

Dollinger P. 1982. Order Carnivora - Family Felidae - *Acinonyx jubatus*. In.

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Abstract: Fact sheet for Appendix I species of CITES submitted by the Management Authority of Switzerland. It contains information on the species morphology, distribution, trade, intraspecific variation and similar species.

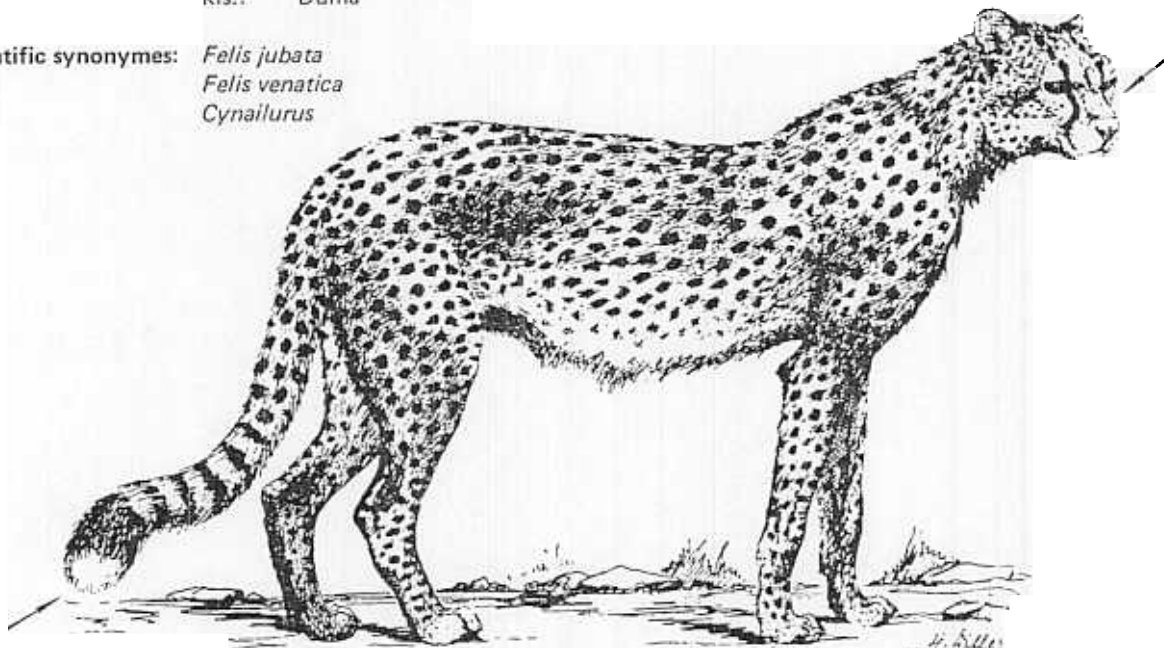


# Acinonyx jubatus

(Schreber, 1776)

<b>Common names:</b>	engl.:	Cheetah
	esp.:	Guepardo, Chita
	fr.:	Guépard
	de.:	Gepard
	ital.:	Ghepardo
	kis.:	Duma

**Scientific synonyms:** *Felis jubata*  
*Felis venatica*  
*Cynailurus*



## Characteristics:

### Adult:

**General appearance:** Ummistakable. Large slender cat with greyhound-like appearance. Body profile nearly quadratic.

**Measurements:** Head-body-length: 120–150 cm, tail: 60–80 cm, hind foot: ca. 28–30 cm, height at shoulder: 60–80 cm.

**Body-weight:** 28–65 kgs.

**Head:** Small with rounded, dome-like cranium. Characteristic black stripe running from the inner corner of each eye to the edge of the mouth. Nose pad black.

**Eyes:** Iris amber. Pupils round.

**Ears:** Short and rounded. Backside black except at the tip. No white spot.

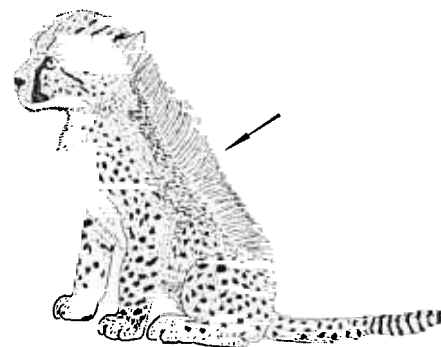
Long and thin, with small-padded feet. Claws only partly retractile. Claw sheaths absent.

**Tail** Long, spotted for its greater part, the spots uniting into bands near the rather bushy tip which is white.

Rather coarse and short. Ground colour pale buff or yellowish-tawny. Entirely covered with small solid round or oval spots, scattered singly and not grouped in "rosettes". Belly whitish. On the neck and shoulders the hair is thicker, forming a slight, wiry mane.

**Sexual dimorphism:** Scrotum evident.

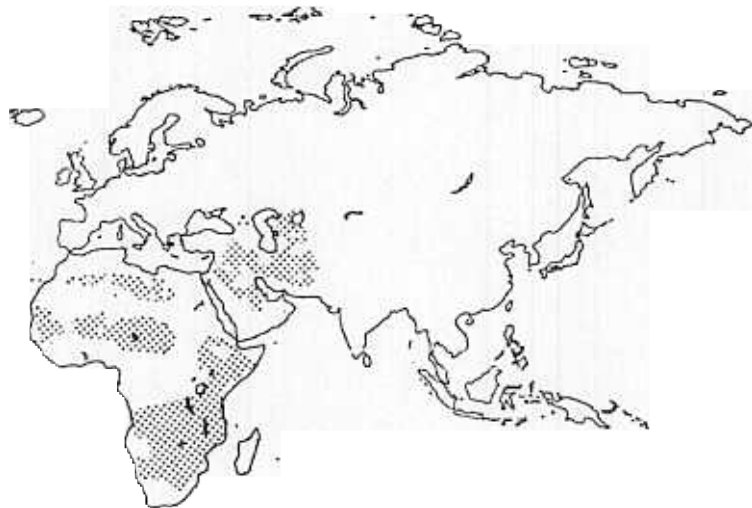
**Juvenile:** Greyish without pattern at birth, sides darker. While the pattern appears, a "mantilla" of long, silvery hair still persists at the back. Weight at 4 months: 7–9 kgs.



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**Distribution:**

**Africa:** Angola, Botswana, N Cameroon, Chad, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, S Mauritania, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, N Nigeria, NE Senegal, Somalia, N South Africa, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, N Upper Volta, S Zaire, Zambia, Zimbabwe



**Asia:** Afghanistan, Iran, Oman, Saudi Arabia, USSR: Transcaspian region

**Population:**

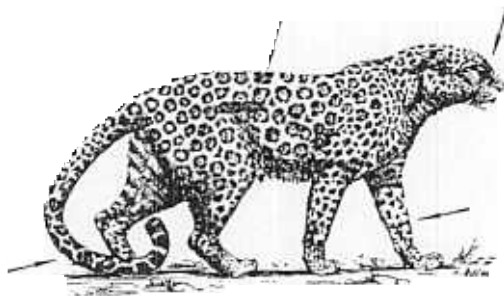
**Wild population:** Roughly 15'000 in 1974. Declining in most parts of the range.

**Captive population:** About 500 cheetahs were kept in institutions contributing to the International Zoo Yearbook in 1980.

**Trade:** Imported for zoos and as pets. Legal imports mainly from Namibia where the species is relatively safe. Exchange of captive bred specimens between zoos. Illegal trade in cheetah skins, mainly via Djibouti. 39 live specimens and 16 skins (hunting trophies) recorded by CITES Parties in 1979. Main exporting countries: Namibia, South Africa. Swiss trade in live specimens (1975–1981): 9 imports, 1 re-export, and breeding loans.

**Intraspecific variation:** About 8 subspecies have been described, but their validity is doubtful. Some authors recognize an African (*Acinonyx jubatus jubatus*) and an Asiatic (*Acinonyx jubatus venaticus*) subspecies only. Occasionally individuals are found with spots confluent into stripes (so called "royal cheetahs").

**Similar species:** The leopard (*Panthera pardus*, see sheet A-112.007.004.003) is also spotted and shares its area with the cheetah. However, differences in anatomy and pattern are obvious.



**Bibliography:** Dorst, J. and Dandelot, P. (1970) A field Guide to the Larger Mammals of Africa. London. Heptner, V.G. and Sludskij, A.A. (1980) Die Säugetiere der Sowjetunion. Band III: Raubtiere (Feloidea). Jena. Prater, S.H. (1971) The Book of Indian Mammals, Bombay. Myers, N. (1975) The Cheetah *Acinonyx jubatus* in Africa. IUCN Monograph No. 4. Morges.