

Manton VJA. 1973. Breeding at Whipsnade Park: a report on the first 17 births. The New  
Carnivore House in the West Berlin Zoo 15.

Keywords: 78Eur/Acinonyx jubatus/birth/breeding/cheetah/female/litter/weight

Abstract: Previous reports emphasized individual breeding successes at Whipsnade Park. Now that two captive-bred animals have given birth to a litter and breeding involves three females and two males. A summary of the position may be useful to many collections seeking to breed these animals. Table with weights of cheetahs born at Whipsnade Park.

# Cheetah

*Acinonyx jubatus*

VOL 15/1973

## breeding at Whipsnade Park: a report on the first 17 births

V. J. A. MANTON

*Curator, The Zoological Society of London, Whipsnade Park, Dunstable, Bedfordshire, Great Britain*

Previous reports (1; 2; 3; 4) emphasized individual breeding successes at Whipsnade Park. Now that two captive-bred animals have given birth to a litter and breeding involves three ♀♀ and two ♂♂, a summary of the position may be useful to many collections seeking to breed these animals.

Although the births have taken place in February, March, July, September, October and November only, oestrus has been observed in every month of the year. It has, therefore, been possible to operate a 'planned mating service' to some extent. Accepting that our previous experience of a gestation of around

NO.	SEX	NAME	ORIGIN	PRESENT LOCATION
1	♂	Chooe	Presented by owner, previously kept as a pet, at least 4 to 5 years old, 30 September 1963	Euthanized 27 March 1974; Lethargic and paretic
2	♀	Kathie	Received in exchange 2 December 1963	Died 24 November 1964; Pneumonia and hepatitis
3	♂	Jack	Presented by Nairobi National Park, previously kept as a pet, 16 December 1964	Whipsnade Park
4	♂	Edashara	Presented by 1st Battalion The Kenya Rifles, when at least 2 years old, 16 December 1964	London Zoo
5	♀	Juanita	Presented from Rhodesia, found injured when two-thirds grown - not tamed, 16 December 1966	Whipsnade Park
6	♂	Jason	Born to 3 and 5 16 September 1967	Whipsnade Park
7	♀	Jasmine	Born to 3 and 5 16 September 1967	Euthanized 4 June 1969; Partial posterior paralysis. Material used for histological and other examination
8	♀	Jacaranda	Born to 3 and 5 16 September 1967	Died 10 February 1968; Heart failure
9	♂	Frank	Born to 3 and 5 22 July 1968	Deposited with Jersey Zoo 24 February 1970
10	♀	Grace	Born to 3 and 5 22 July 1968	At London Zoo, 9 November 1970 - 3 July 1973, now at Whipsnade Park
11	♀	Janica	Born to 3 and 5 22 July 1968	Whipsnade Park
12	♂	Jo-Jo	Born to 3 and 5 2 February 1970	Died at London Zoo 8 April 1972; Suspected viral infection
13	♀	Jiffie	Born to 3 and 5 2 February 1970	Whipsnade Park
14	♀	Juba	Born to 3 and 5 9 March 1971	Sent to Paris Zoo 13 June 1972
15	♀	Jalna	Born to 3 and 5 9 March 1971	Sent to Montpellier Zoo 27 November 1972
16	♀	Jonquil	Born to 3 and 5 9 March 1971	Whipsnade Park
17	♂	Adam	Born to 3 and 11 25 October 1972	Whipsnade Park
18	♂	Raoul	Born at Montpellier Zoo 1 December 1968	At Whipsnade since 1 December 1972
19	♂		Born to 18 and 13 30 October 1973	Whipsnade Park
20	♂		Born to 18 and 13 30 October 1973	Whipsnade Park
21	♀		Born to 18 and 13 30 October 1973	Whipsnade Park
22	♀		Born to 18 and 13 30 October 1973	Whipsnade Park
23	♀		Born to 18 and 13 30 October 1973	Whipsnade Park

Table 1. Cheetahs *Acinonyx jubatus* kept at Whipsnade Park since September 1963.



90 to 95 days to be the normal range, then five of the litters resulted from matings occurring between six to 15 days after introduction or re-introduction of a ♂ to the ♀. Our practice today, therefore, is not to leave adults of different sexes together except for a mating and during early pregnancy. Now that the staff have had so much experience of animals in oestrus, it is now possible to mix them only as oestrus commences. The main sign here is a change from normal feeding behaviour. However, it is very important for the *normal* to be noted first since cheetahs, like all other animals, are individuals with infinite variation.

Two of our pregnant ♀♀, mother and daughter, became very aggressive towards their keepers shortly before giving birth. Apart from this, they tend to remain secluded and inactive when not disturbed – as might be expected from observations on other species. Three times now after parturition, our suspicions have been roused that young are present, simply because the ♀ has refused to leave her house for food. All the young remain with the mother for at least eight months except in the case of the first litter when the onset of posterior

paresis forced us to remove them at five months. The symptoms had only become apparent after the animals had suffered the trauma of enforced removal to warmer quarters during a power blackout.

In all, six ♂♂ and 11 ♀♀ have been born to three ♀♀. Normally no human interference with the young is allowed but when they are vaccinated against feline enteritis, the opportunity has always been taken to weigh them. Table 2 summarizes the weights and relates them to age.

The 1970 litter, although of only two animals, is within the average weight range of the larger litters at the relevant ages and it is interesting to note that the ♀ became the mother of the 1973 litter (nos. 19 to 23). Since both she and the father were themselves captive-bred, this is the first recorded second generation captive-bred litter.

The only change instituted between the first four and the last two litters is that the latter were produced in a different den. This was of similar design to the first however, that is a wooden, well strawed and artificially heated hut. The diet remained the same and the same insistence on separation and re-

	AGE IN DAYS										
	18	44	49	51	64	65	84	103	134	137	365
1967 Litter ♂											10.0
♀											9.54
♀											8.63
1968 Litter ♂						3.86		7.04			10.6 28.6
♀						3.52		6.93			10.6 25.0
♀						3.4		6.13			9.32 25.0
1970 Litter ♂		2.68			4.15						
♀		2.3			3.85						
1971 Litter ♀	1.09	2.225			3.55						
♀	1.27	2.425			4.0						
♀	1.4	2.8			4.05						
1972 Litter ♂			3.4								
1973 Litter ♂				2.7			5.15				
♂				2.75			5.3				
♀				2.7			5.0				
♀				2.7			4.9				
♀				2.35			4.9				

Table 2. Weights (kg) of cheetahs *Acinonyx jubatus* born at Whipsnade Park.

introduction of sexually mature animals was practised.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My thanks must go to Head Keeper F. Hughes and the staff of his section without whose continuing co-operation many of the observations would not have been possible.

#### REFERENCES

1. MANTON, V. J. A. (1970): Breeding cheetahs *Acinonyx jubatus* at Whipsnade Park. *Int. Zoo Yb.* 10: 85-86.

2. MANTON, V. J. A. (1971): A further report on breeding cheetahs *Acinonyx jubatus* at Whipsnade Park. *Int. Zoo Yb.* 11: 125-126.

3. MANTON, V. J. A. (1974): The birth of a cheetah *Acinonyx jubatus* to a captive bred mother. *Int. Zoo Yb.* 14: 126-129.

4. MANTON, V. J. A. (In press): Breeding of cheetahs: *Proceedings of the conference on the breeding of endangered species as an aid to their survival*. New York & London: Academic Press.

Manuscript submitted 8 April 1974



