

WILD CAT

Issue 06

MEET MIRRI

The first Australian born Clouded Leopard.

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From the **DIRECTOR**

It's hard to know where to begin this report, so perhaps the best place is the very beginning—why we started this journey eight years ago right here in Wilberforce. Back then it was my dream to create a sanctuary dedicated to endangered wild cats, focusing on the lesser-known species—the forgotten cats as we often call them.

When we founded the centre, like anyone starting out, I had a list of goals. Some seemed impossible, more like dreams than tangible targets. But today, looking back, I feel immense pride in what we've achieved.

One of our earliest milestones was becoming the first centre in Sydney to successfully breed cheetahs, and not just once, but twice! This incredible achievement followed our earlier success breeding caracals, which was a stepping stone. Then we saw the first-ever return of an Australian born cheetah to the wild, with the amazing Edie continuing to flourish in the wilds of South Africa.

Recently, I stumbled across that original list of goals from all those years ago. They felt daunting at the time, almost out of reach. But there was one goal in particular that stood out: establishing the first-ever breeding population of clouded leopards in Australia.

And now, we've done it. With the birth of Mirri, we've reached that milestone. Breeding clouded leopards is an incredibly complex and challenging task, and to say we've done it successfully is, hand on heart, one of my proudest achievements. More on Mirri later!

It feels surreal. The effort, energy, time, and resources we've poured into this centre have been beyond worth it. At the heart of what we do is our commitment to provide every cat in our care with the best possible life, ensuring they not only survive but thrive.

None of this would have been possible without the incredible team and community who have walked this journey with us. From our dedicated staff to our supporters, every step we've taken has been a collective effort, and I am so grateful.

We've achieved some incredible dreams, but we're not done yet. There are more goals on the horizon and more milestones to reach. I can't wait to see what comes next.

Thank you for believing in us and for helping us turn dreams into reality. Together, we are making a difference for the forgotten cats of the world.

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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CELEBRATING INTERNATIONAL CHEETAH DAY WITH OUR COMMUNITY

Every year on December 4th we come together to celebrate International Cheetah Day, a day dedicated to highlighting the challenges cheetahs face in the wild and the efforts being made globally to protect these magnificent animals. This year's celebration was particularly special, as we were honoured to be hosted by Corrs Chambers Westgarth, long-standing supporters of our work.

For many years, Corrs has been instrumental in supporting our mission and played a vital role in the establishment of our foundation. Their dedication and generosity has been foundational to our success, and we wouldn't be where we are today without them.

The event took place at their stunning office, overlooking Sydney Harbour, and was a perfect blend of celebration and reflection. Guests were treated to an evening of sundowners accompanied by Wilding Gin by Karu Distillery. The atmosphere was warm and inviting, with the team at Corrs hearing about the amazing work being done by the team at WCCC.

The highlight of the evening was a special screening of "Edie's Story," a beautifully crafted short documentary by Dan Walkington of Butter Media.

The film chronicles Edie's journey back to Africa, capturing the emotional and inspiring moments of her return to the wild. The documentary served as a poignant reminder of the impact we can make when we work together to conserve and protect endangered species.

The evening was a true celebration of community, bringing together people from all walks of life, united by a shared passion for cheetah conservation. As we look to the future, events like these inspire us to continue our efforts and remind us of the incredible support network we are fortunate to have.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to Corrs Chambers Westgarth, Butter Media, Karu Distillery, and everyone who joined us for this unforgettable evening. Together, we are making a difference for cheetahs and ensuring their place in the wild for generations to come.

**Pictured in photo – left to right
Dan Walkington and Jerry Butterfield – Butter Media, Ben Britton – WCCC and Michael do Rozario – Corrs Chambers Westgarth**



THE FIRST-EVER CLOUDED LEOPARD BREEDING IN AUSTRALIA!

For anyone who has supported us or visited our sanctuary over the past eight years, you'll know how much we've dedicated ourselves to working with clouded leopards. These magnificent and elusive animals are unlike any other wild cat species. Their care is highly specialised, which is why we're the only facility in Australia approved to work with them.

Clouded leopards are notoriously shy, secretive, and difficult to breed. Their behaviour makes them challenging to study in the wild, and even in captivity, they are not often sought after by other facilities because they don't "display well."

We've invested heavily in creating habitats tailored to their needs and learning everything we could. When Tai and Cinta arrived from Europe and Mark and Moana from the United States, our vision to establish Australia's first clouded leopard conservation breeding program began to take shape.

It wasn't an easy journey. From the logistics of international transfers to acclimatisation, we faced many hurdles, including delays due to COVID-19. Over time, we watched Mark and Moana form an

extraordinary bond, as clouded leopards do. They are largely monogamous in captivity, forming lifelong partnerships.

After a few unsuccessful breeding seasons, we began investigating reproductive options, including testing Mark's fertility. But just as we were about to proceed with testing, we noticed some changes in Moana—she was developing mammary glands. Hormone tests confirmed raised progesterone levels, and a voluntary ultrasound revealed the most exciting news: Moana was pregnant!

In late November, amidst Sydney's intense heatwave (temperatures soared between 38–42°C), Moana gave birth to Mirri, a beautiful cub whose name means "The Sun" in an Aboriginal language. Mirri's birth was not without challenges. She was born breach, and for 20 nerve-wracking minutes, only her tail was visible. Eventually, Moana successfully delivered her, cleaned her up, and the two rested together. However, after hours of close monitoring, it became clear that Mirri was not suckling as expected. Combined with the extreme heat and signs of weakness, we made the difficult decision to intervene.



Mirri weighed just over 180 grams at birth—significantly smaller than the expected 200–250 grams. Removing her from Moana’s care meant committing to hand-rearing her, as reintroduction would not be possible. The decision was hard but necessary to ensure her survival. The international studbook SSP program recommends that all clouded leopard cubs are removed from their mothers for hand rearing as the species are notoriously poor mothers in captivity, losing more cubs than they raise. We had hoped with our purpose-built environments and habitats that Moana would be able to raise cubs though the heatwave put an end to those hopes, even with our insulated dens and nesting boxes she would not have survived those extreme temperatures.

For the past three weeks, our team has been working tirelessly, feeding Mirri every two hours, keeping her in a humidicrib, and mimicking the care her mother would have provided. It’s been an

intense period, but Mirri is thriving. Her eyes and ears have opened, and she’s growing stronger every day.

This achievement is monumental – Mirri is the first clouded leopard cub born in Australia, a testament to the dedication, expertise, and care of our team.

At the end of Jan 2025, we hope to open a nursery where visitors can catch a glimpse of Mirri—the only clouded leopard in Australia. Consider booking a tour early in the new year to see this incredible milestone in conservation up close.

We will also soon be offering cub sponsorship opportunities for Mirri. Her journey ahead is bright, and your support will help ensure she has the best life possible. Together, we are setting a new benchmark for wild cat care and conservation.

Thank you for being part of this historic moment. Stay tuned for updates on Mirri’s development!





EDIE'S JOURNEY: THRIVING IN THE WILD AND WHAT'S NEXT

It's hard to believe, but it has been over six months since Edie transitioned to life as a fully self-sustaining wild cheetah at Mziki Private Game Reserve in South Africa. This milestone is not just significant—it's extraordinary. For rewilded cheetahs, the first six months are critical, as they must establish territory, adapt to their environment, and consistently hunt for survival. Edie has done all of this and more, proving her resilience and adaptability.

We are thrilled to share that Edie is thriving, and her success is a testament to the impact of conservation programs. Her story has captured hearts worldwide, and if you haven't yet watched "Return to Africa: Edie's Story," now is the time. This documentary chronicles Edie's journey from her time with us at the Wild Cat Conservation Centre to her remarkable life in the wilds of South Africa. It's available across our social platforms—don't miss it!

The next step in Edie's incredible journey is the arrival of a coalition of two male cheetahs at Mziki, anticipated next month. This marks a pivotal moment in her story and the conservation program.

Cheetahs are induced ovulators, meaning that the presence of males is critical to triggering ovulation. If successful mating occurs, Edie could become pregnant, with a gestation period of around 93 days.

The conservation team at Mziki will closely monitor interactions between Edie and the males, hoping to confirm mating and estimate a potential timeline for reproduction.

This step is monumental—not just for Edie but for the conservation program as a whole. The successful birth and rearing of cubs from a rewilded cheetah in the wild would mark an unprecedented achievement and reinforce the potential of global rewilding efforts.

As Edie continues to thrive, we're excited to announce our upcoming Cheetah Conservation Trip to Mziki in August 2025. This trip offers a unique opportunity to visit Edie in her natural habitat and, if the timing aligns, potentially witness her raising cubs in the wild—a moment that would be truly unforgettable.

Spaces are still available! If you've ever dreamed of seeing cheetahs in their natural environment and contributing to their protection, this is your chance.

Edie's journey is a prime example of what can be achieved through determination, collaboration, and innovative conservation techniques. Her story continues to inspire, and we can't wait to see what the future holds for her!



EZRA AND DARCIÉ: PREPARING FOR THEIR NEXT CHAPTER

Exciting news! At just over 7 months of age, our incredible cheetah cubs Ezra and Darcie are growing beautifully and have reached an exciting milestone in their journey. The decision has been made—both cubs will be heading back to South Africa! This marks a monumental step in their lives and an inspiring outcome for cheetah conservation.

The process is officially underway, with paperwork and permits being meticulously prepared—a painstaking but essential part of ensuring their safe return. Both Ezra and Darcie have demonstrated all the necessary traits to become valuable contributors to the metapopulation program, which is vital for maintaining genetic diversity and strengthening the survival chances of cheetahs in the wild.

Unlike Edie, who found her home at Mziki Private Game Reserve, Ezra and Darcie's final destination in South Africa is yet to be determined. Initially, they will

enter quarantine upon arrival, where a decision will be made about the best location to support their future role in the program.

As part of their preparation, both cubs are undergoing specialized training, including acclimatization to their transport crates for the journey. This preparation is crucial to ensure their comfort and safety during the long flight to South Africa. The expected departure date is set for March 2025, and we couldn't be prouder or more excited for what lies ahead for these remarkable cubs.

Their journey back to Africa represents not just a new chapter for Ezra and Darcie but also a broader achievement in global conservation efforts. This is a testament to what can be achieved through dedication, collaboration, and a commitment to protecting wildlife.

Stay tuned as we share updates on Ezra and Darcie's journey—we can't wait to see them thrive in their new home!



Darcie



Ezra

A TOAST TO CONSERVATION

There are still limited bottles of our Wilding Gin available! With the weather warming up, the gin is the 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!

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>



CHRISTMAS GIFTING MADE EASY

Christmas is fast approaching!

This festive season, consider a gift that goes beyond the ordinary—gift certificates to the Wild Cat Conservation Centre! Give your loved ones the chance to make a meaningful impact on wildlife conservation while enjoying an experience like no other.

By purchasing gift certificates to the Wild Cat Conservation Centre, you're contributing to an organisation that is committed to securing a future for wild cat species like cheetah and clouded leopard.

These gift certificates aren't just about gifting an experience—they're a tangible way to support the conservation of wild cat species! Your contribution will aid in research, education and the development of breeding programs, making a lasting impact on the future of wild cat species.

This Christmas, give the gift of adventure and join us on the savanna!

Jump online at wildcatcentre.org.au to purchase yours today.



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!

ZIVA



ZANE

BLANCA



DUKE



COOPER

EMMY



FINNEGAN



SIMBA



CRUNCHIE

KATO



KAIA

TAI



CINTA



MARK



MOANA

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

JOIN US ON A WILD CAT CONSERVATION TRIP

NEW CHEETAH CONSERVATION TRIP IN 2025!

We are excited to announce that we have recently partnered with The Classic Safari Company. The Classic Safari Company is Australia's leading safari specialist. Since 1992, they've been exploring the world and sharing their passion, using first-hand experiences to create exceptional safaris and journeys to Africa. This new partnership will allow us to provide even more unique wild cat experiences for our supporters.

These hosted trips allow the opportunity for our supporters to spend quality time with our directors learning about wild cat conservation whilst at the same time visiting and viewing wild cats in their natural habitat, knowing that monies raised from these trips goes directly to conserving wild cats!

Our April 2025 Wild Cat Conservation Trip is now sold out though we have a brand-new hosted trip scheduled for August 2025!

Ben will lead a small group of 8 guests to visit Edie at Mziki Private Game Reserve in South Africa before travelling to Phinda Private Game Reserve to learn more about cheetah conservation and the work being done by WCCC and our conservation partners to prevent the extinction of this beautiful cat.

This trip is not to be missed, guests being able to view Edie, our cub born here at the centre now living as a wild cheetah in Africa! A conservation success story!

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

To book a spot please email:
info@classicsafaricompany.com.au





**WILD CAT
CONSERVATION
FOUNDATION**

Thank you to our major supporters

PLATINUM

Hashim K Aghajan
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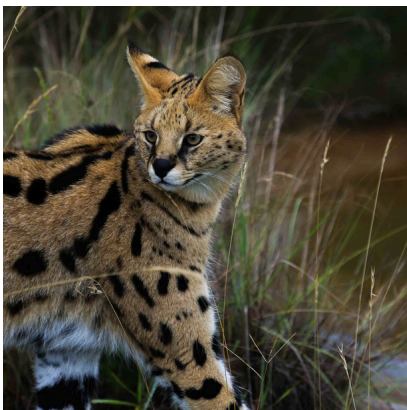
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HOW YOU CAN HELP!



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!