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Abstract: The cheetah *Acinonyx jubatus venaticus* is probably extinct in Arabia. The cheetah is briefly described. A distribution map present the locations of the last observations collected on the species in Arabia. It is specified that the cheetah is undoubtedly sensitive to human pressure because of its size and open area occupation.

Le guépard *Acinonyx jubatus venaticus* est probablement éteint en Arabie. Le guépard est brièvement décrit. Une carte de répartition présente les localisations des dernières observations répertoriées de l'espèce en Arabie. Il est précisé que le guépard est sans aucun doute sensible à la pression humaine de part sa taille et l'occupation du milieu ouvert.

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**PETER JACKSON**  
1131 Bougy, Switzerland  
Tel. (021) 766012

# The Carnivora of Arabia

J. Gasperetti, D. L. Harrison, W. Büttiker

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In this work: 20 – IV.1982 nr Wadi Hiswa 18°15'N 42°28'E, observation of a live leopard, AS (in litt.), JG; Note: skins with teeth, but no skulls in KSU-CE, Abha, and fine mounted specimen in lobby of Al Buhaira Hotel in Abha “killed in this area”, but no localities and dates are known, JPG; HRH Sultan ibn Khalid ibn Faisal noted a dead specimen in the Gizan sukh summer of 1980 “probably from the area”, pers. comm., WB; i – IX.–X.1976 Tawi Mahbayl 23°20'30"N 57°41'E, skull and part skin HZM 5.8749, DHI; j – XI.–XII.1977 Jebel Samhan 17°10'N 54°56'E, examined, DLH 10.VI.1978, TH; k – III.1979 Wadi Maqlayli 25°56'30"N 56°16'30"E, in ONM, RHT; l – VI.1980 nr Alama 25°57'N 56°27'E, skull large ♂, ONM, SG; m – 20.IX.1980 nr Lima 25°57'N 56°27'E, skull of ♀, ONM, SG.

#### Genus *Acinonyx* Brookes, 1828

Large cats with long, thin limbs, with specialized hunting habit of pursuit and capture based on its tremendous speed. Solid black spots, tail ringed with black distally with white tip. Face marked with long black stripes from the eyes to the mouth.

Dental formula:  $i \frac{3}{1} c \frac{1}{1} pm \frac{3}{1} m \frac{1}{1} = 80$ .

#### *Acinonyx jubatus* (Schreber, 1776). Cheetah

1776 *Felis jubata* Schreber: Säugeth. 3: 1105 (1776) text, 392, 586 (1777), Cape of Good Hope.

#### *Acinonyx jubatus venaticus* (Griffith, 1821)

1821 *Felis venatica* Griffith: Vert. Anim. Carnivora: 93, India.

1937 *Acinonyx jubatus venaticus* Griffith; Pocock, Fauna Brit. India. Mamm. 1: 325.

A long slender cat with thin long legs (TL 195 cm, T 69 cm) coat coarse and short, ground colour pale buff entirely covered with black spots except on the white belly. The tail is also spotted basally, the distal half is banded with a bushy white tip. The hairs on the neck and shoulders are more dense forming a slight wiry mane. In juveniles the mane is more pronounced. Rounded small head with black nose pad and black stripe from inner eye to corner of mouth. Eyes with amber iris and round pupil, ears short and rounded black posteriorly.

The cheetah is usually diurnal, in hotter weather it is crepuscular. It awaits its prey, usually birds, hares or gazelle, which it will capture with a tremendous burst of speed. Their food requirement is about 3 kg daily.

An animal of the open country it was once widespread in the semi-deserts and steppes over most of Africa and the Middle East to southern Russian Turkmenia, to central India and northern Deccan. In Arabia, the Cheetah probably was widespread, having been more widely distributed than is indicated in the records. It was, and is, no doubt more susceptible to human pressure as it is such a large animal and its habitat is the open country. It is hoped that in some corner of the vast deserts in Arabia the cheetah is still extant.

CORKILL (1929 p. 701) noted that a cheetah had given birth to two cubs in an old well. These were captured in VII.1928, and one of them lived in the London Zoo where it died 5.VI.1932.

Records and map designations (fig. 20, table 15):

Previously reported: a) CORKILL, 1929 p. 700, POCOCK, 1946 p. 312 and HARRISON, 1968 p. 311; 1. CARRUTHERS, 1909 p. 1135; 2. CARRUTHERS, 1935 p. 60; 3. MORRISON-SCOTT, 1951 p. 2; 4. DICKSON, 1971 p. 187; 5. HARRISON, 1968 p. 310; 6. HARRISON, 1972 p. 628; 7. RASWAN, 1935 p. 68 (see p. 171); b) XI.–XII.1977 nr Jibjat 17°15'N 54°27'E, skin in TH Coll. (TL dry skin 1626), HARRISON, 1983 p. 334.

In this work: None.

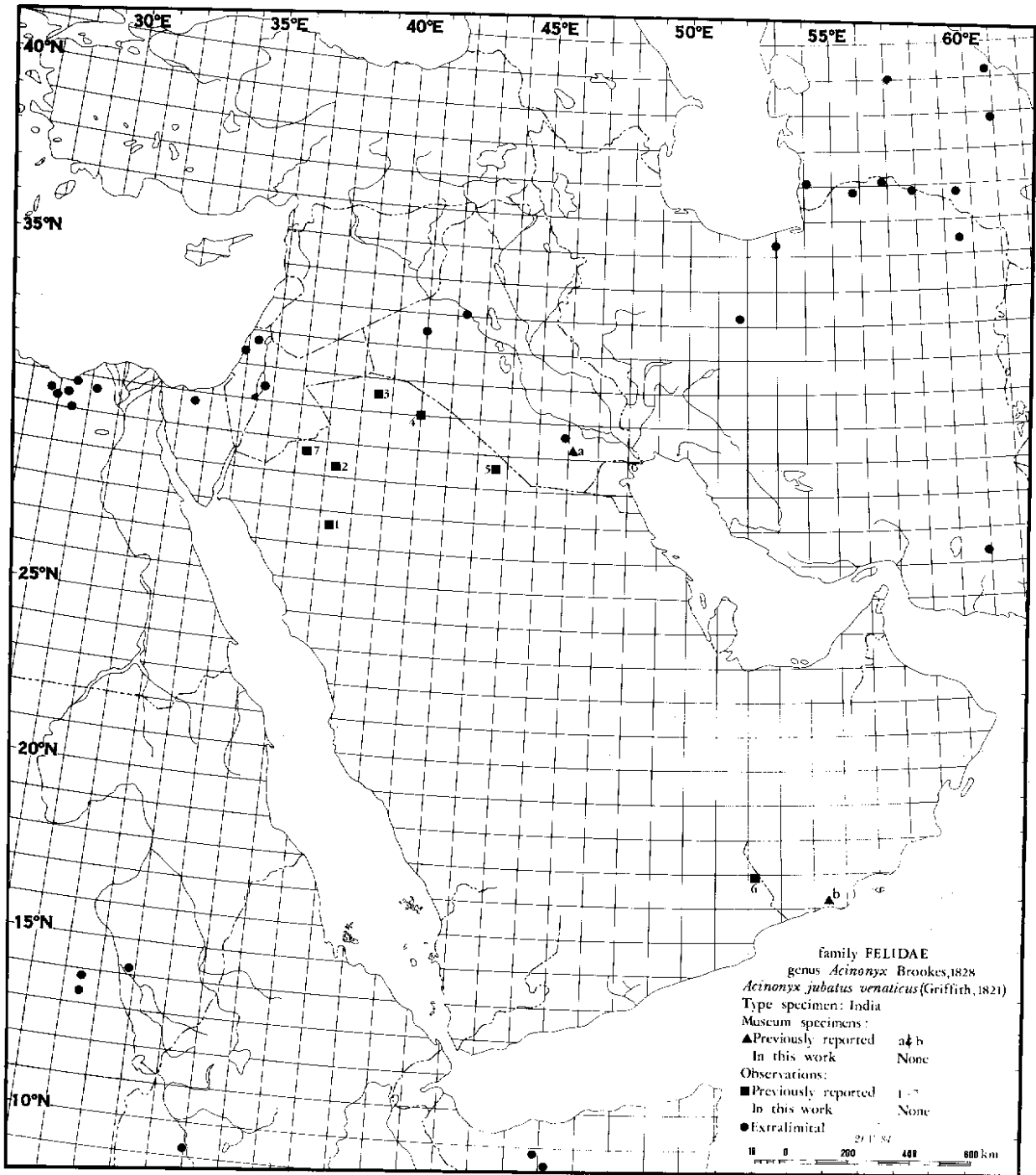


Fig. 20: Distribution map of cheetah.