



## CHEETAH TO BE REINTRODUCED BACK ONTO RIETVLEI

13<sup>th</sup> November 2014

*Start*

On 14 November 2014, in partnership with the Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT), the Rietvlei Nature Reserve, situated between Johannesburg and Pretoria, will reintroduce a male Cheetah into its 3800ha reserve after a two year absence of Cheetahs from the reserve. The Cheetah will help to regulate the prey population in the reserve. A female Cheetah is currently being sought to join this male in early 2015.

The first reintroduction of Cheetahs in Rietvlei included only two males in March 2003. These males lived until the age 15 on Rietvlei and died during 2012/2013 from age related factors. In 2013 Rietvlei contacted the EWT's Cheetah Metapopulation Project with a request for new Cheetahs as prey populations on the reserve were approaching unsustainable levels.

Said Vincent van der Merwe, the EWT's Cheetah Metapopulation Project coordinator "An effective way to increase Cheetah numbers and to increase their range in South Africa is to reintroduce them onto small fenced reserves", continued van der Merwe, "a Cheetah population on one small reserve is not viable in the long-term but 50 small populations are viable if managed as a single population (the Metapopulation)."

Rietvlei is one of the reserves that forms part of the EWT's Cheetah Metapopulation Project. With a rapid decline in suitable habitat for Cheetahs to roam freely in South Africa, the reintroduction of Cheetah into smaller reserves is an effective way to conserve the Vulnerable Cheetah.

For this reintroduction, a male Cheetah was identified from Sanbona Game Reserve, a 54 000ha private game reserve in the Western Cape which has provided Cheetahs to several metapopulation reserves over the past few years including Madikwe, Shamwari, Mabula, Nkomazi and Amakhala.

Any offspring that are produced by the Rietvlei Cheetahs will be distributed to other metapopulation reserves in conjunction with the EWT's project. "Through the EWT's Metapopulation project in South Africa, we have seen considerable growth in Cheetah numbers" added van der Merwe.

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The Endangered Wildlife Trust is a non-profit, public benefit organisation dedicated to conserving species and ecosystems in southern Africa to the benefit of all people.

**NPO Number:** 015-502, **PBNumber:** 930 001 777, **Member of IUCN** - The International Union for Conservation of Nature  
The Endangered Wildlife Trust is US 501(c)(3) compliant under **US IRS Registration number:** EMP98-0586801.

The EWT Cheetah Metapopulation Project is supported by: the National Geographic Big Cats Initiative, Columbus Zoo and Aquarium, Scovill Zoo, St Louis Zoo and Relate Bracelets.

*End.*

**Note for Editors:**

**Invitation:** Members of the media are invited to cover and witness the collaring of the Cheetah.

**Venue:** Rietvlei Nature Reserve(meet EWT's Kelly Marnewick or Vincent van der Merwe at the gate)

**Date:** 14 November 2014

**Time:**8AM

**Contact:**

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