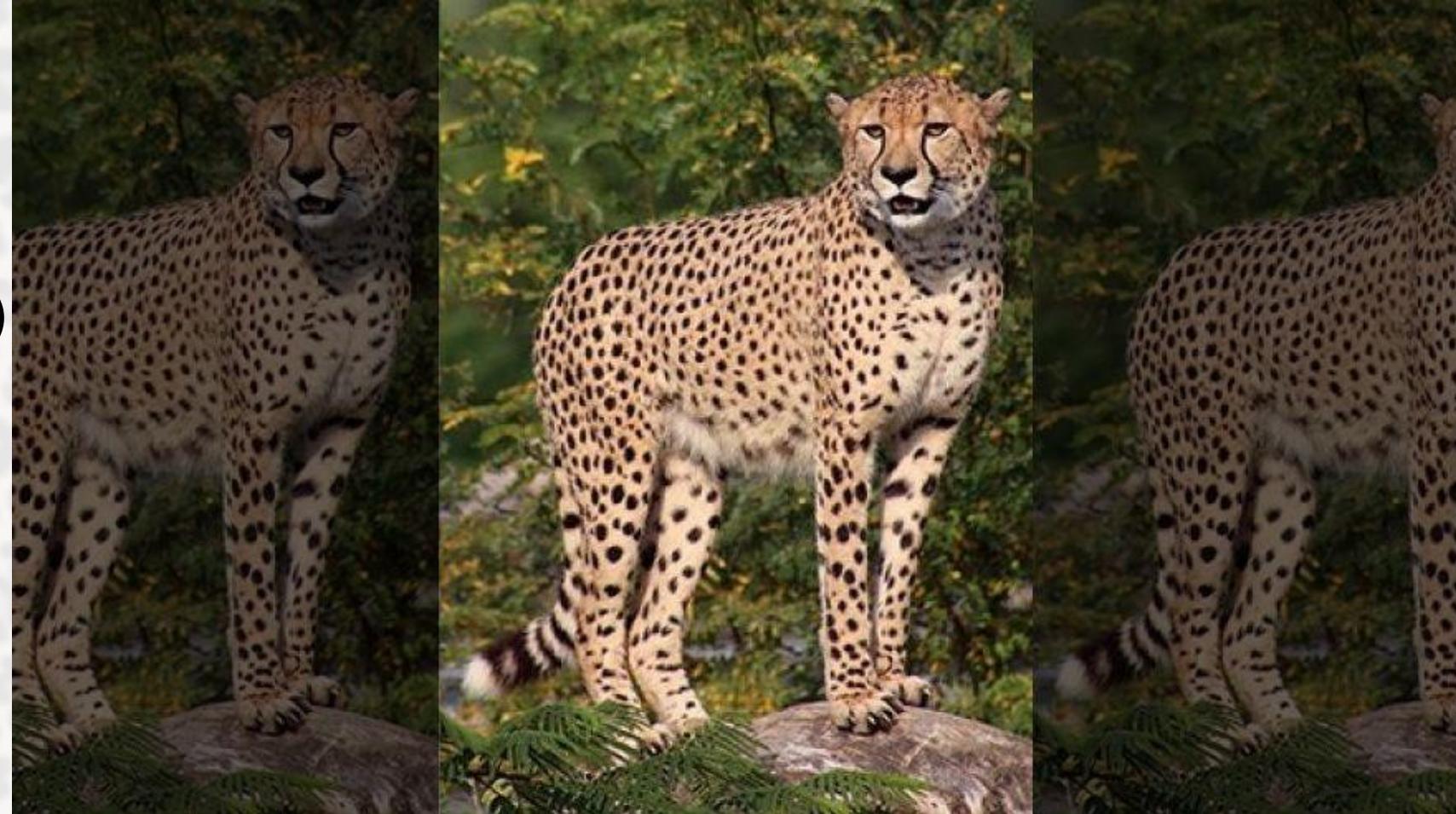


Endangered  
Species

CHEETAH

# Cheetah's Description

- Domain: Eukarya
- Kingdom ANIMALIA
- Phylum: CHORDATA
- Class: MAMMALIA
- Order: CARNIVORA (predators)
- Family: FELIDAE
- Species: "Acinonyx jubatus"
- Size: 3.5-4.5 ft;  
tail: 25.5-31.5 in
- Weight: 77-143 lbs
- Size relative to a human:

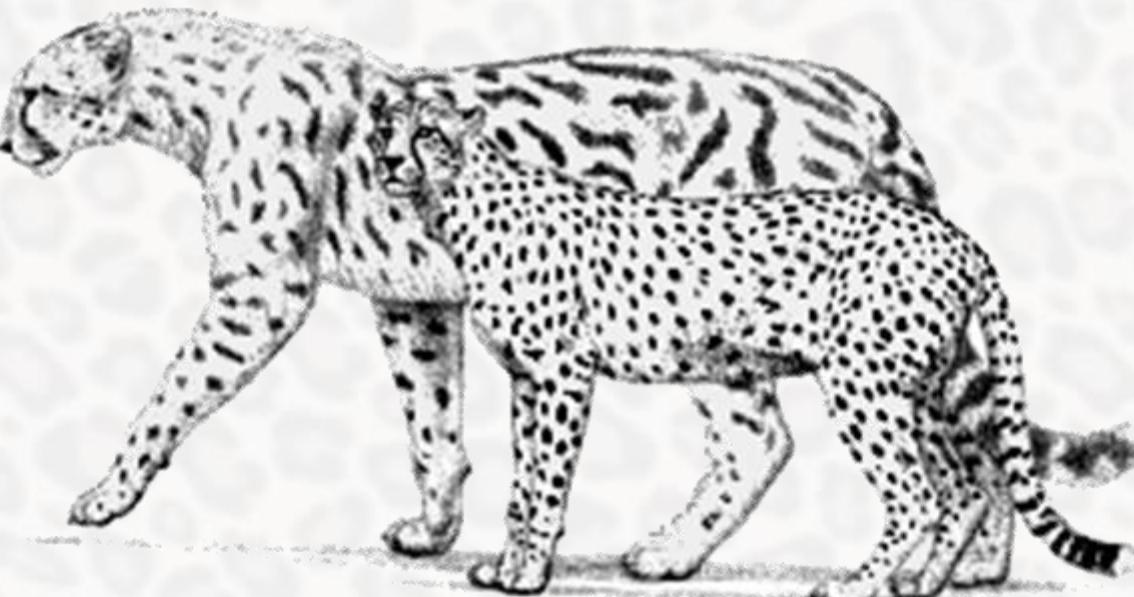


# A Bit about Evolution: From Giant cheetah to Modern cheetah

- The early species

*Acinonyx pardinensis* = “giant cheetah” = “European cheetah”

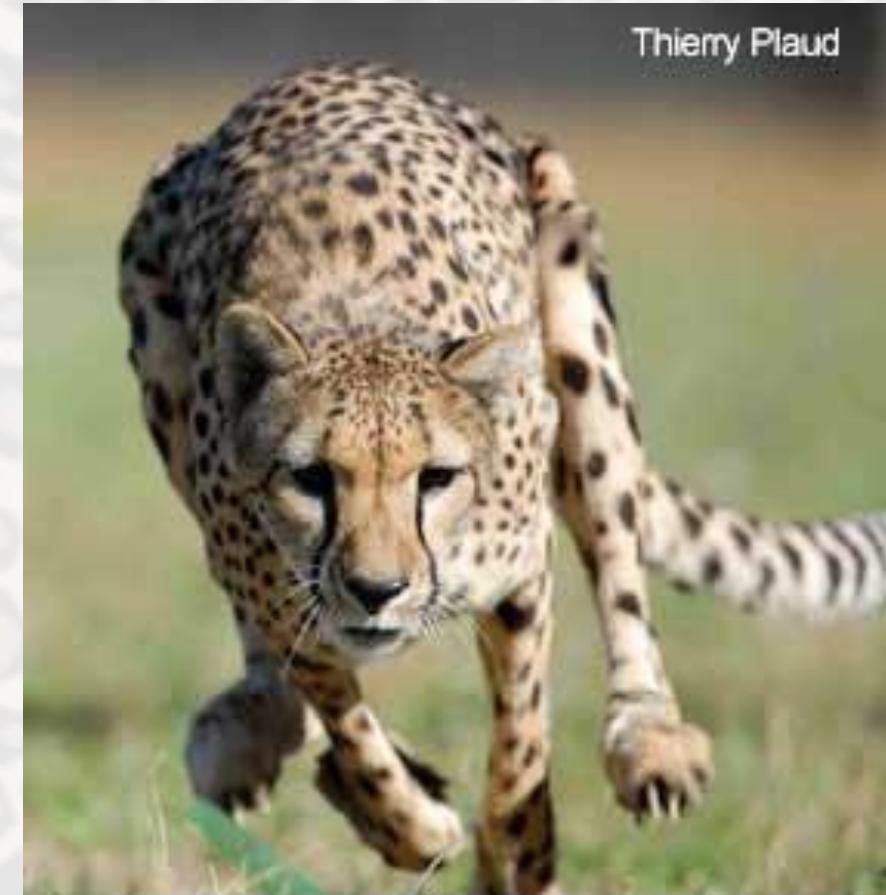
migrated from N. America to Asia, India, Europe and Africa about 200,000 years ago where it evolved into its present form.



- Larger than modern cheetah
- Now extinct

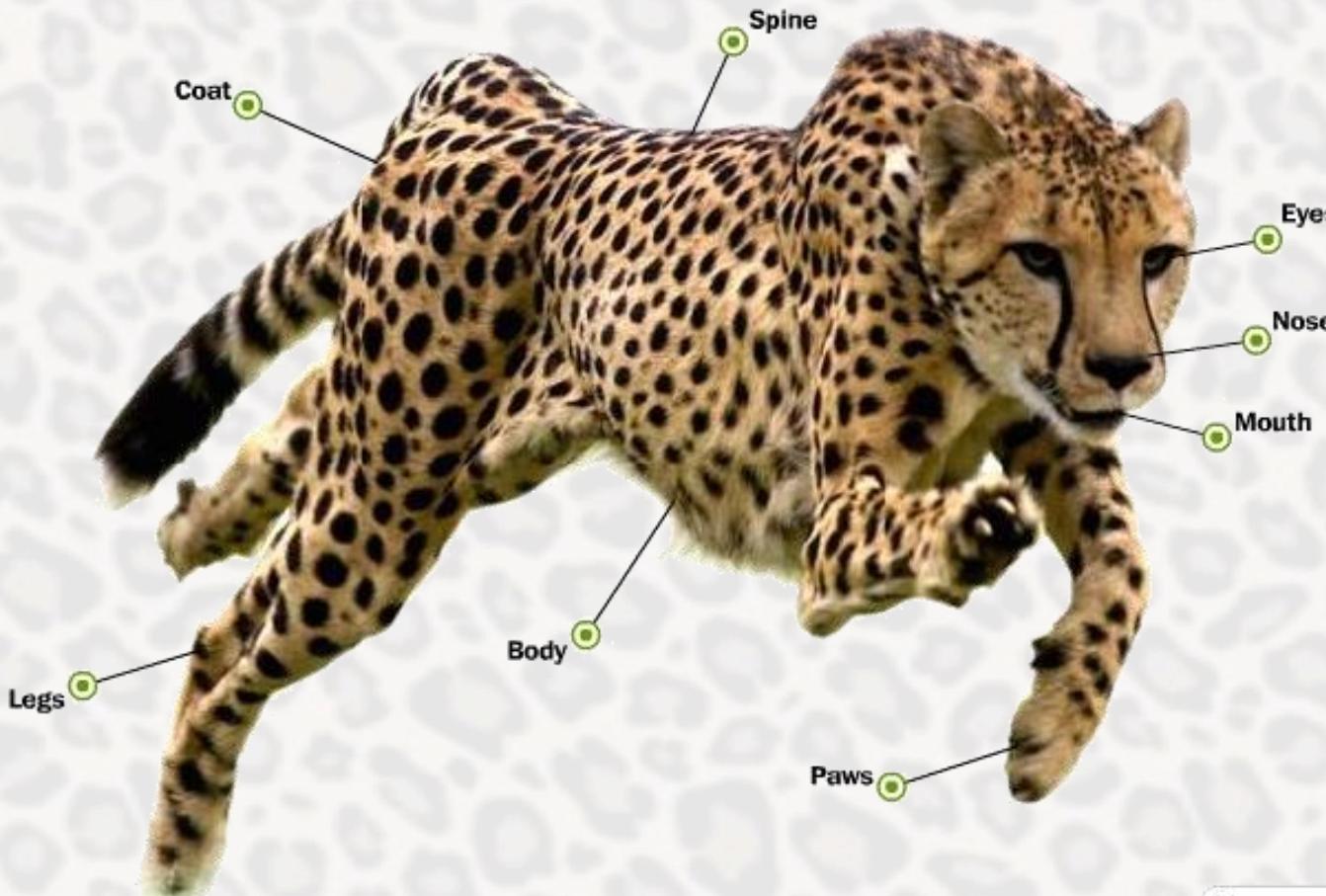
# Record Braking Runners

- Cheetahs are known as the **fastest animal on Earth**.
- They develop a **speed** from 0 to 60 mph (100 kmph) in under 3 seconds!
  - (an acceleration speed that is on par with the fastest cars. )
- When they run, their stride is so long and so quick that only one foot touches the ground at a time.



# Fastest Animal on Earth

- Their **thin, muscular bodies**, large heart, **increased lung capacity**, and large nostrils enable them to take in a great deal of O<sub>2</sub> to help them reach maximum speeds.



- Their **hind legs** have muscles designed to produce speed, whereas those on its forelegs are adapted for steering and balance.
  - As a result, all of the cheetah's power comes from its back.
- 1-min VIDEO, <https://youtu.be/r9R6Zq897iU> from the movie "DUMA"

# Cheetah's Natural Habitat



- They live in a variety of habitats, from *grasslands* and *savannas* to more mountainous terrain.
- Grasslands provide them with plenty of *prey* and the *space* to run that prey down.

# Natural Habitat – Asia: *Iran only...*

- Outside of Africa, they can be only be spotted in **Iran** where the total population is just 40-70 individuals.
- The Asiatic cheetah is also known as:
  - the **Iranian cheetah**
  - the **Indian cheetah**



# Natural Habitat - Adaptations

- Keen eyesight allows them to find prey,
- Their spots help them to blend into the grass as they stalk their prey.



- The black **tear marks** below their eyes help them to *keep the sunlight from blinding* them while they hunt.

# Natural Habitat: Food

- Cheetahs prey on warthogs, **gazelles**, **antelopes**, **rabbits**, **porcupines**, **springbok**, **steenbok**, etc. – Small and medium-sized herbivores.



- The Asiatic cheetah also prey on wild goats, sheep, and hare in the arid region of **Iran**, the Kavir Desert



- Sometimes they also hunt **domestic livestock** because of food scarcity.



# Natural Habitat – Food (cont)

- *Journal of Arid Environments*, vol. 87, Dec. 2012, pages 206–211
- Results of the scientific research:

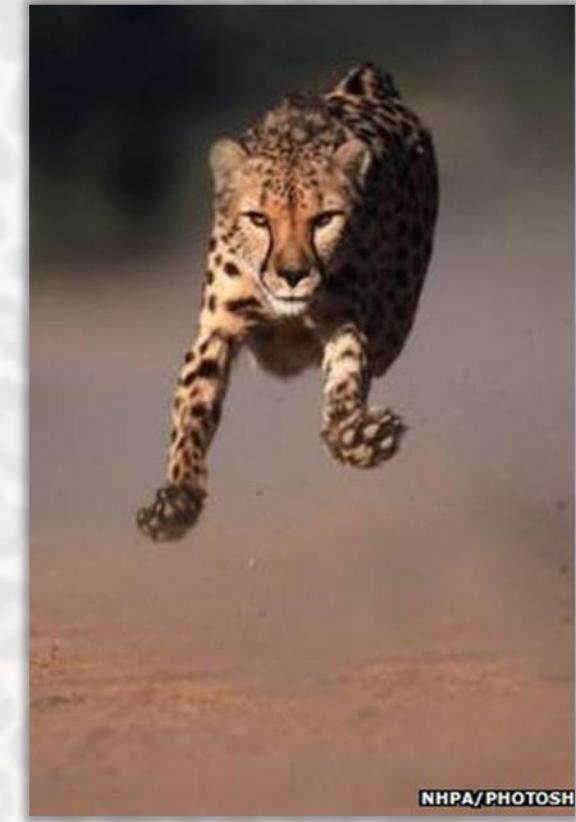
*“Due to depleted prey base, the Asiatic cheetahs catch a considerable proportion of their food demands based on **livestock**. “*

*“Livestock-depredation can lead the cheetahs to direct conflict with local people, which has a significant impact on the species survival in Iran.”*



# Natural Habitat: Risks

- While **speed** is the cheetah's greatest asset, it can also put the animal at risk.
- During a chase, the cheetah can reach speeds of up to **75 mph**. However, they cannot maintain such speeds for long.



This leaves them **exhausted** and **vulnerable** to attack.

Often, **prey animals** survive by simply outlasting their opponent.

# Natural Habitat: Risks (cont.)

- Cheetah hunt during the day
  - avoid **competition** from nocturnal predators (hunting at night) like lions and leopard.



lbrecht  
nd Safaris

*They run when threatened rather than fight,*



- Their *smaller size and less aggressive nature* makes it difficult for them to defend themselves and their families.
- They *lose much of the food they kill* to more aggressive cats or opportunistic scavengers.

Bushmen Run Up On Two Cheetahs and Steal Their Food!  
Cheetahs Back Down  
[https://youtu.be/DjDC0\\_IdA6Y?t=1m35s](https://youtu.be/DjDC0_IdA6Y?t=1m35s)

# Natural Habitat: Risks for the young

- Young cheetahs are at great risk when their solitary mother leaves them alone to hunt. They are vulnerable to predation by **lions** and **hyenas**.
- They have *no pack to rely on*, so even a minor injury can have devastating consequences.

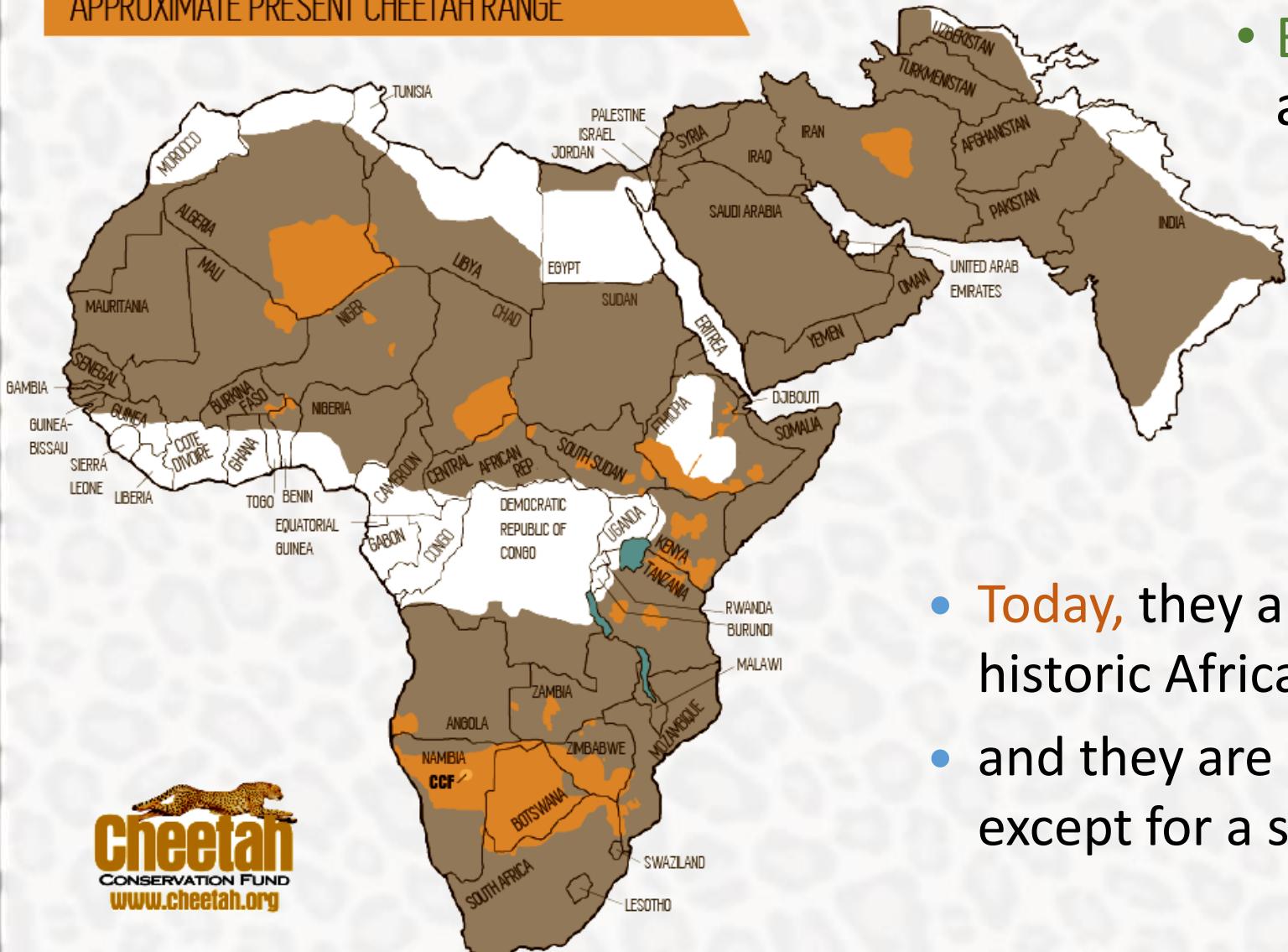


- Only 10% of cheetah cubs make it to adulthood. Survivors have an average **life expectancy of 12 years**.

# Why are cheetahs endangered?

APPROXIMATE HISTORIC CHEETAH RANGE - PRE 1900

APPROXIMATE PRESENT CHEETAH RANGE



- By 1900s, cheetahs ranged across
  - the entire **African continent** (except for the Congo Basin)
  - into **Asia**, from the Arabian Peninsula to eastern India.
- Today, they are found in **only 23%** of their historic African range
- and they are **extinct** in their Asian range, except for a small population in Iran.

# Why are cheetahs endangered? (cont)

- The **Saharan** subspecies is critically endangered, and sightings are almost unheard of.
- The ***Asiatic cheetah*** is critically endangered mainly due to the diminishing population of its prey, caused by ***poaching and food competition*** with domestic livestock.



# WHY ARE CHEETAH'S ENDANGERED

- In 2015, the est. global cheetah population numbered just **6,700 individuals**.
  - 4,190 in Southern Africa
    - (IUCN SSC 2007a, in prep.);
  - 1,960 in Eastern Africa
    - (IUCN SSC 2007b);
  - 440 in Western, Central and N.Africa
    - (IUCN SSC 2012)
  - The Asiatic cheetah:
    - *In the 1970s*, an est. of 200 to 400 in the wild,
    - *By the 2010s*, reduced to 60-80.
    - (Hunter et al. 2007, Iranian Cheetah Society 2013)
-

# Habitat Loss, Fragmentation and Degradation

- Cheetahs thrive in an open and vast environment.
- Shrinking natural habitats due to **human agriculture** and **settlements** make it difficult for them to compete with other predators who are after the same prey.

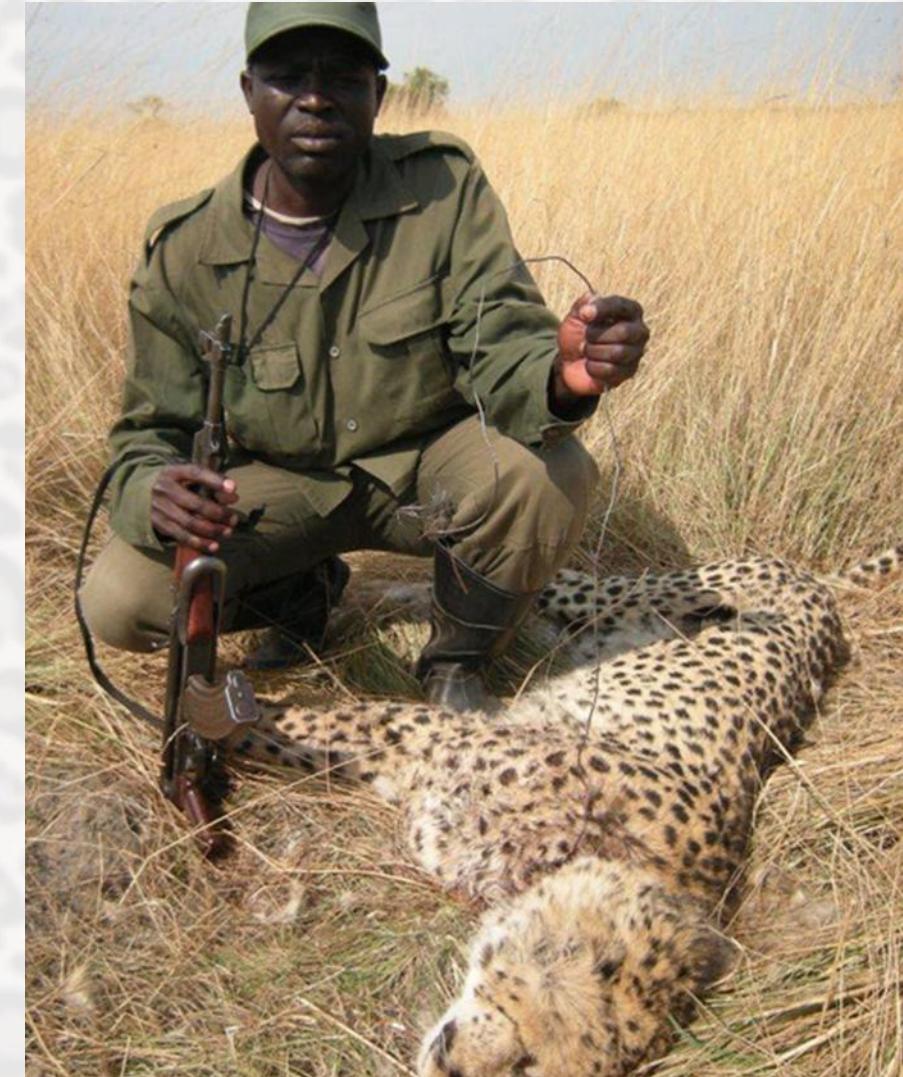


# Human-Wildlife conflict

- Some farmers target them directly in the belief that they pose a threat to livestock.
- The cheetah's beautiful **spotted skin** also makes it valuable to poachers.



*Snared cheetah recovered by a park ranger in Zambia.*



# Illegal wildlife trade

- There is a high demand for cheetahs as pets.
- They are illegally captured from the wild and then smuggled to the different parts of the world.



- Out of all the cheetah cubs smuggled, only **1 of 6 survives** the journey,
  - (therefore requiring even more cubs be captured from the wild to meet the demand.)

# Conservation Efforts

- Cheetah are listed as Vulnerable on the [IUCN Red List](#)
- Many organizations throughout E. and S. Africa have dedicated themselves to ensuring their survival.

The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™ 2016-2 [Login | FAQ | Contact](#)

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[Home](#) » Acinonyx jubatus (Cheetah, Hunting Leopard)



**Acinonyx jubatus**

<http://dx.doi.org/10.2305/IUCN.UK.2015-4.RLTS.T219A50649567.en>

NOT EVALUATED	DATA DEFICIENT	LEAST CONCERN	NEAR THREATENED	VULNERABLE	ENDANGERED	CRITICALLY ENDANGERED
NE	DD	LC	NT	VU	EN	CR

© Jean-Christophe Vié

# Conservation Efforts (cont.)

- For welfare groups like *AfriCat* in Namibia,  
**key aspects** of cheetah conservation include:

✓ **education**,  
✓ **anti-poaching patrols**,  
✓ relocation of cheetah from farmland areas  
to reserves  
✓ like Masai Mara, Kenya  
and **game parks**.



# Conservation Efforts: Breeding

- **Breeding programs** also help maintain a stable population.
- However, they are not proven effective because of the young cheetah's **high mortality rates**.



# Conservation Efforts: Tourism

- **Cheetah-related tourism** is another way to safeguard their future.
- The **best places** to spot a wild cheetah on safari nowadays include:
  - South Africa
    - Phinda Private Game Reserve
    - Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park
  - Kenya:
    - Masai Mara National Reserve
- Tanzania:
  - Serengeti National Park
- Botswana
  - Chitabe area of the Okavango Delta



# Some of Many Conservation Projects:



# Sources Used

- The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Species Survival Commission (SSC)
  - <http://www.iucnredlist.org/details/219/0>
- Cheetah Conservation Fund
  - <http://cheetah.org>
- Journal of Arid Environments. Vol 87, Dec 2012, pp 206–211
  - <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0140196312001504>
- The National Geographic Society's Big Cats Initiative
  - <http://nationalgeographic.org/projects/big-cats-initiative/>
- Hunter et al. 2007, Iranian Cheetah Society 2013
  - <http://www.wildlife.ir/en/species/asiatic-cheetah/>
- National Zoo Cheetah Conservation Station
  - <https://nationalzoo.si.edu/animals/cheetah>

# Any Questions?

