AfriCat’s Wish List 2016/2017

“In order to make a real difference, your support on any level will be sincerely appreciated.”

Essential Salaries

Research Veterinarian: A much-needed professional will supervise & ensure scientifically sound Large Carnivore Research Projects, manage & monitor the animals in our Carnivore Care Centre and support farming communities in conflict zones. N$ 480 000.00 per annum

http://www.africat.org/support/wish-list/sponsor-essential-salaries/research-veterinarian

Lion Guards: these dedicated community members are elected by their Conservancies, essentially carrying the message of Conservation from the highest traditional authorities to the farmer. Cost approx.: N$ 32 000.00 per month / N$385 000.00 per annum.

http://www.africat.org/support/wish-list/sponsor-essential-salaries/lion-guards

Livestock Protection Programme

To effectively reduce livestock loss through better protection and to minimise the destruction of lions & other carnivores, AfriCat builds nocturnal ‘kraals’ (bomas) for committed communities, assisted by community leaders and the Lion Guards.

http://www.africat.org/support/donate/build-a-kraal

Approx. Cost per livestock kraal (depending on size/number of livestock): approx. N$ 40 000 to N$70 000 per kraal; http://www.africat.org/support/donate/build-a-kraal

AfriCat North Research & Community Support Projects

Field Vehicles, 4x4 pick-ups fitted with extra long-range fuel tanks, water containers, heavy-duty springs and tyres, etc. http://www.africat.org/about/africat-north

Costs: approx. N$650 000.00 – N$ 900 000.00 http://www.africat.org/support/wish-list/sponsor-an-africat-research-community-support-field-vehicle

‘Conservation Through Education’

AfriCat’s Environmental Education programme is popular amongst schools nationwide and requires a second Educator’s salary to the Environmental Education Centre. Costs approx.: Educator’s salary N$25 000.00 per month / N$ 300 000.00 per annum.

http://www.africat.org/support/wish-list/sponsor-essential-salaries/environmental-education-teacher-s-salary

Motion Detection Cameras (Trail Cameras) / GPS-Satellite & VHF Collars

To effectively gather data, both visual (trail cameras) and location, movement, etc. (collars):

Cost approx.: N$10 000.00 per camera | Collars: Lion GPS / Satellite $30 000.00 – N$ 35 000.00 each | Cheetah & Leopard VHF collars approx.: N$3 500.00 each.

http://www.africat.org/support/wish-list/sponsor-tracking-equipment

Mobile Field Clinic

4x4 truck, with long-range fuel tanks, water containers, heavy-duty springs and tyres, extra power-supply, etc. AfriCat’s mobile veterinary field clinic supports lion conservation in the field and will be modified to allow basic surgical procedures in the field. Cost approx.: Vehicle N$ 950 000.00.

http://www.africat.org/support/wish-list/sponsor-the-africat-mobile-veterinary-field-clinic

Community School

The ‘Onguta Primary School’ in the Ehirovipuka Conservancy, Kunene Region, north-western Namibia, provides a basic education for Pre-school and Grades 1-3; the classrooms comprise two, dilapidated safari-tents, too few desks and chairs. Cost Phase 1 approx.: (2 classrooms, store room + 4 toilets) approx. N$ 1 500 000.00.

http://www.africat.org/support/wish-list/sponsor-a-community-school-in-northwest-namibia
Here at AfriCat we’ve evolved considerably since afternoon tea with ‘Chinga’ on the lawn two decades ago: from cheetah and leopard rescue, care & release, to rescue and rehabilitation; from farmer support to ‘Conservation Through Education’. During this period, the Rescue and Release Programme has developed as a result of our relationship with the farming community. The ‘Welfare and Carnivore Care Centre’, is a by-product of the Rescue and Release Programme. Although we currently care for cheetahs that are part of our Rehabilitation Project, the carnivores too old or tame to go back into the wild will live out their lives under our expert care and continue to be ‘ambassadors’ for their wild counterparts at AfriCat’s Carnivore Care Centre.

We can now offer visitors a valuable insight into the work of The AfriCat Foundation. The AfriCat office was completed in 2011 and all the carnivore enclosures were upgraded in 2012. The AfriCat clinic was finalised in 2013 and with its advanced equipment, now provides an excellent working environment and up-to-date veterinary facilities for carnivore health. The final phase, which includes our information-display room and presentation facility was completed in 2016. We are eternally grateful for Jim Maltmans’s thoughtfulness, as well as to all our UK supporters who have chosen to support the AfriCat Carnivore Care and Information Centre. Their belief in the importance of AfriCat’s projects and their continued sponsorship are what keep this foundation alive.

**Research & Community Support**


**AfriCat’s Carnivore Care and Information Centre :**

Introducing Mr. Johan Viljoen

Mr Johan Viljoen has joined the AfriCat Environmental team early this year in March, as the second Environmental Education Educator.

‘I am a sixties kid, raised in and around Pretoria, South Africa. During the early eighties the wanderlust beset me and I ended up in Swakopmund, Namibia. It took a while to adapt from the bushveld to the desert, yet it happened and I spent 32 years between the desert and the deep blue sea. Here I met my wife and became a father. I worked at one of the mines for a number of years but eventually ended up teaching at a private school.

During 2001, I had the privilege to take 9 learners of our school on an educational trip via the Etosha National Park to Ongwediva and back through Otjiwarongo closing off with a weekend camp at Okonjima. On my return to Swakopmund I was persuaded in my heart that working at AfriCat as an Environmental Educator was what I wanted to do. Here I am, sixteen years later.’

**WELCOME TO THE TEAM!**

**Leopard Density Study**

The Okonjima and AfriCat Leopard Density Study aimed to assess leopard (*Panthera pardus*) density and population size through the use of remotely triggered trail cameras in the Okonjima Nature Reserve – an island-bound conservation area in Namibia. The study attempted to answer four specific objectives:

- To determine leopard density and population size via a capture-recapture framework using remote trail cameras
- To determine the demography of leopards within the Okonjima Nature Reserve
- To develop a dataset that can be applied as a baseline for comparisons with similar environments
- To develop a long-term population monitoring programme.

In a fenced environment like the Okonjima Nature Reserve, constant monitoring is vital to detect changes in the size and composition of carnivore as well unregulated populations, and to evaluate an increasing or decreasing population trend in terms of available space, prey, inter- and intraspecific competition as well as whether a population is able to regulate itself, or whether, to be sustainable, it requires controlled management.

During the ten months of study in 2015, the 200km² study area was divided into five 40km² blocks, each of which was monitored by camera traps for 50 consecutive days. This was to ensure that the population remained constant in size and composition during the study period. In order to increase the leopard capture rate, cameras were placed in dry riverbeds, riverbanks and/or frequently used pathways. Twenty cameras, equipped with heat and motion sensors, were spaced 1.6 km apart throughout all five blocks and were programmed to run continuously.

Bait to attract the leopards was attached to a large tree trunk opposite the camera. This ensured that the target animals spent significantly more time in front of the cameras, resulting in a higher number of captures that were useful for the positive identification of the animal. Leopards were identified by their unique spot and rosette patterns, mainly on flanks, necklace and face, as well as via morphological features such as sex, size and coloration.

Ninety-five camera stations were used to monitor the leopard population for 250 days, resulting in 4,566 effective trap nights. Thirty-six individual leopards were positively identified in 457 captures. Among these individuals, 29 were adult leopards, 14 of which were fitted with VHF-radio collars (total number of collared leopards during that time) and 15 uncollared individuals (five females, 10 males).

Seven juvenile leopards (between four and 15 months old) were recorded, some of whom were captured alone and some with their mothers. An almost equal ratio of male and female leopards was observed with a slightly higher (52%) proportion of males. Recorded data displayed a density of 18.9 leopards/100 km² in an area of 184.6 km². Male home ranges were found to be 60% larger than those of females, with the smallest home range being 3 km² and the largest 71 km². Large home ranges were observed in young males that were moving long distances to establish territories and emigrate from mature male ranges. A strong overlap of home ranges was observed, especially in the central part of the reserve. Female ranges were on average 9 km² and showed a lesser degree of overlap than male home ranges.

The leopard density within the Okonjima Nature Reserve was found to be quite high compared to other study areas, and consisted of smaller than usual home ranges and a strong overlap of spatial distribution patterns. Leopard home ranges have been found to be very variable throughout southern Africa depending on resource availability, and can be substantially smaller in well-protected or highly productive reserves such as the Okonjima Nature Reserve. We assume that the surrounding electrified and predator-proof fence contributes to the high population number inside the reserve, even though leopards could get through the fence if necessary. The leopard population will be monitored on a long-term basis using continuous camera trapping and collaring of specific individuals. Management strategies to maintain population growth at a suitable level, such as the temporary contraception of chosen individuals, will be implemented if a maximum sustainable population is reached.

Hpl-10 (LEO) & Hpl-20 (TAU)

The brothers Leo & Tau, were first seen in September 2015, close to the Hobatere Lodge waterhole, following one of Hpl-11’s sub-adult females, presumably in oestrus. During their 7-month ‘tenure’ in the Hobatere North section of the Concession, they were seen mating with Hpl-1 (SPOTS), Hpl-12 (Sidatia), her sister Meyana (Hpl-13) and Meebelo’s daughter, Naleli (Hpl-14).

Until we have immobilized and taken blood for genetics from Tau and the offspring, we cannot confirm paternity; however, we are confident that at least five of the cubs born to Hpl-13 and 14, between December 2015 and September 2016, were fathered by Leo & Tau.

During May 2016, the brothers left Hobatere Lodge via Etosha west, and are now settled on a 60 000 hectare nature reserve bordering Etosha’s southern boundary. There they were seen with 1-3 females during December 2016 and have remained on the property since, with short forays into Etosha and onto farmland to the south.
AfriCat rescues 9 WD pups

On Sunday, the 26th of June 2016, as Team AfriCat and the participating vets were in preparation for the AfriCat Annual Health Checks, that were set to begin early the following day, we received a phone call just after sunset from the Chairperson of the Okamatapati Conservancy (a communal conservancy approx. 160 km east of Okonjima) – informing us that a communal farmer was in possession of nine orphaned Wild Dog pups. Wild Dog usually dig their dens and give birth during the dry months June, July and August. The denning period of approximately three months, is the only time of the year when Wild Dogs return to the same location every day, limiting their mobility which can result in a decreased encounter rate with prey species. For that reason, Wild Dogs often den in areas close to a water source that attracts a high density of ungulates during the dry season or near to another area of predictable and easy food supply.

The farmer who was in possession of the Wild Dog pups, apparently suffered a loss of four to six cattle and in his misery, chased the adult pack off his property leaving nine abandoned pups behind. Instead of killing them (which is normally the case, by closing the den and burying the pus alive – or by throwing fuel down the hole and setting the den alight or by poisoning a carcass which usually kills the whole pack), the farmer contacted the Chairperson, who assured him that AfriCat would assist with the relocation of the pups.

In-between the manic madness of setting up veterinary equipment and discussing plans for the upcoming health check, Team AfriCat had to make their way to Okamatapati to collect the orphaned Wild Dog pups; upon arrival, the estimated five week old dogs were slightly hypothermic but otherwise seemed healthy and in good condition. The pups were safely transported to the AfriCat Carnivore Care Centre, arriving at 2 am on Monday morning!

The pups were housed in a semi-open holding facility, the same area Messi, Yogi and their sister Robin were housed in while recovering from their ordeal. Meet SAHARA, ATACAMA, KALAHARI, MOJAVE AKA MO, SONORAN, GOBI, KAROO, NAMIB AND THAR. Unlike Team FIFA, who arrived at AfriCat exactly two years ago and who were named in honour of the football players of the soccer World Cup 2014, we decided to name the current litter in honour of some of the world’s most spectacular deserts.

After spending exactly five months at AfriCat’s Carnivore Care Centre, the 9 Wild Dog pups finally made the big move to Alcatraz – a 5 ha soft-release camp located in the 20 000 ha reserve, which is preparing the youngsters for their forthcoming new life in the wild.

In order to give them the best chances of success in the wild, a soft introduction to the remaining members of Team FifA Jogi and Robin was done. Having last year’s introduction attempt in mind we were aware of the fact that integration attempts are not always a guaranteed success.

A few hours after the pups’ translocation, Jogi and Robin showed up at the outside fence of Alcatraz and haven’t left the site since – except for the occasional hunting excursion. Jogi and Robin were then placed on the other side of Alcatraz, which is divided by a centre fence, creating two equally sized camps. Social acclimatization where animals are kept in adjacent camps allowing olfactory, auditory and visual contact, and then remain as a newly formed pack within a soft release camp for a certain period of time before release, seems to promote social bonding and integration.

Both packs were regularly found resting in close proximity to each other on opposite sides of the divided fence.

After 2016’s continuous flow of bad news, we were beginning this New Year on a happy note; we were all hoping that the attempt to introduce our 9 orphaned Wild Dog pups to Jogi and Robin, the two remaining survivors of 2014’s rescued litter, will be a successful one.

Fully equipped with high pressure fire fighters in case interference was necessary, we were prepared for every scenario. Bonding attempts of two unrelated Wild Dog packs often result in vicious fighting between dogs of opposite packs and not uncommonly have fatal outcomes. To avoid additional conflict due to territory pressure, we decided this time to introduce both packs to one another on neutral ground and therefore transported them to a 25 hectares camp in close proximity to AfriCat’s headquarters.

Upon initial physical contact the seven months old dogs immediately showed submission towards the adult dogs by rolling on their side and back and showed ritualized begging behaviour by licking and poking the mouths of the two adults combined with constant whining calls resulting in subsequent regurgitating of food.

During the next hours the dogs explored their new camp led by the two adult dogs Jogi and Robin until they eventually settled down with all 11 dogs lying in close proximity.

Keeping a pack of 11 Wild Dogs in the 20 0000 ha Okonjima Nature Reserve is unfortunately not a sustainable option for AfriCat & Okonjima at this point. The dogs have been successfully relocated to another registered non-profit conservation organization.

Conservation Through Education!

We are never too old to learn! And the more we learn the more we understand, and can then hopefully become active and passionate conservationists. “In the end we will conserve only what we love; we will love only what we understand, and we will understand only what we are taught.” (Baba Dioum, 1968.)

Sadly, this does not apply to our environment, despite significant efforts of many individuals, organisations and countries. We thus urgently need to increase our efforts.

The best way to achieve this is through education of all age groups. We have to try to reach as many as possible of the staggering 7,5 billion people on our planet.

Each one of us needs to do our bit. We have to be like a spider – never giving up and remembering that one small spider can build a huge web. Let’s take up the challenge!

Young Farmers’ Group
AfriCat’s Livestock Protection Programme (initiated 2004) has, to date, built 21 nocturnal kraals in the Ehirovipuka and Khoa di //Hoas Conservancies, especially targeting communal farming communities in conflict with wildlife (so-called ‘hot-spots’). Supported by an early-warning system (lions fitted with GPS-Satellite collars are monitored twice daily and messages sent to farmers indicating the lions’ location in proximity to their settlements), livestock farmers are now able to better manage and protect their animals from predation.

However, only a few months ago, most farmers had given up hope of rescuing their remnant livestock, emaciated cows from certain death; in most cases, communal farmers had no idea as to their livestock numbers as they had left them to fend for themselves in search of the last morsels in the rugged hills. Unprotected, weak domestic stock makes for easy prey and losses to predators such as lion, spotted hyaena and leopard were high, fueling intolerance of such conflict species.

April 2017 - the devastating, 4-year drought has at last broken, with vast areas of Namibia’s northwest now covered in green, nutritious grass, renewed hope saw the start of a small yet promising AfriCat initiative, whereby young communal farmers are encouraged to develop and implement innovative, arid-adapted farming methods in order to minimize losses when the next dry phase looms.
Shakira’s skin tumour

Earlier last year we noticed a small swelling on Shakira’s side. We asked for veterinary advice and we were told to keep an eye on the lump and monitor her for any signs of distress. She continued to eat and behave normally, but the swelling did not disappear. In fact, it grew larger. For this reason the vets decided to immobilise her during the AfriCat health checks week and have a closer look. Once she was anaesthetised and the skin over the swelling was cleaned and shaved. On examination the vets felt that the “lump” was some kind of tumour and a decision was made to operate and remove it then and there.

Before her surgery began, Dr. Kirberger performed a thorough ultrasound examination of Shakira’s abdomen - in particular her liver and spleen. Some types of skin tumours can spread into other organs (metastasis) and sometimes this can be seen using ultrasound. Fortunately he could detect no signs of spread of the tumour. Dr. Steenkamp then began surgery. He found that the lump had a very clear shape and was easy to distinguish from the tissues around it. He was able to remove the entire tumour very cleanly. The tumour was placed into formalin and was sent to a pathologist in order to find out exactly what kind it is and, based on those results, whether any further treatment will be necessary.

Hyperthermia in Cheetahs

One of the most frequent causes of death in cheetahs during immobilisation is hyperthermia (overheating). This phenomenon has not been studied or described much, but the annual health checks at AfriCat have provided Dr Adrian Tordiffe and colleagues a unique opportunity to try to understand what causes it and to develop ways of managing and preventing it. In cheetahs who develop hyperthermia, temperatures measured shortly after darting can be over 40°C and are sometimes still rising, if the body temperature is not brought down rapidly this can have severe consequences for the cheetah such as brain damage, damage to the digestive tract and/or cardiorespiratory failure. Hyperthermia cases we saw during AfriCat health checks seemed to be unrelated to environmental temperatures occurring on cool and warm days, and at different times of day. In related research however, Prof Leith Meyer had found that impalas who were stressed prior to immobilisation were at greater risk of developing hyperthermia. Dr. Tordiffe questioned whether the same thing was true in cheetahs. He kept records of the cheetahs' stress levels immediately before they were darted, based on his observations. A pattern emerged. Cheetahs who scored higher on his ‘stress scale’ were definitely more likely to have higher initial temperatures after darting. One of the most stressful events of the cheetahs darted during the 2014 checks was a young male named Swakop. He had only recently come in to AfriCat with his sister Mundi, after the pair was found near death in the desert near Swakopmund. Swakop was very suspicious of Dr. Tordiffe – beginning to run the moment he saw him. His temperature had already reached 43°C by the time we were able to measure it after darting him. The AFrica TOrdiffe Foundation (AFRITORD) procedure for a so-called ‘hot cat’ involves cooling them in the vehicles with cold water (a combination of sprayed water and wet towels) cold air, and ice packs. Dr Tordiffe knew that, even with aggressive cooling, Swakop’s temperature would take a while to start coming down, because medetomidine (one of the drugs used to tranquilise cheetahs) causes the blood vessels in the skin to constrict, which works against cooling. He decided to give Swakop an antidote to the medetomidine, as in addition to opening the blood vessels in the skin, the cheetah, once awake, would also be able to cool himself by panting. Fortunately, Swakop recovered well even though he hadn’t had his proper health check! Extravagations have been taken during subsequent health checks to try to reduce stress levels by modifying screens in catch camps and darting from vehicles. Despite these efforts, some of our cheetahs do get a little stressed, which means we still need to be prepared to manage hyperthermia.

New compounds found in Cheetah Urine give important clues to scientist studying cheetah diseases

Some of the research data coming out of the AfriCat annual health checks is shining more light on how the difference between diets of captive and wild cheetahs may be having more of an impact on cheetah health than was previously realised. Dr Adrian Tordiffe has been looking at compounds found in cheetah urine in order to try and understand the metabolic processes happening inside the cheetah. As he says: “if you want to understand what happens in a household, you can go through their rubbish. What they throw out can tell you a lot about how they live their lives. The same principle applies to cheetah urine. What you find in the urine can give us a good indication of the metabolic processes that take place in this unique animal.”

In his research he has discovered significant differences between the urines of captive and wild cheetahs, almost certainly because of the differences in their diet. Whilst wild cheetah eat a diet of whole (mainly ruminant) carcasses, including internal organs, skin, connective tissue and bone, captive cheetahs are usually fed lean, muscle meat - usually donkey or horse. Significantly higher levels of certain phenolic compounds occur in the urine of captive cheetahs. Dr Tordiffe believes that this is due to the fermentation of certain amino acids in their higher protein diet. These same phenolic compounds have been shown in other species to suppress the production of dopamine. Although dopamine is probably best known in humans for its function as a neurotransmitter in the brain, it also play a vital role in gastrointestinal and kidney health. Captive cheetahs frequently suffer from gastritis and renal failure, unlike their wild counterparts. Previous theories to explain these diseases have blamed genetic inbreeding and stress, but now researchers such as Dr Tordiffe are increasingly looking to their diet to understand the diseases unique to cheetahs in captivity.
How you can help

Help us make a difference!
A crucial part of our work at The AfriCat Foundation is raising the necessary funds for our cause. We also run a number of important projects in need of continuous funding. WE NEED YOUR HELP to take care of the rescued carnivores at our Carnivore Care Centre and to monitor the rehabilitated cats in the 200km² Okonjima Nature Reserve.

Here is a list of how you can really make a difference for AfriCat:
- N$50 food for 1 day for a big cat
- N$350 food for 1 week
- N$300 weekend stay for 1 student at our Environmental Education Programme

Support the monitoring of recently rehabilitated carnivore in the 20,000ha Okonjima Nature Reserve
Many of AfriCat’s carnivores rescued from sub-standard captive conditions are fit enough to be rehabilitated into the 20 000 ha Okonjima Nature Reserve. To do this effectively, we need anaesthetic drugs, equipment for tracking and monitoring, supplementary meat and fuel for daily tracking.

Fuel costs for 1 week: N$550 / Meat for a recently released Cheetah for 1 month: N$2500

Adopt-A-Spot
When you symbolically ADOPT-A-SPOT at AfriCat, you are contributing to the conservation of large carnivores in Namibia. At our new Carnivore Care and Information Centre we have painted life size cats on our wall but their spots and rosettes are not coloured in yet – as soon as you ADOPT-A-SPOT, the Cheetahs and Leopards will regain their spots! (and you will be helping AfriCat help the BIG CATS!)

The funding goes towards AfriCat’s general running costs, veterinary expenses, computers, vehicles, cameras, collars, telemetry, research and fuel.

Environmental Education...the only chance for co-existence
Conservation Through Education is our motto: a weekend (2 nights) for a school class at the AfriCat Environmental Education Centre costs approximately N$300 per child.

Donations to this project support the costs of educational materials, transport, food and refreshments.

MOBILE CLINIC
http://africat.org/support/wish-list/sponsor-the-africat-mobile-veterinary-field-clinic
Apart from community support, this field clinic will be equipped to deal with emergency wildlife cases such as removing snares, vaccinating certain plains game species against infectious disease (i.e. rabies) as well as assist the research teams with immobilisation, collaring and select relocation.

- 4x4, V8 Diesel vehicle (type Toyota Trooper or Land Cruiser pick up), which will be modified into a designated, mobile clinic; vehicle cost: approx. N$650 000.00;
- Modified canopy, with lifted roof
- Solar system for power, batteries;
- Interior: small fridge/freezer, basin with running water (water tank + pump), cupboards, narrow bed, folding table, etc.
- Tyres and tools: 2 spare tyres, 2nd battery, tool kit, etc.
- Equipment: Approx. N$ 180 000.00
- Total: approx. N$ 850 000.00 – 950 000.00
- Branding/logos of those people who sponsor this vehicle

AfriCat Projects 2016-2017
AfriCat Hobatere Lion Research Project
AfriCat Environmental Education Programme
AfriCat Cheetah Rehabilitation Project
AfriCat Predator and Prey population density study in the 20 000ha Okonjima Nature Reserve
Management of invasive species in the 20 000ha Okonjima Nature Reserve

Human-wildlife Conflict Mitigation & Community Support
For most Namibians, livestock are their lifeline. AfriCat strives to find workable solutions to this conflict by introducing Livestock Management Programmes which include improved livestock protection.

The Livestock Protection Programme at AfriCat North includes the building of cattle and goat kraals (pens) in communal conservancies. Materials to build an average-sized kraal: approximately N$ 40 000 to N$70 000 (depending on size and the amount of livestock)

Adopt a Carnivore
Read more about each cat at www.africat.org/support/adopt-a-carnivore
This programme supports the animals in our Carnivore Care Centre (CCC) and within the Okonjima Nature Reserve where you can ‘adopt’ individual animals and fund their upkeep, monitoring and veterinary costs.

Research
Sponsor a collar or trail cameras
AfriCat North uses GPS-enabled collars to track Lions; data collected will determine the frequency of Lions crossing the Etosha and Hobatere Park boundaries and how the conflict between Lions and farmers could be minimised. In more accessible areas, AfriCat also uses VHF radio & satellite iridium collars on Leopard, Cheetah, Spotted and Brown Hyaena as well as Caracal. A Predator and Prey Population Density Study was successfully completed within the Okonjima Private Nature Reserve. Lion GPS / Satellite $28 000.00 – N$ 30 000.00 each
Cheetah & Leopard VHF collars approx.: N$3 500.00 each. Motion Detection Cameras (Trail Cameras) N$8 000.00 per camera
**Namdeb Debmarine donate tents to AfriCat HQ**

On Friday, 11 November 2016, AfriCat welcomed the Debmarine Namdeb Foundation Executive Manager, Janita von Wielligh, who arrived to hand over a donation of Wanderer tents to the AfriCat Foundation for use at the AfriCat Environmental Education Centre.

Our excited team welcomed Ms von Wielligh with everyone dressed neatly in AfriCat uniform and sporting big smiles. After meeting all the team members, she gave us a quick brief about what the Debmarine Namdeb Foundation is all about and how they operate. Our initial proposal to Debmarine was made in 2014, so there were many willing hands to help off-load the long-awaited tents; the happy faces in the photographs taken to record the official handing over are an indication of our appreciation.

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**Nyati Wildlife**

ALL THE FULL MOUNTS that are now displayed in our new AfriCat display room, were donated to the AfriCat Environmental Education Programme by NYATI WILDLIFE ART ‘Mr Manfred Egerer, who supports our ‘NO TOUCHING WILD ANIMAL’ policy.

Manfred has always wanted to give back and support our Environmental Education Programme. This part of the AfriCat display museum is very popular—many students had never realised the size of individual animals even though they see them on regular basis across our country!

**STICHTING SPOTS**

Whilst visiting AfriCat for the first time 7 years ago, Simone Eckhardt of Stichting SPOTS, Netherlands, was introduced to the fact that lions also have spots...! As the name of the Dutch Charity indicates, this organization, led by a devout wildlife conservationist, raises awareness and much-needed funds for the conservation and protection of carnivores of the ‘spotted kind’.

The AfriCat Communal Carnivore Conservation Programme (CCCP), initiated in 2010 with the support of the Okorusu Community Fund, includes the Livestock Protection Programme and the Hobatere Lion Research Project, its primary aim to monitor lion movement between Protected Areas (esp. Etosha NP & Hobatere Concession Area) and farmland and to support farming communities in such conflict zones by developing workable mitigation practices, ultimately reducing livestock loss and subsequent carnivore persecution.

Through Ms Eckhart’s tireless dedication to ‘Saving Our Treasures’, Stichting SPOTS supports AfriCat North with lion GPS-Satellite collars, trail cameras, kraal (boma) materials as well as the Lion Guard programme.

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**LIA SPITTERS**

Lia and her husband Joop, visited AfriCat during the 2012 Health Check; thereafter, their tour took them to AfriCat North, where they joined the team on a night patrol into communal farmland along Etosha’s border. Lia and Joop spent 3 days with the team, visiting the Lion Research study area in Hobatere as well as farming communities living in conflict with lions.

Upon her return to the Netherlands, despite her debilitating illness, Lia has inspired friends and strangers to contribute towards AfriCat’s lion conservation and community support programmes. Through Stichting SPOTS, Lia and Joop have donated substantial funds, the most recent designated to the Onguta School Development Programme.

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**WECKE & VOIGTS WD BAGS**

WECKE & VOIGTS (PTY) LTD is one of the oldest businesses in Namibia, trading since 1892! Our business has experienced many ups and downs in our beautiful country, but we believe that Namibia is one of the most special places on this earth. Not only for its people and its landscape, but also for its wild animals.

Our selves, and our ancestors before us, enjoy and treasure the outdoors and its animals, and therefore we want to be part of looking after them.

We believe in the cause of AFRICAT and feel, that through creating awareness for the animals, we can assist a little. Our first project was our LION bag and we now have the WILD DOG bag. Through the sale of the bags we create awareness and support projects of AFRICAT, additionally we can be part of hopefully a soon-to-be PLASTIC FREE NAMIBIA.

We thank each and every person that has bought a bag and will buy a bag, through that, you also leave your stamp in conservation!
Field Notes
Read more AfriCat news: http://africat.org/program

Paying tribute to two brave cheetahs and a legendary leopard

AfriCat says goodbye to two of the famous Adams cheetah family members, Morticia and her sister Wednesday

Morticia, Wednesday and their two brothers, Pugsley and Gomez formed the well-known – and long-lived – Adams Family at AfriCat. Early in 2002, the foursome was approved, fully formed, from their mother’s womb after she had been shot. They quickly took to an artificial diet, but because they lacked the antibodies that they should have received from their mother’s milk, had no immune system. They required close monitoring for any signs of illness and were bottle-fed every four hours. At six months we were fairly confident that the Adams Family would form, from their mother’s womb after she had been shot. They were suffering, we decided to end her pain as soon as possible.

Morticia was 14 years old. Wednesday was 15 years old when she died on 20 March 2017. Morticia was 14 years old. Wednesday always had the best appetite, even though she was suffering, we decided to end her pain as soon as possible.

Wednesday grew up in the first, Okonjima Nature Reserve created in 1999, which was only 4,500ha in size. The perimeter fence was co-sponsored by TUSK for the rehabilitation of captive cheetahs, but because of circular competition,Wednesday was the smallest sibling, born with a curled tail and one front leg shorter than the other.

In February 2016, Morticia’s lack of appetite and the fact that she was drinking an unusual amount of water set off alarm bells. When we presented her with food she started to salivate and she seemed depressed, so we darted her for a closer look. Her left kidney was severely swollen and her right mildly swollen. So too was her liver. These results indicated renal failure and, as she was suffering, we decided to end her pain as soon as possible.

Wednesday always had the best appetite, even though she lost her eyesight nearly a year ago. However, in March 2017, she presented with acute abdominal pain, excessive bloating and vomiting. She gained valuable hands-on experience under the guidance of skilled veterinarians and veterinary students.

Wednesday was 4 years old. Wednesday was 15 years old when she died on 20 March 2017. The remaining siblings are in good health, although now on a soft chicken diet!

Saying Goodbye to Legendary MJ
MJ was born in early 2000. Her mother was the beautiful Maha and her father the magnificent Mike Tyson, who were the first leopards to be collared on Okonjima. Both her parents stayed wild and were seldom sighted. However, MJ and her twin brother TJ became habituated to vehicles and researchers were very excited to see these last wild leopards in the Hoanib Valley. MJ grew up in the first, Okonjima Nature Reserve created in 1999, which was only 4,500ha in size. The perimeter fence was co-sponsored by TUSK for the rehabilitation of captive cheetahs, but because of circular competition, MJ was suffering, we decided to end her pain as soon as possible.

MJ thrived and became a perfect mother to four litters and six cubs over the years, with birthing intervals between 15 months and 2 years. Wayne Hanssen monitored her for 14 years, during which she built a very close relationship. She was seen on regular kills every 1-4 days with Oxry and kudu calves, steenbok, duiker and warthogs her favourite. Sadly, on 17 December 2016 MJ’s body was found in a tree. Her wounds told the story of a tough battle with a territorial male. Over the years she had become our best-known leopard, with a record average of 40% of all leopard sightings to her name, and our guests were able to experience fantastic sightings of her and her cubs.

LONG LIVE THESE LEGENDS WHO HAVE ALL ADDED TO THE OKONJIMA AFRICAT STORY!

UNAM Vet Students Go Wild -
http://africat.org/unam-vet-students-go-wild-students-were-given-a-glimpse-of-the-daily-life-of-a-wildlife-vet

The establishment of a School of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Namibia was approved by the UNAM Senate in September 2015. Currently, the pioneer class is in their third year of study, having started in 2013 in a small Veterinary Department. The School offers two courses: a Bachelors of Veterinary Medicine, and a Diploma course in Animal Health. The aim is to provide Namibia with veterinary science graduates who are theoretically and practically competent to meet the veterinary requirements of the country.

Armed with the basic foundation veterinary courses in the first three years, the students are now ready to expand their knowledge and skills in carnivore conservation. Students were given a glimpse of the daily life of a wildlife vet and enthusiasm ran high.

Next, the students spent a day at the Cheetah Conservation Foundation’s headquarters where they learnt about identifying the causes of human-wildlife conflict, and how to mitigate the scenarios along sound conservation principles while recognizing the needs of the farmer. The use of livestock guard dogs, herding and corralling, and sound disease prevention protocols were a few of the highly valuable lessons the students learnt at this world-class conservation centre for the rare and endangered cheetah. Resident veterinarians and the Foundation’s CEO, Dr Laurie Marker, described some of the valuable research, popular education programs and successful work the foundation has carried out over the years. The visit was capped with an introduction to their high-tech genetics laboratory.

Finally, the UNAM veterinary students were afforded the opportunity to join a real-life disease surveillance program carried out by the Ministry of Environment and Tourism on the Waterberg Plateau Park. Here the only herd of buffalo south of Namibia’s cordon fence is free from certain diseases, including Foot and Mouth Disease, bovine Tuberculosis, bovine Brucellosis and Corridor Disease. The population has great value to the nation both ecologically and economically. Every 24 months a number of buffalo are routinely tested for foot and mouth to confirm their continued freedom from the disease. The students were able to witness the capture of buffalo through both the use of a capture boma as well as darting from a helicopter. Thereafter they joined the team from the Central Veterinary Laboratory and were able to try their hand at buffalo identification and sample collection.

The week’s exposure for the students to the world of wildlife veterinary medicine was aimed at preparing them for the following year’s wildlife course which includes both classroom and field studies. Not all students will eventually be wildlife vets, but it is essential that all vets in Namibia appreciate the value of Namibia’s wildlife to the nation, and are capable of dealing with wildlife veterinary issues as they may occur in the course of their chosen profession.

All in all, a week worth remembering!
On the 21st July 2016, after a long and eventful drive, pupils from the Perivoli Okonjima Country School (POCS) arrived at the Hobatere Campsite for their field excursion to learn about the work of the AfriCat Hobatere Lion Research Project. On the first afternoon, the children learned the ins and outs of setting up trail cameras and why they are so crucial to research work in the field. Each group received their own trail camera as well as the task of deciding where to set them up, depending on what their main capture aims were.

The short weekend trip included bravely on-board a helicopter to help the local communities and farmers live together with the lions. The children had already run a project to help conserve lions in the wild by working with locals to ensure that they benefit from the presence of carnivores by reducing stock losses, increasing personal safety and developing eco-tourism projects. In this venture AfriCat is to work with the conservancy, as well as with schools when children from pre-school age to grade 3 can be educated in safe conditions.

Currently the School is housed in makeshift army tents. The Conservancy made the request for AfriCat’s assistance when this structure blew down in high winds. Currently the School is housed in makeshift army tents. The results of the appeal can be seen at: http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/fund/africatadoptabrick as it is still open for people to donate towards the project.

Giving Tuesday (29th November 2016) was a global day of giving. After the sales of Black Friday and the online shopping boom on Cyber Monday, Giving Tuesday was seen as an opportunity to come together to show the world why it’s good to give. Giving Tuesday is a call to action for everyone who wants to give something back. In November of 2016 for Giving Tuesday AfriCat UK launched an on-line appeal to Adopt-a-Brick to help build a permanent community school in Namibia. Working with the people of Ehirovipuka conservancy in Namibia AfriCat had already run a project to help conserve lions in the wild by working with locals to ensure that they benefit from the presence of carnivores by reducing stock losses, increasing personal safety and developing eco-tourism projects. In this venture AfriCat is to work with the conservancy as well as with schools when children from pre-school age to grade 3 can be educated in safe conditions.

The School Onguta was previously housed in a government supplied marquee. The Conservancy made the request for AfriCat’s assistance when this structure blew down in high winds. Currently the School is housed in makeshift army tents. The results of the appeal can be seen at: http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/fund/africatadoptabrick as it is still open for people to donate towards the project.

Congratulations Simon on a brilliant running time of 2 hours 57 mins and 1 sec achieving the effort does match the rewards on crossing the line in medal positions! The day and train 6 days a week. They added that there is a great team spirit and all the effort does match the rewards on crossing the line in medal positions! The day and train 6 days a week.

Giving Tuesday and the Adopt-a-Brick AfriCat campaign in 2016

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