

CONSERVATION CORRIDORS IN SOUTH-WESTERN BOTSWANA

Restoration of historic wildlife migratory routes, livelihood opportunities for San communities and predator conservation



The arid Kalahari savanna ecosystem of south-western Botswana was historically home to extensive wildlife migrations of thousands of springbok, wildebeest and hartebeest moving between the Central

Kalahari Game Reserve and the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park in search of water and other scarce resources. These movements have ceased almost entirely due to a combination of factors, including the erection of fences, fragmentation of land for cattle ranching, human settlements (which monopolise the open water sources), and, possibly, unmanaged hunting. The region offers scant economic opportunities to its inhabitants (primarily San – otherwise known as Bushmen or Basarwa – and the Bakgalagadi).

The Botswana government, French GEF (FFEM) and Conservation International (CI) conducted a combined scoping

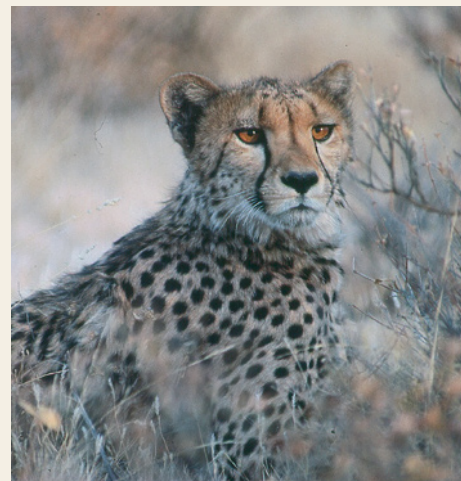
exercise through extensive consultation, and so the Western Kgalagadi Conservation Corridor (WKCC) project was born. CI was appointed as the Implementing Agent and is undertaking this exciting four-year project in partnership with the Botswana government, through its Department of Wildlife and National Parks, in the Ministry of Environment, Wildlife and Tourism. A team of five permanent staff is spearheading the project implementation in collaboration with a number of local partners, such as the Kalahari Conservation Society, Botswana Community Based Organisations Network, Phytotrader Africa, Cheetah Conservation Botswana, Cybertracker, the Botswana College of Agriculture and the Kuru Family of Organisations.

CI's Southern Africa Wilderness and Transfrontier Conservation Program believes that, although the political will to establish the WKCC exists, the challenges are great. Expanding ranches and veterinary fences threaten animals' seasonal migrations. Human-wildlife conflict is on the rise due to increased competition between communities and animals for scarce natural resources. The region's wildlife-based tourism economy coexists with rural poverty, heightening the stakes for communities in conflict with this region's large animals. Guided by science and focused on addressing the complex mix of challenges, CI is helping national and local stakeholders to protect wildlife and build conservation-friendly livelihoods.

Financial support for the project is provided by FFEM, the John Swift Foundation and the British High Commission in Gaborone, as well as CI.

While the primary objective of the project is to re-establish conservation corridors in a fragmented ecosystem, this objective is only sustainable if local people can find livelihoods that are compatible with conservation. CI will, therefore, assess a range of such opportunities.

Worth mentioning is that Botswana is one of the last countries where wide-ranging species, such as cheetah and



Botswana is one of the last remaining strongholds of the cheetah, Africa's most endangered large cat.

African wild dog (both threatened according to IUCN criteria) still roam freely. This project has the potential to assist in conserving these and other vitally important populations.

DID YOU KNOW?

- Botswana contains more African wild dogs than any nation outside Tanzania. It is likely that the WKCC supports 250 to 600 wild dogs, representing one of the 10 largest populations in the world.
- Botswana contains one of the world's largest remaining populations of free-ranging cheetahs, estimated at 2 000 individuals. This represents 20 per cent of the global population and positions Botswana as one of the last strongholds of the species.

This page was written and paid for by Conservation International.



The WKCC aims to restore ancient migration routes in south-western Botswana.