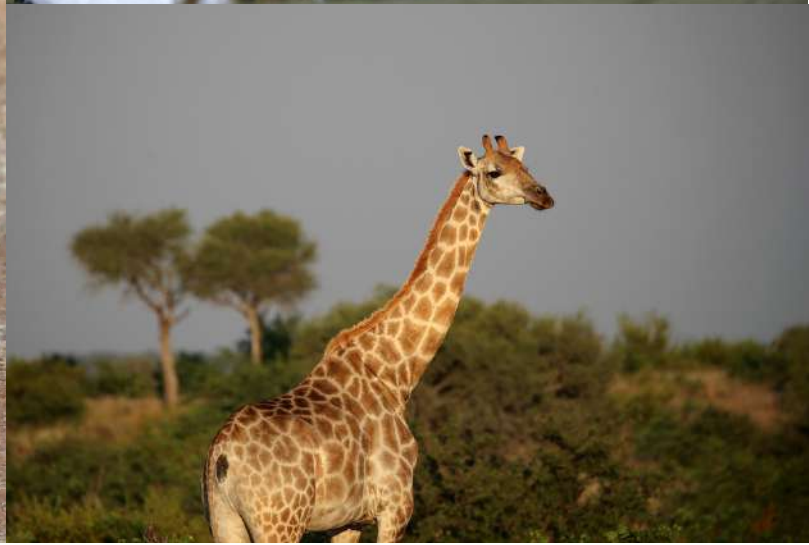
Whether it be carrying out field observations at a Spotted Hyena den, tracking animals on foot, visiting a local village to learn first-hand about human/wildlife conflict or spending the late afternoon searching for the elusive leopard or caracal, this trip has a little bit of everything!

You'll then transfer to Mashatu Game Reserve, widely regarded as one of the best locations in Africa to view big cats with twice daily game drives to view these amazing cats up close! Ben has been visiting and working at Mashatu for over 15 years and calls it his second home. He will share his experiences with the group and provide firsthand insights to the challenges in conserving wild cats in Botswana.

Mashatu is also home to elephants, giraffes, zebra and much, much more! A perfect introduction to life in one of Botswana's most unique locations.

The tour is capped at only 8 guests, ensuring a uniquely intimate experience. Don't miss out, secure your spot today!

For more information, a full itinerary or to secure your spot contact info@wildcatcentre.org.au



VISIT US: WHAT'S ON AT THE CENTRE?

Wild Cat Cadets

This program provides a unique opportunity to learn and practice the conservation and research techniques used in Africa to study and conserve wild cats. Your children can learn these skills and more at our Wild Cat Conservation Centre in Wilberforce, on the outskirts of Sydney.

The Junior Conservationist Program is available to children aged 9 to 13yrs who have an interest in wildlife conservation and its pursuit!

Learn telemetry, practice tracking wild cats, create a cast of a real wild cat pug mark/ footprint, learn animal observation skills and so much more. This one-of-a-kind experience is not to be missed. Limited spaces available this school holidays, get in quick!

Head to www.wildcatcentre.org.au today to book!

Open Days

Our open days provide the opportunity for you to spend an entire morning here at our centre learning about our unique conservation work.

It is the only place in Australia you can view the amazing Clouded Leopard and see Cheetahs, Servals and Caracals all within the one personalised tour. Our cheetah conservation breeding program is the only one of its kind in Sydney and is the only place you can view cheetah in a wild like state!

Guests on our open day will spend time observing each of our wild cat species and learning what makes them all so special. Learn about the work we are doing here at the centre and around the world to assist in the conservation of wild cat species.

Head to www.wildcatcentre.org.au today to learn more and grab your ticket!





HOW YOU CAN HELP!



DONATE

Our vision is to secure a long-term future for the world's wild cat species, and we can't do it alone. Wild Cat Conservation Centre relies on the generosity of supporters like you and our corporate partners to achieve our conservation goals.

By donating to Wild Cat Conservation Centre, you are helping us protect the forgotten wild cat species.



VISIT

Join us at the Wild Cat Conservation Centre and experience our wild cats up close!

The funds generated from your visit directly supports our conservation efforts, such as breeding and rewilding programs. Your support allows us to help make a difference to wild cats!