

Moll E. 1976. The cheetah kill and the cheetah killers. African Wildlife:12-13.

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Abstract: Kill of a yearling springbuck by a sibling of cheetahs. The male made the kill and kept his sister away from the prey until he has eaten his fill.

Dealing with live wild animals and deals mainly possession, selling and buying of live cheetahs is prohibited. Nowhere in the Ordinance is it stated that the killing of cheetah is an offence. The Transvaal Department of Nature Conservation has now taken positive steps to rectify the position. Wherever possible, cheetah will now be captures in areas where they create problems and relocated in suitable nature reserves.

# The Cheetah kill

by Eugene Moll



E. Moll

Although it was only 10 a.m. the sun was already hot and the two cheetah had crawled as far under the small bush as possible to escape the heat. They were brother and sister, as we were later told, about two years old.

Small herds of springbuck, zebra, oryx and kudu moved to and from the Klein Namutoni waterhole nearby. Many passed within 100 metres of the cheetah, who appeared quite unconcerned and seemed more inclined to sleep than to hunt.

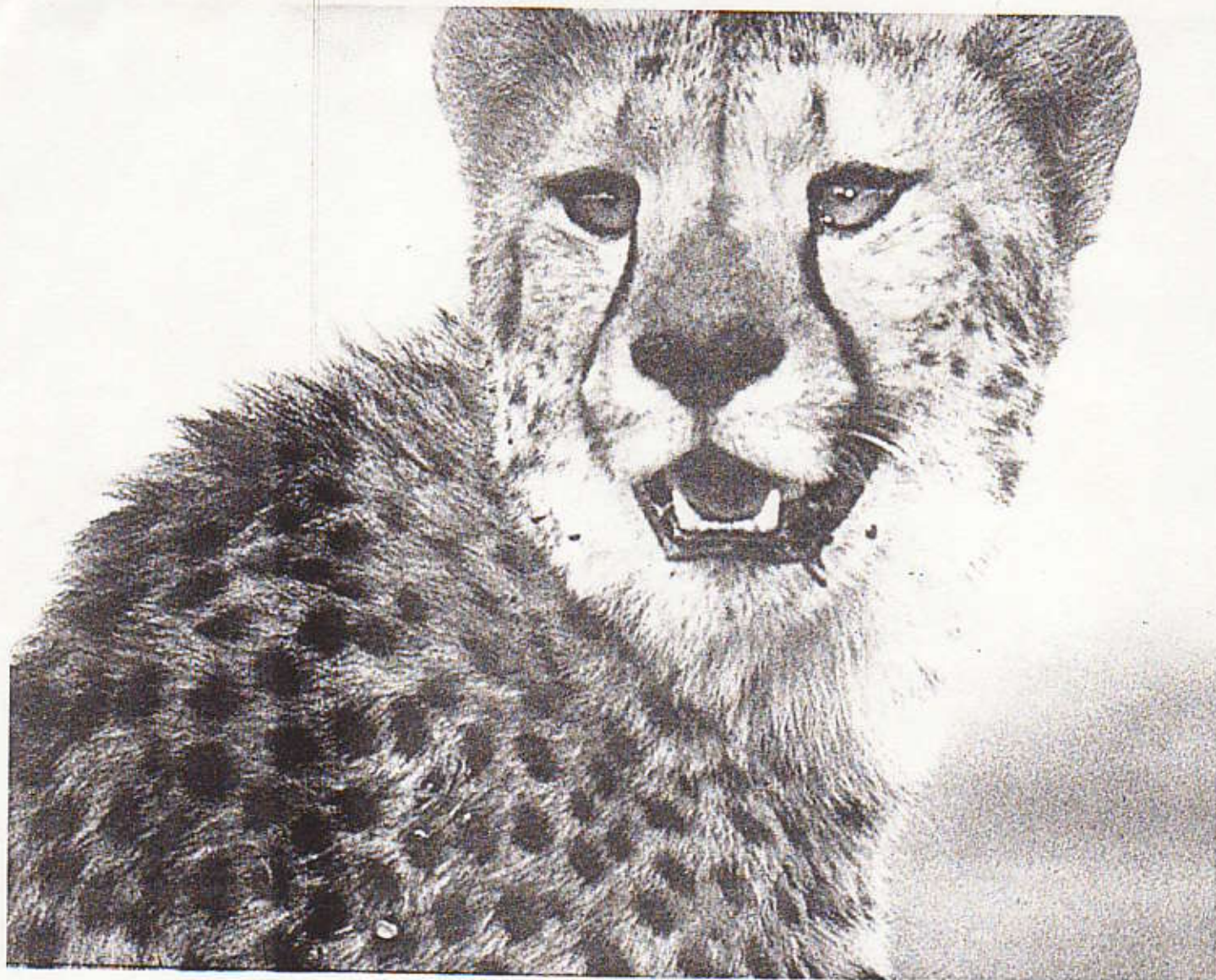
However by noon the male began to show some interest in the odd passing animal, although his interest was not sufficient to cause him to change position. I was hot, tired and stiff from the long wait, and decided to move the car up to the waterhole to watch any possible action from there. As I was about to move off, two yearling springbuck came ambling along the game path, veering off their path and increasing their pace to pass the slow-moving car. At this moment they came in sight of the cheetah. The nearness of the prey was too much for the male cheetah who sprang into action — followed a few moments later by his sister. Too late the springbuck realised the danger and

tried to escape — but the chase over not much more than 50 metres was over in a few seconds.

It was the male cheetah who caught the springbuck by the body, and by the time his sister loped onto the scene he had already positioned himself over his prey, changing his grip from the body to the back of the head. After what seemed to be a long time, but was in fact something under two minutes, the springbuck ceased struggling.

The male dragged the carcass to the shade of the bush and then the feasting began. For an hour and a half, while we watched, the cheetah had their meal. Surprisingly the male used his body to keep his more timid sister away from the prey. It was only later, when he had eaten a complete shoulder, that she moved in for her share. Initially he had allowed her to eat, then changed his mind and there was a "clenched-teeth-and-growling-display" which lasted two minutes before he relented and allowed her to eat in peace.

Once fed, the two cats moved off to the shade of another tree, further from the road, where they would be less disturbed while they slept off their heavy meal.



C. D. Meredith

## and the Cheetah Killers

The Transvaal farmer who shot eight cheetah on his own farm and, who in doing so, was perfectly within his rights, has highlighted the fact that there is something seriously wrong with some of the wildlife laws in that Province.

Legislation for the animals varies from Province to Province. In the Transvaal it appears under schedule 3 of the Nature Conservation Ordinance "Wild Animals in regard to which the Provisions of Section 26 Apply". Section 26 refers to prohibited acts dealing with live wild animals, and deals mainly with possession, selling and buying of *live* cheetah. Nowhere in the Ordinance is it stated that the killing of cheetah is an offence. Schedule I of the Ordinance governs protected Game and provides protection for other animals listed — but not cheetah, an endangered species! In the Cape Ordinance, the cheetah is listed as an endangered species and in Natal under protected game. In the Free State the Ordinance is very similar to that of the Transvaal. Clearly a case exists for an amendment to the Transvaal and the OFS laws in regard to this species.

The Transvaal Department of Nature Conservation has now taken positive steps to rectify the position. Wherever possible, cheetah will now be captured in areas where they create problems and relocated in suitable nature reserves. Its Research

Division plans to determine accurately the species' regional distribution, its status, its habitat requirements, its diseases and other limiting factors.

There is little doubt that the main reason for the decline of cheetah throughout its former range is the loss of large areas of its prime habitat, a loss brought about by man's activities and his rapidly-expanding population. Coupled with this is, of course, the high price paid for cheetah skins on the world pelt market, which has led to much illegal killing.

The Society believes the following positive action is needed to remedy the decline of cheetah populations.

Permits for killing or capturing cheetah must be mandatory in all Provinces and must be issued by the Provincial Nature Conservation Departments.

The sale and/or purchase of all cheetah products must be subject to obtaining a permit from the Provincial Nature Conservation Department concerned.

The establishment of large, new areas of arid savanna — the prime cheetah habitat — as nature reserves so that viable populations can be safeguarded in Southern Africa.

An extensive education campaign, particularly among farmers and landowners — perhaps like those in Natal for the lammergeyer and the python.

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