

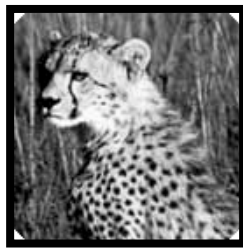


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NEW KIDS ON THE BLOCK A BOOST FOR CHEETAH CONSERVATION

Toronto, Ontario, October 2nd, 2004: The Toronto Zoo has purchased two breeding pairs of captive-bred cheetahs from the De Wildt Cheetah Centre in South Africa. The purchase will enable the Toronto Zoo to continue its prominent role in the conservation of these endangered animals. Money used to purchase the cheetahs will go toward assisting the De Wildt Centre in the conservation of the species.

Although the Toronto Zoo's Species Survival Program (SSP) for cheetahs has been highly successful, with over 25 cubs being produced to date, the decline of the captive population overall has created a need for new breeding animals. Species Survival Plans are cooperative captive breeding programs amongst North American zoos to help ensure the survival of wildlife species at risk. Zeke (male), Zack (male), Jamoccha (female), and Mya (female) represent new bloodlines to the North American captive cheetah population. Cheetahs become sexually mature at the age of 21 to 22 months. From two to four cubs are born following a gestation period of 90 to 95 days.

"It is very exciting to have these new cheetahs at the Toronto Zoo," notes Maria Franke, Curator of Mammals. "They will become part of our captive breeding program, enabling the Zoo to play a large role in the conservation of this highly endangered species."

The establishment of the De Wildt Cheetah Centre in 1971 has resulted in major breeding achievements. Cheetahs captive bred at the Centre have been returned to the wild to repopulate native habitats. As it becomes more and more necessary to build up and maintain adequate gene pools for the captive populations of endangered animals, the roles of such facilities will become crucial. The purchase of the four cheetahs emphasizes the Toronto Zoo's support for the De Wildt Centre and its commitment towards working with outside captive breeding organizations to save endangered species.

The new arrivals, all one year and 4 months old, will be on display in the African Savanna starting Saturday, October 2nd. The Toronto Zoo now has a total of 10 cheetahs including three on a breeding loan from the Bowmanville Zoo.

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Zoo Hours until Oct. 11th: 9:00am to 6:00 pm. Last admissions one hour before closing. General admission 13-64 is \$18, Children 3 and under free, Children 4-12 are \$10 and Seniors 65+ are \$12. Parking is \$8. Events subject to change without notice. The Zoo is located at Meadowvale Road and Hwy.401, Exit 389 east and west bound. For general information, call (416) 392-5929 or visit www.torontozoo.com