

CHEETAH SHORT-TERM CARE

Newly seized cheetahs should be kept in quarantine for a minimum of 30 days and ideally up to 60 days. This period allows time for diseases the cheetah could be carrying to become apparent, and also helps reduce stress caused by moving animals.

The following quarantine protocols should be followed:

- Cheetahs should be **kept isolated** from any other animals (including other cheetah) to avoid disease transfer.
- **Equipment** (e.g. water and food containers) used for quarantined animals **must be kept separate** from that used for other animals and disinfected before repeat use.
- **Only people involved in cheetah care should be allowed access to their enclosure.** They should wear overalls, disposable gloves and face masks that are removed when leaving the quarantine area. Hands should be washed thoroughly on departure.
- Cheetah should be given at least 2-3 days to acclimatise to the surroundings, then a **full veterinary check should be conducted** - including taking blood samples for analysis where possible.
- **Faecal samples** should be collected throughout quarantine period and checked for intestinal parasites.
- Body condition and indications of general health levels should be continually **monitored**.
- Cheetahs must pass the **end of quarantine health checklist** see *CITES Cheetah Trade Resource Kit, 'Long-Term Captive Care and Management Guide'* before being moved out.

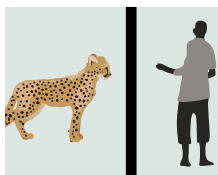
Blood samples may be sent for laboratory analysis to screen for diseases. If this is in another country, appropriate CITES export and import permits must be obtained. Many countries have a simplified permitting system for facilitating the transfer of diagnostic and health screening samples. Contact your national CITES authority for further information.

Cheetah enclosures should have the following features:

- Enclosure size should have **at least 1 ha per individual.** Where space is limited, rectangular enclosures are better than square ones to maximise length for the cheetah to run.
- There should always be **gaps between enclosures** to prevent animals fighting through the fence, and to enable keepers to monitor around the entire perimeter.
- Substrate should be **natural soil and vegetation** if possible. Hard surfaces such as concrete should be kept to a minimum.
- All entrances should have **double doors** to allow safe access for keepers and prevent cheetah escape.
- The feeding area should have a **guillotine door**, normally left open but to allow easy isolation of the area.



Photo © Cheetah Conservation Fund



Cheetahs do not normally attack humans, however when highly stressed, traumatised or feeling cornered they could lash out and cause serious injury. Ensure there is always a physical barrier between any cheetahs and people.

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During their time being trafficked, cheetah(s) will likely have experienced periods of extreme stress, as well as dehydration and starvation.

Short-term care focuses on rehabilitating animals to a good level of health and ensuring their welfare in the first few weeks after seizure whilst a decision is made about their long-term management.

Cheetah(s) should be housed in suitable enclosures with the following key aspects:

<p>Secure fencing at least 2.5m tall with an overhang or roof, 3.5m tall without</p>	<p>Fencing base should be buried 10-20cm below ground</p>	<p>As much room as possible. Long enclosure better than square</p>	<p>A sheltered area to protect from sun, wind, rain and disturbance</p>
<p>Access to clean water at all times. Water bowls should be cleaned daily</p>	<p>Quiet surroundings with minimum number of people nearby</p>	<p>Straw, mulch or other organic bedding materials for the cheetah to lie on</p>	<p>Provision of appropriate food - see below</p>

What should cheetah(s) be fed?

Cheetah(s) must only be fed very fresh meat. Cheetah(s) are particularly prone to gastric problems so feeding them properly is vital for their survival. **If possible feed them fresh wild game meat - ideally giving whole carcasses.** Otherwise whole rabbits or chickens that still have skin, fur/feathers and internal organs intact can be used. Camel, goat, donkey or horse meat can also be used but must include organ meat - particularly heart, liver and kidneys as well as cartilage, bones and tendons. **Feeding with a variety of species is preferable** to provide a range of nutrients.

NB: If there is any chance that cheetah may be released into the wild where there may be issues around human-wildlife conflict, the feeding of livestock that they could encounter should be avoided.

2 – 6 month old cheetah cubs should be fed the same types of meat as adults. It can be helpful to partially open carcasses to help them access the meat inside. If young cubs have trouble feeding, try mincing food before giving it to them - be sure to include the bones and internal organs.