

Mara-Meru Cheetah Project

DUE TO THE WORRYING DECLINE IN THE GLOBAL CHEETAH POPULATION AND THEIR CLASSIFICATION AS VULNERABLE BY THE IUCN (INTERNATIONAL UNION FOR CONSERVATION OF NATURE), THERE IS A MAJOR FOCUS ON THE STATUS OF WILD CHEETAH POPULATIONS IN KENYA



This concern formed the basis for ongoing cheetah research in the Mara Ecosystem and Meru Conservation Area: the Mara-Meru Cheetah Project. The goal of the Project is to secure habitats for the long-term survival of cheetahs and their ecosystems. The mission of the Mara-Meru Cheetah Project is to promote the conservation of cheetahs through multi-disciplined and integrated scientific research, community involvement and education programmes.

RESEARCH TEAM PERFORMS THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES:

- Counting cheetahs based on individual identification; collecting photographic material for identification; building databases for the research sites and Mara cheetah pedigree since 2001
- Monitoring certain individuals through behavioral observations of their interactions with tourists, herders/ livestock, prey and other carnivores in different environmental conditions
- Cooperating with rangers and driver-guides on sightings of sick individuals and providing assistance to KWS vet team and county government rangers in taking care of recovering individuals and females with cubs
- Giving educational wildlife conservation talks to driver-guides from different companies, encouraging them to follow Park rules and regulations and to raise awareness on cheetah vulnerability
- Visiting local communities and interviewing local stakeholders; working on educational materials for local villages and schools; conducting conservation lessons at local schools
- One of the project objectives is estimation of the human-wildlife conflict in the study areas and its mitigation. By interviewing local communities, attitudes to wildlife in general and carnivores in particular, are noted



DR. ELENA CHELYSHEVA

Dr. Elena Chelysheva is an expert on both captive and wild cheetahs with over 30 years of experience in researching, caring for and tracking the big cats. She has worked with cheetahs and studied their behaviour on three continents and 7 countries. She joined the Cheetah Conservation Fund in Namibia in 1999, helping track and count wild cheetah populations, assisting in the care of non-releasable cheetah, and researching cheetah husbandry. In 2001-2002, she worked as an assistant researcher at the Maasai-Mara Cheetah conservation Project initiated by the Kenya Wildlife Service.

At that time, Dr. Elena developed an original method of cheetah identification, and is able to trace kinship between generations of cheetah. In 2008, Dr. Elena obtained her PhD in cheetah ecology and behaviour, and since 2011, she has conducted cheetah research in Kenya as a founder and principal investigator of the Mara-Meru Cheetah Project. Her recent work includes the study of human impact on wild cheetah populations in protected areas, particularly the relationship between cheetah and herders/ livestock and tourism.

Together with her assistant, a Kenyan student, Dr. Elena spends 16-18 hours a day in the field, studying cheetah behaviour and monitoring individuals, including some who are third generation.

ANGAMA MARA AND THE MARA-MERU CHEETAH PROJECT

SPECIALISED CHEETAH GUIDED GAME DRIVES WITH DR. ELENA CHELYSHEVA:

- Off Road Permit in the Mara National Reserve: \$100 per day
- Exclusive Use of Angama Mara Vehicle: \$600 per full day / \$300 per half day
- Half Day with Dr. Elena: \$300 (\$250 towards the Mara-Meru Cheetah Project + \$50 to the Angama Foundation)
- Full Day with Dr. Elena: \$600 (\$500 towards the Mara-Meru Cheetah Project + \$100 to the Angama Foundation)

SPECIALISED LECTURES BY DR. ELENA CHELYSHEVA AT ANGAMA MARA:

- Fewer than 10 guests: \$300 (\$250 towards the Mara-Meru Cheetah Project + \$50 to the Angama Foundation)
- 10 guests or more: \$10 per head (\$25 towards the Mara-Meru Cheetah Project + \$5 to the Angama Foundation)



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