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Abstract: Referring to the many names that are given to the cheetah. Comparisons about body features with other cats like the leopard and serval. Distribution in Asia and Africa is mentioned and their favorite haunts.

THE GAME ANIMALS

OF

INDIA, BURMA, MALAYA,
AND TIBET.

BY

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"THE JUNGLE," 167 PICCADILLY

THE HUNTING-LEOPARD

(*Acinonyx venaticus*)

NATIVE NAMES.—*Chita* AND *Laggar*, HINDUSTANI ;
Yuz AND *Yuz-palang*, PERSIAN ; *Chitra* OF THE
GONDS ; *Chita-puli*, TELUGU ; *Chircha* AND *Sivungi*,
CANARESE.

(PLATE VIII, fig. 12)

Neither of the two popular names in common use for this interesting animal is altogether satisfactory. The Hindustani *Chita*, which, like its Gond equivalent *Chitra*, means spotted, is, as mentioned above, applied in many parts of India to the leopard ; and with regard to the name "hunting-leopard," there is the great objection that the creature is not a leopard, either in structure or in coloration, being in fact very unlike the typical cats of the family *Felidae* ; it is now classified as representing a separate sub-family distinct from the cats. To some of the older writers the animal was known as the guepard, and, whatever may be its origin, this name is unobjectionable ; but since it has become obsolete, it would be hopeless to attempt its revival. Of the other two names, hunting-leopard seems less liable to lead to confusion.¹

From all the species—both cats and lynxes—included in the genera *Felis*, *Caracal*, and *Lynx*, the hunting-leopard is distinguished by the circumstance that it is unable to withdraw its claws entirely within the margins of their protecting sheaths, so that the points remain exposed. The body is more slender, and the limbs are proportionately longer and slighter, than in any of the species of *Felis* ; the animal being obviously cut out for racing much more decidedly than are any of the latter. There are likewise certain distinctive features

¹ See above under the heading of Leopard.

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connected with the skull and the upper flesh-teeth, which may be passed over without special mention.

In place of being called the "hunting-leopard," the animal might have been better designated the "hunting-serval," since the black markings on its fur take the form of solid spots like those of the African serval, instead of the rosettes distinctive of the leopard. In size and form the species may be compared to a long-legged, slender-bodied leopard, with short and rounded ears, a tail somewhat exceeding half the length of the head and body, the hair of the neck rather elongated, so as to form an incipient mane, that on the under surface of the body rather longer and shaggier than elsewhere, and the fur as a whole somewhat coarse. On the upper-parts of the head and body, as well as the outer surface of the limbs, the ground-colour varies from tawny to bright ruddy fawn, while on the under-parts it is paler, and devoid of the round black spots with which it is elsewhere ornamented; the chin and throat, which are buffish white, being also unspotted.

Towards the extremity of the tail the spots tend to coalesce so as to form incomplete rings. The outer surface of the ears is black, except at the base and on the margins, where it is tawny. From the outer angle of each eye a black streak runs to the lip, this being continued, either as a continuous line or a row of spots, from the inner angle of the eye to a point just below the ear. The cubs have a coat of long and uniformly grey hair, but on turning this back more or less distinct traces of spots are noticeable on the shorter under-fur.

The geographical distribution of the hunting-leopard is rather similar to that of the lion. Unknown in Ceylon and on the Malabar coast, the species ranges from the confines of Bengal through Central India and Rajputana to the Punjab, whence it extends through Baluchistan and probably parts of Afghanistan to

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Persia, Russian Turkestan, Transcaspia, and so on through Syria and Palestine to Africa, where it ranges as far south as the Cape. According to Dr. Satunin, it is not found in the Caucasus. It is reported by Mr. A. A. Dunbar Brander (*Wild Animals in Central India*, p. 273, 1923) to be now very rare in the Central Provinces.

Although much has been written with regard to the training and employment of the hunting-leopard for the purpose of capturing blackbuck and other animals by the natives of India, little has been said about the creature in its wild state; and since this has been repeated over and over again in works of natural history, a short notice will be sufficient in this place. The favourite haunts of the Indian hunting-leopard are low, isolated, rocky hills, whence it can obtain an unrestricted view of the surrounding plains, and mature its plans for stalking the blackbuck, gazelles, deer, and other animals which form its prey. These felines hunt in couples, and creep up to within a certain distance of their intended victims, when they make a sudden rush at a terrific pace, which, whether successful or otherwise, is the final effort, the pursuit being abandoned if the quarry is not overtaken during the first spurt. Occasionally, instead of a single pair, it is said that a whole family will join in the stalk and subsequent rush. After a successful foray the hunting-leopard indulges in such a gorge that it generally requires two or three days' repose and quiet before again taking the field. Before each chase these animals repair to some favourite tree, upon the bark of which they sharpen and clean their claws. The cubs are carefully trained by their parents in stalking and taking their prey; and so essential is this parental instruction that, according to native reports, cubs that have not been thus taught are of no use for hunting. Consequently the trained individuals kept by the chiefs for the latter purpose are captured when full-grown. The method of hunting with these tame animals has been so often

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described, that there would be nothing gained by its repetition.

Hunting-leopards never attack man, and very seldom carry off or molest domesticated animals. Considering that on ordinary ground the best English greyhounds have not a chance with blackbuck, the speed of the hunting-leopard during its final rush must be tremendous. This speed can, however, only be maintained for a very short distance, and a well-mounted horseman can come up with a hunting-leopard after a comparatively short run, when it generally permits itself to be speared without vigorous resistance, although at times requiring to be driven out from the covert in which it has taken refuge. If the statement by Jardine that these animals were formerly kept by the Moghul emperors in thousands for sporting purposes is to be relied upon, it would seem that they must have been more numerous than is the case at the present day, when they are comparatively rare.

A full-grown hunting-leopard stands about $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet in height at the shoulder, and has a total length of about 7 feet, $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet of which is accounted for by the tail alone.

THE INDIAN CIVET

(*Viverra zibetha*)

NATIVE NAMES.—*Khatas*, HINDUSTANI (in common with several small Carnivora); *Mach-bhondar*, *Bagdos*, AND *Puda-ganla*, BENGALI; *Bhran* IN THE NEPAL TERAI; *Nit-biralu*, NEPALESE; *Kung* OF THE BHOTIAS; *Saphiong* OF THE LEPCHAS; *Kyoung-myeng* (horse-cat), BURMESE; *Tangalong*, MALAY.

Although commonly called cats or civet-cats, the civets and their allies the palm-civets are very different