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# Cheetah

The cheetah (Acinonyx jubatus) is the world's fastest land mammal. It can run at more than 60 miles per hour (100 km/h). It has long powerful legs and a long tail, probably to aid balance. Their claws don't fully retract, giving added traction for maneuvering.

## Information[]

The female cheetah is solitary, looking after her two to four cubs on her own. She will feed and protectively guard her young until they are 15 months old.

These cats were once trained as hunting animals. During the 1600s, the Mughal emperor in India kept 1,000 cheetahs. His collection included a very rare white cheetah with bluish spots.

Cheetahs almost became extinct during the last ice age. Only a tiny number survived. Since then, in-breeding over generations has caused a serious decline in the fertility of some males. Cheetahs are further threatened by poachers.

## King Cheetah[]

* dark markings form stripes instead of spots

A cheetah with unusual and very rare coat pattern was first reported in 1927. Although once mistakenly thought to be a separate species, the king cheetah occurs in litters along with normal, spotted cheetahs.