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Abstract: The article from the international Zoo Yearbook describes birth and rearing of a litter of cheetahs at Krefield Zoo. The cubs had to be removed by the mother who killed two of her four cubs after birth. The babies were hand-reared and given to a foster-mother, a domestic cat with a six-day-old family. The two cheetahs are at time of writing with an age of about 3 months in the best of health.

BIRTH AND REARING
OF CHEETAHS
AT KREFELD ZOO

by Walter Encke

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THE pair of Cheetahs (*Acinonyx jubatus*) at Krefeld Zoo, Germany, came from South-West Africa. The female was imported in July 1958 and the male arrived in July 1959. Both animals were about three or four years old on arrival. They live in a den 1.50 m. \times 1.50 m. which gives them shelter from the weather; their enclosure measures 15 m. \times 6 m. The ground is covered in sand and only a very small portion is roofed over. Inside the den there is an ultra-violet lamp which burns day and night. The Cheetahs are never locked into their den but allowed to come and go between it and the enclosure as they please. They appear to be fully acclimatized. In the middle of winter the temperature goes down to 0°C. The Cheetahs' diet consists of horse-meat and, occasionally, freshly killed rabbits. In December 1959, the Cheetahs were started on a course of vitamin treatment. Both animals were given 20 cb. of a vitamin preparation on consecutive days. Included in 1 c.c. of the preparation are the following - 1 million I.E. Vitamin A, 100,000 I.E. Vitamin D₃ and 40 milligrams Vitamin E.

The birth of the young Cheetahs occurred on the 24th April 1960. The birth of the first cub took place at 9 a.m. but it was unfortunately not observed and by the time we got to it, it had been eaten, except for the legs and tail. The parents were immediately separated. The second cub arrived at 6 p.m. Before the mother could bite through the umbilical cord, the baby was removed. Later another was born.

The fourth and last cub was born at 8 p.m., and this one was left with the mother. She nursed and cared for it for two days, but on the third morning she mauled it and broke and chewed one of its legs; later it died of shock. The second and third babies were, however, hand-reared and on the same evening as they were born, they were given to a foster-mother, a domestic cat with a six-day-old family. She took to the two Cheetah cubs at once and the rearing of the cubs then proceeded without much trouble or worry. The cat suckled the cubs for five weeks when she contracted inflammation of the mammary glands so that we were forced to wean the young cubs.

The cubs were weaned gradually on a mixture of Nestlé's milk and ox blood with Vitakalk (calcium carbonate) added. Later rolled oats were included with their diet and very soon afterwards the cubs were eating flesh. They were started on young rabbits but after the eleventh week they were eating ox hearts and horsemeat without any difficulty.

At three days old the cubs each weighed 370 gm. and they gained steadily without any fluctuation at the rate of about 40-50 gm. a day. At $5\frac{1}{2}$ months they each weighed $8\frac{1}{2}$ kg. Their eyes opened after eight days and the first pupil-reflex became obvious on the twentieth day.

A characteristic feature of young Cheetahs is the silver-grey mane which stretches the whole length of the back. This disappears, however, after the tenth week, leaving only a short 'mane' at the nape of the neck. Until they were about ten weeks old the Cheetahs could retract their claws fully in the same way that other cats do. The typical cheetah-type attack (knocking the prey down with the paw) was first noticed at about the eleventh or twelfth week.

During their tenth week the Cheetahs were given injections against feline distemper. Some weeks later they were given two more of these injections and, in addition, one against canine distemper. To guard against rickets, phosphorous salt and Vitamin D₃ were included in their diet. They were also injected at intervals with Tonophosphat.

At the time of writing the Cheetahs are in the best of health.



Plate XXXI

Bruno Krauth

Cheetah cubs (*Acinonyx jubatus*) born at Krefeld Zoo in April 1960. As far as is known, these are the first cheetahs ever to have been bred in captivity. The silvery-grey mane which stretches the whole length of the back disappears after the tenth week, leaving only a short mane at the nape of the neck. (See pp. 85-86.)

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