



27 August 2020

Cheetahs Return to Rietvlei

Start

After a gruelling 14-hour journey, the Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT) successfully relocated a female Cheetah from the Western Cape to Rietvlei Nature Reserve in Gauteng. The City of Tshwane approved the relocation of wild Cheetahs to Rietvlei, as well as a donation of 250 Blesbok, Springbok, Red Hartebeest, Black Wildebeest, and Zebra to [Rietvlei Nature Reserve](#), also made possible by EWT, with capture and relocation costs kindly sponsored by [Ashia Cheetah Conservation](#).

The 18-month-old female Cheetahs' roots can be traced back to a female captured near Askam in the Kalahari in 2003, and a male that had escaped from Mountain Zebra National Park in 2014, but was recaptured close to Graaf Reinet. She will be joined temporarily by two 18-month-old males from Welgevonden Game Reserve in the next two weeks. All three subadults will be bonded in the Rietvlei boma and released as a unit to allow them to hunt more efficiently and settle into their new surroundings.

In early 2021 the two Welgevonden males will be flown to Mozambique as part of several reintroductions into the country, coordinated by the Endangered Wildlife Trust. Two male Cheetahs with origins in Botswana will then join the female in Rietvlei. These male Cheetahs will provide precious genetics unrelated to other Cheetahs in the metapopulation. It is hoped that this will be the beginning of several generations of genetically unrelated Cheetahs, which

can be propagated on Rietvlei for distribution to other reserves located across the country. Cheetah releases onto Rietvlei Nature Reserve have been highly successful in the past. Exactly eleven Cheetah were removed from Rietvlei between 2017 and 2019 and relocated to nine reserves in the Lowveld, Zululand, the Waterberg and the Karoo.

The Cheetah Range Expansion Project entails the management of approximately 421 Cheetahs on 61 fenced reserves in southern Africa. The project is coordinated by the EWT and supported by a multitude of partners and stakeholders, including donors, researchers, national parks, provincial conservation areas, and private reserves. The principal goals of the project are to maintain the genetic and demographic integrity of Cheetah populations on these fenced reserves and to increase the resident range of free-roaming Cheetahs across southern Africa. The Cheetah Metapopulation constitutes the only growing wild Cheetah population worldwide.

The EWT would like to thank the City of Tshwane and Rietvlei management for making safe space available for wild Cheetah conservation. The EWT would also like to thank Ashia Cheetah Conservation for purchasing the founder Cheetahs for Rietvlei, providing collars for their monitoring, and for agreeing to cover all veterinary costs associated with their stay on Rietvlei. Mr Simon Smith from Q20 generously raised funds necessary to cover the relocation costs.

Please [click here](#) to see images of the Rietvlei Cheetah.

About the Endangered Wildlife Trust

The Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT) has worked tirelessly for nearly 50 years to save wildlife and habitats, with our vision being a world in which both humans and wildlife prosper in harmony with nature. From the smallest frog, to the majestic rhino; from sweeping grasslands to arid drylands; from our shorelines to winding rivers: the EWT is working with you, to protect our world.

The EWT's team of field-based specialists works across southern and East Africa, where committed conservation action is needed the most. Working with our partners, including

businesses and governments, the EWT is at the forefront of conducting applied research, supporting community conservation and livelihoods, training and building capacity, addressing human wildlife conflict, monitoring threatened species and establishing safe spaces for wildlife range expansion.

A beacon of hope for Africa's wildlife, landscapes and communities, the EWT is protecting forever, together. Find out more at www.ewt.org.za

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