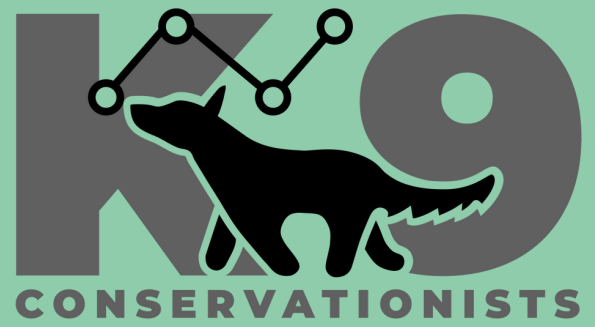


# 2022 ANNUAL REPORT

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GROWTH AND MENTORSHIP



# DEAR FRIENDS

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2022 has been a huge year for K9 Conservationists.

On January 1, 2022, K9 Conservationists consisted of a single founder, two dogs, a podcast, and 32 students in an online mentoring group. As I write in December, we now have three co-founders, four dogs, and 118 active online students. Together, our three co-founders embarked on our first international capacity-building trip, donating nearly three months of our time to Action for Cheetahs in Kenya. We have been blown away by the support of our community and the hunger for knowledge from our students.

We have worked creatively to apply our skill set not just to the fieldwork at hand, but also to meet the needs of the global community. A central focus is international knowledge co-production regarding how to best partner with conservation detection dogs.

At K9 Conservationists, passion and grit are at the heart of everything we do. Our three co-founders walked hundreds of kilometers, woke up before dawn dozens of times, and wrote thousands of words of proposals and feedback for our students. None of this would be possible without your support. From the bottom of our hearts and with wagging tails, thank you.

*Kayla Fratt*

KAYLA FRATT

Co-Founder





# K9 Conservationists

## at a Glance

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Our mission is to provide expert dog-handler teams that help scientists collect the data they need.

Our core values are collaboration, Humane Hierarchy-based training, and enthusiasm for sharing knowledge about conservation detection dogs.

We pride ourselves on creative solutions for challenging projects, top-notch dog welfare, and safety in the field.

## K9 Conservationists by the numbers

**1000+**  
targets  
found

**84**  
days of  
support  
for ACK

**44**  
online  
handling  
school  
students

**73**  
patrons in  
online  
learning  
club

**7**  
grant and  
RFP  
submissions

**84,652**  
podcast  
plays





# Notable Projects



Fieldwork

Sub-contracting for  
WEST, Inc on wind  
farms in 3 states



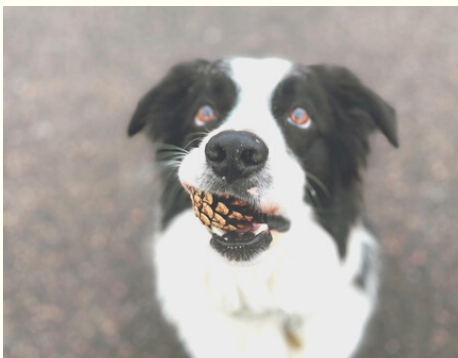
Capacity Building

3 months of support  
for Action for  
Cheetahs in Kenya



Instruction

19 week-long online  
handler course with 10  
expert guest instructors





# CAPACITY BUILDING

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In January of 2022, Action for Cheetahs in Kenya's (ACK) scat dog team was in trouble: they had just one of three handler positions filled, one of their dogs was fighting for her life against a tick-borne illness, and they had no experienced dog handlers left on staff. Starting in February, K9 Conservationists helped remotely with hiring decisions for the second handler (Naomi, right) and offered advice on rebuilding the canine side of the program when Artemis the dog passed away.

More importantly, K9 Conservationists offered nearly 3 months of staff time to the program, flying out one at a time to mentor Naomi and Edwin (on the cover) and re-train Persi (cover) and Madi (right). ACK could not afford salaries for the team, so we fundraised \$4,088 to cover staff time while in Kenya. We also collected much-needed dog training books and dog gear to help the program grow and sustain once we were gone.

While in Kenya, we focused on helping the handlers read dog body language, create GPS tracks, perform first aid checks, improve the physical conditioning of the dogs, and understand airflow for search strategy. We also identified and addressed a gap with the dogs' target specificity, a case study that we hope to publish in a peer-reviewed journal in 2023.

We continue offering remote mentorship to the ACK team through weekly calls and offered both Naomi and Edwin free spots in our Handler Course. We have also applied for two grants to return to Kenya and continue our work with these amazing teams.





# FIELDWORK

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All 3 K9 Conservationists founders spent their summers on wind farms as sub-contractors for WEST, Inc. This was Heather and Ellie's third season; Rachel, Barley, Niffler, and Kayla's second season, and Suki's first season.

Sub-contracting is. an important part of our growth, as it allows us to:

- Build & maintain skills for both handlers and canines
- Cover staff salary time for the summer season
- Obtain a strategic sense of the state of the industry

All told, our teams found over 1,000 targets across three states. The dogs successfully located dozens of species of various sizes and odor profiles. Each of our handlers also offered mentorship and support to novice handlers at each field site.



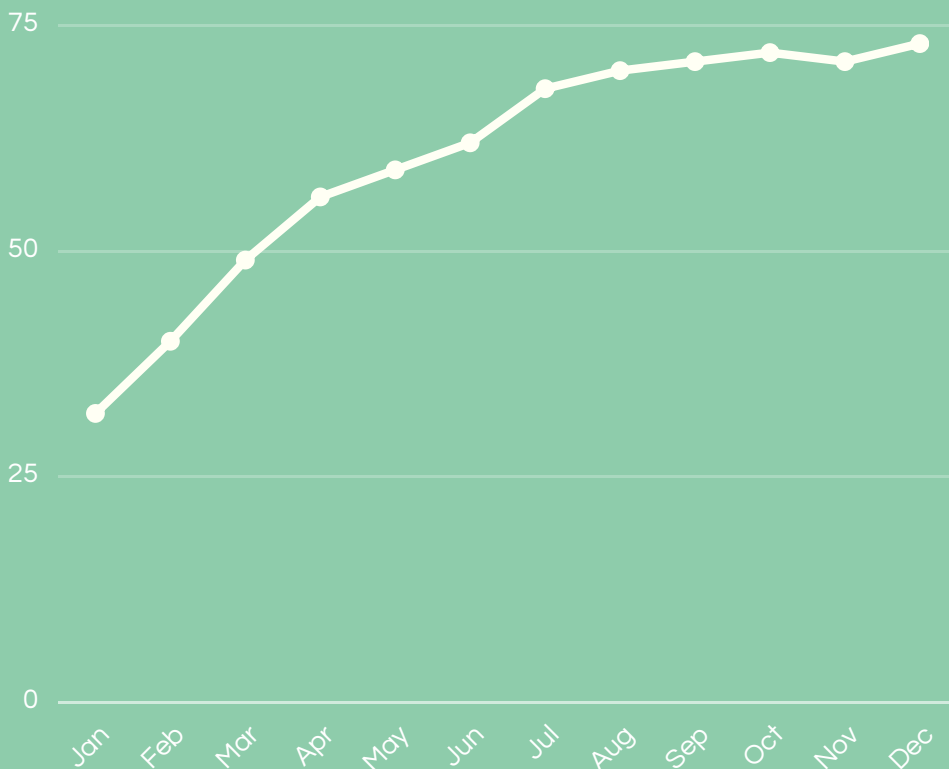
# PATREON

As part of the podcasting and outreach effort, K9 Conservationists offers a fee-based membership program through Patreon. Anywhere from \$3 to \$50 per month, 73 people get access to a book club, Facebook group, Q&A sessions, and group & private coaching calls.

This year we even saw our first Patrons "graduating" to paid jobs within the conservation dog field.

Our Patreon program brings in about \$600 per month in recurring revenue for the team, which helps to cover the costs of podcast editing, website maintenance, and other administrative overhead costs.

Looking forward, we hope that Patreon can earn enough money to pay Kayla for her time spent on the podcast (3-4 hours for each episode).



## MEMBERSHIP

Over the course of 2022, our Patreon membership grew from 32 to 73.

We hope to continue growing the community in 2023!



# PODCAST

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**46**

hours of  
podcasting  
published

**46**

guests  
highlighted  
on the show

**37**

different  
countries  
represented  
in listeners

**Top 5%**

most-shared  
podcast  
globally\*

**26%**

growth in  
followers  
over 2022

**84,652**

podcast  
plays



\*According to Spotify analytics

# ONLINE COURSE

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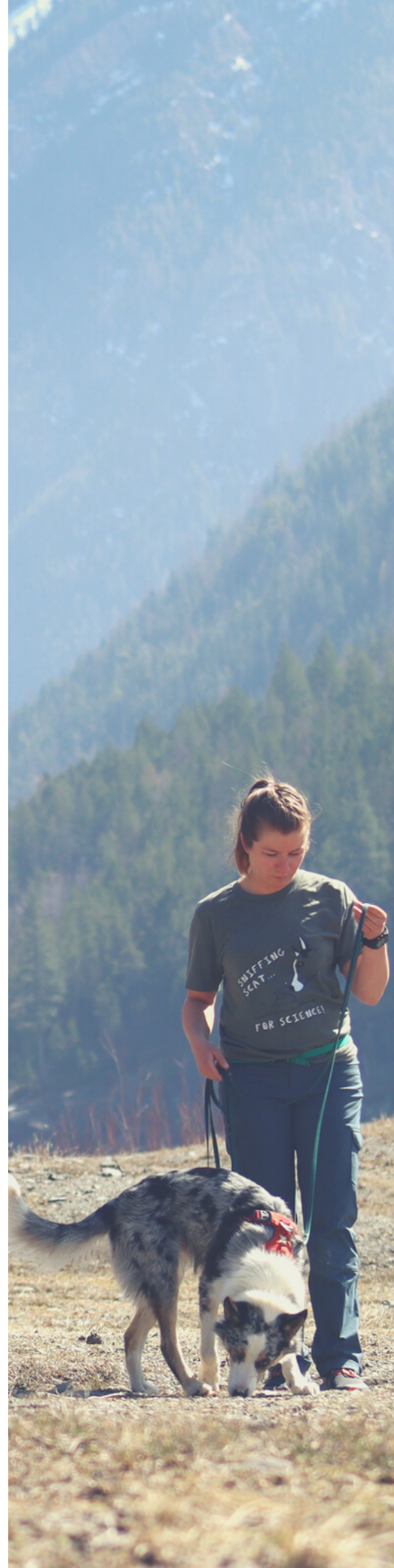
Entering the field of canine conservation detection is incredibly difficult.

We receive dozens of emails asking us if we accept interns, offer classes, or are hiring for entry-level jobs. Many of these inquiries come from passionate candidates, and we hated telling them that we didn't offer classes.

That's why we launched the K9 Conservationists Handler Course. Encompassing 19 weeks of instruction, this course relies on written lectures, video recordings, quizzes, homework, and weekly live group calls to offer students the best possible online learning environment. We were blown away by the interest in the course and offered spots to 44 students, many of whom required significant financial aid.

These students benefitted from the expertise of 10 guest instructors from around the world and across various industries.

All told, the course brought in \$16,916. After overhead costs and guest instructor compensation, this led to the first-ever paycheck for Rachel, Heather, and Kayla.





# OUTREACH

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Through programs like [Skype a Scientist](#), the K9 Conservationists team loves bringing the wonder of conservation dogs to the classroom. This year, the K9 Conservationists teams presented at three fourth-grade classrooms, two college classes, and several student-specific webinars.

Kayla was invited to speak at the [Natural Areas Association Conference](#) regarding compassionate conservation and canines.

Thanks to ongoing search engine optimization and outreach efforts to journalists, K9 Conservationists was also featured in publications including [Behavior Vets Colorado](#), [Voyage Denver](#), [ShoutOut Colorado](#), [You're Not Qualified Podcast](#), and [From Lab to Launch](#).

