

WILD CAT

Issue 04



AUSTRALIAN FIRST

Edie returns to Africa!

Learn more about our historic rewilding efforts

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From the **DIRECTOR**

Wow! Where do I start. Safe to say I've never been quite so excited to bring you a Director's Report. It's been an amazing few months, both personally and professionally. When you've been working on a dream for 8 years and you see that dream become a reality, well it's a dream come true! It doesn't always happen in life, so when it does, you really must hold onto it.

One such dream for me and the centre, is the return of captive bred Cheetahs to Africa to aid in the rewilding and conservation efforts of the wild populations over there. And, well.... WE DID IT! Edie made the journey back to Africa last month.

The culmination of Edie returning to Africa, is not just the moment when she stepped out of her crate and hit African soil for the first time (which isn't one I'll forget any time soon), it's the realisation that everything we do - our approach to managing wild cats in captivity, providing them choice and agency, and providing a wild like space, it works, and you can see that in Edie when she wandered out of the crate. I have no doubt that she knew she was home, and all her instincts just came naturally. Watching her for those first few days, she looked like she had lived there her whole life. I think that it is our obligation to provide each cat, each cheetah, that opportunity to live as wild as possible.

This is a memory I'll cherish forever.

Edie was just the start, and we hope to have many more cheetahs bred here at the centre make that journey back over the coming years. To know that we are playing a critical part in the conservation of Cheetah populations in South Africa is truly satisfying!

The key to continuing the program is the successful breeding of genetically diverse cubs here in Wilberforce, and we have done just that (again!). We are thrilled to announce that Emmy, Edie and Dakari's mum, is expecting once again. We can't wait to share more with you and hope you will follow Emmy's journey over the coming months!

Safe to say 2024 is shaping up to be one of our best!

As always, I want to say a huge thank you to all our supporters for your continued support. We couldn't do this vital work without you!

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 & rewilding programs.

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EDIE RETURNS TO AFRICA IN AN AUSTRALIAN FIRST

We are thrilled to share with you a momentous achievement in Australian conservation history. After years of hard work, planning and dedication, we are excited to announce that Edie, born at Wild Cat Conservation Centre in 2022, has embarked on a ground-breaking journey back to her ancestral homeland in Africa. This endeavour marks a significant milestone not only for the Wild Cat Conservation Centre but also for wild cat conservation efforts across the globe.

From inception, our vision at Wild Cat Conservation Centre here in Wilberforce has been clear: to create an environment where wild cats can thrive and, if deemed suitable, be reintroduced to their natural habitats. The design of the centre has played a key role in this goal. Our cheetah habitats, particularly our savanna, have been designed to mimic the natural environment of wild cheetahs. This means that our cats can maintain their natural behaviours and important instincts, while living a fully enriched life.

Beyond providing a natural environment for the cats, innate qualities such as temperament and

personality play a huge role in deciding suitability for rewilding. Edie's unique personality traits hinted at her potential suitability for rewilding quite early on. Her confidence, keen observation skills, and adaptability were key indicators that she could thrive in the wild. As she grew, so did her confidence, further confirming our belief that she could be the first ever wild cat of any species to be reintroduced back to their home, in this case to Africa from Australia.

The process of preparing Edie for her return was a collaborative effort that spanned months (and continents!) of careful planning and co-ordination. Edie's genetic makeup was tested for suitability with samples sent down to the University of Pretoria. The results were conclusive, her DNA was suitable for reintroduction to Africa and perfect for infusion into the remaining cheetah population. We have a long history of working in South Africa and Botswana, which gave us some crucial key contacts to begin the process. We worked closely with the Cheetah Metapopulation Project, renowned for their expertise in managing the rewilding of captive cheetah, to develop a plan for Edie on her return to Africa.



Navigating the bureaucratic hurdles of international wildlife transportation posed its challenges. Historically, cheetah have never been transported out of Australia, Edie was to be the first. The Honourable Tanya Plibersek MP, Minister for the Environment and Water and Ms Susan Templeman MP, were invaluable in providing assistance and helping us push the approvals across the line for this historic moment.

Qantas generously came onboard and sponsored Edie's flights back to Africa, and FreightNet International helped to coordinate the logistical side of the flights, ensuring a smooth journey back to Africa for Edie. We are grateful for their support, which allowed us to direct all necessary funds back to Edie and her journey.

As Edie's departure drew near, our team at the centre spared no effort in ensuring she was physically and mentally prepared for the journey ahead. From specialised diet plans to rigorous exercise routines, every detail was meticulously planned, culminating in Edie's safe arrival in South Africa.

Upon reaching South Africa, Edie underwent a period of quarantine and acclimatisation before

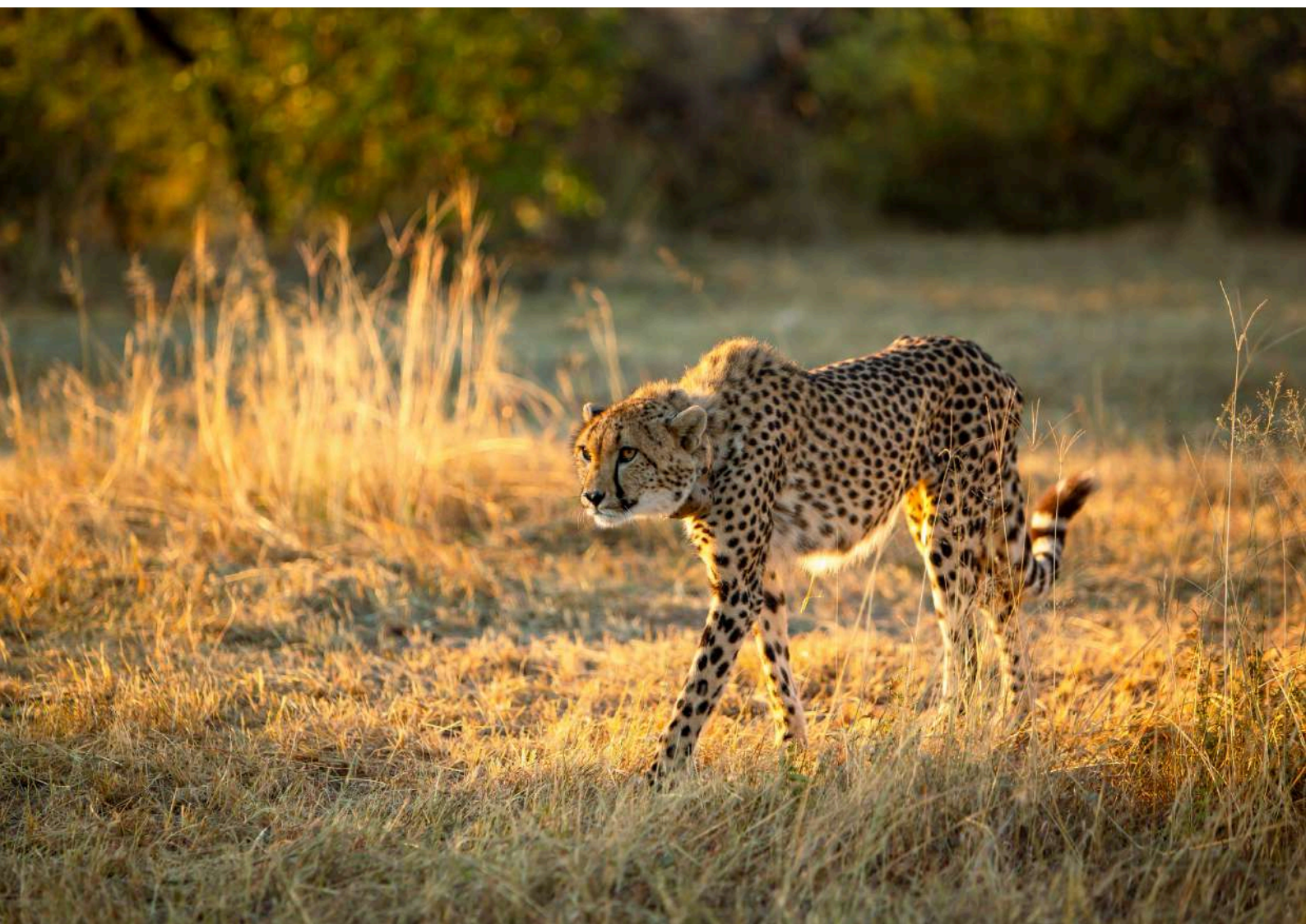
being introduced to a boma within the Mziki Private Game Reserve. This soft release approach allows her to gradually adjust to her new surroundings and establish herself before venturing into the larger reserve. With no lions or spotted hyenas present, Edie's chances of success are significantly enhanced, thanks to the careful selection of her new home.

The journey doesn't end here; it's only just begun. Edie is now equipped with a state-of-the-art satellite collar, allowing us to monitor her movements and ensure her safety as she navigates her new territory. It even has some spots painted on to match her stunning coat!

With ongoing support from our partners at the Cheetah Metapopulation Project, Mziki Private Game Reserve and WeWild Africa, we remain committed to tracking Edie's progress and supporting her transition to a fully independent life in the wild.

We must also thank our supporters. Together, we have achieved a milestone that sets a new benchmark for wild cat conservation in Australia and beyond. As we look to the future, we remain hopeful that Edie will be the first of many cheetahs bred at our centre to return to Africa, contributing to the preservation of cheetahs for generations to come.







EMMY IS EXPECTING... AGAIN!

We are thrilled to share more exciting news from the Wild Cat Conservation Centre. One of our resident female cheetah, Emmy, is once again expecting, and we couldn't be more excited for the arrival of her new cubs! After confirming Emmys pregnancy through ultrasound, we anticipate the arrival of at least two cubs in the coming days. Although, given her size, comparably to her last pregnancy, we suspect we may have more than two cubs hiding!

Emmy was the first ever cheetah in Sydney to successfully breed back in 2022. Brother and Sister duo Edie and Dakari captured hearts instantly! Emmy proved to be an incredible mother, and we adopted a method that saw Emmy take on most of the rearing. However, we nurtured and developed strong relationships with the cubs early on to allow for calm, stress free health and veterinary checks, that gave the cubs autonomy and choice.

This news, on the back of the return of Edie to Africa, not only fills us with anticipation but also opens new opportunities for our conservation program. With

Edie's successful return to Africa paving the way, we are eager to continue expanding our efforts. The upcoming birth of these cubs allows us to nurture and prepare them for potential rewilding in the future, provided their personalities and behaviours align with the requirements for reintroduction.

For our visitors, this news means an incredible opportunity to follow their journey. The cubs will remain under our care here at the centre for the first 14 to 16 months of their lives, giving everyone ample time to visit and observe their growth and development. We invite you to join us on this journey, from the moment the cubs are born to their transition to life in the wild!

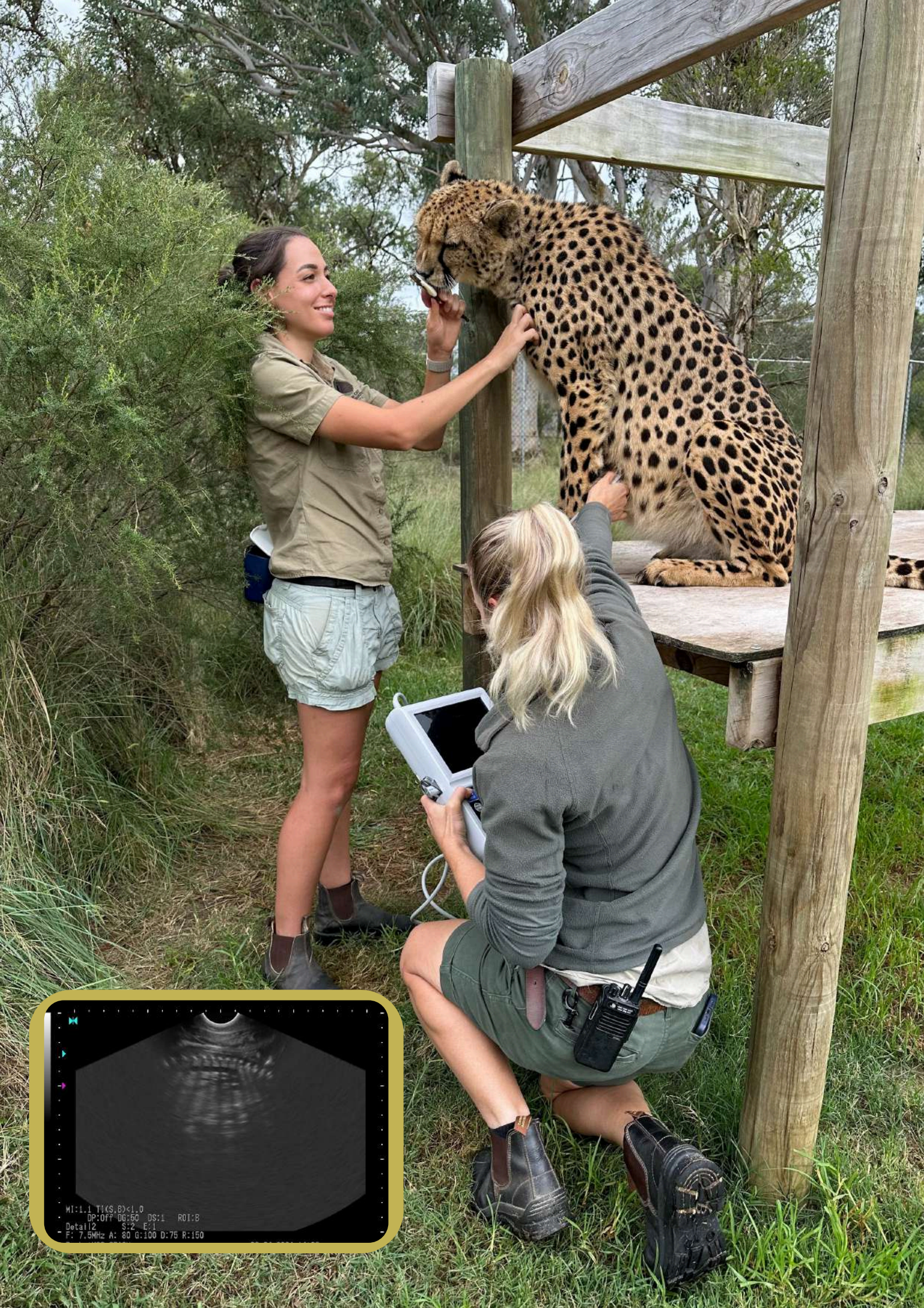
As we eagerly await the arrival of Emmy's cubs, we encourage you to plan your visit to the Wild Cat Conservation Centre. Late May, June, and July will be prime times to book a tour and witness the adorable cubs in their early stages. We will keep you updated every step of the way, so stay tuned for more exciting announcements!

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A TOAST TO CONSERVATION

We've partnered with the renowned Karu Distillery to bring you a limited edition cheetah inspired gin, a perfect blend crafted for African sundowners and those refreshing G&T moments.

What makes this gin truly special is not just its exceptional taste, but also the heart behind it. When Nick and Ally from Karu Distillery approached us with the idea of collaborating, we saw a shared ethos and passion for conservation. Karu Distillery are known worldwide for their award-winning gins, and joining forces with them on this project has been an incredible opportunity for us. When they visited our centre late last year, we knew we could do something really special together and here it is - Wilding: Jubatus!

A gin that is heavily influenced by the origins of the endangered Cheetah. Traditional in style, incorporating bitter, sweet, citrus, and spice to create a gin that is worthy of accompanying you as

the sun goes down on a warm afternoon. Juniper forward, bursting citrus, bitter pelargonium root, herbaceous floral of diosma, depth of thyme, and warm cassia bark. With every bottle purchased, you are contributing toward our ongoing cheetah rewilding efforts, so have a drink and help save a cheetah at the same time! The perfect drink for an African sundowner or two!

As we eagerly anticipate the arrival of Emmy's cubs and celebrate the return of Edie to Africa, the timing of this gin launch couldn't be more perfect. It's an opportunity for our supporters to indulge in a delicious beverage while making a meaningful impact on wild cat conservation now and into the future. Money from every bottle sold is directed back to our conservation and rewilding programs.

Available to purchase at:

<https://karudistillery.com.au/products/wilding-jubatus>



BECOME A WILD CAT SPONSOR

Wild Cat Conservation Centre is committed to securing a future for the forgotten wild cat species! Our unique centre stands proudly in Wilberforce, Australia, as a pioneering force in understanding and protecting smaller wild cat species.

Our brand-new sponsorship program seeks to connect our community of supporters with the cats under our care, while generously supporting Wild Cat Conservation Centres' efforts to protect and ensure the survival of wild cat species. We do this through the provision of education and carrying out research, and dedication to our conservation breeding programs.

Each of our cats are available to sponsor and every sponsorship package comes with a great sponsorship keepsake pack! Our sponsorship packages make the perfect gift for the cat conservationist in your life, so spoil yourself or a loved one.

With a number of sponsorship packages available, know that every donation you make goes a long way in helping us achieve our mission!

Head to **wildcatcentre.org.au** today to meet our cats and sponsor your chosen animal!



MEET OUR CATS!



Head to wildcatcentre.org.au today to sponsor a cat

JOIN US ON A WILD CAT CONSERVATION TRIP

NEW APRIL 2025 DATES RELEASED!

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





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CONSERVATION
FOUNDATION**

Thank you to our major supporters

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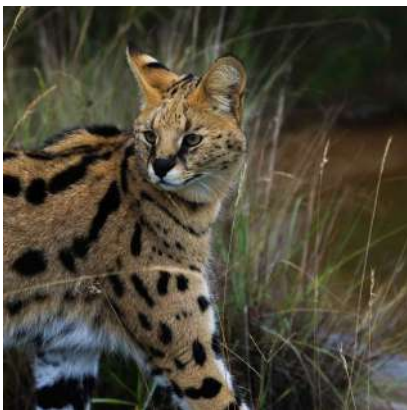
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HOW YOU CAN HELP!



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!