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Abstract: 1967 the hand-reared male Jack was introduced to the female Juanita. They had two litters. The first litter showed osteodystrophic lesions and one of them died. It was not possible to observe if the cubs actually ate calcium additive.

It is interesting to note that on each occasion after the introduction of the male to the female the initial sparring period has been followed by a period when both animals remained closely associated with one another. After mating had taken place the relationship could only be described as indifferent.

Breeding cheetahs

Acinonyx jubatus

at Whipsnade Park

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A two and a half year old female cheetah *Acinonyx jubatus* was presented to Whipsnade in November 1966. Having completed six months quarantine under the Importation of Cats and Dogs Order she was moved to a grass run where a hand-reared male called 'Jack' was introduced to her on 3 June 1967. The immediate reaction of the female 'Juanita' was to run from the male, even to the extent of attempting to climb out of the paddock, round which there was a 2.3 m (7.5 ft) high, 5 cm (2 in) chain link fence, with a 60 cm (2 ft) angled overhang, giving a total height of some 2.75 m (9 ft) from the ground. She suffered one or two skin cuts from the male but none were serious enough to warrant surgical interference and the two animals were left alone as much as possible.

Juanita came into oestrus between 15 and 21 June and a mating was recorded on 17 June. After this period both animals appeared to be much more agreeable to each other. No further signs of oestrus were seen and in August some mammary development was observed. Due consideration was given to moving the now obviously expectant mother to more suitable quarters but it was decided to leave her where she was, provide infra-red heating for the house and a wind shield for the den and to remove the male. On 16 September Juanita did not come out to feed for the second consecutive day and a hole had to be drilled through the wall of the shed to observe her. She was seen to be feeding two cubs which appeared healthy and strong.

Strangely, Juanita did not now appear to resent the presence of humans although she had reacted so strongly to them before. Three cubs were seen with their eyes open five days later. Mother and all three cubs (one male and two female) had to be moved to separate quarters during a long electricity power failure in January 1968. At this time it was noted that one of the female cubs did not appear to be very strong on her hind legs although she had appeared normal during the

previous four months in the paddock. X-ray photographs were therefore taken of her legs and these revealed osteodystrophic lesions. She died, following what appeared to be epileptiform convulsions, on 10 February. The other two cubs were transferred to the Hospital where both showed similar lesions.

The diet of the adult included whole chicken several times each week but, although red meat was dusted with steamed bone flour before giving it to the cheetahs, it was not possible to observe if the cubs actually ate any such calcium additive.

On 9 April 1968, Juanita and Jack were returned to their original pen and allowed to run together. Again after a short 'scrap' they settled down well and oestrus in the female and service by the male were observed after an interval of ten days. Three more cubs were born on 22 July, although this time the male still had access to the female for at least 24 hours after the birth. He was then removed. Again the cubs proved to be one male and two females. The gestation period was about 95 days whereas on the first occasion it had been 91 days. A closer watch on the diet of the cubs was kept and food was only available to them through a 'creep' so that accurate records were taken of the amounts of food which they consumed. They were taken from the mother on 9 April 1969 in perfect health, and the parents were reintroduced. The 'scrapping' this time consisted solely in the male chasing the female twice round the paddock after which they settled well. Fifteen days later on 24 April, oestrus was again observed and mating recorded.

The paddock in which the parents were kept had a south frontage of 43 m (140 ft) facing on to a public footpath and overlooking the Cape buffalo *Syncerus caffer* and Musk ox *Ovibos moschatus* paddocks. The rear of the paddock was 36 m (120 ft) long and in the eastern half were

situated a wooden shed and a kennel. The western boundary measured 15 m (50 ft) deep and the eastern 21 m (70 ft). Both these were screened with corrugated iron sheets for a height of 1.2 m (4 ft) from the ground to prevent the cheetahs from becoming too excited by the animals kept on either side. The rear fence looks out into Whipsnade Wood where live peafowl *Pavo cristatus* and North American turkeys *Meleagris gallopavo* and through which run Bennett's wallabies *Protemnodon rufogrisea fruticosa*, Chinese water deer *Hydropotes inermis* and muntjac *Muntiacus* sp.

The 'kennel' measures 1 m (3 ft) wide and 1.5 m (4.5 ft) deep and is unprotected from the public on both sides and the rear. Juanita pro-

duced her second litter in here and only moved them to the shed when the male had been removed. The shed measured 3 m (9.75 ft) long and was 2.25 m (7.5 ft) deep. It contained two infrared lamps, a deep straw bed and the feeding 'creep' for the cubs.

It is interesting to note that on each occasion after the introduction of the male to the female, the initial 'sparring' period has been followed by a period when both animals remained closely associated with one another. After mating had taken place the relationship could only be described as indifferent. In April 1969 one of the second litter cubs - then about nine months of age - appeared to be coming into season for the first time.