



ConGen 2025

Recent Advances in Conservation Genetics

January 5-15, 2025

March 14, 2025

Report to AGA SEA committee for **ConGen 2025-CCF**:

<https://conservationgenetics.org/congen2025/>

The 2025 version of the AGA-sponsored Short Course entitled “**Recent Advances in Conservation Genetics**”, was convened **January 5-15, 2025 hosted by The Cheetah Conservation Fund** in Otjiwarongo, Namibia, and was highly successful. A total of 26 faculty and 31 determined students enjoyed 10 days of exposure and discussion of the latest advances in Conservation Genetics. The 2025 course was the latest in a 19-year history of AGA sponsorship and remains a beacon of AGA outreach and continuing education for the genetics/genomics community.

This year the venue was the **Cheetah Conservation Fund-CCF** in Otjiwarongo, Namibia <https://cheetah.org/> hosted by Drs of. Laurie Marker and Ann Schmidt-Kuntzel of CCF.

The 2025 ConGen course was organized in collaboration with the CCF and the University of Namibia Staff on the campus of CCF in Namibia adjacent to the Waterberg Plateau National Park.

CCF-global is a conservation research institution with an outstanding reputation, excellent facilities, and a dedicated species conservation mission. The researchers at CCF collaborate on numerous research projects in conservation biology with several institutions in Africa, Europe, Asia, and the Americas. CCF has a track record of organizing international conferences and scientific workshops, such as Summer Schools in Ecology and Biodiversity and longer-term training programs for students from Namibia and throughout Africa. The combination of international students and faculty made for an outstanding training communication and collaborative experience with a field trips into the Namibian savannah.

ConGen -2025 received **48 applications** for attendance and accepted **31 students**. The students were outstanding and motivated, ranging from keen undergraduates to full professors across the world. The course lasted 10 intense days with **26 international faculty and 17 countries** represented in the student body, offering a rich admixture of scientific and cultural backgrounds in the training sessions. The faculty were also diverse and accomplished with broad scope and expertise ([see attached Agenda and faculty list attached](#)).

Morning lectures were in-depth presentations on topical areas that are applied today and in the future on species conservation applications. Afternoon computer laboratories featured the latest version of algorithmic routines used for the assessment of wildlife populations and natural history. Evening lectures were complete conservation genetics stories presented by the experts who led the studies. The cohesion generated by the topical and timely course, plus the favorable venue for student-faculty interaction, made for effective interpersonal communication among faculty and students.

Overall, we would rate the 10-day international venue a whole-hearted success. This is the sixth international ConGen course outside continental USA. Previous international ConGen courses were held in:

Pantanal, Brazil in 2011;

The Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute in Panama in 2012

Wildlife College at Kruger Park South Africa in 2013 ;

University Puerto Rico, Rincon in 2015; and

Balaton Limnological Institute in Tihany, Hungary in 2016.

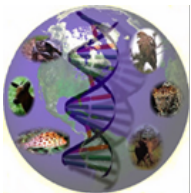
We are all hoping that AGA will continue to support the world-recognized ConGen brand and concept in the future.

The course was -as expected- detailed and rigorous and allowed our faculty to meet the next generation of Conservation Genetics scientists. The chemistry was exhilarating to the students, to the faculty and to me.

Each of the faculty and staff of the course remain extremely grateful to the AGA Council for support for the past 29 years and are eager to plan the next version schedule for 2026 and a soon-to-be-chosen spot that will invigorate all of our resolves toward these important research missions.

Attached to this report are a student list, a faculty list, email contacts, and a course curriculum. A total of \$24,000 in scholarships was awarded to student applicants as stipulated in the AGA ConGen application. I have attached the disbursement of scholarships.

With my deepest gratitude on behalf of the faculty and staff of ConGen 2010,



Stephen J. OBrien, Director

For my **ConGen 2025** Co-Directors:

**Eduardo Eizirik
Laurie Goodman
Klaus Koepfli
Laurie Marker
Cindy Harper
Taras Oleksyk
Emma Teeling**

Local Hosts

**Laurie Marker
Anne Schmidt-Kuntzel**







