



## Cheetah update

September 2014

Dear reader,

From the camp site in Mushandike, I hereby send you a short update to inform you about the most recent activities of the Cheetah Conservation Project Zimbabwe. We have been on the road since the beginning of May and are nearing the end of our field season. For the past five months we travelled through the south of the country where we found several resident cheetah populations in National Parks estates and private estates.

I hope you will enjoy reading about our latest adventures.

Best wishes,

*Esther*

### Finding the cheetahs of Southern Zimbabwe

Since May the cheetah team has been travelling through the south of the country interviewing wildlife professionals and others about the occurrence of cheetah in their area. In the past five months we drove 13 000 km, covering our target area (ca. 110 000 km<sup>2</sup> of historic cheetah range) in which we interviewed more than 500 people.

We have so far found resident cheetah populations in Gonarezhou National Parks, Buby Valley Conservancy, Save Valley Conservancy, Malilangwe and Nuanetsi. In addition, there are a few cheetahs moving through the Tuli circle. Thanks to the pictures we received from the Tuli animals we have been able to confirm they are the same animals as are being seen on the Botswana side of the Tuli. During the survey we have not come across recent cases of livestock depredation by cheetahs.

In August we had a change in our cheetah field team. Our student on attachment, Simbarashe Mpansi, left us to start his final year at the National University of Science and Technology in Bulawayo. Ashton Goronga, a graduate from Chinhoyi University, joined us for the last part of the season to gain experience and familiarize himself with questionnaire based surveys.

Although we have managed to cover our target area we have



Conducting interviews in Save Valley Conservancy

decided to continue travelling for another month in order to collect additional information in areas of interest, e.g. areas that were part of the historic cheetah range. A detailed description of the results of this year's survey will follow in our end of the year report.



Hammond anti poaching unit



Camping at a school in the community

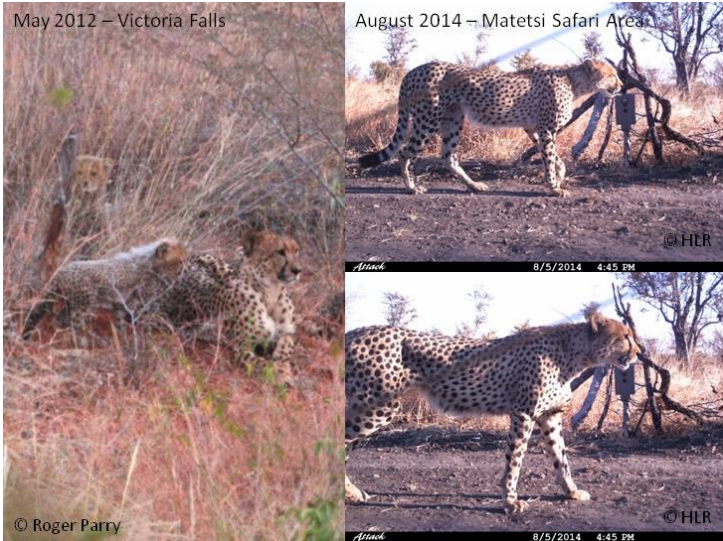


Handing out spoor reference guides



# Sighting highlight

Over the past months we found several cubs back as adults. The Hwange Lion Research team carried out a camera trap survey in the Matetsi area where they caught two adult cheetah on camera trap that were born in May 2012 in Victoria Falls, which is 70km from where the camera trap survey took place.



The Victoria Falls cubs are now adults with a territory in Matetsi

Female HNP012, a sister of the female in my previous update, was born in Hwange National Park in 2010. For the last year we did not receive any sightings of her and it was uncertain what her faith was. However, she was recently caught on camera by Basil Butcher and we were extremely excited to find out she now has three little cubs of her own



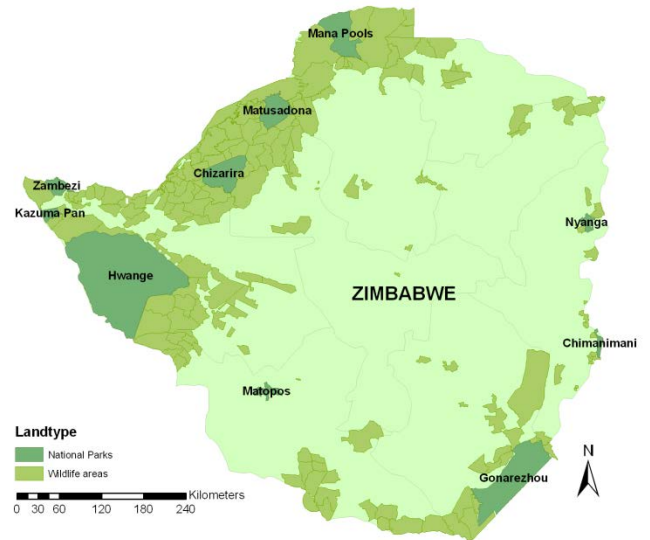
Female HNP012 followed by her three cubs



# Hwange meeting



Hwange National Park is the largest wildlife protected area in Zimbabwe. With 35 known cheetahs, it is also home to the largest cheetah population in Zimbabwe. Which is why we decided it was important to take up the invite to participate in the Hwange National Parks planning workshop. Mid August we packed up our camp and travelled the 850 km back to Hwange where we attended the National Parks planning workshop on the 19th and 20th of August. We managed to put cheetah forward as an exceptional resource of Hwange National Park and will continue to emphasize the need to conserve Hwange's cheetah population in the follow up meeting at the end of October. These meetings will result in a new updated management plan for Hwange National Park in which we will ensure cheetahs are taken into consideration.



Hwange National Parks is the largest wildlife protected area in Zimbabwe

Cheetah Conservation Project Zimbabwe

Follow us via facebook: [facebook/CheetahZimbabwe.org](https://facebook/CheetahZimbabwe.org)

or via the blog on [www.cheetahzimbabwe.org](http://www.cheetahzimbabwe.org)