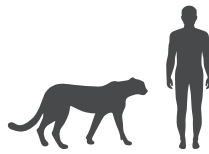


CHEETAH



DESCRIPTION

The cheetah has a slender, long-legged body with blunt semi-retractable claws, providing traction when running at top speed. The pads are quite hard, which also allows them to grip when running at high speeds. Its coat is tan with small, round blackspots and the fur is coarse and short. The black fur actually grows out of black spots on the cheetah's skin and is slightly longer and softer than the tan fur, which provides the cheetah with a slightly 3D outline when camouflaging. The cheetah has a small head with high-set eyes. Black "tear marks," which run from the corner of its eyes down the sides of the nose to its mouth, keep the sun out of its eyes and aid in hunting, reflecting the glare of the sun when hunting during the day.

DIET

Small antelope, such as impala, gazelle, steenbok, young of large antelope, warthog, hare, and game birds. They have been known to pull down ostriches and even larger prey such as wildebeest.

BEHAVIOUR

Covering 7-8 metres in a stride, with only one foot touching the ground at a time, the cheetah can reach a speed of 110 km/h in ~3 seconds. Cheetahs mostly hunt during the day, often in the late morning and early evening. They capture their prey by stalking it until the prey is within 10-30 metres before chasing it and tripping it with their dewclaw.

THREATS

Decline in prey, loss of habitat, poaching, and indiscriminate trapping and shooting threaten the survival of the cheetah throughout its range.



FAST FACTS

Scientific Name: *Acinonyx jubatus*

Conservation Status: Vulnerable
(Critically Endangered – North Africa and Asia)

Wild Population: < 7000

Body Length: 112 – 135cm

Weight: 28 – 60kg

Gestation: 95 days

Number of Young: 1 – 8

Habitat: Grasslands, savannahs, dense vegetation, and mountainous terrain. Home ranges can extend beyond 1000sq km.

Distribution: Former range across Africa and Asia reduced to fragmented populations with the highest numbers in Namibia and Botswana. A small population of approx. 50 in Iran.

