

EXCERPT TO WRITE ABOUT

"Saving Cheetahs"

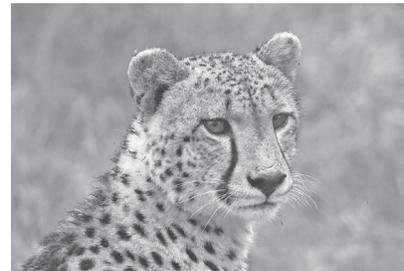
by Suzanne Zimblar

Cheetahs are in danger of becoming extinct. People are working to save the wild cats.

As fast as a cheetah. Whether it's describing a car or the best runner in a race, the comparison is made all the time. It's for good reason, too. The cheetah is the speediest runner on Earth. Sadly, the cheetah is also quickly disappearing.

Just 100 years ago, the spotted cat was a common sight in Africa and Asia. There were about 100,000 cheetahs in the world. But that number has dropped sharply. Cheetahs were captured and sold as pets. They were hunted and killed for their fur. And their habitat shrank as people build cities where wilderness used to be. Today, there are only about 10,000 cheetahs left in the wild.

Laurie Marker is the founder of the Cheetah Conservation Fund (CCF). She has spent nearly 40 years helping the wild cats. She says it is still possible to save them. "I do believe we can turn back time," she told TFK. "We now have the tools."



Courtesy of Irma Bense/Pixabay

A Brighter Future for the Cats

In 1977, Marker moved to Namibia, a country in southern Africa where the cheetah population was quickly shrinking. Farmers were killing the wild cats to protect their **livestock**.

Marker had an idea. She knew that for thousands of years, farmers in Turkey had been using special dogs, called Anatolian shepherds, to protect their livestock. These guard dogs scare away **predators** without hurting them. "They bark loudly," says Marker. "They stand their ground."

About 20 years ago, Marker and her team began placing the dogs on Namibian farms. Since then, she says, "we've stopped the killing and doubled the country's cheetah population." Now the dogs are being used in other African countries, too. As a result, fewer cheetahs are being killed.

Marker's goal is for people, livestock, and wild cheetahs to be able to live in **harmony**. "That's my vision," she says, "and it's doable."

"Power" Words

harmony: agreement

livestock: farm animals

predator: an animal that eats other animals to survive

Note: Suzanne Zimblar writes with great economy. Notice how her first sentence immediately makes the reader envision a cheetah in action and reminds us why we should care about this animal. From there, Zimblar explicitly establishes the problem, and then in paragraph two, describes the cause of it and the depth of it. In paragraph three, the possible solution is introduced—a dedicated conservationist, Laurie Marker. This is a good piece to point out not only embedded structures of cause and effect, problem and solution, but also the way in which writers employ several structures and "mini-genres." "Saving Cheetahs," for example, also has an element of a profile about a person.