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Abstract: In a previous article Manton (1970) reported on the birth of two litters of cubs to Juanita. On 1 February 1970 Juanita again did not leave her house all day and two cubs were recorded. Weights of all three litters born from the same female in Whipsnade Park are given in a table. The cheetah population of Whipsnade now includes a male from the first litter, two cubs from the third litter. The male from the second litter has been sent to Jersey Zoo.

A further report on breeding cheetahs

Acinonyx jubatus

at Whipsnade Park

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V. J. A. MANTON

Curator, Zoological Society of London, Whipsnade Park, Dunstable, Bedfordshire, England

In a previous article (Manton, 1970), I reported on the birth of two litters of cubs to 'Juanita', a captive cheetah *Acinonyx jubatus*. After the second litter of cubs were taken from her on 9 April 1969, she came into oestrus on 24 April 1969 and mating was recorded. Another mating attempt was recorded on 20 June (57 days after the first) and on 29 July (96 days after the first mating) she did not come out of her shed at all. However, she appeared to be normal on the next day. On 31 October (94 days later) the male appeared to be showing a lot of interest in her but although he followed her closely round the paddock, no mating was observed. However, on 1 February 1970, 'Juanita' again did not leave her house all

day and two cubs were recorded as being born on 2 February, 94 days later. These were a male and a female and their weights are recorded and compared with those of previous litters in Table 1.

The male had already been moved from the paddock on 11 January since it was then thought that the previous mating had been unsuccessful. The intention was to introduce him to the female in April in the hope that oestrus would be induced and a successful mating result.

Following on the experience gained of the mother's reactions to interference in rearing the previous litters, it has been possible to take much closer notice of the behaviour of these cubs. Daily records have been kept of all food taken by

| YEAR OF BIRTH | SEX | LENGTH (cm) | | WEIGHT (kg) | AGE (days) | WEIGHT (kg) | AGE (days) | WEIGHT (kg) | AGE (days) | WEIGHT (kg) | AGE (days) |
|---------------|-----|-------------------------------|--|-------------|------------|-------------|------------|-------------|------------|-------------|------------|
| | | NOSE TO TIP OF TAIL (44 days) | | | | | | | | | |
| 1967 | ♂ | | | | | | | 10 | | 139 | |
| | | | | | | | | 9.5 | | 139 | |
| | | | | | | | | 8.6 | | 139 | |
| 1968 | ♂ | | | | | 3.4 | 65 | 10.6 | 137 | 25 | 352 |
| | | | | | | 3.5 | 65 | 10.7 | 137 | 25 | 352 |
| | | | | | | 3.8 | 65 | 9.3 | 137 | 28.6 | 352 |
| 1970 | ♂ | 42 | | 2.68 | 44 | 4.15 | 64 | | | | |
| | | 39 | | 2.3 | 44 | 3.85 | 64 | | | | |

Table 1. Weights of three litters of cheetah *Acinonyx jubatus* cubs born at Whipsnade Park.

stroyed because of medical infirmities at the age of 28½ years.

Several times in her youth she was transferred to other zoos for mating but without success. Then between 1956 and 1959 a male camel shared her quarters, still without success. Finally, in 1960, a young male camel was purchased with the hope

produced a baby camel.

After she was destroyed an autopsy was performed and, at long last, the answers to her breeding problems were evident. It was discovered that she had, long ago, been pregnant with two foetuses and they were still present in

the mother and of the time she spent away from the cubs. It is interesting to note that even on the day after the cubs were born, she spent several hours away from them eating chickens, rabbit and red meat in the paddock.

At 12 days old the cubs were actively moving around in the shed. At 28 days old they were out in the paddock with their mother, walking about quite freely. They were then seen outside on 11 of the next 14 days, after which time they appeared outside for longer and longer periods. It was noticed that even with the cubs being fairly mobile in the paddock 'Juanita' was eating all faeces deposited by the cubs on day 38 after birth.

At 47 days old the cubs were seen eating rabbit and beef and at 49 days of age they were observed eating Z.F.6 - a tinned, compounded diet of a soft and moist consistency. From this time on, the mother, who had previously not found the tinned food acceptable, also started feeding on it with relish.

When 58 days of age, one cub was observed tackling a whole chicken. At 63 days old the cubs were using a 'creep' inside the house and were eating tinned food from inside. The 'creep' was so designed that the opening, while being large enough to admit the cubs, was too small to allow the mother in and the length was too great for her to reach the food in it with her paws. [At the end of their first three months of life the cubs

were still spending a noticeable amount of time suckling but their mother was not nearly so protective as she had been. During a spell when the paddock lay under an average depth of 10 cm (4 in) of snow, she would carry them back into the house when they appeared cold, and on mornings with severe frost was seen to encourage them to play and move around, presumably to keep them warm.

The cheetah population of Whipnade now includes a male from the first litter (born 16 September 1967), two females from the second litter (born 22 July 1968) and the two cubs from the third litter. The male from the second litter has been sent to Jersey Zoo as a potential mate for their lone female. It is reported that he has already shown signs of sexual interest in her.

I wish to thank the Head Keeper of Section IV and all his staff for the time they have spent looking after these animals and for the wealth of information they have recorded, and are continuing to record, about them.

PRODUCT MENTIONED IN THE TEXT

Z.F.6.: manufactured by Spillers Limited as a complete carnivorous diet.

REFERENCE

MANTON, V. J. A. (1970): Breeding cheetahs *Acinonyx jubatus* at Whipnade Park. *Int. Zoo Yb.* 10: 85.