

Big Cat Conservation Champion (BCCC) Award

The Cheetah Conservation Fund (CCF) is the administering organization of the CCF Big Cat Conservation Champion Award presented by CCF in conjunction with the AAZK Awards Committee. The purpose of this award is to recognize an AAZK Chapter or AAZK member(s) that is contributing to conservation efforts to ensure a future for any big cat species and/or subspecies, acknowledging that preserving these natural treasures requires a commitment to an on-going collective effort. This award is meant to recognize those chapters or individuals who have identified a need, created a plan to fill the need and made a notable contribution to the conservation of the species (in an in-situ environment) through their effort(s). It is hoped that recognition of outstanding efforts by keepers to become involved in conservation efforts will provide incentive to others to continue to be leaders in this important endeavor. Nominations are due May 1st. If you do not have access to a google account to fill out this form, please contact the awards chair at awards@aazk.org.

The CCF Big Cat Conservation Champion Award was established in 2025 by CCF in conjunction with the AAZK Awards Committee. This award is presented at the annual AAZK National Conference

Qualifications

- An individual member of AAZK at any membership level from a zoo/aquarium/related facility, a zoological institution or organization, or a chartered AAZK chapter are eligible to be nominated for this award.
- Nominee(s) must have developed and/or facilitated a conservation project at their facility or with a conservation partner that had a direct impact on the conservation of one of the following species:
 - Lion
 - Leopard
 - Tiger
 - Cheetah
 - Cougar/Mountain Lion
 - Snow Leopard
 - Jaguar
- The conservation project must have added to the knowledge base of the institution/zoological community and conservation organizations working with the species in-situ.

Keeper Involvement:

- Keeper was involved with conceptual development of the conservation project (identifying the need).
- Keeper was involved with facilitation of completion of the project (setting up the project, fundraising, participation in the project itself inside or outside of the facility).
- Keeper worked in conjunction with their facility to complete the conservation project in house OR worked in conjunction with an outside organization/university to facilitate this project.

Scope/Quality of Project:

- The project design was clear and concise and could be replicated by other keepers/facilities.
- The project results could benefit other zoological institutions or conservation organizations.

Improved Husbandry Practices and/or Conservation Methods

- The project aided in increased funding for species conservation in-situ.
- The project aided in increased information for presentation to the public.
- The project aided in increased animal care of the species ex-situ.
- The results of the project had a direct and measurable impact on big cat conservation in the wild.

Dissemination of Knowledge:

- Results of the conservation project were disseminated to the zoo community to advance the knowledge of the species or taxa.
- Results were presented at either conference(s) by workshop

Nomination Procedure

- The nominee must be nominated by an animal care professional.
- Complete the nomination form which includes the name of keeper(s) who conducted the project, institution's name and address.
- List and **document** outstanding achievements in one or more of the categories listed under qualifications.
- Completed nomination packet (nomination form and supporting documents) may be submitted beginning January 1st and no later than the deadline: **MAY 1st** of each year.

Verification of the nomination requires a signature from the Director/CEO/Curator of the facility or their representative (if an individual nominee) or signature from the AAZK Chapter president (if an AAZK Chapter).

Selection Procedure

- The CCF Big Cat Conservation Champion Award Committee will review each nominee and cast a deciding vote in the instance of a tie.

Winner will receive:

- A plaque for display at their facility or individual home
- A copy of “Cheetahs: Biology and Conservation” signed by Dr. Laurie Marker
- The opportunity to take the “Certified Cheetah Interpreter” class with fee waived
- A post and/or press release on the www.cheetah.org website
- Bragging rights!