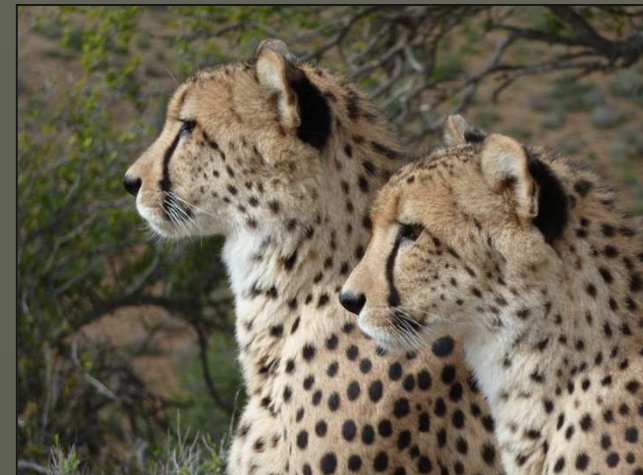


MODGAJI

CONSERVATION PROJECTS



Welcome, we hope you enjoy this Newsletter, we hope to keep you informed on what is happening with the Project, news and all the exciting additions to the Reserve.



Sharon Van Duyn.

20 Dec 1968 – 13 Oct 2010

It is with our deepest regret that on 13th October 2010 our darling Sharon van Duyn passed away tragically after having fought bravely against cancer for the last two years. The loss we feel is monumental and our sadness so heartbreaking, but her passion and love for the conservation of wild Cheetah and many other animals will always remain in our hearts. We are determined to achieve her dream, and we feel honoured to continue to be a part of this project. Her spirit lives on in this work and also in the beauty of the natural environment all around us.

Sharon had an amazing gift for getting the most out of conservation drives and community projects, and the Modgaji volunteer project was just one of many schemes Sharon started during her years in conservation. She was an incredibly driven lady always self-sacrificing and her gentle magnanimous spirit will be deeply missed, Sharon had refined taste and was innately talented as a chef and an interior designer, as the many lodges she set up remain testament to, Sharon was always cheerful, positive and adventurous, a woman of true humility and compassion. She was an immense support to us all and we miss her desperately every day..



Back to the Wild

Some fantastic news on Jabari He was relocated to Hopewell Game Reserve in Eastern Cape in April 2010 and has been successfully released into the wild. The owner of the reserve told us that he is doing really well and has been sighted with a kill several times. A former Modgaji female Cheetah Phinda lives there, so some day he will meet her and we hope to receive news of his cubs being born in the wild.

Khanya (sister of Jabulani & Themba) **and Jafari** (Jabari's brother) were relocated to Thandeka Game Reserve in Limpopo province in May 2010. They are currently in a lovely large enclosure of 5 hectares waiting to be released. Yuko visited them in October and found them in excellent condition, being looked after very well by the rangers of Thandeka. We heard that they twice caught a warthog, which strolled into their enclosure. It was of course too sad to say good-bye to them and we all miss them very much, but we are also happy for them, especially for Jabari who has absolute freedom!



Jafari and Khanya in Thandeka in October 2010



The Wildboys, The great success story is with our two male Cheetahs sons of Thunderbolt and Phinda from Modgaji who were born in the wild to a their hand reared mother Phinda. They are now waiting to be transferred to a mega game reserve called Gorongoza in Mozambique. Will and Jacques made a very long overland trip to visit Gorongoza in July and found it to be a stunning place for wildlife. There are many species of Antelopes and also Warthogs, Elephants and some Lions as well as other predators. We trust that the Wildboys will make it out there and successfully live free in the wild. We would like to send one or two female Cheetahs as well so that they can breed and have their off-spring in the wild.



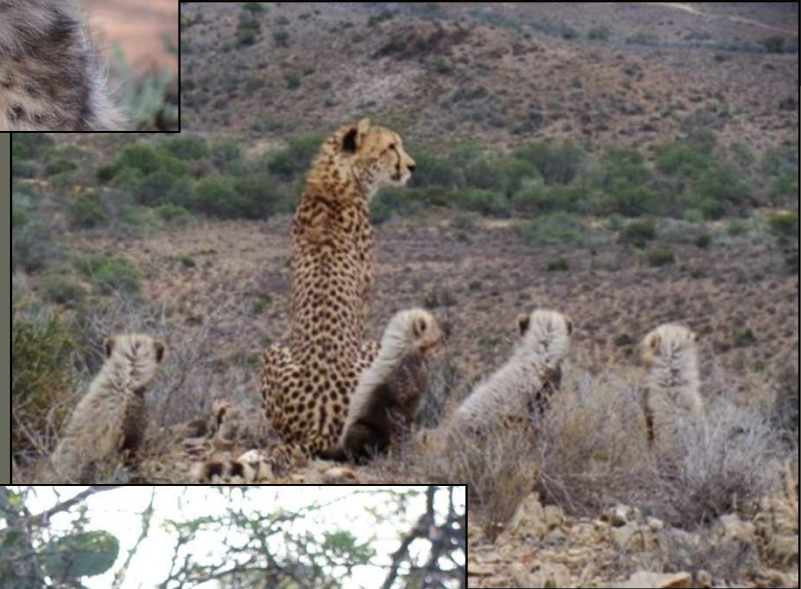
Jabari's portrait painted by Colin Howard, volunteer March 2010



Exciting New Additions!

Cheetah Babies

Buhle delivered 4 healthy babies, one female and three males on 20th of October. The babies' father is Themba who spent about two weeks in Buhle's enclosure in July. Buhle has been a really good mother and nurses them very well. We've been spending 3-4 hours a day with Buhle and her cubs so that the cubs get used to us. They are getting very playful and adventurous and are absolutely adorable! We have taken Buhle with the cubs on walks several times. Buhle seemed a bit confused in the beginning, walking up and down between the cubs who were calling her in a lovely high pitched, bird-like tone. The cubs started following Buhle quite well and can already run amazingly fast. It makes it very difficult for Buhle to hunt when taking her cubs with her, but she has been trying to and has caught two scrubhares and chased a few small antelopes. More recently she made a very successful hunt and during 1 hour and a half caught a large male duiker while keeping her cubs in tow, she was exhausted but very proud and she and the cubs devoured it after we dragged it home to camp for her



Spotted Hyena Pups

More Babies in the bush,
The Spotted Hyena dominant female delivered three babies on 5th January 2011. Sadly one of the pups was born dead, It was a hard decision to make as to whether or not to take the babies away from their mother, but it was thought best to do so and hand-raise them because the Hyenas are in a boma at this stage. The pups are doing really well and all the volunteers have been enjoying feeding them even through the nights! They were born with their eyes open and even with 6 upper and lower teeth including canines. When they grow older they will be returned to their clan in an enclosure next to the other hyenas until they have asserted themselves and been accepted back into the clan.



Zakumi (Caracal)

In September a male Caracal kitten, named Zakumi, arrived at Modgaji at the age of almost two weeks. He started eating meat after a month when African Wildcat, "Mummy Cat" brought him a baby scrubhare. He has grown bigger and stronger daily and is now running, climbing trees and enjoying playing with his best friend Tshabalala, the African Wildcat. His feet are enormous and we think he is going to be an impressive boy when fully grown, we hope to find a tame female for him so he will stay around the reserve.





African Wildcats

Joy and Tigger had two more litters in July and October. One in the second litter, Tshabalala, was hand-raised at the house and has been a very good brother to Zakumi. Zakumi follows Tshabalala everywhere and they play so well together. Some other kittens have been adopted by a game reserve owner, a vet and others who are also interested in breeding this rare African Wildcat, and we still have two hand raised females from Joy's second litter here, Dahlila and Tiggs who play with the baby hyenas. Mummy cat has even started to look after them around the house and often jumps in when Zakumi gets too rough.

Other News

Jabulani and Themba had another amazing hunting record in 2010. They walked 107 times and caught 104 preys, which included large antelopes such as kudu, nyala, blesbuck, waterbuck and red hartebeast as well as lots of duiker, springbuck, impala and ostrich. They are more focused on bigger preys and hardly need to be fed by us.



Serval

Spot and the other Serval are doing well and they are as vicious as ever. We have seen a few Serval on heat and had expected to see some Serval kittens, but so far we don't see any pregnancies. We have plans for new enclosures where the Serval can be separated for more suitable breeding purposes.

Volunteer Cottages

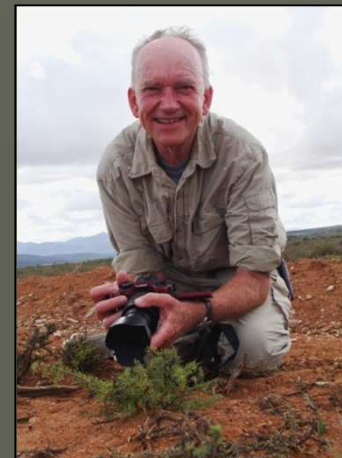
The newly renovated cottages are proving to be a great success, providing the volunteers with their own private cottages and ablution facilities, it is so quiet and peaceful at the cottages and only a 100 metre's from the main house. We still serve meals in the main house because of monkeys. Sleeping out there is a real remote African experience, the monkeys often give them a wake up call in the morning running across the rooftops and Shabalala visits them there at night.

Local School Children – Education Day

In May 2010, 56 local school children between the age of 6 and 8 years accompanied by four teachers from Steytlerville visited us to see and learn about wild animals. This was an initiative with which Sharon was always involved, She saw a huge value in educating our young generation about the importance of nature and animals in the wild. Jacques showed them all the animals in the enclosures and explained their characteristics and conservation. After the education sessions, all the children enjoyed playing with volunteers and had a good time. We presented them with lots of stationery, which had been donated by volunteers in the past.

Indigenous Plant List

During the last 6 weeks our Lex has been developing an indigenous plant list for the reserve, he has spent many long hours with Wills permission (as it is rather dangerous) walking alone in the reserve photographing and documenting each and every flower and plant that he found, So far he has documented over 200 different plant species, This is a project he and Sharon had worked on during his last visit back in June 2010, and we know she would be so happy that he continues to pursue this dream on her behalf, as you can imagine this type of research is invaluable as not many people have the time nor the opportunity for such time a consuming study, so THANK YOU LEX!!



Veld Work

Cactus Removal

We have been busy with removing alien vegetation, especially a cactus called "Opuntia Tunicata". It is very important to remove these plants as they take over an area of land very quickly leaving no room or water for indigenous plants to grow and provide natural grazing for the animals. It is tough work to cut the branches of a thorny cactus, dig out the trunk and the roots, and collect all the small pieces that fall on the ground, but thanks to all the volunteers we managed to fill the trailer with cactus a number of times. There are still plenty more to remove. So this work is ongoing.



Other field works

What seems endless but definitely has improved last three years is the field being made "Clean and Safe". With great help from volunteers we made a big difference around the house, cottages and all over the reserve. We removed lots of pipes, old fences, broken glass pieces and worked hard for continuous road maintenance.

Fence Work

With the addition of 1,000 hectares in Mantanteeskop, on the east side of our existing land, we now have to remove the boarder fences with the help of the volunteers. There are about 8km of fencing that need to be taken down and about 1km of them have been removed so far.



THANK YOU

We've had over 50 volunteers during the past year including several repeaters. Many thanks for your contributions and hard work!

A special word of Thanks to the following volunteers and guests who gave us donation for new large enclosures for African Wildcats. Due to relocation planned to move all animal enclosures and volunteer accommodation to Mantanteeskop, we have not built the new camp for African Wildcats yet. But your donation will be spent to rebuild the new enclosures for all animals at the new site.

- ▶ Beatrice Marlic (Canada)
- ▶ Joke Kuipers (Holland)
- ▶ Ellen and Travis Ammerman (U.S.A.)
- ▶ Monika and Christian Lugar (Austria)
- ▶ Lex Kruijer (Holland)



Jacket Plum Tree is the Official South African Tree of the year for 2011

- ▶ Sabine Lang (Germany)
- ▶ Mark and Michele Ogden (U.S.A)
- ▶ Darren Gina & Sacha, UK