

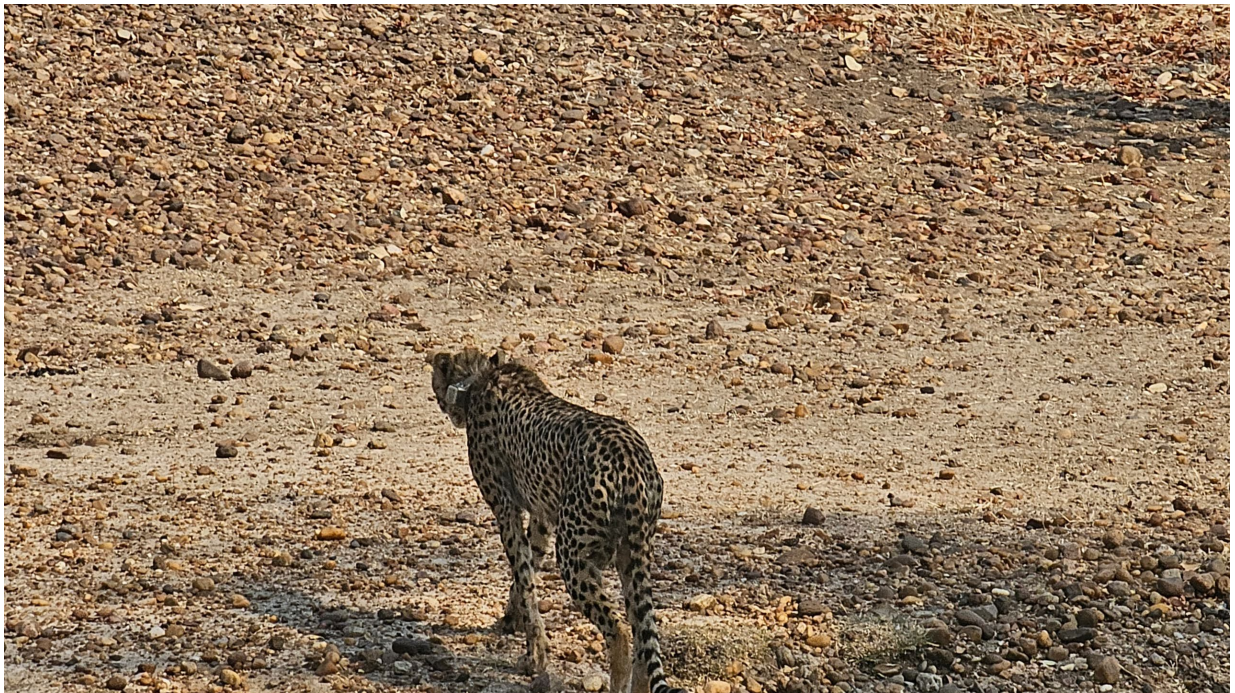
*Panyame.*

## **The Panyame Cheetah Conservation Project**

### **Monthly Report**

**Prepared by Jacob Da Cunha**

**October 2025**



*Figura 1: Bugatti in the Sapi Safari Area (Photo by Sapi Monitoring Unit)*



## From the Monitor's Desk

My name is Jacob Da Cunha, born in Maxixe, Inhambane, southern of Mozambique. As a Conservation Biologist with a degree in Ecology and solid experience in mammals, remote sensing, birds, plants, restoration, and biodiversity monitoring, I have worked for at least three years for Gorongosa National Park and Zinave National Park.

My passion lies in applying my knowledge to the preservation of ecosystems, the sustainable management of natural resources, and the development of communities living around conservation areas. Based on my experience this October, I feel very well positioned to be part of this team.

In this role as cheetah monitor, I am committed to contributing significantly to the establishment and resilience of this cheetah population in Panyame.

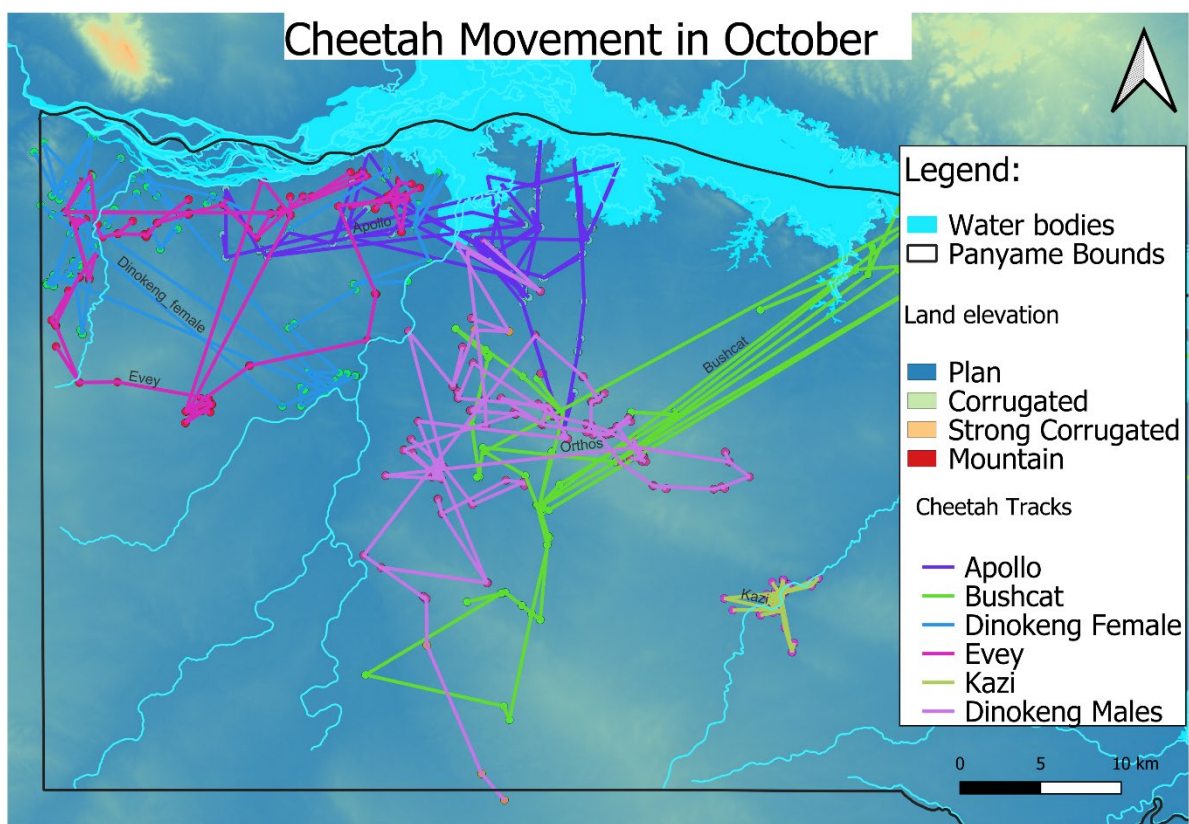
Throughout October, I have been working closely with the field team to ensure that we are capturing comprehensive data on the activities, locations, and overall well-being of the cheetahs. I am excited to share some of the key highlights and insights from our monitoring efforts in October in the sections below.



## Summary of Monitoring Activities

The data collected during monitoring in October indicate that the cheetah population is healthy and shows typical species behavior. Overall, the movement of the cheetahs is strongly influenced by the availability of water, food, and shelter, often found in termite mounds, which provide ideal microclimatic conditions for resting and have a diverse flora that attracts herbivores.

The map below illustrates the movement of cheetahs in relation to the availability of resources, such as water and food. The presence of prey is strongly influenced by the availability of termite mounds and rock piles, which affect the vegetation structure and consequently attract prey for the cheetahs. In the map, the land elevations between Corrugated and Strong Corrugated represent the termite mounds and rock piles.



⇒ The KZN female, Kazi was seen several times in the Fundumwe area, often lying relaxed on top of a termite mound. She is in excellent physical condition and displays normal behavior. The flora composition around the termite mounds is dominated by



*Tamarindus indica*, *Colophospermum*, *Ximenia americana*, *Combretum*, and *Senegalia*, with surrounding grasses nearly 1 meter tall.

- ⇒ Female Evey was spotted in various locations (Limbatima, Malala pan, Fly camp, and Chinthopo). Records indicate that Evey is in excellent body condition, often found lying relaxed or sleeping in the shade of trees or shrubs near termite mounds and camouflaged grass in open areas, always close to water sources.
- ⇒ The solitary male Bushcat was frequently seen in floodplain regions, in excellent body condition, with no signs of injury, likely the largest cat in the area after Apollo (image below). He was mostly observed lying relaxed before fleeing and camouflaging in tall grass and difficult-to-access areas with rocks (caves) and dense vegetation. He was seen near the Zambezi River in Mbadzi and in open mopane regions in Chintopo. The dominant species were *Colophospermum*, *Sterculia*, *Strichnos*, *Adasonia* (baobab), and *Ximenia*.



Figura 2: Image taken from the helicopter.  
Credit: Jan

- ⇒ Apollo is a highly nomadic cat, difficult to find, but he was in the region between Nhajenje and Chongo, in a floodplain surrounded by a mopane ecosystem with rocks. He is estimated to be the largest cat in the area and was seen lying in the shade of a mopane tree trunk, 50 meters away. When he noticed our presence, he moved away quietly, as if he were hunting.
- ⇒ Female Dinokeng was seen on several occasions and is in good body condition. Highlights include her hunting an oribi and dragging it into a termite mound where she was found resting with her food (image below). On another occasion, she was spotted in the eastern side of the Panyame floodplain (Limpantima) area on top of a bare termite mound, making social vocalizations in the late afternoon for almost 10 minutes, again showing the importance of termite mounds for cheetahs. Overall, the female Dinokeng prefers floodplain areas with tall grass and termite mounds that serve as resting islands.



Credit: Jacob

- ⇒ The three Dinokeng males always remind me of the term "land of fear," as they hunt large herbivores, and during our monitoring, we found two dead kudus (image below).





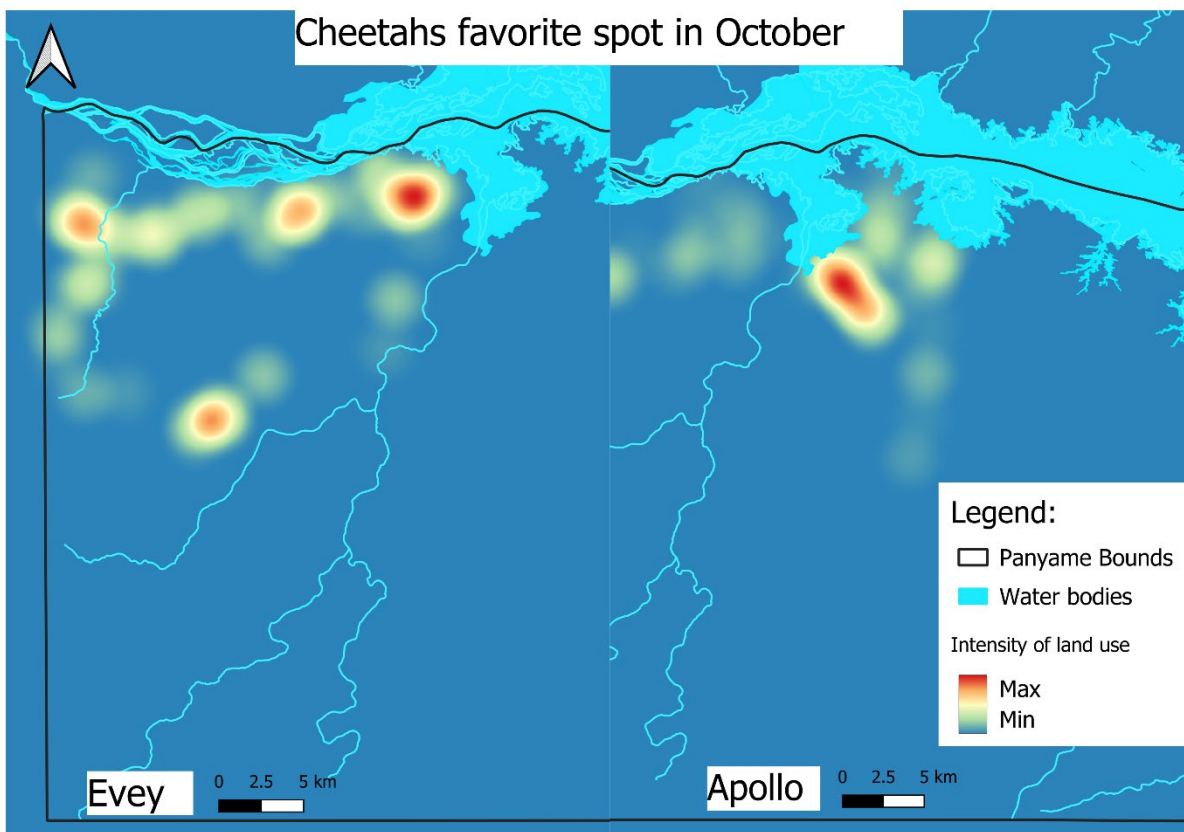
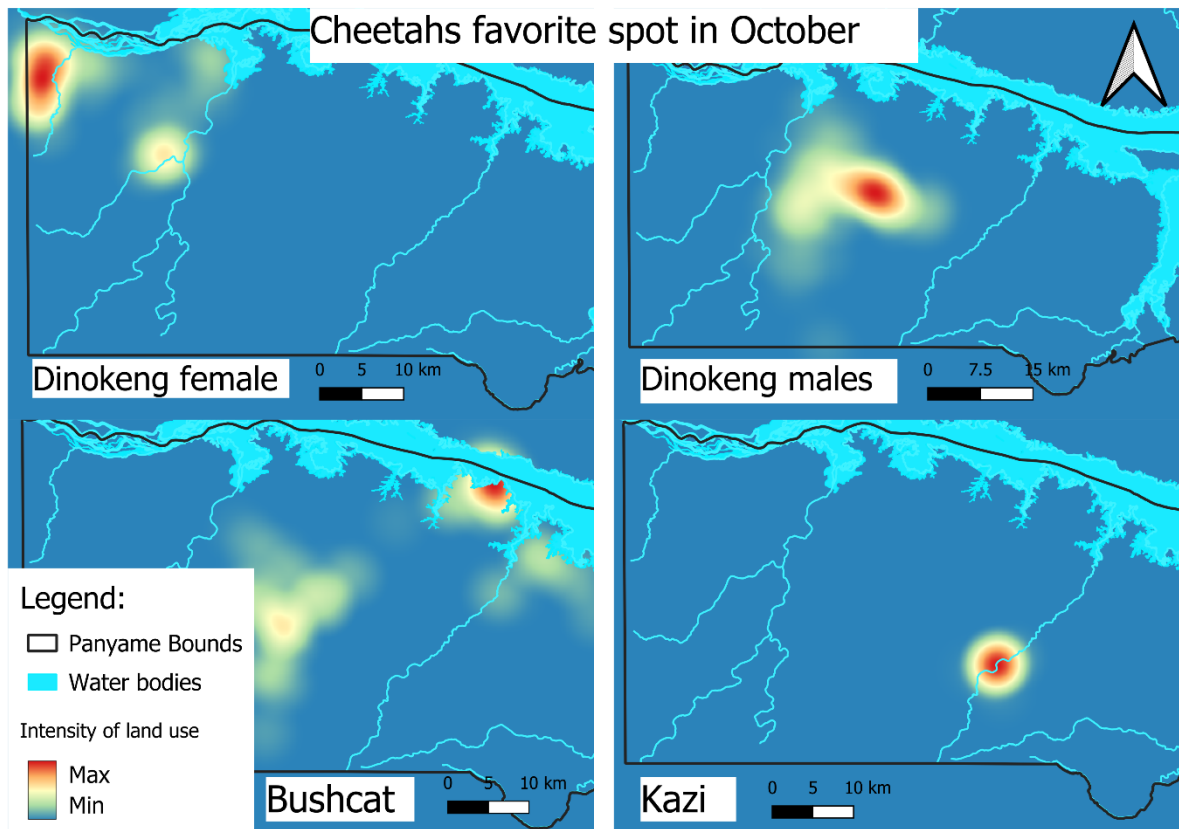
Credit: Jacob

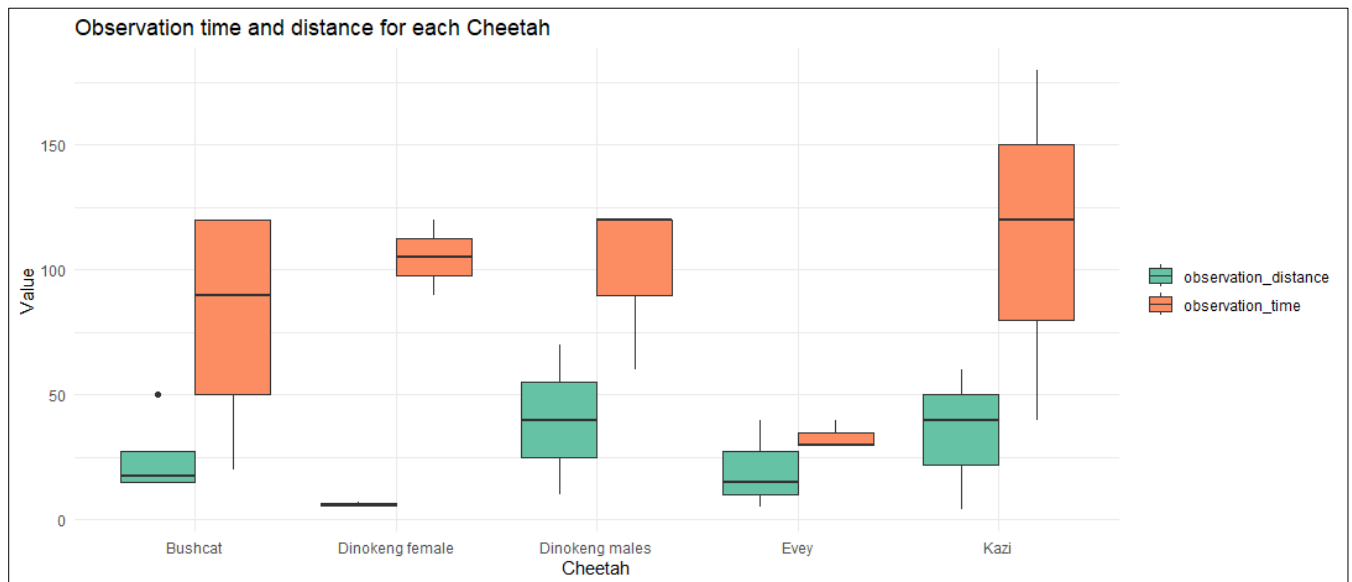
Unlike other cheetahs, the three Dinokeng males prefer to have a wide view of the landscape and were mostly found in open areas under *Adasonia digitata* (baobab).

In general, they are in excellent physical condition, exhibiting typical behaviors of dominant males in their territory, making wide movements in the Nhamulombue, Wire, and Mashuma regions, and at the end of October, they made a foray into neighboring Zimbabwe.



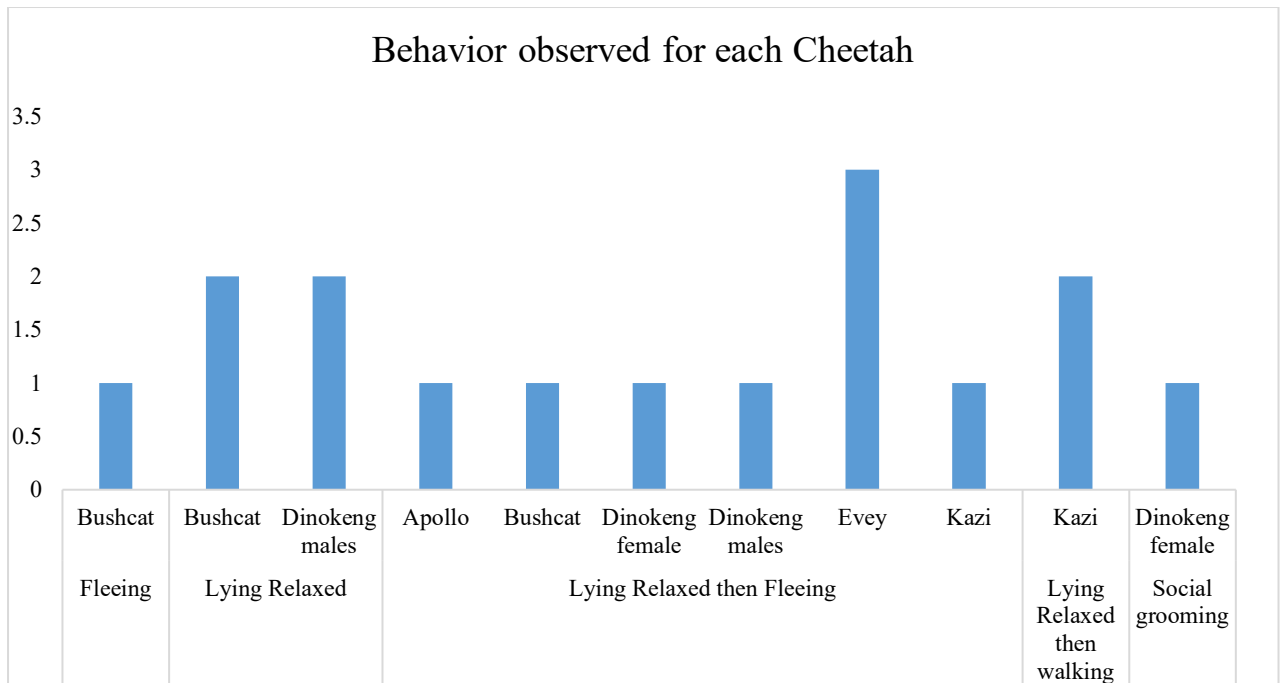
## **ADDITIONAL VISUAL INFORMATION**





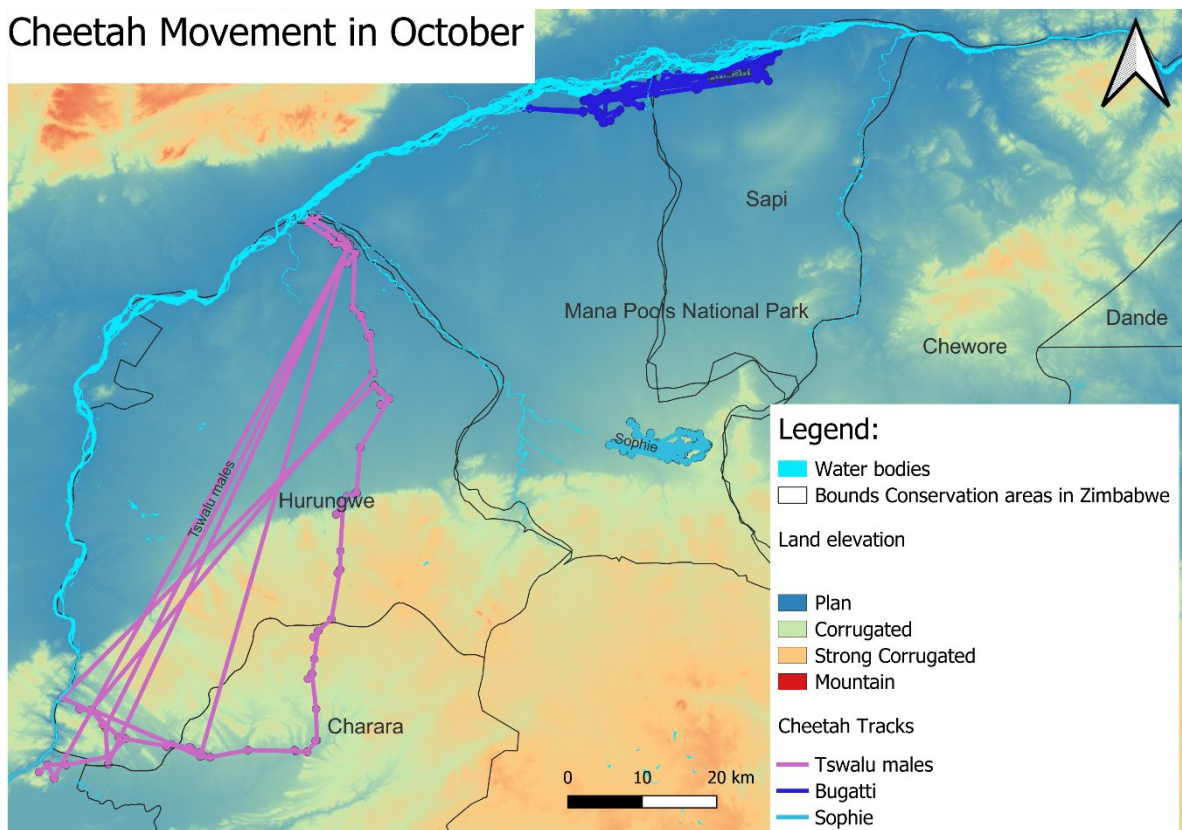
We can observe from the data distribution in the boxplot, that the observation time of the cheetahs, with the exception of Evey, was over 100 seconds, while the average observation distance was approximately 40 meters among all the cheetahs. These analyses are fundamental for understanding how close the cheetahs can get to humans and the potential that observing these magnificent creatures can offer. We did not conduct any statistical analysis due to insufficient sample size; we limited ourselves to observing the data distribution. In the case of Apollo, during the entire month of October, he was observed only once, for 120 seconds, at a distance of 50 meters. In my opinion, the ideal scenario for the future is the one represented in the graph by the Dinokeng female, which shows shorter distances and longer observation times.





This graph shows the frequency of behavior for each cheetah at each observation throughout the month.

### Cheetah Movement in October



## CHEETAHS IN ZIMBABWE

Over the border in Zimbabwe, our cheetahs are constantly updating their movements, and there is a general behavior of preferring floodplains. Bugatti is moving east, following the river upstream, and is currently located in Sapi, as shown in the heat map below. She is in excellent physical condition (as illustrated in the following images).



Figura 3: Bugatti, Credits: monitoring unit at Sapi

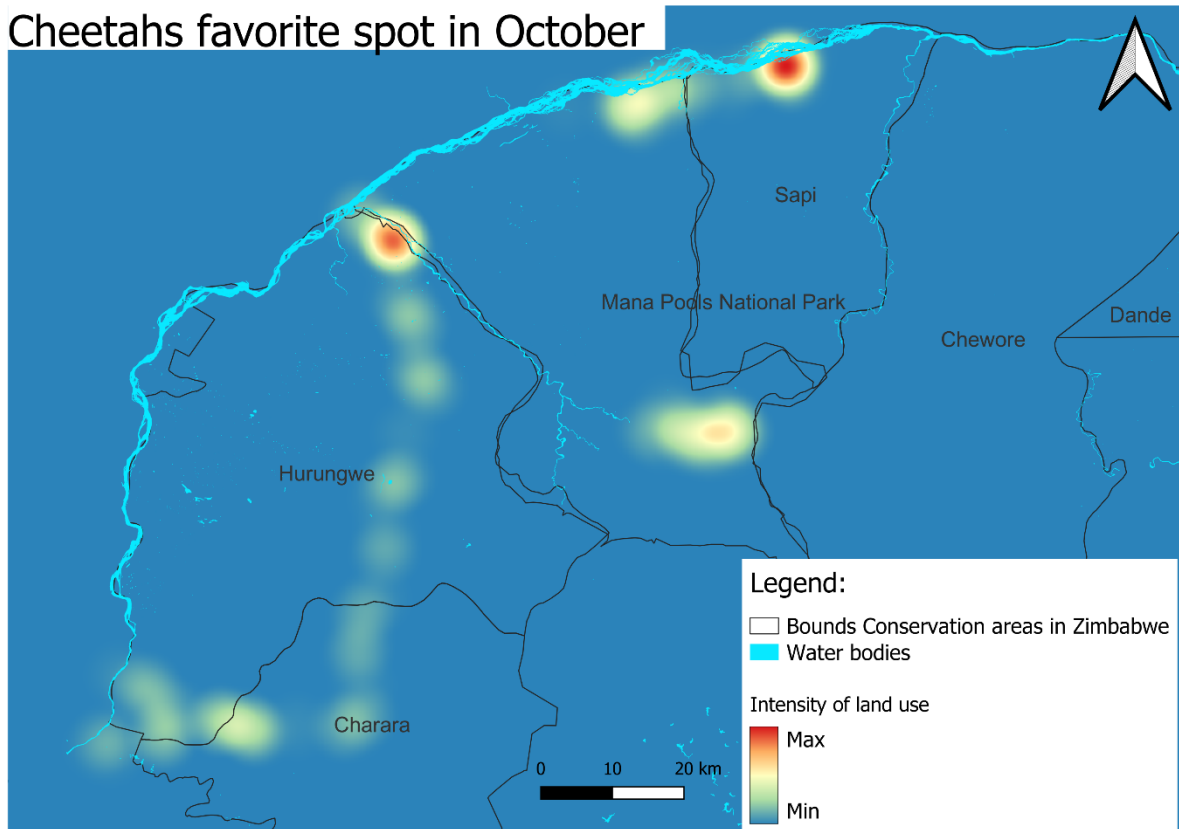
From the reports and observations received by stakeholders we are in touch with at Mana Pools National Park in Zimbabwe, we know that Sophie is in good condition. She was found resting in the shade before fleeing north. She was near the Chitake River, under a natal mahogany tree. The area features a dry riverbed with riverine vegetation, including *Combretum*, *Croton*, and *Trichilia*, along with some *albidas*. There were also small openings filled with grass, showing signs of impala, bushbuck, grysbok, elephants, and buffalo.

Throughout October, she has been following the river downstream, and if she continues, she will reach Chitake Springs, which has a significant population of lions. However, I believe she is strong enough to withstand the competition.

The three Tswalu males are also showing movement, moving north from Charara and currently located in Mana Pools.



## Cheetahs favorite spot in October



## EQUIPMENT INVENTORY

Item	Quantity	Condition	Comments
Telemetry set	2	Excellent	Telemetry set (antenna, cable, radio, radio charger, headphones, helicopter cable)
Communication radio	1	Excellent	
Radio Charger	1	Excellent	
Power bank	1	Excellent	
Starlink set	1	Excellent	Cable, charger, and connection receiver
Monitoring vehicle and equipment	1	Excellent	Car Tools, Jack, vehicle, kitchen kit, and the car itself.