



SEPTEMBER 2016



ABQ BIOPARK
**CONSERVATION
SPOTLIGHT**



Saving the Cheetah with Dogs and Bushblok

Earth Expeditions 2016

By Lisa Moore

It's August in Africa and that means winter here is ending. There is no snow on the ground and the vast sky is bright blue. The landscape is dotted with acacia trees and the dirt is broken up by clumps of dried yellow grass. If it weren't for the cheetah growling in front of me, I could almost believe I was still in New Mexico.

Amani arrived at the Cheetah Conservation Fund (CCF) when she was two years old. She was caught in a farmer's trap and taken to a nearby lodge to be a companion for the lodge's "tame" cheetah. The two females did not get along so CCF was contacted. Though the goal is for any cheetah brought to CCF to be released back to the wild, because Amani was separated from her mom at such a young age and has no fear of humans, she was not a good candidate for release and will live out her life under human care.

Dr. Laurie Marker started CCF in 1990 as a means to save cheetahs through research and educational programs. If not for CCF, for instance, Amani might have been killed right away by the farmer. Now, locals have learned that they can live with cheetahs on their land. Conducting research on scat, Dr. Marker was able to scientifically prove that cheetahs prey on around 3% of killed

goats and sheep. When they do kill a farmer's livestock it usually means the cheetah is injured or sick. Cheetahs prefer to prey upon small antelope like impala, kudu or springbok. Armed with this research, CCF began several programs that encourage farmers to stop killing cheetahs and invest in their future.



One very popular program with farmers is the Livestock Guardian Dog, which uses Anatolian shepherd and Kengal dog breeds due to their large presence and loud bark. Eight week old puppies are taken to a lucky farmer's property and introduced to his livestock. The puppy is left with the herd of goats or sheep in order to build a bond with them and not the human. The farmers agree to care for the guard dog, including any vet care. Throughout the early stages of the guard dog's transition to its herd job,

staff from CCF visit to ensure the farmer is upholding his commitment. In the end, since cheetahs are not made for fighting like lions or hyenas are, having a guard dog like a Kengal or Anatolian shepherd is an effective solution.

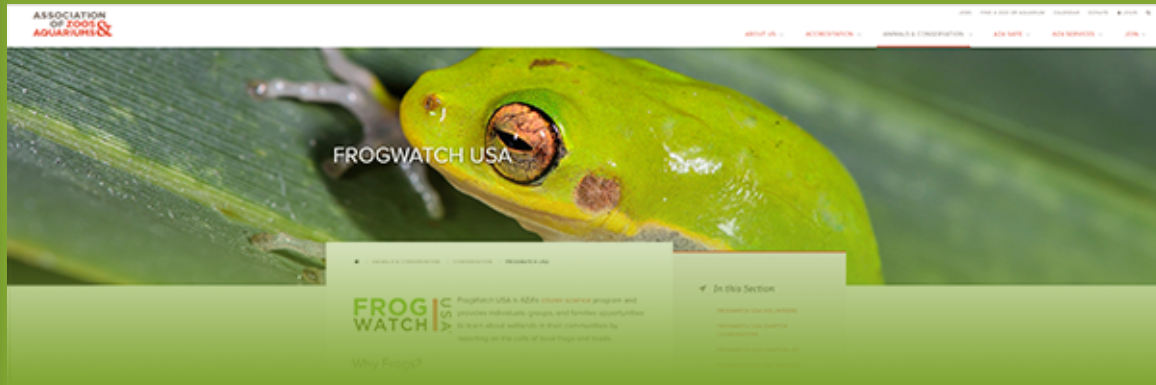
The Livestock Guard Dog program ensures the safety of the herd and in so doing provides the cheetah with territory to hunt it's prey. But what if there is no prey to hunt? African savannahs were once open grass areas studded with the occasional acacia tree. Now the terrain is more acacia thornbush with little grass. Springbok prefer the open grasslands where they can speed away from their predators, but with the loss of elephant herds to eat the acacia, bush encroachment is another threat to cheetah survival.

The Bushblok program is another great investment for Namibia created by CCF. Bushblok are fuel logs made by cutting down the thornbush, turning them into chips and then compressing those into fuel logs, marketed as Bushblok. These logs are cleaner to burn than if they were made into charcoal and CCF hopes to model this environmentally clean fuel source for Namibia. The program creates income directly through the sale of Bushblok, and also indirectly by facilitating ecotourism: by encouraging animals like the springbok or kudu to the area, cheetahs will follow the food, and people love the chance to see a wild cheetah.



The Livestock Guard Dog and Bushblok programs are just two examples of the amazing job Dr. Marker and the staff at the Cheetah Conservation Fund do to help the cheetah species survive. Amani is not the only cheetah with a story to be told. I encourage everyone to take the time to visit their website: www.cheetah.org to read about others.

This was an amazing experience, one that will be with me for the rest of my life. Thank you.



Frogwatch Update

by Katie Anderson

2016 marked the start of the inaugural season of frog monitoring with the ABQ BioPark's chapter of FrogWatch USA. FrogWatch is a national citizen science program where volunteers are trained to identify frog calls and monitor populations at local wetlands. Frog populations have declined dramatically worldwide, and it is important for scientists to understand where and why these declines are happening. FrogWatch volunteers listen for frog calls, record their observations, and submit their data to a national online database.

The new chapter was spearheaded by Josh Davis, and as a result the BioPark has joined the over 140 FrogWatch chapters and is now the very first FrogWatch chapter in New Mexico. Volunteers attended two training sessions and passed a written and audio exam identifying the calls of native frog species to become certified FrogWatch volunteers. Six monitoring sessions were held at the Botanical Gardens and Tingley Beach where



Spring Peeper (*Pseudacris crucifer*) metamorph

volunteers perfected their monitoring skills. Volunteers were also encouraged to explore other wetland sites they were familiar with and monitor them for frogs. The best time of the year in the desert southwest is during the monsoon season when the most species of frogs tend to call. Frog calls are advertisements made by males to attract females. Female frogs can identify many traits about a male by his call and determine if he is fit enough to produce offspring with.

During a monitoring session data is recorded, including: any species of calling frog, a rating of the size of the chorus of each species, and weather conditions. The data is then submitted to the online database Field Scope, which is open to anyone interested in exploring frog populations. Data can be mapped and

graphed to understand long-term trends, and it's all easily accessible on a single platform. The ABQ BioPark chapter logged over 50 observations from its dedicated volunteers. Our FrogWatch coordinators, Josh Davis and myself, are excited to start the next season and hopefully recruit even more volunteers.

Environmental Enrichment

The Elevation of Animal Welfare and the Conservation Connection

by Tammy Schmidt

Choice, Change and Complexity are the key components to a solid environmental enrichment program.

Animal welfare is elevated and enhanced by a strong program, which is what we strive to provide here at ABQ BioPark Zoo on a daily basis. Integration of conservation within many of our enrichment focus days is also a goal we strive for when planning our enrichment activities. Those special focus days include; Great APEril, World Rhino Day, World Giraffe Day along with Global Tiger Day, just to name a few. These special enrichment/conservation days allow us to interpret the importance of our animal ambassadors and their status in the wild, their interconnectedness to the planet and how we **all** as citizens can help mitigate deleterious impacts to their populations and habitats.



We expect to provide the highest level of animal welfare to all of our animal family members. This includes proper veterinary care, nutrition and daily husbandry along with their psychological and physical well-being.

Enrichment is defined as: *"a dynamic process for enhancing animal environments within the context of the animals' behavioral biology and natural history. Environmental changes are made with the goal of increasing the animals' behavioral choices and drawing out their species-appropriate behaviors, thus enhancing animal welfare."* (Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA)/Behavioral Advisory Group (BAG), 1999).

Our zoo assigns a high priority to environmental enrichment for the animals within our care. Goals for the program include: providing species appropriate items that elicit choice, change, complexity and contingency. Specifically providing individuals and groups the chance to reduce atypical species behavior/increase typical behaviors, reduce stress behaviors/physiology, increase social encounters, increase feeding/foraging behavior, increase exploration/play/choice, increase range of naturalistic behaviors, increase use of spaces available, refuge and coping mechanisms, increase activity, create activity based habitats and challenge creativity, choice and complexities in their daily lives and habitats.

We rely on a multitude of novel and traditional enrichment devices along with natural and artificial objects to catalyze physiological and behavioral indicators of pleasure and satisfaction.



Novel and traditional devices may include but are not limited to items such as natural and non-toxic browse (leaves, grasses and flowering plants), logs and branches, along with naturalistic habitats. These may include man-made items such as extra reinforced balls, bobbins and tires. In addition we can incorporate olfactory catalyzers such as perfumes, essential oils and spices. Visual opportunities such as hide barriers, pinwheels, posters and holiday lights are included in our enrichment programming. Finally, auditory devices such as nature sounds, conspecific and contraspecific species vocalizations and classical music round out just a small portion of the items/devices we may utilize for our animal groups.

Our enrichment program is continuously evolving. We have established a dedicated space for conceptualizing and building enrichment at our Enrichment Central location. Enrichment making

sessions began in January of this year and are monthly sessions for our staff and docents to gather together to make enrichment for as many animals as we can in a dedicated block of time, in addition to our scheduled daily enrichment. We are also very lucky to partner with many of our wonderful city neighbors; grade schools, high schools, university students, churches and businesses who come in and volunteer their time to help make enrichment

throughout the year. We are currently forming a zoo wide enrichment committee to work even closer together to provide a beneficial enrichment program. We are also testing new computer generated, randomized enrichment calendars for three species in our zoo to see if this will create a more versatile palette of enriching options throughout a month.

Conservation/Enrichment Focus days like Great APEril, World Giraffe Day and numerous others provide us an amazing platform to educate and share stories about our animal ambassadors who represent their wild cousins. Our daily zoo guests come out to visit with (for example) Camilla our Reticulated Giraffe on the 21st of June each year and not only appreciate her beauty but also may walk away with a better understanding of the silent extinction that giraffe are experiencing currently. We can share in part, through our special enrichment focus days, the issues surrounding the giraffe and their habitats in Africa and hopefully empower our guests with the information needed to mitigate this very serious issue facing Camilla's cousins in the wild.

Choice, Change and Complexity provided through our environmental enrichment program are major factors in providing the best practices in animal welfare. These components also lend a beneficial hand in sharing the conservation message for all of our animals in trouble in their wild habitats. We as a staff are dedicated to every aspect of animal care and utilize our environmental enrichment program as one of the tools to continue to enhance and elevate our animal care programs.



From Green to Lean

How to Get Your Health Goals in Line With CABQ Options

by Erica Hubbard

We all know that going "green" means becoming better stewards of our resources. But how many times do we overlook the greatest resource we have... ourselves! Using a "Green to Lean" thought process will allow us to protect our investment in ourselves and ensure better outcomes as we age.

Going "green" means to pursue practices that can lead to more environmentally friendly and ecologically responsible decisions and lifestyles. And this concept certainly applies to our mental and physical health. The best part? With the City of Albuquerque, you can access the resources needed for this at little to no cost.



The City provides us with multiple health clinics and healthcare options, and even free gym memberships. It also provides access to health support via "Nuvita" and "BetterHealth". These organizations offer health oversight via Q and A sessions, weekly support calls, mini-health checks, and fun health challenges for individuals and teams. Many of these challenges provide equipment such as heart monitors, pedometers, Garmins and FitBits.

Additionally, both the Zoo and the Aquarium have on site "Ambassadors of Fitness" that coordinate a variety of activities, from recipe makeovers to healthier choices, screenings and so on. Some of the new topics to watch for include: "Take a Break!", micro walks, Salad Bar Pot Luck and Scavenger Hunt Lunch walks. For those interested, the "Fantasy League" challenge from NUVITA includes a new cardio monitor (or upgrade to a Garmin) to monitor your activity. And the BioPark is well suited for quick walks at lunch. Whether traversing from Graphics to Administration or from the Cottonwood Gallery to the Bugarium, the path combinations are endless (please see Erica to sign up before 9/23/16).

If none of the above work for you there is always the COA Police Gym. (Interested parties should contact David Pulliam at 768-4623 or dpulliam@cabq.gov.) This gym has free weights, treadmills, weight machines, yoga and a complete fitness "overview", which can even tell if your brain is being challenged by a variety of activities. This option is open to all employees, whether novice or expert.

Biking is a great way to get in some cardio and some sightseeing. CABQ has a free "Earn-a-Bike" program for qualified participants.

You can learn more [here](#). The City of Albuquerque also has the bike share program, with details found on the CABQ.gov page. And Parks and Rec hosts a multitude of ongoing and specialized sporting events for individuals, teams and families. Some of the ongoing include both indoor and outdoor activities, for free or a nominal fee. Visit their page on [CABQ.gov](#).

Lastly, if you are stuck in first gear and feeling like a mental reset would be the best place to start, then the [Employee Assistance Program](#) is available to assist you. Dr. Julia Bain and staff can be reached at 768-4613 or 1-800-348-3232 for emergencies and 24/7 counseling.

Whether you are finishing up your fitness goals for 2016 or just getting started (never too late!), the City of Albuquerque has a myriad of economical choices (most are free) at multiple locations, that can include the whole family and can be done on different days and times.

Bottom line: **"GET UP, GET OUT, GET GOING!"**

Conservation Hero

This month our Conservation Hero is Amos Arber. Last week Amos was removing a very large and dangerous cottonwood tree that had split overnight in the Curandera courtyard. It may be counterintuitive that removing trees would be considered conservation but the tree work Amos does at the BioPark is not only labor-intensive but creates a safer place for both the public and the animals on exhibit. It took Amos 10 hours to remove the tree and although cutting much of it away by hand was exhausting, he took that extra measure so he could better control the drop zone and preserve the garden below as much as possible. Assessing, pruning and removing dangerous trees is not an easy task and can often be met with negativity by the public when they don't



understand why we are taking out mature trees. Amos takes the task to heart and does what is best for the tree, people and animals alike. As a side note to removing the tree, the branches were all delivered to the Zoo for browse and the larger logs and giant stump will go to the Children's Fantasy Garden to make step and balance logs and tables and chairs. Thank you, Amos!

More reasons to keep fighting

[The Importance of Farm to Table](#)

[World's Largest Gorilla Species at Risk of Extinction](#)

[Bad News for Elephants but there's a Way to Fight Back](#)

[National Aviary Helps to Preserve Guam Kingfishers](#)

[Bornean Orangutan one step away from Extinction](#)

[Good News for Giant Pandas](#)

[Help for African Penguins](#)

[Saving a Genetically Valuable Cheetah Cub](#)

[A Historic Day for Conservation](#)

Upcoming Events

Saturday, September 24, 10:00am-2:00pm | Zoo
Elephant Conservation Day

Sunday, October 2, 10:00am-2:00pm | Zoo
Croctober

Tuesday, October 19th, 6:30-9:30pm | Talking Drums African Cuisine
Science Café: Wildlife Trafficking

Wednesday-Friday, October 19-21, 10:00am-2:00pm daily | Zoo
Wolf Awareness Days

Sunday, October 23, 1:00pm | The Guild and Tractor Brewery
"Milking the Rhino" film screening and Science Cafe

About the Conservation Spotlight

Contact any member of the ABQ BioPark Conservation Committee to share your success stories and tips in an upcoming Conservation Spotlight. And join us on the last Tuesday of each month at 2 p.m. We meet for one hour and work to make the BioPark a greener place!

Conservation Committee Chair

Holly Casman
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Sub-committee Chairs

Education: Kathryn Venzor
Operations: Jon Stewart
In-Situ Conservation: Matt Eschenbrenner
Policy Advocacy: Barry Bitzer
Community Engagement: Keith Crow
In-House Conservation: Josh Davis

Treasurer: Greg Swyden
Secretary: Virginia Ludvik
Marketing: Tina Deines
Conservation Spotlight: Holly Casman

The Conservation Committee meets the last Tuesday of every month at 2:00 p.m., alternating between the Shark Reef Café and the Parq Cafe. Join the greening fun!

Green Awards: to nominate someone for next month's award, contact a Conservation Committee member.

