

2024 CHEETAH PROJECT ANNUAL REPORT



Serendipity Wildlife Foundation
CSWlfdlife.org

A cheetah is shown in profile, looking towards the right. It is standing on a rocky outcrop. The background is a blurred savanna landscape with tall grass and some trees. The overall image has a dark, muted color palette.

Beauty, grace, and speed - The Cheetah

Our cover photo was taken by Brian Odida "Green Eagle"



Ravi Perera, CEO and Manager, Cheetah Project

It's been an amazing 2024 for the Cheetah Project, but not with a few hurdles. The year started with our team arriving at Loisaba Conservancy at the end of January. This was also the time that black rhinos were going to be reintroduced to the conservancy after several decades...and we were slap-bang in the middle of this very important and historic rhino relocation project. Since we had already established a territory map for the cheetahs, we were anxious to see if the cheetah territories would change after the rhinos were introduced. The territories did change, with the cheetahs seeing rhinos for the first time, and distancing themselves from the new occupants.

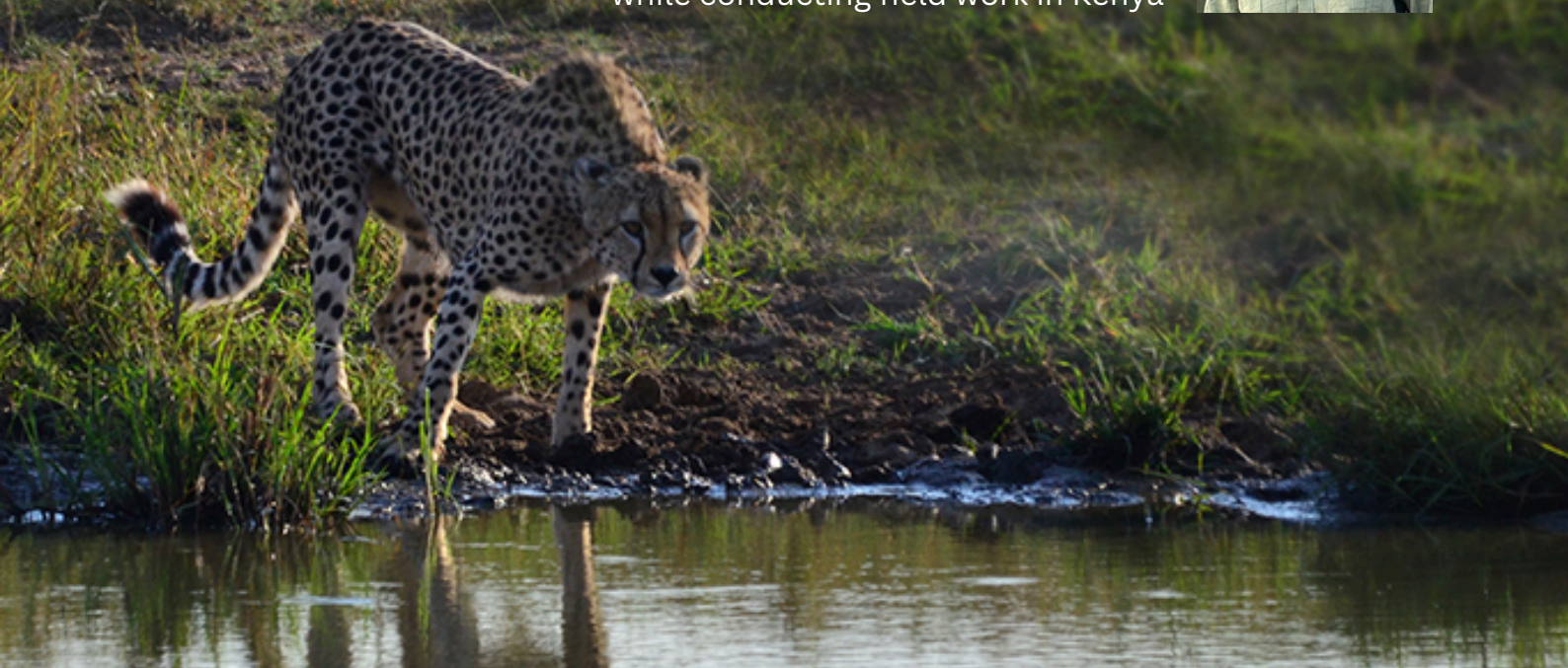
The team returned in July and August and found that the grass was the tallest it has been in Loisaba Conservancy, making it extremely hard to observe cheetahs. At Mugie Conservancy, the grass was lower. However, we were successful in locating cheetahs with the help of field personnel from both conservancies.

At the end of field patrolling for the team, we returned to our respective countries in August. It was then that we heard the good news that Mugie Conservancy would be collaring a cheetah soon, and our assistance would be required. We were excited, and a team arrived in November to assist in locating the targeted cheetah while Kenya Wildlife Services conducted the immobilization, and Mugie personnel attached the collar.

As always, a very big Thank You to Loisaba Conservancy and Mugie Conservancy for collaborating with Serendipity Wildlife Foundation's Cheetah Project to make the area a safe haven for cheetahs.

Khushboo, Cheetah Project Manager

Khushboo started off as a Cheetah Project team member, and was promoted to Cheetah Project Administrator. She is presently our Cheetah Project Manager, and will retain that position while starting on her doctorate soon in Canada, while conducting field work in Kenya



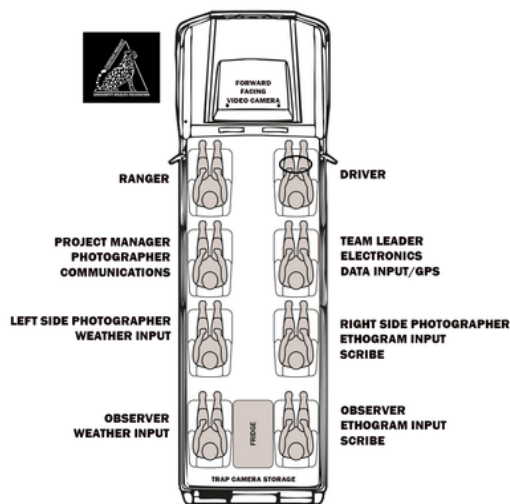


Our “Classroom in the Wild” program conducted an art competition for 2nd graders, and young Eliana from Lowell Elementary School in Everett, Washington, USA won the award for the best cheetah drawing.

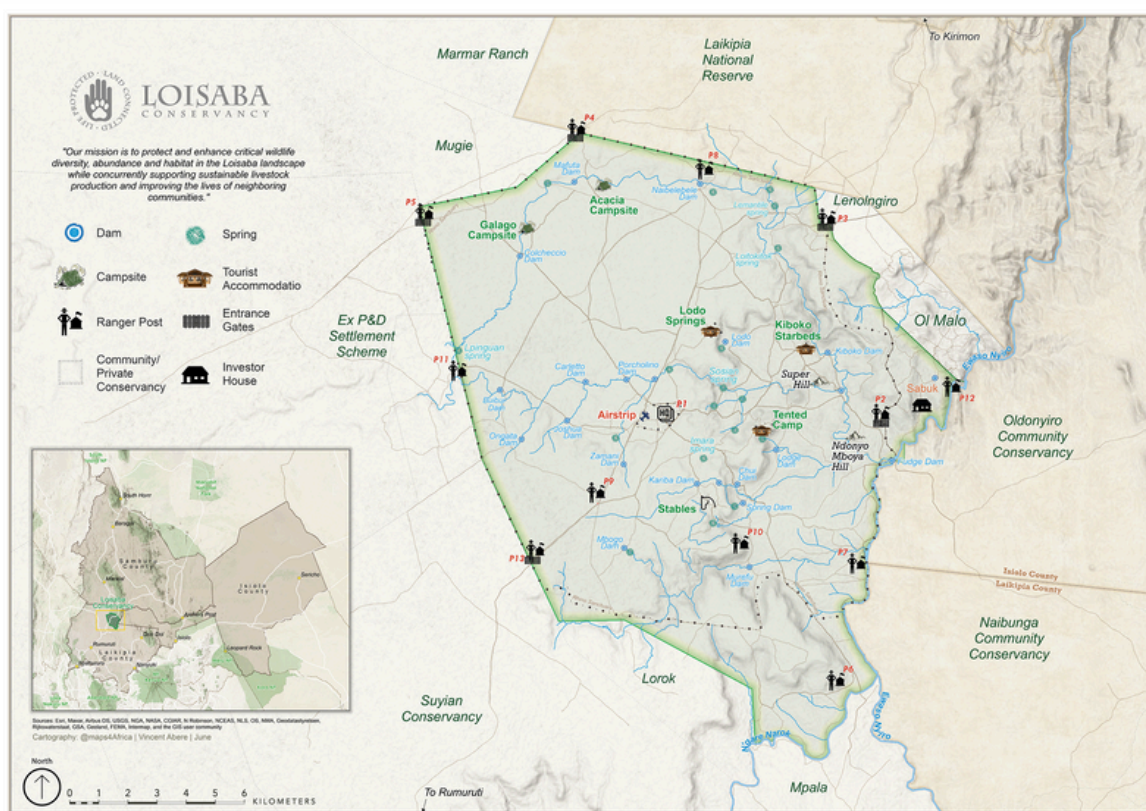
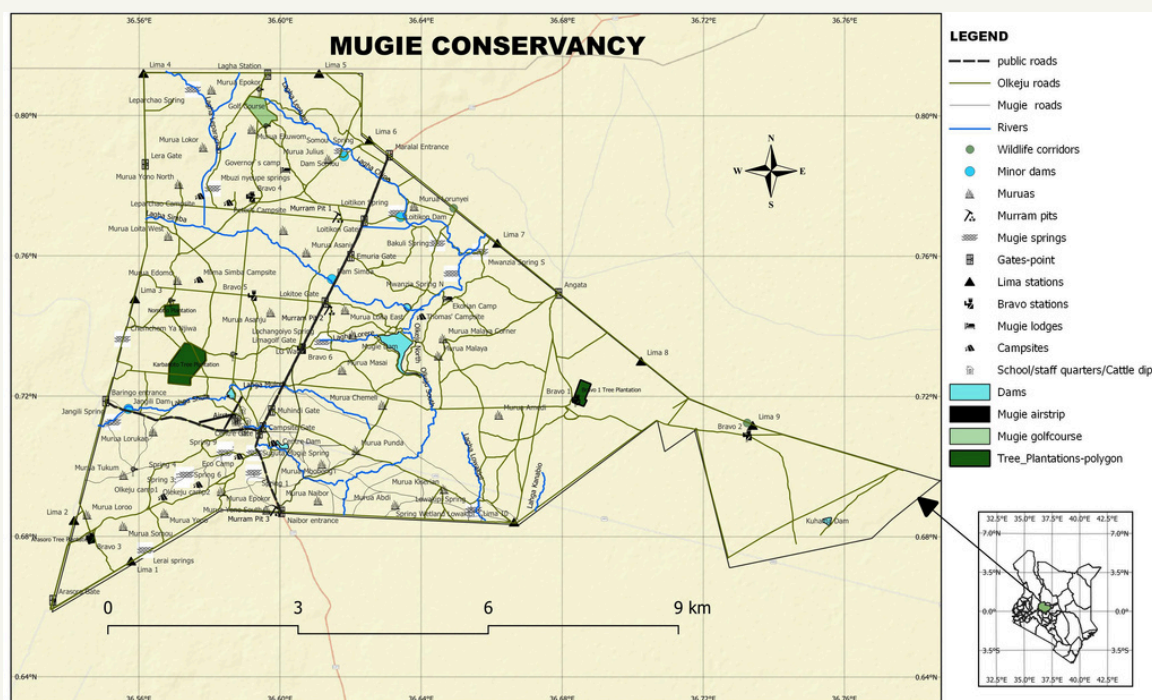


Our Advisory Board Member who is a strong supporter of the Cheetah Project displays a cheetah skull to second graders.





The Cheetah Project partners with Loisaba Conservancy and Mugie Conservancy to take a census of the cheetahs in both conservancies, determine each cheetah's territory, and keep track of any cheetahs that migrate from one conservancy to another. Our patrol team covers 50,000 acres at Mugie and 58,000 acres at Loisaba.





NISHA GAMAGE, Cheetah Project Administrator

Nisha is a Sri Lankan born in Botswana and has her degree in Forensic Science. She is the Cheetah Project Administrator and is in charge of compiling the identification sheets that are used by the team to identify each cheetah. Additionally, her duties include training new team members, documentation, and communicating with the rangers and guides. Nisha is an expert in cheetah identification, and most times identifies each individual cheetah within minutes after spotting it in the field.

WHAT IS A “STANDARD”?

Every cheetah in our database has a ‘Standard’ card (Right). Identification photos taken in the field are used to compile the Standard card. Whenever a cheetah is observed in the field, it is compared with the Standard cards that we have.

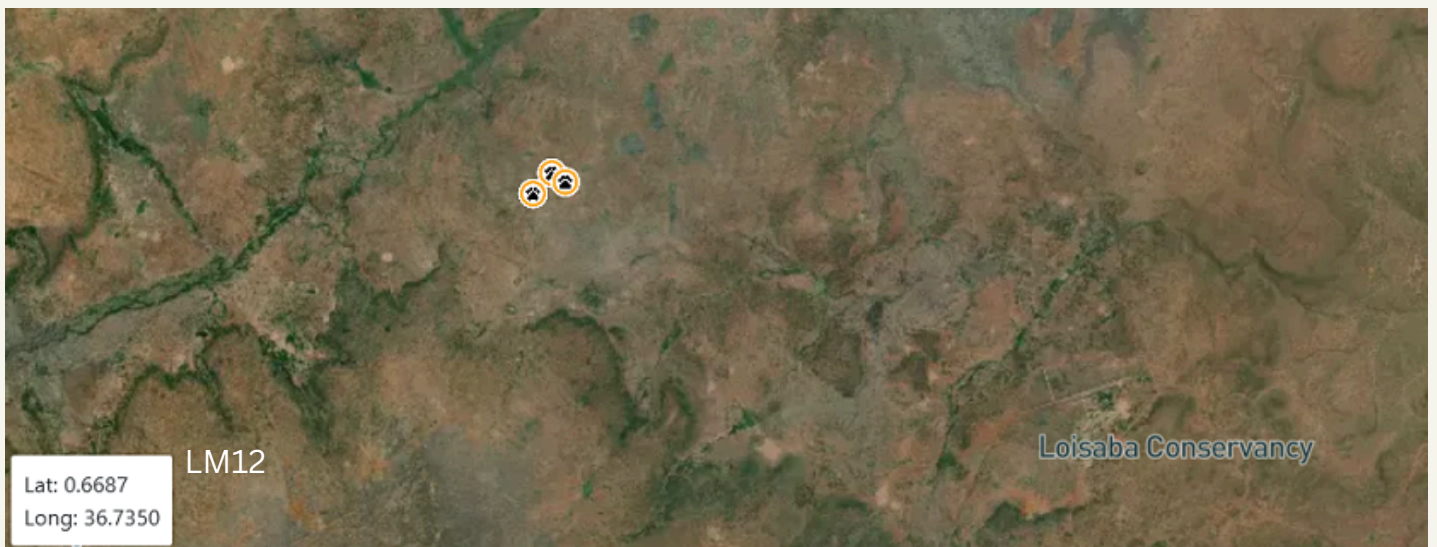


IDENTIFIED AND DOCUMENTED CHEETAHS IN 2024

LM 12

Loisaba Conservancy

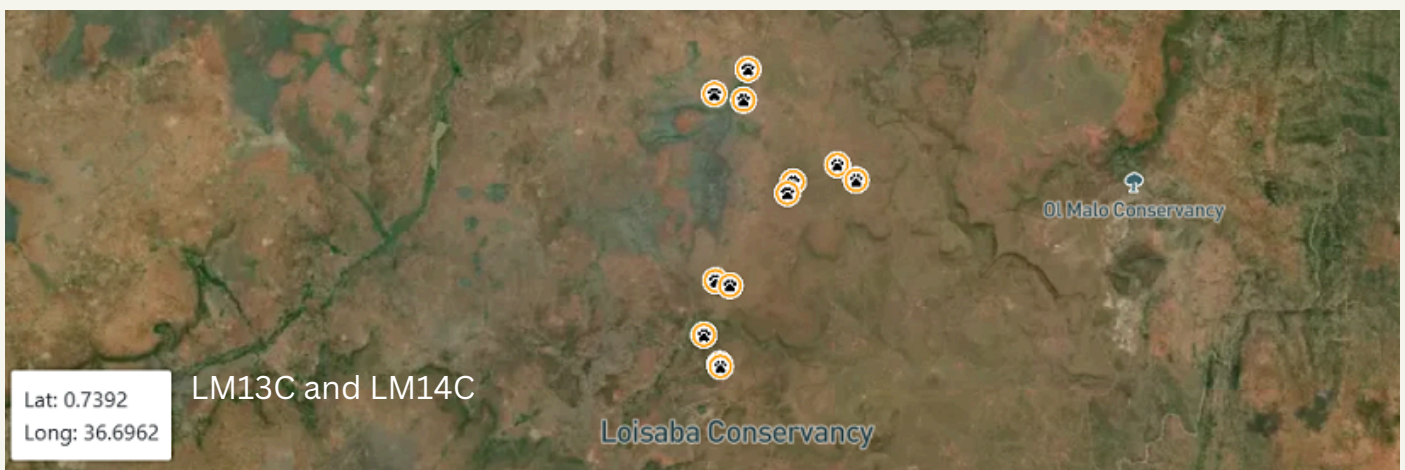
LM12 was first discovered in Loisaba Conservancy mid 2023. He was first spotted on an ant hill approximately 1km away. As we approached to position about 50 meters away, he took one look at our vehicle and went into hiding. His behavior was unlike any other cheetah our team had seen.



LM 13C and LM 14C

Loisaba Conservancy

LM 13C and LM 14C are a coalition of two male cheetahs. The letter 'C' after their identifier indicates that they are a coalition. It is unknown if these two males are 'blood brothers', but we have seen them together several times in 2023. They have learned to hunt together, and are pretty good in positioning and chasing down prey successfully. Both cheetahs often ignore the safari vehicles that approach them, and as long as the vehicles keep a minimum 30 meter distance, the two boys show no attention to the vehicles.



LF 11

Loisaba Conservancy

Is the daughter of LF 10, who has not been seen since the latter part of 2024.

DATE OF BIRTH: April 2022

SEX: Female





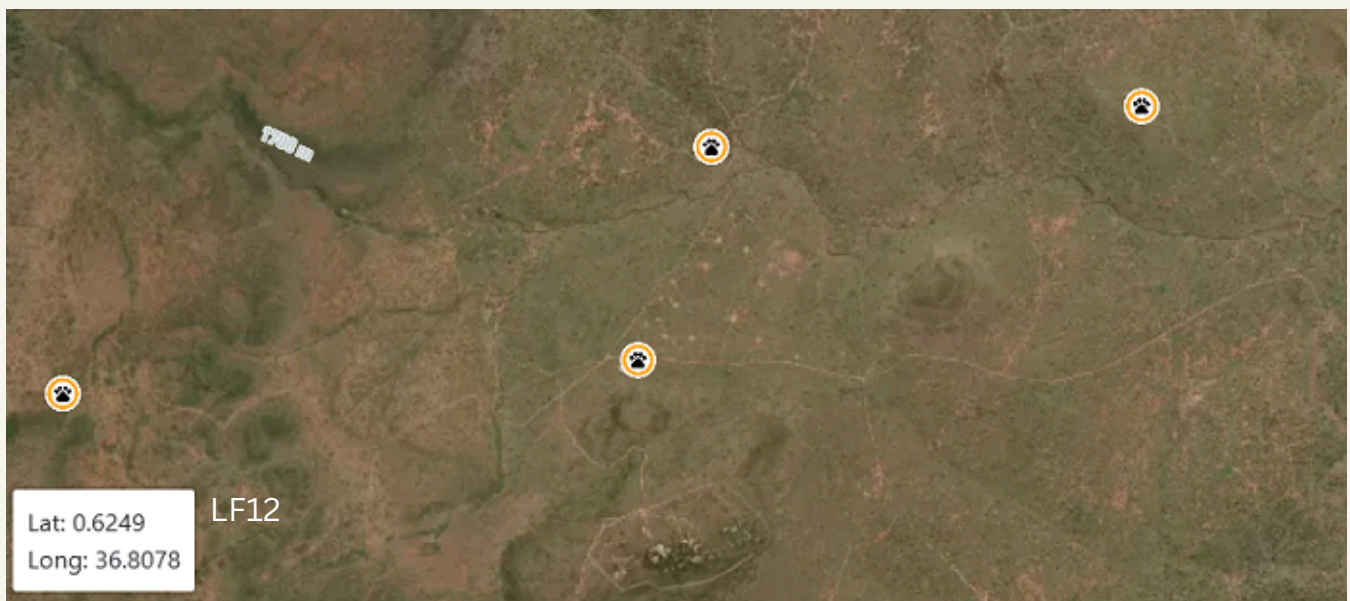
LF 12

Loisaba Conservancy

Is the daughter of LF 10, who has not been seen since the latter part of 2024.

DATE OF BIRTH: April 2022

SEX: Female



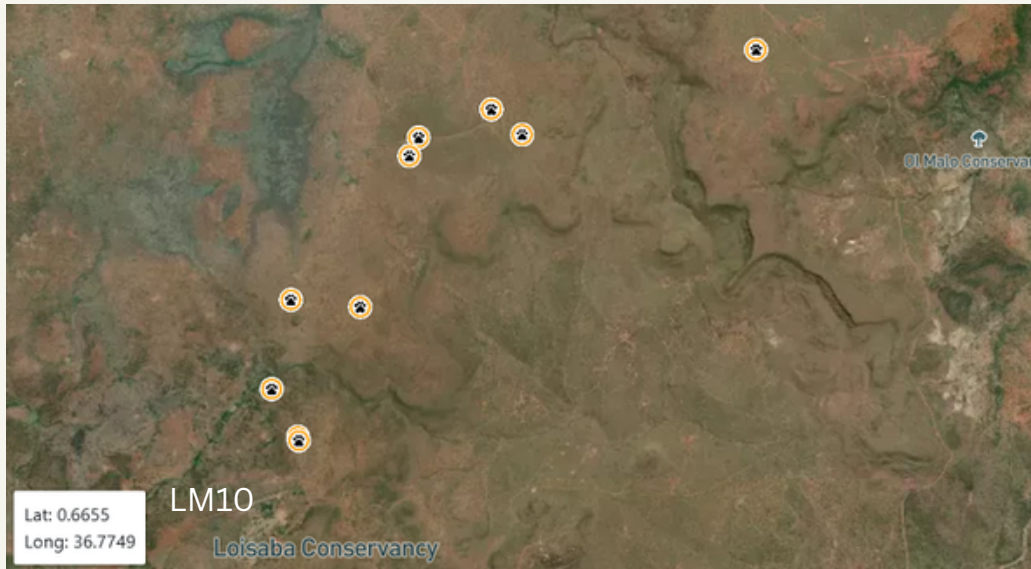
LM 10

Loisaba Conservancy

Is the son of LF 10, who has not been seen since the latter part of 2024.

DATE OF BIRTH: April 2022

SEX: Male



LF 10

LOISABA CONSERVANCY

Is the mother of LF 11, LF 12, and LM 10. She originally had 4 cubs, and only three survived.

DATE OF BIRTH: April 2022

SEX: Female



MM 20C and MM 21C

Mugie Conservancy

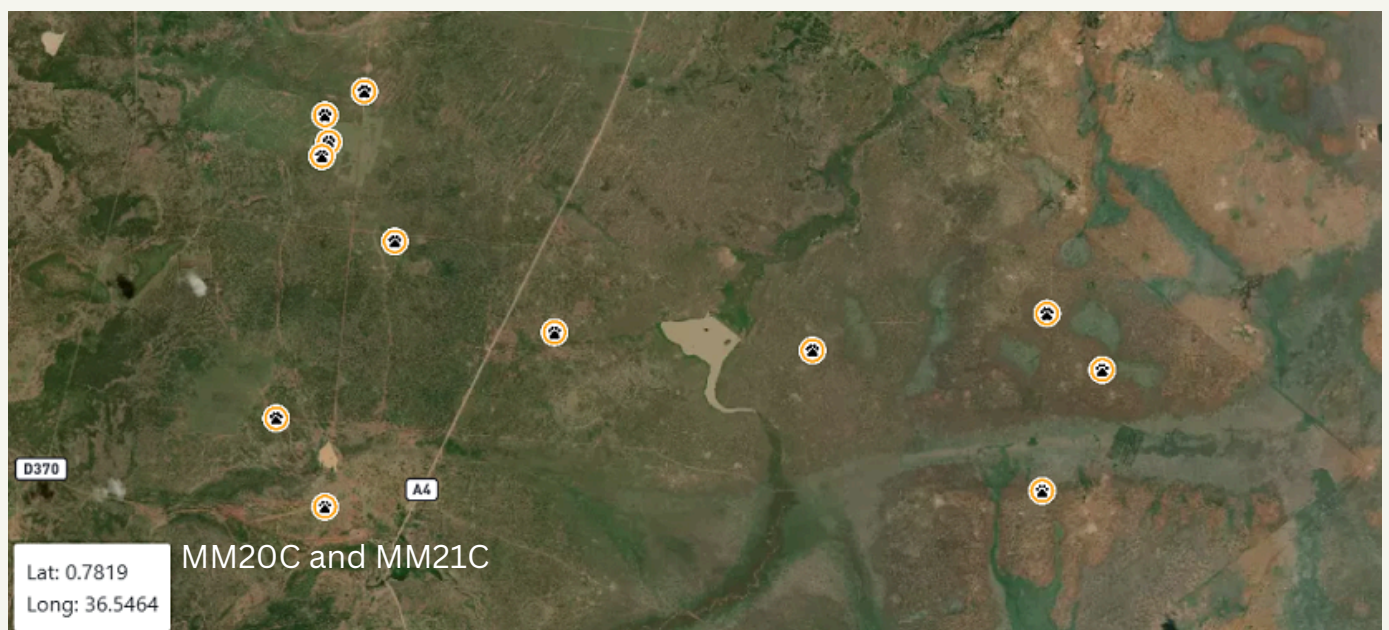
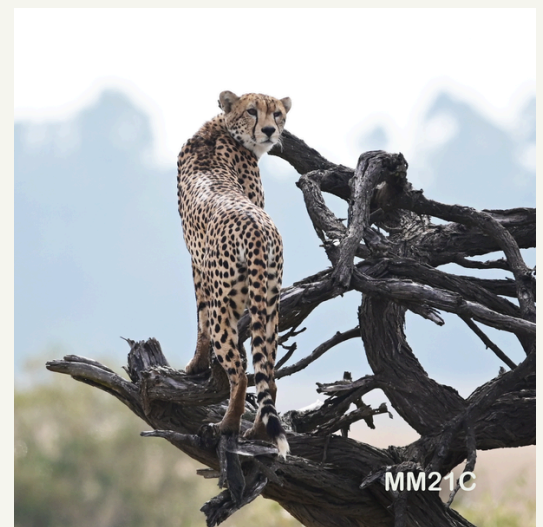
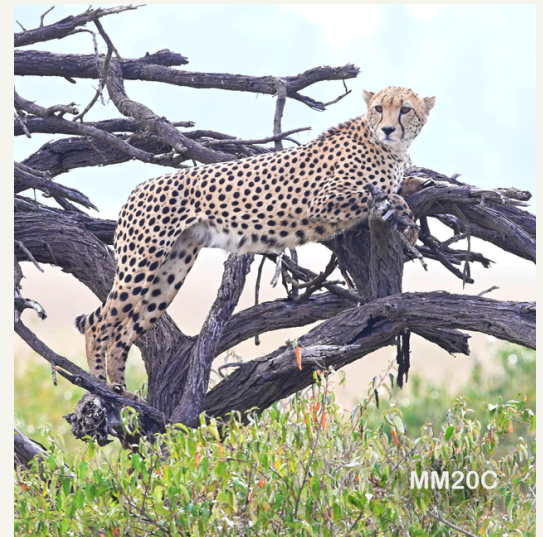
The stars of Mugie Conservancy, and possibly the most photographed cheetahs in Laikipia County, the “Chongo Brothers” have been spotted almost every day in 2024. Our team has been attempting to establish their territory, but have discovered that they move within all parts of Mugie Conservancy, and have never been documented outside of the conservancy’s boundary.

It should be noted that MM21C does have an injury to its left eye. It is unknown how much visibility it has with that eye, but field observations have shown that it does not affect its hunting ability.

In November 2024, LM 20C was collared, and is now trackable by VHF antenna.

DATE OF BIRTH: Unknown

SEX: Male



MF 20

Mugie Conservancy

MF 20 is a female cheetah approximately four years old. She was first observed in the summer of 2024 by the Cheetah Project team on the East side of Mugie Conservancy where she had made a fresh kill. What was unknown at that time was that she had three newborn cubs, possibly a week or two old, hidden in the brush. A couple of months later she was seen by several guides with three cubs. She now has only one cub that survived.



DATE OF BIRTH: Approximately 2021

SEX: Female



CM 10

Loisaba and Mugie

CM 10 (Community Male 10) was first photographed and identified in Mugie Conservancy. Later that year, he was seen at Loisaba Conservancy.



DATE OF BIRTH: Unknown

SEX: Male

2024 CHEETAH COUNT

Mugie Conservancy: 02 males. 01 female. Total: 03

Loisaba Conservancy: 04 males. 03 females: Total 07

Community Cheetah (CM) male moving between Mugie and Loisaba Conservancies: 01

*The above numbers show cheetahs observed from Jan 1 - December 31, 2024

With a lot of help from the sky



We are extremely thankful to the security folks at Loisaba Conservancy for providing air support, when needed. Searching for cheetahs from a patrol vehicle has always been a difficult task. With a good knowledge of territory, documenting procedures, and heat maps, our team is able to search for our target. However, there are times when we have observed a cheetah and lost it in the thick scrub, or are unable to reach the cheetah due to the terrain being inaccessible...that's when air support comes in.



If the fixed-wing is in the air on patrol, Pilot Andre would often respond to our location to search from the air, and guide our vehicle in. While on air patrol, If he did spot a cheetah, or anything else that was of interest, he would guide us to the location while he circled over the find.

On the ground, Security Manager Daniel and Saruni would always help us if available. Deploying the drone in the area where the cheetah was last seen, has always been successful.



When a cheetah is spotted and prior to a drone being deployed, our Cheetah Project team often looks around for evidence in the perimeter (such as paw prints, and direction of travel). By doing so, we can focus on the search area and establish a more accurate perimeter.



To collar a cheetah

In November 2024, our Cheetah Project team returned to Mugie Conservancy on a special assignment - to assist Kenya Wildlife Services veterinarians and Mugie personnel in collaring darting and collaring a cheetah.

The conservancy and the Cheetah Project decided that MM20C would be collared, as his coalition partner MM21C and he had a large territory that comprised of 39 square kilometers. In addition, the coalition were constantly crossing the busy C77 road, that divided the conservancy.

Approximately five days prior to the scheduled day for darting, our team arrived, and immediately went in search of MM20C. When we found him, along with his coalition partner, our eyes were continuously on him to check on any change in behavior patterns, territory, and of course, health.

On the day scheduled for the darting, we left camp early, as our duty was to locate the coalition, and stay with them for several hours until the Kenya Wildlife Services vets arrived. The coalition did give us the slip one time, and with some anxious moments in the bush, we did locate them less than 10 meters from our vehicle, in thick scrub.

The darting by the KWS vet was spot on, and within a few minutes MM20C was carried to the shade of the vehicles. MM21C ran away and hid by a nearby bush approximately 30 meters away.

While the KWS veterinarians monitored the cheetah, our five team members sprang into action, with each assigned a duty: body measurements, paw imprints, inspection for injuries, body temperature monitoring, and assisting Mugie personnel to secure the collar.

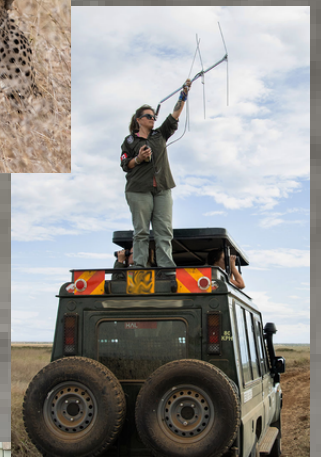
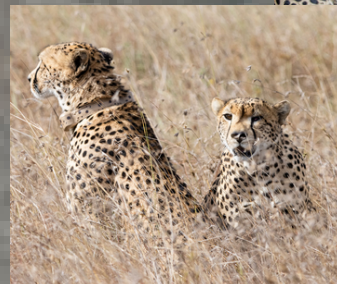
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We completed our duties 10 minutes ahead of MM20C's expected recovery time. He recovered to the sounds of his partner crying out from the nearby bush, and soon, both cheetahs reunited.

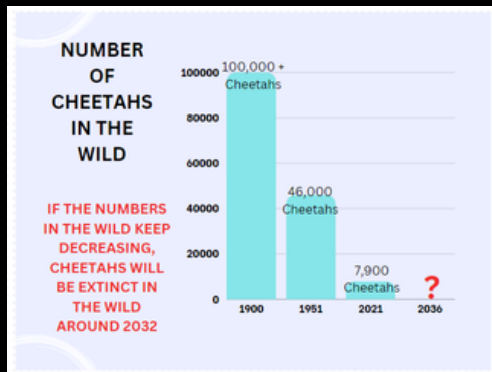
Our team duty was to monitor MM20C for the next few hours until sunset. He did remain groggy and disoriented for the first hour, and then went to sleep in the tall grass with MM21C.

We monitored the coalition for the next few days, and our observations confirmed that the radio collar was not affecting MM20C's daily behavior, and neither was it a hindrance to his his daily life.

To date, the coalition continues to be tracked by our Cheetah Project team, Guides at Mugie, and Mugie personnel.



Photos by Brian Odida
"Green Eagle"



Two years ago we discovered that there were only approximately 7,900 cheetahs in the wild. Down from 46,000 within seventy years. This is a decline that started from 1900...a decline that has continued through the decades that at this stage, we humans have realized that sometime between ten to fifteen years from now, it could well be that these majestic animals could be extinct in the wild.

The cheetah is at the bottom of the ranking of the “big cats”. The leopard and the lion reign above it, and cheetah babies killed by both. It’s hard earned meal is often stolen by hyenas, jackals, baboons, and other big cats - a sacrifice it makes, to run away, so that it can survive another day.

As much as 90% of the cheetah babies will not survive their first year, often killed by predators. Blind at birth, the mother hides them in thick brush or rocky terrain. As they grow older, they follow their mother in the grassland and savannahs, often exposing themselves to predators.

How is it that the population of the fastest mammal on land is declining rapidly, and is presently classified as “Vulnerable”, which could change soon to “Endangered”? There should be a healthy population of youngsters to replace the old, but that is not happening. In certain areas in Kenya, there have not been a single cheetah cub that has survived to adulthood for the last 4-5 years. With a lifespan of 8-10 years in the wild, the old pass away, while there are no young to replace them.

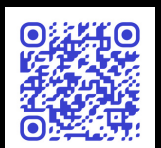
Stealing cheetah cubs from the wild in East Africa, and smuggling them to the Middle East and other countries, does not contribute to the population growth in the wild either. Many are found dead during transport, and do not survive even after they reach their intended destination as they are malnourished, stressed, and with multiple deceases. The trafficking still continues to date.

How is it that this beautiful big cat is forgotten and ignored, while the other “exotic” animals have donations poured into their survival and preservation? Why was the cheetah forgotten all this time? The number of organizations that support and prevent cheetahs from extinction could well be counted with the fingers on one hand.

We, on the Cheetah Project of Serendipity Wildlife Foundation are trying to make a difference in the population decline, working together with Loisaba Conservancy and Mugie Conservancy in Kenya. We want our children, grandchildren, and future generations to see cheetahs in the wild, as we see today. Every donation helps.

Together, we can do it!

www.csiwildlife.org



**Serendipity Wildlife Foundation gratefully say a big
THANK YOU to the following that helped us in 2024**

The staff at Loisaba Conservancy

The staff at Mugie Conservancy

Tom Silvestor, CEO Loisaba Conservancy

Josh Perrott, General Manager Mugie conservancy

Max Lovatelli, Development & Program Manager Mugie Conservancy

Hannah Campbell, Chief Administrative Officer Loisaba Conservancy

Daniel Yiankere, Security Manager Loisaba Conservancy

Andre Antoine, Pilot Loisaba Conservancy

Jankees of Sensing Clues

Fauzia Kweyu, Mugie Conservancy

The Elewana Guides at Loisaba Tented Camp, Lodo Springs, and Starbeds

The Guides at Governor's Camp Collection

The Guides at Ekorian's Mugie Camp

Brian Odida "Green Eagle"

SerendipityN'Travel Safaris

KWS Veterinarians

The Cheetah Project Team representing 12 countries



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