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Abstract: Eaton felt it important to attempt to acquire knowledge that might prove helpful as an aid to preserving the cheetah, to study and to acquire insights into the reasons for the cheetah's decline. The effects of man as a contributor to mortality far beyond natural losses are manifested in several ways. Trapping, poisoning, hunting, poaching and agriculture, including defense of stock, habitation and loss of prey species, are all important. The demand for live cheetahs for hunting and as pets is also an important source of losses. Recommendations for preserving cheetahs are given.

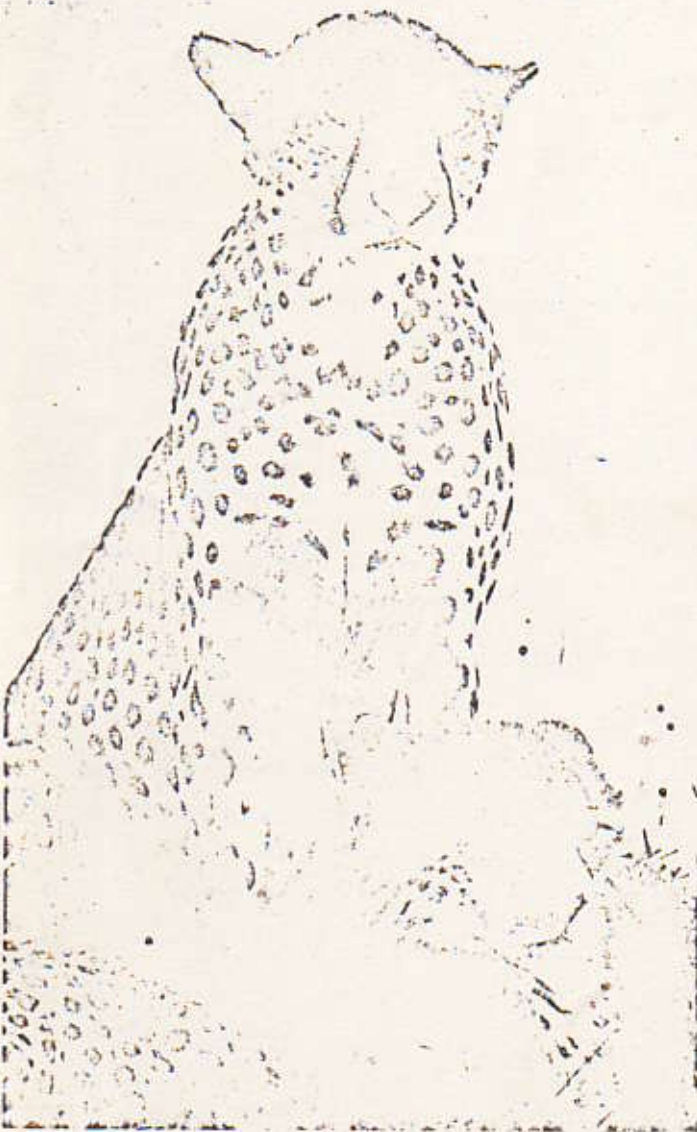
The CHEETAH'S SURVIVAL ENDANGERED By MAN

BY RANDALL L. EATON

Laboratory of Ethology, Department of Psychology
Purdue University, Lafayette, Indiana

Photographs by: H. Patel of Nairobi

*The Author studied cheetah ecology
and behavior in East Africa.*



Cheetahs Declining

It was the East Africa Wild Life Society's Cheetah Survey in 1965 that alerted me to the cheetah's condition. The report estimated that only 2,000 cheetahs still remained in all of East Africa, the species' last stronghold, and that numbers appeared to be sharply declining. Upon reviewing the known information on cheetahs I became aware that until then no real study of life-history, ecology or behavior had been made. I felt it important to attempt to acquire knowledge that might prove helpful as an aid to preserving the species. A research grant from the University of East Africa enabled me to study the cheetah and to acquire insights into the reasons for the cheetah's decline.

Mortality from Man

The effects of man as a contributor to mortality far beyond natural losses are manifested in several ways. Trapping, poisoning, hunting, poaching and agriculture, including defense of stock, habitation and loss of prey species, are all important. The demand for live cheetahs for hunting and as pets is also an important source of losses.

Loss of Cheetahs as Sporting Animals

There is a long history of the use of cheetahs as hunting animals by man. The early Egyptians used cheetahs for coursing game and they took each new generation from the wild since cheetahs would not breed in captivity. Thousands of cheetahs were used by the Mongol rulers on their deer hunting expeditions according to Marco Polo. The use of hunting cheetahs became a pastime that proved tasteful to European rulers and those of Asia Minor as well. In the courts of the Turkish Sultan to the hunting lodges of the German emperor at Vienna, cheetahs were tamed for hunting everywhere after the 16th Century. The sport of cheetahs hunting in India was developed similarly to falconry and reached such proportions that cheetahs became extinct there in this century. The demand for cheetahs in Asia still exists and wild animals are taken for two reasons: (1) cheetahs do not readily breed in captivity and (2) they are easily tamed when trapped in the wild and only wild adults are able to kill properly.

The use by man of wild-caught adult cheetahs is damaging to populations in several ways. For every cheetah trapped, tamed and trained successfully, several die during trapping, transportation or in captivity. Also there are natural losses to cheetah cubs, mostly from other predators, so that each adult is, in a sense, more valuable

Endangered Species

than a cub in reproductively maintaining local populations.

Furthermore, it is true that cheetahs, unlike lions or wolves, lack "babysitters", that is the cheetah female raises her young by herself and not in a group of adults which help care for the cubs. If a female lion is killed or removed, her cubs can still survive but a cheetah's cubs will die. A female cheetah in Nairobi National Park suddenly disappeared and her cubs, half-grown and not able to kill on their own, were doomed.

More recently a demand has been put on younger cheetahs for pets. One has but to visit the Miami area to either see or hear of so-and-so's cheetah. While I was recently in Palm Beach, I talked with a local veterinarian who told me of the frequent purchases of cheetahs there. He also said that many of them die shortly after arriving in this country. His more wealthy clientele simply have them replaced. Cheetahs are available in this country from many animal dealers for \$1,000. to \$2,000.

Fortunately one of the veterinarian's clients, who had lost two cubs, became interested in supporting research to enable the breeding of cheetahs in captivity, which would help remove the demand from zoos and private citizens for live-trapping wild cheetahs. It was not until 1967 in Rome that a cheetah gave birth to cubs in captivity that did not have to be hand raised.

The young cheetahs imported into the United States must be coming from the wild, and East Africa is the only remaining area of the cheetah's once great range in which a continued supply is available to animal dealers. Poachers in Kenya told me that cheetahs are worth great sums of money alive in Ethiopia; which, according to them, is the center for exporting black market cheetahs to other countries.

Cheetah as a Game Animal

Cheetahs were hunted in India as game animals. In Africa they have been shot for sport; for example, Roosevelt related that Kermit killed seven cheetahs in one day, a record. Several safari hunting firms included cheetahs in their bag, and they were taken by most game hunters in South Africa in the latter part of the 19th Century.

The Cheetah Survey reported only 16 cheetahs shot in East Africa. However, this figure is surely extremely low. It does not, for instance, include those shot by farmers. I was appalled on several occasions when speaking with big game hunters in Africa and America who shot cheetahs illegally while on safari.

Since cheetahs are outlawed as game in most African countries, and they are not considered today by most hunters as desirable trophies, then it is doubtful that sport hunting remains an important mortality factor.

Cheetahs Destroyed for Damage to Livestock

In many areas of East Africa the cheetah is considered vermin for its supposed great threat for decimating sheep, goats and small calves. I observed several cheetahs that regularly hunted on Somali sheep lands and not the slightest interest was shown in their stock. The herdsmen told me that they never had trouble with "duma" (Swahili for cheetah) and they saw cheetahs daily on their ground. Although an occasional cheetah may damage livestock, as sometimes occurs with an unusual wolf or coyote, it is certainly not a common occurrence. Kenya's laws allow that if a cheetah is killed for its damage to livestock than it can be sold for its fur.

A visitor to Nairobi will notice that the tourists shops are full of cheetah furs—whole, or on wrist-watch bands, hat-bands, handbags, etc. All these furs come from cheetahs that supposedly attacked domestic animals. There is no measure taken to establish whether or not such losses did occur, but the amount appears very exaggerated.

As a means of cutting down on the illegal take of animals sold for fur, there are restrictions on sending furs out of Kenya. They do not appear to be rigidly enforced. For example, a friend of mine had no trouble in sending furs from Nairobi to the United States. Furs from East Africa are a common sight in American shops that handle African curios and art.

Poaching

The Cheetah Survey recorded a mere eight cheetahs known to be poached in East Africa. To be sure poaching is taking a far greater toll. It is illegal anywhere in East Africa to kill cheetahs for fur, but the demand for women's garments, especially in this country, has led to the illegal killing of cheetahs for the black market fur industry.

Poachers told me that cheetah furs brought them fifty American dollars in Kenya, and that they killed from one to six animals each time they went into northern Kenya after them. The more damaging poachers are European or Asian since they use firearms and vehicles to run down and kill cheetahs. Because the cheetah inhabits the more open areas, poaching by natives using traps, snares or primitive weapons, is probably not substantial.



Agriculture

The growth of human populations leads to the increase in the amount of soil put into farming or grazing. One district in central Kenya had the highest population growth rate in the world in 1966. It is, without a doubt, human numbers that most seriously endanger all resources, including wildlife.

With the advent of more intensive agriculture in East Africa there is not only the prevention of normal animal migrations and movements, necessary for maintaining habitat conditions, but, for the predators, there is a loss of prey. The cheetah in India may have survived had it not been for the loss of grazing resources, due to farming, of the black buck. It is the loss of

animals paired with unnatural losses such as poaching for furs that endangers the cheetah.

In South Africa, the decrease of prey with the advent of European development and farming techniques probably contributed more to the decline of predatory species than did actual killing of the predators themselves. Since cheetahs are highly specialized for certain types of prey species in East Africa, the decrease in these prey is leading to a decline in cheetahs.

The cheetah's status is comparable to that of the wolf in North America which was not only shot, poisoned and trapped, but whose prey populations were also decimated.

Game Ranching: A Way of Preserving Wildlife

Equatorial Africa has the richest mammalian fauna in the world. Bourliere, the French mammalogist, noted that "Nowhere else in the world is there to be found so many species of wild ungulates, many of which have extremely large populations." Because of this great array of both individuals and species of wildlife, this area has great aesthetic value. In order to preserve the wildlife of Africa in the face of rapid population growth many biologists have advocated the use of surpluses of natural animal populations for food rather than attempting to replace them with domestic livestock. The wise management of the wild animal resources can only be carried out effectively if the ecology of these species is thoroughly understood. Ecologists are studying these natural communities, especially the ungulate herbivores since they make up the great potential for human food.

The Question of Predators in Game Ranching

The diversity of opinion on the role of predators in controlling prey populations is not new. Paul Errington, for example, argued from years of work on muskrat ecology that losses due to predation were incidental and that habitat conditions limit herbivores. Laboratory experimentation and theoretical speculation, on the other hand, have suggested that herbivores are predator limited, not food limited. For East Africa this question is of vital importance for the continued survival of the large predators in any kind of management scheme. The ungulates, for their economic value as food potential, may remain. However, the use of wild protein sources may require strong control measures for predators. Man will be cropping the wild herds and thereby replacing the natural role of the predators in the community. There may be just a few areas in a very short time where the

cheetah and other exciting predators can act out their oldest of dramas in a natural setting.

National Parks: The Need for Closed Ecosystems

Like North America, South Africa's once great wildlife legacy now exists only in a few National Parks and Preserves. The same condition appears ominous for East Africa; however, with unstable political environments, the continuation and wise management of wildlife even in National Parks is uncertain. Those parks, such as Serengeti in Tanzania and Nairobi National Park in Kenya, that require small area extensions to make them closed ecosystems—areas that can support wildlife the year round—are fighting losing battles.

The encouraging side of things to the long-term survival of *all* wildlife is the increasing tourism by Europeans and Americans in East Africa. For example, the fastest growing income in Kenya is in the Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife. Although dollar signs cannot be placed on aesthetic values, the economic importance of wildlife in East Africa, hopefully, will ensure its survival.

The only hope for Western Man and the world to hold on to an aesthetically precious part of his environment is to stress to the developing nations of East Africa the value of *all* of their wildlife.

Recommendations for Preserving the Cheetah

Several things need to be done immediately if we are to stop the decline in cheetahs and to ensure their continued survival:

1. Prevent further importation into the United States of wild-born cheetahs as pets, and encourage the practice of successful breeding of the many presently captive cheetahs as a source for zoos and private individuals.
2. Prevent the further importation and sale of cheetah hides, skins or furs into the United States in order to decrease the level of poaching and black market fur business.
3. Discourage illegal killing and sale of cheetah fur under the guise of stock damage by encouraging the African nations to employ government trappers on a complaint basis for removing and relocating any cheetahs that are really causing damage.
4. Encourage East African governments to make the necessary additions to those National Parks that are not closed ecosystems so as to prevent prey and their predators from leaving the parks which makes them more susceptible to poaching.