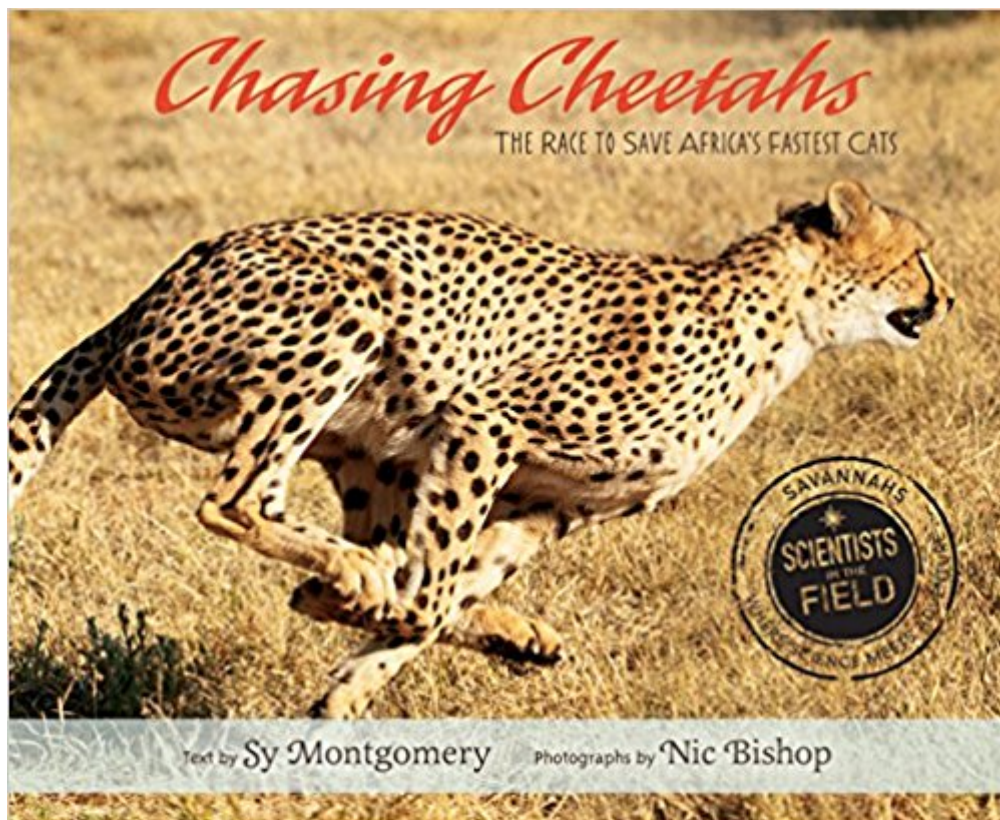




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Chasing Cheetahs: The Race To Save Africa's Fastest Cat (Scientists In The Field Series)



Synopsis

Since the year 1900, cheetah footprints quickly dwindled in African dirt as the species plummeted from more than 100,000 to fewer than 10,000. At the Cheetah Conservation Fund's (CCF) African headquarters in Namibia, Laurie Marker and her team save these stunning, swift, and slender creatures from extinction. Since the organization's start in 1990, they've rescued more than 900 cheetahs, most of whom have been returned to the wild. But this arduous challenge continues. For most African livestock farmers, cheetahs are the last thing they want to see on their properties. In the 1980s, as many as 19 cheetahs per farmer died each year. Cheetahs were considered vermin--but, in learning more about this magnificent species, we know this is far from true. Today, CCF acts as a liaison between the farmers and the cheetahs, in order to promote cohabitation in an ecosystem that cannot thrive without the existence of the precious and predatory cheetah. On a wild ride through the African wilderness--sometimes sniffing out scents left in the dirt--Sy Montgomery and Nic Bishop join CCF in studying the cheetah's ecological, genetic, and behavioral patterns in order to chase down the fastest animal on land and save the species--before it is too late.

Book Information

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Age Range: 10 - 12 years

Grade Level: 5 - 7

Customer Reviews

Gr 6—Cheetahs, the smallest of the big cats, are superbly adapted to their habitat and to running down their prey with blinding bursts of speed. Here Montgomery focuses her scientific attention and literary craft on the work of the Cheetah Conservation Fund (CCF) and its efforts to save the cheetah from threatened extinction. Quartered in Namibia, CCF director Laurie Marker and her team analyze scat, measure trees where cheetahs congregate, collect DNA to follow genetic lines, breed cheetahs for ultimate release in the wild, and rescue these animals from captivity when possible. Another major thrust is educating farmers, herders, and future farmers/herders (children) in how to coexist with a large predator that often prefers wild meat to domestic animals. To this concern, CCF breeds large Kangal guard dogs and sells them (at low cost) to herdsman. Montgomery's lucid prose flows smoothly, and Bishop's elegant color photos bring it all into crystal focus. Interspersed with the narrative are information pages on specific topics, such as "Secrets of DNA" and "Taking the Measure of a Tree." Similar in scope to this team's excellent *The Tapir Scientist* (2013) and *Kakapo Rescue* (both Houghton, 2010), this is a readable, informative, and elegant book on an equally elegant feline. —Patricia Manning, formerly at Eastchester Public Library, NY

The latest entry in the *Scientists in the Field* series finds award-winning collaborators Montgomery and Bishop visiting a cheetah reclamation preserve in Tanzania for close-up looks at how orphaned or injured animals are rescued, nurtured, and prepared (when possible) for release back into the wild. Along with sharp views of the facility's experts and student volunteers working with cheetahs and taking general wildlife counts, Bishop provides plenty of stunning cheetah photography—both full-body and head shots—to beautifully complement Montgomery's detailed descriptions of daily routines, research projects, and medical procedures. The text also extends its coverage of wildlife conservation issues in explanations of how the facility's passionately dedicated head, Laurie Marker, works to turn local herders from being part of the problem to becoming part of the solution by working to save these beautiful, threatened creatures. This is yet another engaging, well-designed entry into an essential series. Grades 5-8. --John Peters

I am a huge fan of the *Scientists in the Field* series by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. They are not only fascinating but well designed with gorgeous photographs. *Chasing Cheetahs* did not disappoint, it's as high in quality as its predecessors. With the growing emphasis on STEM (Science, technology,

engineering, and math) in the education field, these books are a great help in that endeavor. This book takes a look at the work of the Cheetah Conservation Fund's work in Namibia, Africa in saving cheetahs. The work done by Laurie Marker and her associates has clearly made a difference, but like all conservation stories there is still much to be done as Montgomery clearly shows. I found it absolutely intriguing to read about the things the CCF is doing to help the species. The strategies they are using are clearly explained and demonstrated in the book which shows the power of science in action. I for one found the stories about different cheetahs and the way the scientists study them and share what they've learned with local farmers and school children as well as with colleagues worldwide makes for a great story. This book is very readable with lots of gorgeous photographs to highlight the text. A wonderful addition to a great series.

Great book, but I purchased it for my Granddaughter who is 5 that loves Cheetah and it was a little more detailed than I thought. It is a great book and talks a lot about Cheetahs, but just too deep for a 5 year old to keep interested. But she loved the pictures and their captions. And when she gets older I am sure she will like reading all of it.

I sent this book to a 13 year old girl who had met the author and read many of Sy Montgomery's other nature books. Her note to me said how great it was and in the short time between receiving it and writing my note she had reread it seven times! Quite a review I'd say!

Great book about the hard work of creating and maintaining a Cheetah Refuge. Beautiful pictures of the Cheetahs and their new environment. A terrific book on conservation that is good for adults and young adults. We need more of these places. You see the passion of the conservators. I love Cheetahs and it was perfect or purrfect for me.. Hope to visit one soon.

I wanted a coffee table sized book on cheetahs and this fits the bill.

This book is beautifully illustrated! Delivered earlier than scheduled, and it was in great shape! My kids loved it! I would recommend this book to everyone!

Good review, pictures

Informative!

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