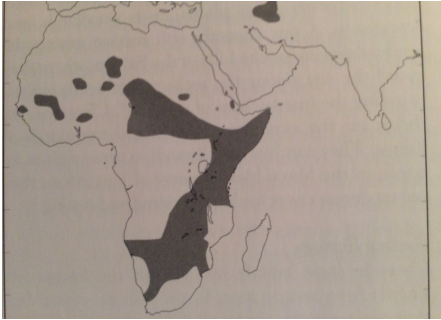


Cheetah

Acinonyx jubatus



Range: Sub-Saharan Africa
Iran
Size: :119-131 cm(40-64 in)
:113-140cm (36-48in)
Weight: 50-62kg
(110-136lbs)
: 36-57kg(72-125lbs)

Tail: 73 cm
Habitat: open grasslands to
semi-desert
Estrus cycle: 12 days
Estrus length: 2-3 days
Gestation: 90-95 days
Litter: 3-4
Weaning : 3-4 months
Sexual maturity:23-36 months
Social: 's: coalitions
:solitary
Circadian: diurnal avoids heat
of day
Food: medium sized
ungulates
IUCN:Vulnerable
Subspecies : 5
Longevity: captive 12-17 yrs



Order: Carnivora Family:Felidae

When one thinks of the cheetah one word comes to mind, speed. The cheetah is the fastest land animal on earth. Although there is some dispute as to the exact top speed cheetahs have been recorded at 64 mph. A newer study recorded a top speed of 59 mph however this speed was taken in the wild with thick vegetation.

Cheetahs possess many adaptations to help obtain these amazing speeds. The skeleton is designed to extend stride length and reduce weight. The limbs are long and the collarbone (clavicle) is attached to the shoulder blade (scapula) only by ligaments. The flexion and extension of the spine also help increase stride. The result is a stride length of 22 ft (7m) at top speed. The long tail helps with balance and the semi-retractile claws and pass with ridges help with traction.

Cheetahs are the most diurnal of the large cats and hunt during the day. Cheetahs usually stalk prey using tall grass as cover to approach prey. Where cover is not available the cheetah will approach prey at a jog. Once within range about 200 yards the cheetah will sprint after the

prey obtaining top speed in two to three strides. Capture is usually accomplished by tripping or swiping of the hind quarters to knock the prey down. Once the prey is down the cheetah kills it by strangulation with a throat bite. Gazelles or similar sized ungulates make up the major part of the cheetahs diet.

