



## A lucky escape

**Our new female cheetah cub may be only about 9 months old, but already she has had a lifetime of experiences.**

In January this year, N/a' an ku sê received a call from a farm in the East of Namibia who had caught a pair of cheetah cubs – a brother and sister. They had been caught back in November as the farmer wanted to tame the cubs, but he found that they were already too old.

The cubs were brought to the farm and immediately we could see that the female had very swollen toes on her back leg and was limping slightly. The brother had been caught in a box trap but his sister had been caught using an archaic and potentially lethal steel jaw gin trap. The cubs were put into one of the temporary enclosures with another four orphan cheetahs of about the same age. Our female cheetah came to be called Lucky for having lived through her barbaric capture.



Example of a gin trap



Rudie darted Lucky to have a closer look at her injury; there was a hole in her foot where you could see right through to her bones. Rudie stitched up as much as he could and bandaged up her leg. Our vet was called out to take a look and decided she needed to go into the clinic in Windhoek. Here, her foot was x-rayed and it was discovered that where the ligaments had been so badly torn and were pulled away from the bone, it would be impossible to save her foot. Had Lucky been brought to us immediately upon capture it may have been a different story. As it was, Ian had no choice but to amputate. Her whole back leg needed to be removed; if just the foot was removed she would continue to use the remaining stump as a leg and her hips would not develop properly.

The operation went smoothly and our three legged cheetah has coped remarkably well. She is now living in a lovely enclosure in Marlice and Rudie's garden, with a dog kennel as her shelter! When she walks you can see her limp but already she has adapted and you can't tell she has a leg missing when she runs.

Sadly for Lucky, she cannot go back into the wild as she would not be able to survive. Lucky's brother and four other cubs are still on the farm where they can grow, develop and learn to hunt. When they reach around two years old we hope to be able to release them back to the wild where they belong.

N/a'an ku sê receives many calls throughout the year from farmers who have captured cheetahs or leopards and want them off of their land. The farm provides a safe sanctuary for these animals. However we strongly believe the wild belongs in the wild and direct all efforts towards long term rehabilitation and re-release.



N/a'an ku sê's research project on leopards and cheetahs is working to help conserve the species and reduce human wildlife conflict.

### How you can make a difference

1. If you would like to sponsor Lucky and help us build a safe, new, large enclosure for her and other cats who cannot be released please email [naankuse@iway.na](mailto:naankuse@iway.na) .
2. As part of our research project, we need to fit the cats with GPS collars before they are released back into the wild. This will enable us to track their movements, check on their condition in their new environment and work to identify a sustainable and successful solution for re-locating problem animals (those who are proven livestock predators) so they are no longer shot and killed. If you would like to make a donation or help raise funds for the collars we still desperately need to release more animals back to the wild please email [naankuse@iway.na](mailto:naankuse@iway.na)
3. You can also choose to experience your own life changing African adventure, wild carnivore release and volunteer at the project. Visit [www.volunteersnamibia.com](http://www.volunteersnamibia.com) or email [bookingsnaankuse@iway.na](mailto:bookingsnaankuse@iway.na) to find out more.

