

Marker-Kraus L. 1994. Letter to Prof. Nicholas Plunin.

Keywords: 1Afr/Acinonyx jubatus/cheetah/playtree

Abstract: Laurie Marker is answering Polunin's questions what kind of playtrees cheetahs use primarily. These are: Camel-thorn tree, Shepherd's tree, bastard umbrella-thorn tree and weeping wattle tree.

To: Prof. Nicholas Polunin
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Date: 14 December 1994

From: Laurie Marker-Kraus
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No. Pages: 1

Dear Prof. Polunin:

We have just returned from a 6 week lecture trip in the United States. We are sorry for the delay in answering your letter of 27 October and your editorial comments. All in all, the comments look fine.

The three species of trees that cheetahs use primarily as playtrees are as follows:

Camel-thorn tree (Acacia erioloba)
Shepherd's tree (Boscia albitrunca)
Bastard umbrella-thorn tree (Acacia luederitzii)

A fourth tree that is used is the Weeping wattle tree (Peltophorum africanum).

The scientific name for the Camel-thorn tree is Acacia erioloba. This tree is one of the largest trees in the central regions of Namibia. It is not bush, unlike most of the other species of Acacia. The Camel-thorn trees are tall with a 'real' trunk (not bushy) and limbs that slope. It is due to the shape of this tree that the cheetahs use them so often. When Camel-thorn trees are not in the area, other trees are used as playtrees. These other trees also must be open and not bushy so that the cheetahs can run up the trunk and climb onto the limbs.

As far as the thorn-bush bomas, these bomas are made by cutting bush. The bush used is a variety of different Acacia species. The primary bushes used for the boma are the Hook-thorn (Acacia mellifera) and Sickle-bush (Dichrostachys cinerea).

I hope these scientific names will be helpful. You had asked of degrees, I have a Bachelors of Science from Eastern Oregon State University in the United States. Danny does not have a degree although he attended Utah State University and University of Montana for a total of over 4 years and majored in Wildlife Management.

We will keep you apprised of our programs. Thank you for your interest in our work.

Most sincerely,

Laurie Marker-Kraus