



Hoedspruit Endangered Species Centre (Pty) Ltd

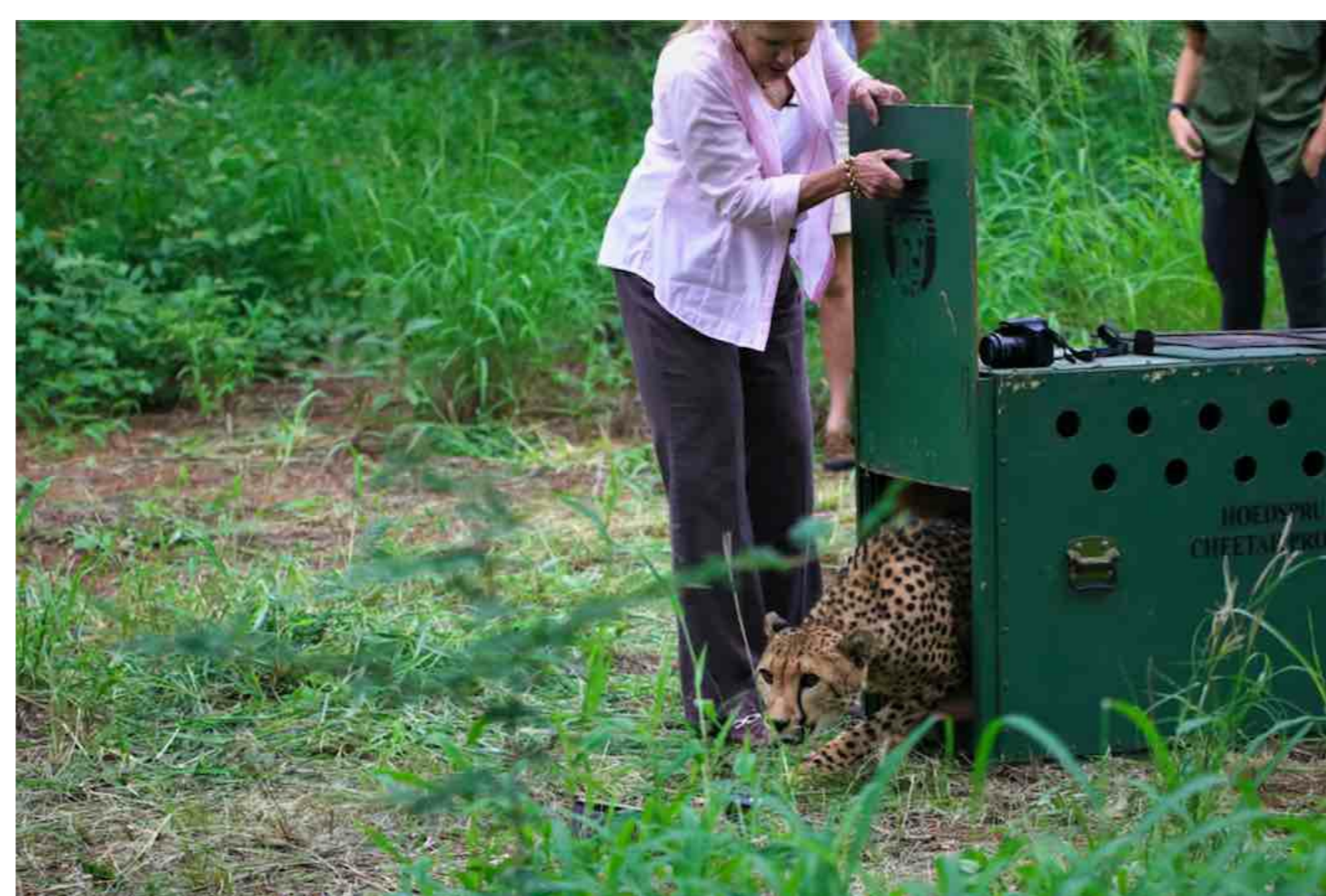
Reg No: 1993/007165/07 | Directors: LL Roode, A Roode | Postal: PO Box 25745, Monument Park, 0105  
Head Office: +27 (0) 12 465 5605 | Centre: +27 (0) 15 793 1633 | Website: www.hesc.co.za

**PRESS RELEASE**

DATE: 30 January 2019

For immediate release

## Hoedspruit Endangered Species Centre releases a cheetah in a wilderness reserve



The [Hoedspruit Endangered Species Centre \(HESC\)](#) released a captive-bred female cheetah in the [Pidwa Wilderness Reserve](#) yesterday, Tuesday 29 January 2019. The release forms part of the Southern African cheetah meta-population programme facilitated by the [Endangered Wildlife Trust \(EWT\)](#), and entails selectively releasing captive-bred cheetahs to enhance the genetic diversity of the limited number of free-ranging members of the species in southern Africa.

HESC has been breeding cheetahs since 1990 and was accredited by the [Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora \(CITES\)](#) as a breeding centre for cheetahs in October 2003.



HESC's founder and managing director, Lente Roode, says the release of cheetahs into the wild remains the ultimate objective of her cheetah breeding programme and the release today will provide a fresh bloodline to broaden the diversity of the gene pool of the [Pidwa cheetahs](#).

As female cheetahs are solitary animals by nature, Roode says releasing a single cheetah into a new area is a normal practice and is consistent with the way in which they live in the wild.

[WATCH VIDEO OF RELEASE](#)

The release will be conducted in three stages with the first stage entailing a three-month habituation period in a predator-free boma of one hectare. During this time the cheetah will be fed impala carcasses.

For the next stage the cheetah will be moved to a 2 000 hectare area devoid of cheetahs, hyenas and lions, where she will have the opportunity to hone her natural hunting skills. During this period she will be monitored daily and provided with meat should she fail to hunt successfully.



*Lente Roode of HESC together with Katie Rooke, Manager of Askari Wilderness Programme at Pidwa Wilderness Reserve*

Only once she proved herself to be an independent and successful hunter, will she be released into the 17 000 hectare, big-five reserve to meet and interact with the other inhabitants in the reserve. Monitoring will continue to ensure that she adapts to her new environment, and hunts successfully.

Roode says that the numerous previous successful releases of captive-bred cheetahs into the wild by HESC, dispel the myth that cheetahs born and raised in captivity cannot be released and sustain themselves in the presence of other predators in the wild. Their ability to survive in the wild and in the presence of other predators is very much an individual ability; some do so successfully, others not.



*Although born and raised in captivity at HESC, another beautiful predator is now back in the wild where it belongs. This cheetah will from now on grace the [Pidwa Wilderness Reserve](#) where she was released on Tuesday 29 January 2019.*

*Note to editors:*

The Hoedspruit Endangered Species Centre (HESC) is a unique, African wildlife facility that focuses on the conservation and breeding of rare, vulnerable and threatened wildlife species. HESC also is increasingly becoming a refuge for animals injured and orphaned as a consequence of poaching events.

Released on behalf of Lente Roode  
Founder and Managing Director  
Hoedspruit Endangered Species Centre (HESC)

For further information contact Lente Roode  
Mobile: 082 499 7524 – Tel: 012 460 5605  
Email: [lente.roode@cheetahcentre.co.za](mailto:lente.roode@cheetahcentre.co.za)

