

## BIG DOG SAVES BIG CAT

*Predators are Africa's most controversial characters, fierce and scary and if large, capable of killing our livestock and even us humans.*

A carnivore needs to have many, many prey animals – such as grazing impala, duiker or birds in their territory. 10,000kg of prey may sustain only 90kg of predators. A female predator needs to be able to find enough food and therefore space, to feed herself and her young.

Space is the one thing many wild animals do not have. It is being taken over by us for our own use.

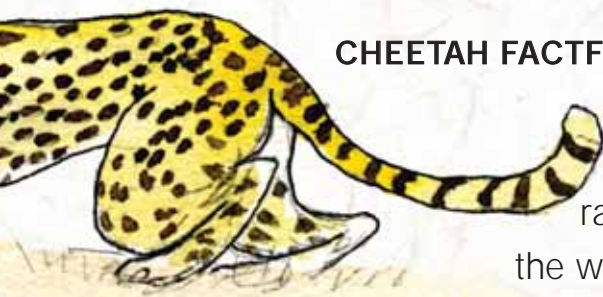


Prowling through the farms of Namibia, the world's fastest land predator, a huge cat capable of running at 60 miles an hour, cheetah were not a welcome sight. The answer found by the farmers was a bullet to shoot them dead. Cheetahs are rare. Just twelve thousand remain. They have lived on this planet for four million years, and in Africa for over a million. Many people find them startlingly beautiful. Like Wild Dog, lion and elephant, cheetah are one of the animals for which Africa is famous and which tourists travel here to see.

On farms cheetah thrive, because bigger cats – lion and leopard – with whom they cannot compete have been killed. The cheetahs normally eat wild animals, but cattle, being docile, slow-moving and often found in large numbers, can be an easy meal. This is very bad for farmers, but Namibians have discovered that they can live alongside cheetah using some simple livestock husbandry techniques.



Anatolian Shepherd dogs come from Turkey, in Europe, where they have been used for around 6,000 years to look after livestock. They work in a vast open area alone, without human masters. They are very big dogs. The puppies bond with the herd and instinctively protect it. In Africa puppies are introduced slowly to their job and the dangers of the bush. Herders check their dog for ticks, illness or injury each day. A well-trained, well-cared-for Anatolian Shepherd is an imposing barrier against all predators including baboons, jackals, caracals, cheetahs, leopards and even humans. Its job is to bark and posture to scare the predator away. The farmers have no need to shoot the cheetahs. These magnificent animals are safe and so are the livestock.



**CHEETAH FACTFILE:** In Namibia, 20% of the world's cheetah population live on commercial ranchland. In the last 25 years the world population of cheetahs has halved. Cheetah kill small stock and calves

up to six months of age. Farmers trap and kill cheetah, but in one study, of 98 animals caught, only six (3%) were shown to have been taking livestock. Each year trophy hunting of cheetah contributes \$15million to the Namibian economy.



Most livestock are killed when animals are left outside of protective bomas at night. A bad boma is worse than no boma because once predators get into a boma they can kill many animals in one go. Build a solid **thorny** boma to save your animal's lives, or adapt your traditional boma to make it stronger and more predator proof. Make sure the thorns face outwards, ring the boma with wire fence and put in a metal door made from an old drum.



**i** ACTION SHEET 7: PROTECTING LIVESTOCK FROM PREDATORS

