Cheetahs need help. With only 9,000 to 12,000 left in existence, the world's fastest land animal is an endangered species. Daniel Kraus and Laurie Marker-Kraus established the Cheetah Conservation Fund to advance the species' survival.

In October of last year, I had the opportunity to spend a day with Dan Kraus and Laurie Marker-Kraus in Namibia, Africa, to learn of their exciting and innovative efforts to save the threatened cheetah. The following article is a personal account of their efforts on behalf of these endangered animals. Both HSI and EarthKind are proud to be associated with Dan and Laurie in their efforts to protect and preserve one of the world's most magnificent creatures.

—John A. Hoyt, President, HSI

Outside we can hear the high-pitched chirp of our cheetah calling from her perch in one of the shade trees. Just like a wild Namibian cheetah, she picks and uses certain trees as "play trees" to stand in and mark. "Gizzy" is twenty-two months old and has been with us for a year. She was caught by a farmer when she was five weeks old and kept at a guest lodge until they could no longer keep her. She is now very tame, and every day she reminds us of why we are here in Namibia, why we moved permanently from the...
We set up the CCF after years of working with cheetahs and seeing that no large conservation organization was focusing on their problems. Few people understand that this most unusual of all the thirty-seven cat species does not fit into established conservation schemes. Africa's many parks and reserves offer only minimum protection to a small number of cheetahs. In these conservation areas, lion and hyena numbers increase and cheetahs are unable to thrive, since larger predators kill their cubs and steal their kills. The largest numbers of cheetahs are found outside protected areas, competing with an even more powerful and numerous adversary—the human.

In April 1991 we arrived in Namibia to establish the first long-term, on-site conservation and research effort for wild cheetahs. The CCF's major objective is to secure a habitat for free-ranging cheetahs through a country-wide cheetah conservation strategy and the expansion of successful programs to include other African countries.

In Namibia 95 percent of the cheetahs live in 275,000 square kilometers of commercial livestock farmlands or ranches that produce cattle, sheep, goats, and wildlife. Farmers have successfully removed most of the other large predators. Many would like to remove the cheetah as well because they believe cheetahs kill their livestock. Namibian cheetahs have been in direct conflict with commercial livestock farmers, and from 1980 to 1991, 6,782 free-ranging cheetahs were removed from the wild. The cheetah is responsible for a percentage of livestock loss, but in most cases it causes far less damage than is claimed.

This is a harsh land on which to make a living, so we are working directly with farmers to find solutions to their problems and compromises that will enable these lands to remain a habitat for the cheetah. Farmland supports 70 percent of

United States to this arid land of endless sand, rock, and bush.

Cheetahs need help. With only 9,000 to 12,000 left in the world, the world's fastest land animal is an endangered species. If this number inhabited one area, there would be little problem, but cheetahs now live in small, isolated populations. Loss of habitat and food, poaching, and competition with nomadic and commercial livestock farming are threatening the survival of the species. Unfortunately, the world's captive population is not a self-sustaining, healthy backup population to that found in the wild. Because of these problems, we developed the Cheetah Conservation Fund (CCF) in 1990 to research and implement long-term conservation strategies for the wild cheetah.

Namibia has the largest remaining population of cheetahs (approximately 2,500) and offers the best opportunity to conserve a relatively large gene pool. Due to the recognized genetic impoverishment of the species, we chose Namibia as the CCF's permanent base, as it is critical to stabilize the largest gene pools first, then reach out to other habitats.
the country's wildlife; wild cheetahs have a chance for long-term survival here.

The CCF has made a commitment to an interdisciplinary, multiphase cheetah conservation/research program in Namibia. Since August 1991 phase one, an extensive farm survey including data collection on livestock and wildlife-management practices and general cheetah statistics, has been under way. So far more than 250 farms, covering more than four million acres, have been surveyed.

It is very hard for non-Africans who love cheetahs to understand how such a beautiful species can be considered a problem animal in its homeland. It is a fact that won't change overnight. But the cheetah is not a threat to human life, so our efforts can concentrate on livestock protection.

Our survey has identified farmers who have found solutions to their cheetah problems. We publicize these success stories in the hopes that other farmers will try the methods. For two years one farmer has reduced his losses to almost nil by keeping three female donkeys with his calving herd. Donkeys are aggressive and chase away jackals and cheetahs. Other farmers have brought their calves closer to the homestead for the first few months, or kept them in corrals for six to eight weeks.

CITES MILESTONE CELEBRATED

March 3, 1993, marked the twentieth anniversary of the signing of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), a wildlife treaty administered by the United Nations. Twenty-one countries were original signatories to CITES, which protects plant and animal species from overutilization in international trade. There are now more than 100.

The anniversary was celebrated with a reception, sponsored by The HSUS/HSI and other organizations, at the U.S. Botanic Garden Conservatory in Washington, D.C., site of the treaty's first signing in 1973. More than 500 people attended. Highlights included speeches by U.S. Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt and CITES Secretary General Izgrev Topkov.

A meeting of the CITES governing board, known as the standing committee, coincided with the anniversary celebration. This committee provides general policy and operational direction to the CITES Secretariat concerning implementation of CITES. The HSUS/HSI and other organizations expressed distress to the committee about the continuing threat to rhinoceroses by the illegal trade in their horns, and the increase in the brutal poaching of tigers for the illegal trade in their bones. To help rhinos, the committee decided it would impose wildlife-trade sanctions on Taiwan, China, South Korea, and Yemen if these nations do not implement prohibitions on the sale and trade in rhino horn; destroy all government and illegal stocks of rhino horn; and take action against rhino traffickers.

The committee decided to call on all countries to stop the illegal tiger trade, and on Asian countries to report their efforts to stop that trade; publicize the plight of the tiger; collect further information on tiger poaching; and review the progress of tiger recovery in September.

The committee engaged in heated discussion of a controversial proposal to change the criteria that species must meet to be covered by the CITES treaty. The HSUS/HSI believes that the proposed changes will undermine the treaty and make it impossible to provide many species with the protection they need. The committee decided that the proposal was unworkable and impractical and needed further review. It will reconsider the proposal in September.
The divers, whose rescue efforts were funded by The HSUS/HSI and EarthKind, braved stormy seas to search for victims, including a dead seal and shag (left), claimed by the oil slick. Ecological damage to the area could be severe.

weeks. Farms with more wildlife prey species also see reduced livestock losses. To protect small stock such as sheep and goats, we are looking into the use of large breeds of livestock guard dogs, used around the world, to protect stock from predators.

At times our work is frustrating. We rarely see a cheetah in the wild. They are quite shy and elusive on the vast farmlands. Most of the cheetahs we do see have been caught in live traps set at play trees. Cheetahs are not hurt during capture, but once caught they face a bleak future. Some are exported to zoos, but the majority are killed. We ask farmers to call us if they catch a cheetah, so that we can collect blood samples to learn more about the overall health and biology of the free-ranging cheetah.

The farmland survey has helped us lay a solid foundation for our continued conservation and research efforts. In October 1992 we began working with farmers to tag and release cheetahs caught on their farms. This program will provide information on cheetah densities, distribution, and actual conflict with livestock. Through monitoring we can gain a better understanding of cheetah movement patterns, unique to Namibian farmlands, and, by implication, greater coexistence between farmers and cheetahs. Fifteen cheetahs will be given radio collars for radio-telemetry monitoring. To date nine cheetahs have been tagged and released and two have received radio collars.

The CCF continues to stress close cooperation with farming communities. Our educational programs are expanding with the help of selected volunteers and a new Mazda truck, donated by The HSUS/HSI and three other organizations.

Model programs that we are developing in Namibia will soon be adapted to situations in other African countries where the cheetah is in need. Recently Botswana officials asked us to begin programs there.

The cheetah deserves a place on Earth. Its special adaptations for high speed are a marvel: long limbs, flexible spine, enlarged heart, large nasal passages, small head, and blunt claws that remain out to increase traction. It is the only species in the genus *Acinonyx*. The cheetah has been revered by humans for almost 5,000
years; its extinction would leave a void in the human psyche as well as in nature.
The African sun has set and Gizzy cleans herself after her daily meal of fresh meat. Due to her dependence on humans since infancy, she will never run free, but her big cheetah eyes are ever on the alert for movement in the bush. We follow her stare and hope that we can help secure a habitat for her kind.—Laurie Marker-Kraus and Daniel Kraus, co-directors, Cheetah Conservation Fund

TEST-BAN EFFORTS CONTINUE

The proposed 1998 European Community ban on animal testing of cosmetics continues to generate debate. The European Council of Ministers (which represents the governments of the twelve member states of the European Community) attempted to dilute the proposed ban. But in April the European Parliament (whose members are elected directly by the citizens of the European Community) voted to defy the council and reaffirm its commitment to establishing a strong law.

European Parliament members supported two of four amendments endorsed by a consortium of animal-protection groups. These amendments would ensure that the proposed animal-testing ban would be comprehensive.

To override the council proposal to weaken the ban, at least 260 of the parliament’s 518 members had to vote for the provisions. Animal-protection advocates achieved an overwhelming majority vote on two amendments: that the ban cover all animal testing of cosmetics, including tests required by non-European Community legislation, and that any decision to postpone the ban be endorsed by the European Parliament and not by a technical committee, as favored by the Council of Ministers.

German member Dagmar Roth-Berghendt wrote the original proposal to ban cosmetics testing on animals and has spearheaded legislative support for the ban for more than a year.

Now the European public, members of the parliament, and animal-protection groups such as HSI are waiting to see what the European Commission (the government bureaucracy) will do. If the commission supports the parliament, the only way the Council of Ministers can reject an amendment is by a unanimous vote. These proposals’ fate could be decided before the Parliament’s summer recess.

HSI blocked insertion of misguided, potentially hazardous language in a German Bundestag resolution on commercial whaling. Although the proposed resolution called on the German government to condemn all commercial whaling, it also included a so-called threshold that might permit commercial whaling at some future time. This threshold would be reached when taking a “sustainable yield” of a species would allow that species to reproduce and survive. HSI quickly showed key legislators that such a resolution would support Japan and Norway’s arguments that they have a right to “harvest” whales.

HSI leadership, and assistance from the Bellerive Foundation, the Environmental Investigative Agency, Deutsches Tierhilfswerk, and the International Fund for Animal Welfare, resulted in Bundestag members rejecting another proposal, that commercial whaling be banned as long as whales remain on the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) list. Such a proposal could conceivably have benefited Japan and Norway. Japan has formally filed a “reservation” for whales under CITES; it could continue to whale despite any protection for whales under this treaty. Since CITES deals with international trade in endangered species, Norwegian whalers would not be in violation of CITES regulations so long as Norwegians consumed all whale meat and products within their borders.

The Bundestag passed a resolution stating that the government should “vote against a resumption of commercial whaling and for the continuation of the IWC [International Whaling Commission] moratorium.”

Dr. Egon Klepsch, president of the European Parliament, short-circuited efforts to gain passage of a strong resolution—for which HSI had generated solid support—calling for Norway to refrain from resuming commercial whaling. Unfortunately, Dr. Klepsch, concerned about the number of “urgent” matters requiring debate in the parliament’s April session, decided to ease the agenda by forgoing debate on the issue and, instead, writing a letter to the Norwegian and Japanese prime ministers.

The letter stated: The European Parliament has always vigorously opposed the resumption of commercial whaling, which we consider to be inhumane and ecologically unacceptable. We would urge the European Commission, the Council of Ministers and all Member States of the EC [European Community] to take an active role in maintaining the global moratorium established by the International Whaling Commission in 1986.

The letter, written on Parliament’s behalf, prevented legislators from stating their personal views on the floor. Anita Pollack, president of parliament’s Inter-group on Animal Welfare, expressed concern that 1993 was the first year in which the parliament would not be sending a formal resolution opposing whaling to the IWC meeting. HSI and parliament members vowed to continue pressuring Norway to abandon its plans to resume commercial whaling.—Betsy Dribben, European director, HSI