



Dr. Laurie Marker

The Real Catwoman

EXCLUSIVE

Acclaimed for almost single-handedly saving the cheetahs in the wild, Dr. Laurie Marker is a passionate advocate for this fastest of all land animals. Marker “knows more about cheetahs than anyone alive,” praises Smithsonian Magazine. “Without her, these fleet-footed predators of Africa’s bush country would likely be closer to extinction.” Co-founder and Executive Director of the non-profit Cheetah Conservation Fund, Dr. Marker has worked with these magnificent cats for more than 30 years in the wilds of Namibia.

As a conservation biologist, her research has led to many discoveries about the future survival of cheetahs from their lack of genetic variation and weak immune systems to re-introducing captive cats into the wild.

Dr. Marker helped develop the U.S. and international captive program to assist the cheetah, establishing the most successful captive cheetah-breeding program in North America during her 16 years of work in Oregon. Her remarkable work led her to become Executive Director of the Centre for New Opportunities in Animal Health Sciences based at the Smithsonian Institution’s National Zoo.

Recognized by Time Magazine as a “Hero for the Planet in 2000,” Marker received the 2008 Society of Women Geographers Gold Medal as a conservation biologist—given only every three years to the likes of Amelia Earhardt, Margaret Mead, Mary Douglas Leakey, and Jane Goodall.

The internationally-renowned San Diego Zoo honored Dr. Marker in 2008 with its prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award. According to the institution, “Laurie has been able to accomplish so much because she is such a dynamic individual. She is a dedicated behaviorist, and she is an incredible speaker. She can impart the plight of this species in a way that anyone who hears her speak cannot help but send a donation to help save the cheetah in its natural habitat.”

Dr. Marker has been named a 2008 Tech Awards Laureate by the Tech Museum of Innovation in California. She is one of 25 innovators from around the world recognized for applying technology to benefit humanity. Marker has spearheaded a plan to clear invader bush and convert it to a clean-burning and economical alternative fuel log to existing firewood and charcoal. Clearing invader bush helps restore thousands of hectares of Namibian savannah to its original state and improves the habitat for both cheetah and their prey. Plans are underway to use invader bush to power electricity plants.

She was also nominated for The Indianapolis Prize, the largest individual monetary award for animal species conservation in the world. The award is given every other year to an individual who has made extraordinary conservation efforts involving a single or multiple animal species. The award’s ceremony was hosted by film stars Jane Alexander and Sam Waterston.

In 2009, Marker was honored with a Lifetime Achievement Award at the International Wildlife Film Festival.

Honored throughout Africa, Marker was named Conservationist of the Year by Chevron-Texaco and the Tracks and Sand Award from The Living Desert. Her PhD. is from Oxford University.

Dr. Marker is often seen with her sidekick cheetah, Chewbacca, at her side.