

## **Cheetah Conservation Fund and Foundation for Human Rabies Education and Eradication Are Providing Rabies Prevention Education and Mobile Vaccination Clinics in Namibia**

*Written by: Jj Muehlhausen, Cheetah Conservation Fund*

The World Health Organization (WHO) reports show more than 59,000 deaths a year from rabies with high occurrences predominantly in Africa and Asia. The main problem with rabies all over the world is the lack of education about the disease and especially in rural areas because of so many feral dogs. For this reason, the Foundation for Human Rabies Education and Eradication (FHREE) took action. Since 1998, FHREE has participated in providing rabies prevention education and canine population control programs. In 2018, FHREE teamed up with the Cheetah Conservation Fund (CCF) to further their efforts.

CCF is a world-renowned international field research and education facility in Namibia. They provide research, education and conservation programs throughout Namibia to save cheetahs and other endangered species. CCF host Future Farmers of Africa and Future Conservationist of Africa training at their centre and move about the country to reach thousands of farmers, students and educators each year through their education and training programs.

Rabies is a problem affecting the wildlife in Namibia. As rabies is spread between wildlife and unvaccinated domestic animals it is passed very easily to humans. The way to minimize rabies contraction to promote awareness and encourage vaccinations for domestic companion and working animals. As a zoonotic disease, rabies prevention was an ideal project to team up with FHREE.

In 2018 for World Rabies Day the theme was Rabies: Vaccinate to Eliminate. FHREE provide education materials and CCF set up a booth at their centre to promote this message. The response was so positive that it was decided to develop a One Health program to provide rabies prevention education and free/no costs vaccination as well as spay/neuter clinics.

In March 2019, the first mobile clinic rolled into action. The CCF Veterinarian, Dr. Robin Gieling and her team traveled 2,185 kms throughout the Eastern Communal



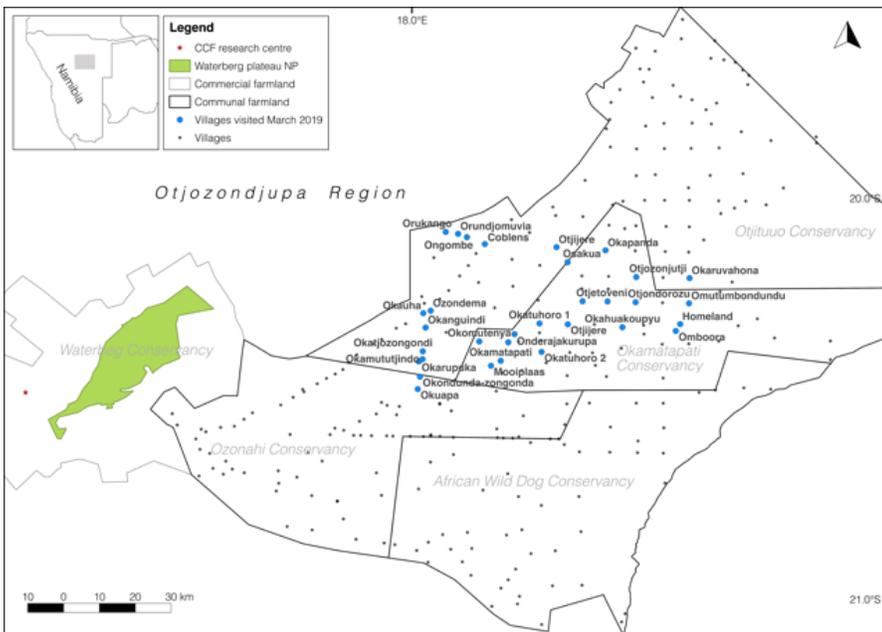
Conservancy where they visited 28 different villages and two (2) larger settlements. During this first trip they vaccinated 664 animals for 342 owners with Nobivac vaccines.

The Okamatapati Conservancy Chairperson, Mr. Edward, was actively involved during the actual vaccination campaign. Conservancy Chairperson of Otjituoo, Mr. Katjiveri, was also very helpful in spreading the word about the mobile clinic. They used many methods promoting the mobile clinic



including posters, radio and community meetings. People were very enthusiastic about the campaign and grateful. Many inquired about castrating their animals so this fall after additional funding is raised additional mobile clinic services will include spay/neuter clinics. There are still many villages to reach so the next campaign will be held in the fall of 2019. In the areas that were visited the team managed to vaccinate 80-90 percent of the dogs. There were some dogs that were out with the herds that will be included in future visits.

There is an estimation of 12,800 people in the four (4) conservancies. Based on the assumption that there are on average five (5) people per household there are just over 2,500 households that need to be reached. Using this analysis CCF is planning on at least six (6) more trips to the identified areas. Planning also includes providing a booster vaccination within the one (1) year at which time there will be plenty of new younger animals that will need vaccinations.



CCF received a report in April 2019 that a woman in the Ovitavi region was bitten and the State Veterinarian confirmed the dog was positive for rabies. She was treated at the local hospital and was released shortly afterwards. It is estimated that there are an additional 1,250 animals requiring vaccinations in this conservancy. Once additional funding is secured CCF will schedule a mobile clinic visit to this area. Later reports confirmed that the woman is doing well and has been released from the hospital. At this time no new incidents of rabies have been reported.

The CCF mobile clinic's second trip took place in mid-June. The team led by Dr. Gieling traveled 1,208 km where they visited five remote villages that deal with human wildlife conflict cases. The Ministry of Environment and Tourism assigned two Okamatapati game guards to assist CCF on this journey. Due to the remoteness of the villages and smaller populations than the first areas visited, less than 100 animals were vaccinated for rabies and several livestock were examined and treated by Dr. Gieling.

CCF continues to share information through informal lectures, educational materials at schools, conservancy meetings, training classes, and conferences throughout the region. Materials include colorful illustrated posters and pamphlets (shown below). Additional trips are planned. This One Health mobile clinic program also provided opportunities for CCF interns (Petoorua, Jill & Kendall) to participate in this very important program. Training the next generation to promote animal health care and how to implement programs that can eradicate rabies for future generations is very valuable.





# RABIES AWARENESS



Rabies is an infectious disease transmitted by **DOG BITES** (pet dogs, street dogs and Jackals). It can go from dogs or jackals to other animals or to people.

This disease is always fatal but can be prevented by vaccination. The time between the bite and illness can be several weeks.

## HOW TO DEAL WITH RABIES

What do you do when bitten by a known or unknown dog?



Wash wound immediately with soap and water, go to a doctor, and tell them you might have been bitten by a rabid dog.



Report the dog to state veterinary or local vet. If the dog is dead, it can be checked if it had rabies. If alive, it will be checked for rabies.

## AWARENESS AND PREVENTION

Pets and farm animals can get rabies



Your pets can get rabies, so you must vaccinate your dog every year.



Your farm animals can get rabies, so report any unusual behavior to your local vet.

## PREVENTING RABIES MAKES EVERYBODY SAFER

How to avoid being bitten by a dog



- Be nice to your dog, do not tease them
- If you are approached by an unknown dog, freeze and do not run
- If you play with a street dog never harass him
- To deal with a dog attack, see <https://www.wikihow.com/Handle-a-Dog-Attack>
- **Never** play with or approach a dog you do not know
- Report immediately any dog aggressive or foaming at the mouth to veterinary authorities



Cheetah Conservation Fund  
P.O. Box 1755 Otjiwarongo, Namibia

Farmer Carnivore Help Hotline  
24 Hour number  
264 81 227 5139

Daytime ONLY number  
(08:00 – 17:00)  
067 306 225



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HOW TO DEAL WITH RABIES	AWARENESS AND PREVENTION	PREVENTING RABIES MAKES EVERYBODY SAFER
<p><b>What do you do when bitten by a known or unknown dog?</b></p> <div> </div> <p>Wash wound immediately with soap and water, go to a doctor, Hospital or clinic for medical attention and tell them you might have been bitten by a rabid dog.</p> <div> </div> <p>Report the dog to state veterinary or local vet. If the dog is dead, it can be checked if it had rabies. If alive it will be checked for rabies.</p>	<p><b>Pets and farm animals can get rabies</b></p> <div> </div> <p>Your pets can get rabies, so you must vaccinate your dog every year.</p> <div> </div> <p>Your farm animals can get rabies, so report any unusual behavior to your local vet.</p>	<p><b>How to avoid being bitten by a dog</b></p> <div> </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be nice to your dog, do not tease them</li> <li>• If you play with a street dog never harass him</li> <li>• <b>Never</b> play with or approach a dog you do not know</li> <li>• If you are approached by an unknown dog, freeze and do not run</li> <li>• To deal with a dog attack, see <a href="https://www.wikihow.com/Handle-a-Dog-Attack">https://www.wikihow.com/Handle-a-Dog-Attack</a></li> <li>• Report immediately any dog aggressive or foaming at the mouth to veterinary authorities</li> </ul>



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