

Cheetah

by

BRITTANY



The scientific name for the cheetah is called *Acinonyx Jubatus*. The cheetah is a mammal. The habitat a cheetah usually lives in is Africa, North America, South America, Asia, Europe, and Middle East. In the habitats the cheetah usually lives in, there is a lot of trees for the cheetahs to live near. An adult cheetah weighs 80-140 pounds, is about 32 inches tall at the shoulder and 48-56 inches long with another 28-32 inches in tail and males are a little larger than females. The cheetah eats gazelles, young antelope, young calves, warthogs, hares, and game birds. They typically stalk their prey until they are only 30 to 90 feet away. They then burst into a chase that lasts about 20 seconds. The cheetah catches its prey in all of the chases the cheetah has. The cheetah hunts in the open. It watches its prey, very often a Thompson's Gazelle. Then, it runs after it, tripping it when it gets close enough. If the cheetah succeeds, it will eat its catch, starting from the hind legs where the muscle tissue is. Unlike other stronger cats like the leopard, the cheetah can not drag its prey up a tree let alone climb it. Soon vultures will find the cheetah eating and will create a lot of noise and fuss. This is usually the beginning of the end of

the cheetah's meal. The vultures draw attention to lions, hyenas, and other scavengers and the cheetah will not fight them off. If the cheetah was injured; it could not catch its prey and would starve. The cheetah is extinct outside of Africa, with the exception of possible small populations in Iran. With a life span of 10 to 12 years, the cheetah is basically a solitary animal. At times a male will accompany a female for a short while after mating, but most often the female is alone or with her cubs. Two to four cubs are born in a secluded place. Their eyes do not open for a week or two, and they are helpless at first. When the mother is hunting, she leaves them hidden, but by 6 weeks of age they are able to follow her. They are suckled for 2 to 3 months but begin to eat meat as early as 3 weeks. By 4 months the cheetah cub is yellow and almost completely spotted, the tail has bands of black and by adulthood a white tip. The grayish mantle disappears more slowly. The last traces are still visible when the cubs are adult sized at 15 months. Sometimes the mother cheetah has to be gone for two days sometimes just to hunt for food for her cubs. In some African countries, cheetahs are considered a nuisance. In Namibia, more than 95% of the cheetahs live on private ranch land. The farmers kill the cheetahs because they believe that the cheetahs eat livestock. Cheetahs are easy to kill because they are diurnal animals. Almost 7000 were killed as vermin in Namibia in a ten year period. A few are hunted by vehicles for trophy kills. Some cheetahs are captured for zoos. A few are even kept as pets. From the early 1960s the cheetah has been regarded endangered species. Thanks to a scientist named De Wildt.

Facts:

1. The Cheetah is the world's fastest land animal.
2. The Cheetah can reach speeds up to 70 mph.
3. The Cheetah is referred to as the greyhound of cats.
4. The Cheetah is often mistaken for a leopard.
5. Male Cheetahs are slightly larger than females.
6. The Cheetah weighs 80-140 lbs.
7. Cheetah's like to live in an open area.
8. The Cheetah's favorite prey is the Gazelle.
9. The Cheetah can live to be 10-15 years old.
10. The Cheetah can reach top speed in about 3 seconds.