

Press Release

For Immediate Release

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For More Information

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RARE CHEETAH CUBS ON DISPLAY AT TORONTO ZOO

Thursday, October 23, 2008, Toronto, Ontario: The Toronto Zoo's new cheetah cubs are cute, cuddly and ready to meet you! Born on July 25th, 2008 to Mom 'Mya' and Dad 'Luke' the cubs have been carefully watched and nurtured by Zoo staff in the cheetah's Outdoor Holding while awaiting their official public debut this weekend. Including our newest members, the Zoo now has a total of ten cheetahs with six cheetahs out on breeding loan to other zoos.

A member of the Species Survival Program (SSP), the Toronto Zoo actively takes part in various measures ensuring this species, currently deemed as threatened, continues to genetically grow stronger. The Zoo is involved in Reproductive Physiology, Behavioural Studies and Nutritional Research to enhance breeding techniques in cheetahs. The decline of the cheetah population overall has created a need for new breeding animals. The Toronto Zoo's cheetah breeding program has been highly successful, with over 44 cubs born to date.

"Mate choice and low genetic variability resulting in low fertility in male cheetahs can make this species difficult to breed," says Maria Franke, Curator of Mammals. "These births are very significant to both the Toronto Zoo and the North American captive cheetah population. This litter represents a significant contribution to a genetically healthy captive population."

Apart from captive breeding, the Toronto Zoo also supports cheetah conservation in the wild through its Endangered Species Fund. Through funding, the Zoo is involved in cheetah research projects such as a cheetah census being conducted in South Africa, as well as a study on the prevalence of a tick species hindering the cheetah populations in South Africa.

"The cubs", says Keeper Kim Meehan, "are very active. They love to play, chasing each other and jumping on each other". "Bomani" (male) and "Mahala" (female), will be on display this weekend in the Zoo's African Savanna and then periodically until they become accustomed to their exhibit.

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Current Zoo Hours and Admission Prices – Please note our hours will change:

Zoo Hours Oct. 14th to Dec. 31st: 9:30am to 4:30pm. Last admissions one hour before closing. General Admission 13-64 incl. is \$20, Children 3 and under are free, Children 4-12 are \$12 and Seniors 65+ are \$14. Parking is \$8. **Events and admission prices are 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. The Toronto Zoo is open year round (except December 25th). torontozoo.com