

Morrison-Scott, T. C. S. (1951). Cheetah in Arabia. Proc. Zool. Soc. Lond 121.

Keywords: 5IQ/5SA/*Acinonyx jubatus*/*Acinonyx jubatus venaticus*/Arabia/Asiatic cheetah/cheetah/observation/occurrence/signs

Abstract: Mr. T.C.S. Morrison-Scott exhibited a photograph which had been sent to the British Museum and which showed the skin of a cheetah (*Acinonyx jubatus venaticus*) believed to be the first specimen recorded from Arabia. The Arabic name for the cheetah is Fahad, or Fahd, but this is also sometimes applied to leopard, whose proper name is Nimr. This confusion, together with the lack of any specimen, gave rise to doubt whether the cheetah occurs in Arabia.

NOTES AND EXHIBITIONS

MEETINGS OF THE SOCIETY FOR SCIENTIFIC BUSINESS.

February 13th, 1951.

Dr. L. HARRISON MATTHEWS, M.A., F.L.S.,
Vice-President, in the Chair.

Dr. EDWARD HINDLE, F.R.S., the Scientific Director, gave a report on the additions to the Society's Menagerie during the months of December, 1950, and January, 1951, and made special mention of a Lettered Aracari (*Pteroglossus inscriptus*), purchased, a Hunting Crow (*Cissa chinensis*) and a Larger Pied Wagtail (*Motacilla maderaspatensis*), presented by the Rt. Hon. the Viscount Chaplin, and two Moor Monkeys (*Macaca maurus*), purchased.

Mr. T. C. S. MORRISON-SCOTT exhibited a photograph which had been sent to the British Museum (Natural History) by Mrs. H. R. P. Dickson, M.B.E., of Kuwait and which showed the skin of a Cheetah (*Acinonyx jubatus venaticus*) believed to be the first specimen recorded from Arabia.

The Arabic name for the cheetah is *Fahad*, or *Fahd*, but this is also sometimes applied to the leopard, whose proper name is *Nimr*. This confusion, together with the lack of any specimen, gave rise to doubt whether the cheetah occurs in Arabia, though Carruthers, 1935, *Arabian Adventure*, mentions having seen cheetah tracks in 1909 on the north side of Jabal Tubaiq, approximately 150 miles east of the head of the Gulf of Aqaba.

The specimen in the photograph was killed by Mr. Tony Valentine on 15th March, 1950, in northern Saudi Arabia in latitude 31° 32' N., longitude 39° 35' E. on the 'Tapline' road.

Cheetahs seem to be rare in Iraq also. Corkhill, 1939, *J. Bombay nat. Hist. Soc.* 33: 700, could record only two occurrences, one in 1925 in the Muntafiq area, and another in 1928 in the Shamiyah desert (approximately 30° 15' N., 46° 10' E.).

Dr. EDWARD HINDLE, F.R.S., exhibited and made comments on two new mutants of the Golden Hamster (*Mesocricetus auratus*). He first gave a general account of the re-discovery of this species in April, 1930, in the neighbourhood of Aleppo, Syria. The only previous record of this species having been found was that of the type specimen exhibited at a meeting of the Society in April, 1839. Dr. Hindle emphasized the fact that all the Golden Hamsters in captivity were the descendants of the female and twelve young which had been captured near Aleppo in April, 1930, by Mr. I. Aharoni and taken back to Jerusalem. These formed the basis of all the existing stock in the world, as none had been caught since. He obtained two pairs of their descendants the following year and exhibited them at a previous meeting of the Society on April 28th, 1931, and as far as he was aware all the Golden Hamsters in this country were the descendants of those individuals as he had continued breeding them and distributing specimens to various institutions until after the war.

Dr. Hindle stated that he had hoped to obtain some mutations but his stock had been remarkably uniform with the exception of the development of a form of microphthalmia which was inherited as a simple recessive character. More recently, a number of colour mutations had been recorded