

CHEETAH IDENTIFICATION

ADULT & OLDER CUBS: Key distinguishing features

Relatively small, rounded head

Amber / orange colour eyes

Black 'teardrop' mark from eye to side of mouth

Black nose tip

White chin with no/ very few spots

Fur rather coarse and short

Main coat colour tawny yellow

Rounded ears, black at base

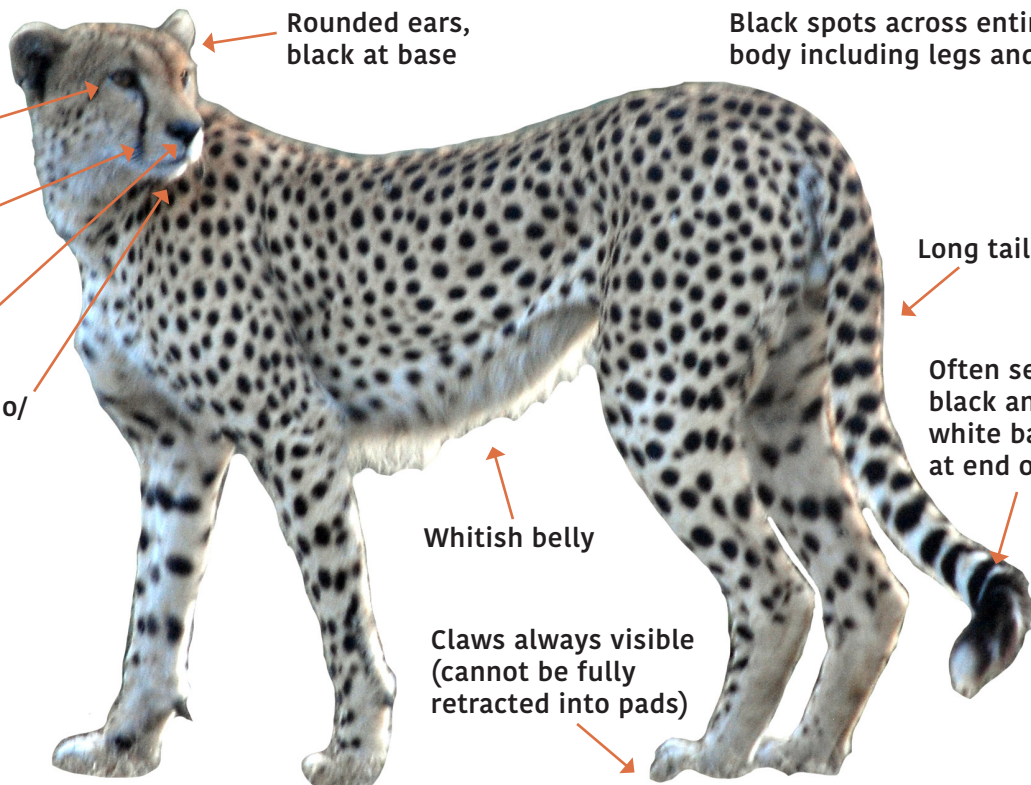
Black spots across entire body including legs and tail

Long tail

Often several black and white bands at end of tail

Whitish belly

Claws always visible (cannot be fully retracted into pads)



Head-Body Length: 110 – 140 cm • Tail Length: 60 – 80 cm
Height at Shoulder: 60 – 80 cm

YOUNG CUBS: Key distinguishing features

Rounded ears

Black 'teardrop' mark from eye to side of mouth

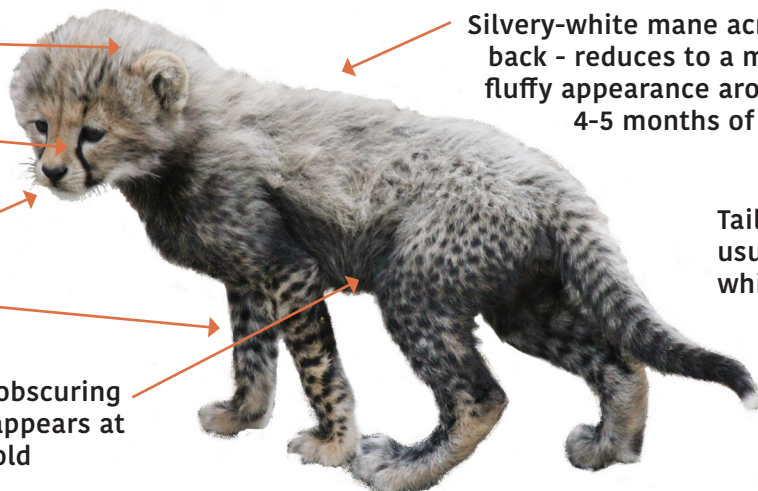
Black nose tip

Some spots visible on legs

Dark fur partially obscuring spot pattern - disappears at around 3 months old

Silvery-white mane across back - reduces to a more fluffy appearance around 4-5 months of age

Tail tip usually white



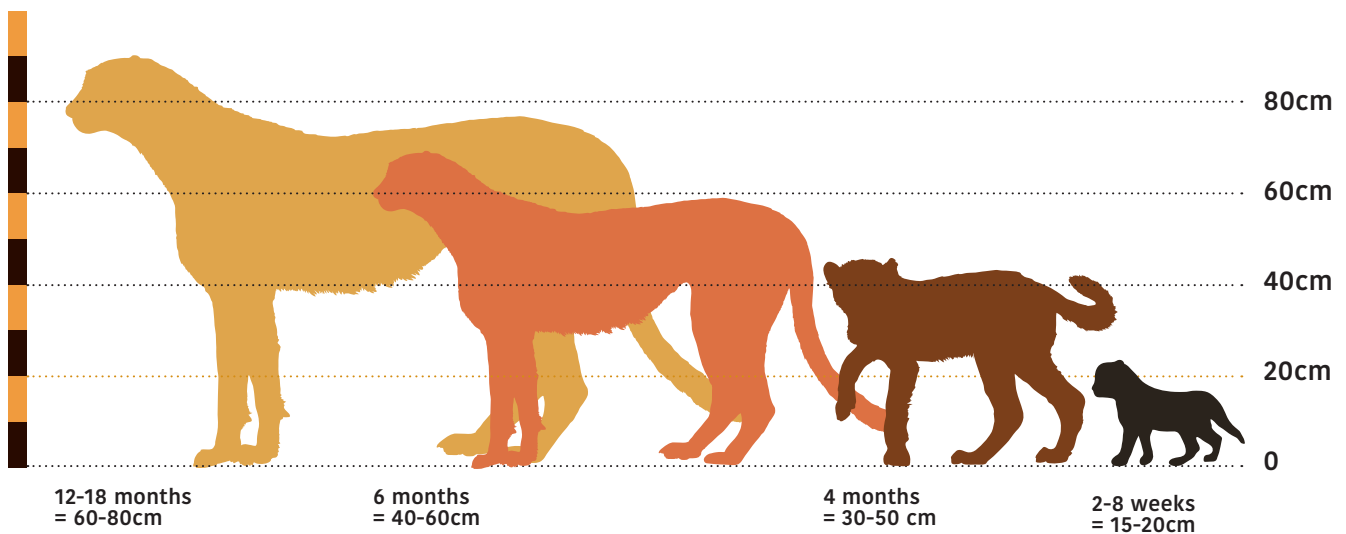
Approximate Height at Shoulder: 2-8 weeks old up to 20cm
• 6 months 40-50cm • 12 months 50-70cm

See **CITES Cheetah Trade Resource Kit, 'Identification Guides' (parts 4, 5 and 7)** for full ageing guidelines and sex determination.

CHEETAH IDENTIFICATION

Young cubs look quite different to adults. Their bodies are covered by dark fur, making their spot patterns difficult to see. They also have long silvery-white hair along their backs. These characteristics start to disappear when the cub is 3-4 months old after which it will begin to resemble a small adult cheetah. However, even when very young, **cubs still have the distinctive facial tear marks, claws that are always visible (without a protective sheath) and a black nose tip.**

CHEETAH AGE HEIGHT AT SHOULDER GUIDE



Identifying real or fake cheetah skins

When a skin is suspected of being from a cheetah, tissue and hair DNA samples should be taken to confirm the species and help trace its origin. (NB: Hair samples should include the hair root base.) Please follow protocols within the **CITES Cheetah Trade Resource Kit, 'DNA Sampling Guidelines'**.

- Real fur is backed by skin. Fake fur often has webbed backing material.
- Real hair tapers to a thin end. Fake hair is uniform width along its length.
- A real hair sample will shrivel and smell like human hair when singed with a match. Fake fur will melt and smell like burnt plastic.

Identifying cheetah skulls

Cheetah skulls are more domed than those of other cats, with a very short muzzle and a straight to concave nasal profile. They are relatively short in length compared to width, with the highest point above the eyes, and very small infraorbital canals.

See **CITES Cheetah Trade Resource Kit, 'Identification Guides', parts 8 to 12** for comprehensive guidance on identification of cat skin and bones.

