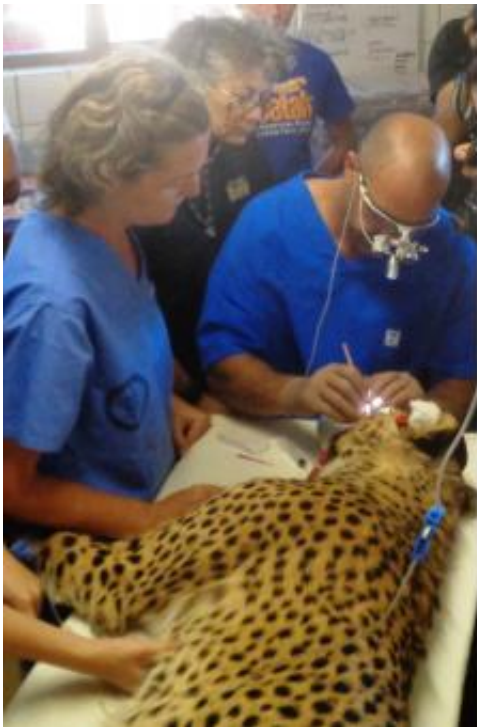


# Ophthalmologist performs surgery to help save young cheetah's eye

January 26 2015, by Susan Yannetti

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Dr. Petrick, a Windhoek, Namibia, ophthalmologist operates on Khayjay's eye at Cheetah Conservation Fund on Jan. 6, 2015

Dr. Léart Petrick, a Windhoek eye specialist with a practise focused on serving humans, recently travelled to Cheetah Conservation Fund (CCF) to perform an operation on a different kind of patient. Khayjay, a four-and-a-half-year-old cheetah that has lived at CCF since he was three weeks of age, successfully underwent a 45-minute surgery to address a

chronic, debilitating eye problem.

"Khayjay's left [eye](#) was creating excessive amounts of discharge, causing him discomfort and interfering with his vision", said CCF veterinarian Dr. Mari-Ann DaSilva. "When Khayjay was not responding to our initial treatment protocol, we decided to examine him thoroughly under anaesthesia".

Dr. Da Silva consulted with Dr. Petrick, who agreed that [surgery](#) was the best option. The operation was performed at CCF on 6 January, with Dr. Petrick bringing his own special ophthalmology tools. Dr. Petrick has practised in Windhoek for approximately 10 years and occasionally makes his services available to assist veterinarians with domestic animals. Khayjay's [surgery](#) marks the first time he has operated on a [cheetah](#).

"Khayjay's problem is the result of long-term inflammation, and the procedure I performed is fairly simple", said Dr. Petrick. "Khayjay seemed to respond well to the surgery. We anticipate he will make a quick recovery and have full use of the eye".

During the surgery, Khayjay's third eyelid was sutured shut to act as a natural bandage. It will remain closed for a few weeks to allow the eye to heal. Eye ointment is being applied five times a day. "The sutures are absorbable and will dissolve on their own. At that time, his [eye](#) should be well into the healing process and function normally", said Dr. Da Silva.

"We are so pleased to have a resource like Dr. Petrick in the community who is willing to step outside of his normal practise and donate his services to help us with one of our orphan cheetahs", said Dr. Laurie Marker, Founder and Executive Director of CCF. "We don't have many veterinarian specialists in the country, so having an interested human specialist is wonderful. Having healthy eyes and clear vision is

just as important to cheetahs as it is for people".



A healthy Khayjay exercises at Cheetah Conservation Fund. Photo by Peter Scheufler.



Khayjay proudly stands on a dirt mound at Cheetah Conservation Fund during his exercise session. Photo by Peter Scheufler.

Provided by Cheetah Conservation Fund

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