

# SAN DIEGO ZOO. SAFARI PARK

Welcome to the San Diego Zoo Safari Park! We want you to have an enjoyable experience during your visit. Please feel free to ask any employee or volunteer to assist you.

We have animal and plant information signs posted throughout the Park to help educate our guests. Also, if you have a cell phone that can access the internet, please go to:

<http://www.sandiegozoo.org/animalbytes/> to view more information about the many animals and plants we have in our collection. The following documents enclosed in this packet are designed to enhance your experience here at the Park.

## ❖ Africa Tram Species I.D. Guide

This will give you information about some of the many animals you may see on the Africa Tram Safari. Each tour is customized depending on the guide and the time of the tour and therefore does not have a script.

## ❖ Show scripts

We have included the scripts and information for our two shows; Frequent Flyers and Cheetah Run. Please see your map for the current show times.

- ◆ Frequent Flyers - A fun and entertaining free-flight bird show
  - Located in the Bird Show Amphitheater
- ◆ Cheetah Run - See how fast a cheetah can really run
  - Located near Lion Camp at Shiley's Cheetah Run

## Africa Tram

Each tour is customized depending on the guide and the time of the tour and therefore does not have a script.

The purpose of this Species I.D. Guide is to provide a means to identify animals in the Safari Park's field exhibits for individuals who cannot hear the tour vehicle driver's voice. This guide contains animals in our many field exhibits; however, some of the animals listed in this guide may not be seen on the tour.

### **SAFETY RULES:**

- Smoking is not allowed on the tour vehicle.
- Hold on to your hat and any other item that might blow out of the vehicle. If anything falls to the ground, we cannot stop the tour vehicle to pick it up.
- Please do not open doors at any time during the tour.
- You must remain seated while the tour vehicle is in motion.
- Standing is permissible when the vehicle is stopped.
- Please keep your head and arms inside the tour vehicle for your safety.

**For an emergency, please press the yellow strip located on the roof on each side of the tour vehicle, unless you are in the first car. If you are seated in the first car, please knock on the window to alert the driver.**

### **STROLLERS AND WHEELCHAIRS:**

Strollers and wheelchairs may be parked at the loading dock.

## Africa Tram Species Guide



**ANKOLE CATTLE**  
*(Bos taurus x indicus)*

Ankole cattle are a domestic cattle breed reared by tribesmen in eastern and southern Africa. Their individual coat color can vary greatly, ranging from brown to white, both solid and spotted. They are quite hardy, capable of living in very harsh climates characterized with very little water and grazing land. Owning Ankole cattle is a symbol of high status, and the animals are used for ceremonial and ritual purposes. With prosperity measured in cattle, their owners have a strong reason not to eat their wealth! Ankole cattle horns are the largest of any breed of cattle and average six feet across.

**Status: Conservation Dependant**



**BARBARY RED DEER**  
*(Cervus elephus barbarus)*

Barbary red deer can be found in the forest, oak woodland, and grassy meadows of northwestern Africa along the border of Algeria and Tunisia in the Atlas Mountains. They are large deer with a reddish coat and short tail. Mature males grow antlers that are shed every year and act as both ornaments and weapons. The antlers are shed after breeding season; females choose the male with the largest and most symmetrical antlers. Males also vocalize loudly to advertise their fitness. The red deer's diet consists of grasses, shrubs, and woody plants.

**Status: Near-Threatened**



**BLESBOK**  
*(Damaliscus dorcas philippsi)*

Blesbok are fairly large antelope, weighing between 130 to 220 pounds, and have a distinctive pattern of white markings on a rich brown coat. Once numerous throughout the grasslands of South Africa, their numbers have decreased considerably due to overhunting and habitat destruction. The population has begun to recover, and this species is no longer listed as endangered. Blesbok are grazers and inhabit open grassland. Herds normally include from 6 to 30 animals but may increase up to hundreds. Males are territorial, and both sexes scent mark using their preorbital glands.

**Status: Conservation Dependent**



## Africa Tram Species Guide



**BLUE CRANE**  
*(Anthropoides paradisea)*

The blue crane is one of only two crane species to have a completely feathered head. Feathers on the head and nape give the bird the appearance of a cobra. This crane is the national bird of the Republic of South Africa. A medium-sized crane, it reaches a height of 43 inches and can live up to 50 years. Found in the marshes and grasslands, the blue crane provides a great service to farmers by consuming prodigious numbers of locusts and other insects. It also eats seeds, roots, worms, and small mammals. The spectacular courtship dance of the blue crane begins with the pair running around in circles. Suddenly the two stop and call in unison, then both birds simultaneously pick up bunches of grass and throw them up in the air. Upon the completion of the nest, two eggs are usually produced. **Status: Threatened**



**CAPE BUFFALO**  
*(Syncerus caffer caffer)*

The Cape buffalo, also called the savanna buffalo, inhabits the open plains of East and South Africa. There are two species of African buffalo: the larger Cape subspecies weighs about 1,500 pounds, and the smaller, reddish-colored forest buffalo weighs about 800 pounds. The Cape buffalo is a heavily built, stout-limbed animal with large, black, shaggy ears and massive horns that join at the base on top of the head. Although it is not endangered in the wild, it is a popular trophy animal. The Cape buffalo is surprisingly fast, reaching speeds up to 40 miles per hour. It is also a powerful animal and can be dangerously aggressive when encountered in the bush. This subspecies has been known to attack and kill predators such as lions, leopards, and hyenas.

**Status: Conservation Dependent**



**DALMATIAN PELICAN**  
*(Pelecanus crispus)*

The Dalmatian pelican's range is from southeastern Europe to China. It lives up to ten years in the wild and much longer in zoos. Pelicans are among the heaviest of all flying birds and can weigh up to 33 pounds. They have a unique fishing technique, working in cooperation with the great cormorant. When the cormorants dive for fish, they chase some to the surface where the pelican is waiting. As the fish appear, they become easy prey for both bird species. As with most pelicans, Dalmatian pelicans have subcutaneous air sacs to help keep their large bodies afloat. They prefer to make their nests on the ground.

**Status: Endangered**

## Africa Tram Species Guide



**EAST AFRICAN BONGO**  
*(Tragelaphus eurycerus isaaci)*

The bongo is the largest and most colorful forest antelope, having a bright chestnut coat and white vertical stripes. Males are darker, but both sexes have spiral horns. This antelope lives in tropical forest openings heavy with brush re-growing after elephants have moved through the area. While some male bongos are solitary, this species travels in small, mixed herds. Females reinforce long-standing social bonds through mutual grooming. These bonds prove valuable by minimizing child-bearing costs, because the females can raise their offspring collectively in crèches. San Diego Zoo Global is participating in a cooperative effort to reintroduce bongos to Mt. Kenya.

**Status: Critically Endangered**



**EAST AFRICAN CROWNED CRANE**  
*(Balearica regulorum gibbericeps)*

Found throughout eastern Africa, the straw-colored feathers around the head give the bird its name. Its distinctive brush-like feathered crown provides this crane with the perfect camouflage in the tall grass of marsh, lakeside, and riverbank habitats. Crowned cranes also spread their wings to show off in a dramatic courtship dance. The crowned crane is monogamous, and pairs preen mutually, especially about the face and neck. When foraging, the cranes stamp the ground to stir up insects, but they also eat seeds, mollusks, amphibians, and rice. This is the most abundant crane on the African continent.

**Status: Threatened**



**EAST AFRICAN SITATUNGA**  
*(Tragelaphus spekei spekei)*

The sitatunga inhabits many western, central, and eastern African countries. This antelope spends much of its time in the dense reed beds of swamps and marshes. It has widely splayed hooves for walking in mud and compressed floating vegetation and is a good swimmer. Adult males and females look like different animals because of their extreme sexual dimorphism. The males, at 200 pounds, weigh almost twice as much as the females and are a chocolate gray-brown with white markings. Only the males have horns, which are long and slightly twisted. The females are bright chestnut and more conspicuously striped. Sitatungas are the most aquatic of all the antelope and when in danger have been known to totally submerge themselves, except for their nostrils.

**Status: Threatened**



## Africa Tram Species Guide



### **EASTERN WHITE-BEARDED GNU** *(Connochaetes taurinus albojubatus)*

Gnus are large antelope, 400 or more pounds, with a large, elongated head and shoulders that are noticeably higher than the rump. Also known as wildebeests, they are usually seen in large herds known for their seasonal mass migrations. They roam a thousand miles or so each year, following the growing grasses back and forth across the Serengeti Plain of Tanzania and Kenya. Generally short-grass grazers, the migratory pattern of the gnu reflects the availability of suitable forage, water, and minerals. About 80 percent of females give birth within the same 2- to 3-week period; this is known as synchronized birthing or calving. The name “gnu” derives from the Hotentot *t’gnu*, which mimics the animal’s typical loud, bellowing snort.

**Status: Least Concern**



### **EASTERN WHITE PELICAN** *(Pelecanus onocrotalus)*

This species of pelican is a resident of southern Europe, Africa, and central Asia. Like the pink-backed pelican, the white pelican lives around lakes, lagoons, and marshes. Although not globally threatened, it is considered regionally threatened due to habitat destruction, persecution, disturbance, flooding, and pollution. Eastern white pelicans hunt cooperatively in small groups. The birds create a horseshoe formation on open water and then push the fish into the shallow part of the water and plunge their bill underwater in unison. The fish trying to escape are met by several living nets and are likely be caught by one of them. The captured fish is brought to the surface, the water strained from the pouch before the fish is consumed.

**Status: Near threatened**



### **ELLIPSEN OR SOUTHERN WATERBUCK** *(Kobus ellipsiprymnus ellipsiprymnus)*

Waterbuck are the largest of the wetland, grazing antelope species. They do not have to migrate with the seasons because their favored habitat, in central and southern Africa, has an abundance of sheltering vegetation, water, and grass year-round. Waterbuck prefer riverine areas with reed beds and tall grasses as well as open woodland. They rarely venture far from the water, as they are the most water dependent of all antelope and need to drink daily. Their high-protein diet, found in the grasses they eat, probably accounts for their high water intake. Only the males have horns, measuring 30 to 40 inches in length. This species is named for the pronounced elliptical ring on the rump.

**Status: Conservation Dependent**

## Africa Tram Species Guide



### FRINGED-EARED OR KILIMANJARO ORYX

*(Oryx gazella callotis)*

Oryx are primarily grazers living in habitats ranging from dry acacia savanna to gravel plains to desert. The fringe-eared and beisa subspecies are found in Kenya, but the fringe-eared oryx's range extends farther south into Tanzania. Both sexes possess long, nearly straight horns, weigh 300 to 400 pounds, and have a sandy-colored body. They have distinctive black stripes on the face that camouflage the eyes and black spots in the ears to mimic eyes. The Greek *callotis* translates to "beautiful ears" and refers to the distinctive tufts of long, black hairs on the ears.

**Status: Conservation Dependent**



### GEMSBOK OR SOUTH AFRICAN ORYX

*(Oryx gazella gazella)*

This South African representative of the oryx group is the largest member of the oryx subspecies. An adult averages 48 inches at the shoulders, and bulls weigh about 450 pounds. Both sexes have long, almost straight, horns, although the females' are thinner and longer. The gregarious gemsbok is found in herds of 30 to 40 animals in the dry plains and subdesert regions of Namibia and South Africa. It feeds mainly on grasses but also eats the fruits and bulbs of succulents, thereby obtaining enough moisture to withstand long periods of drought. The gemsbok is considered nomadic because it travels extensively in search of water and grazing land.

**Status: Conservation Dependent**



### GIRAFFE

*(Giraffa camelopardalis)*

Both male and female giraffes have two to four blunt, short, horn-like ossicones on the top of the head plus a fifth central protuberance (horn) just above the eyes. The giraffe is the only mammal born with horns; they are soft cartilage at first and harden as they mature. At a maximum height of 18 feet, the giraffe is the tallest living land mammal. Its height and excellent eyesight have given giraffes the name "walking lookout towers." Giraffes range in weight from 2,000 to 3,000 pounds. The name "giraffe" is derived from the Arabic *zarafah*, meaning "one who walks swiftly." The translation of the Latin *camelopardalis* is "camel marked like leopard."

**Status: Conservation Dependent**



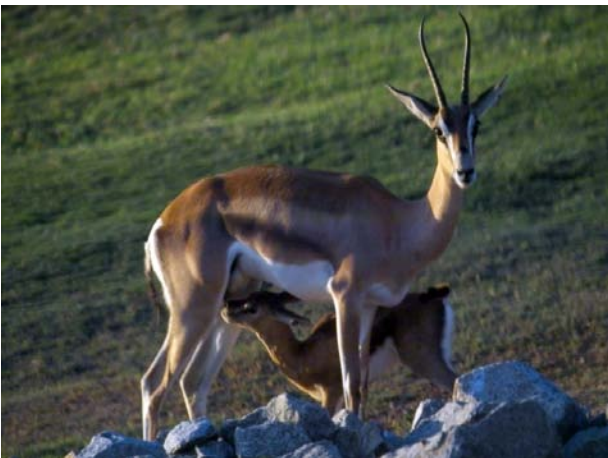
## Africa Tram Species Guide



**GOLIATH HERON**  
(*Ardea goliath*)

At about 5 feet tall, the Goliath heron is the largest of the 60 heron species. It inhabits the shallow water of rivers and lakes, both salt and fresh water, marshes and swamps, tidal estuaries, reefs, and sometimes mangrove creeks in central and southern Africa. The Goliath heron stalks prey with great patience. Once a fish is captured, the heron carries it to floating vegetation or to shore before eating it. The heron's size also allows it to wade into deeper water than other birds in search of fish, so it is rarely in competition with other herons for food. The Goliath heron is distinguished from the great blue heron by its black bill.

**Status: Least Concern**



**GRANT'S GAZELLE**  
(*Gazella granti*)

Found in northern Kenya, this gazelle prefers semi-desert to open savanna. The Grant's gazelle is twice the size of the Thomson's gazelle, weighing approximately 120 pounds. It looks similar except that the Grant's gazelle has a white rump patch that continues up over the base of the tail, and the black band along the flank is usually absent in adult males. Sight and hearing are well developed in gazelles, and they are also swift runners. Both sexes have horns, but the males' are longer and much thicker than those of the females'.

**Status: Conservation Dependent**



**GREATER KUDU**  
(*Tragelaphus strepsiceros*)

The greater kudu is a large, tall antelope with a gray to reddish brown coat and light vertical stripes to break up the animal's outline in the thickets. Males are larger, with corkscrew horns that are longer than those of any other antelope. While this antelope prefers dense thickets during the day, at night it browses in relatively open woodland. Because the kudu is very familiar with its range and is a good jumper, it runs toward obstacles that others have to go around when rushed by predators. Its large ears are perfect for detecting predators in its low-visibility environment.

**Status: Conservation Dependent**



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### **GREVY'S ZEBRA** *(Equus grevyi)*

Grevy's zebras are the largest wild equid and have the most delicate striping of any of the three types of zebras. The unique stripes of individuals help them to recognize one another. They inhabit grasslands bordering deserts in northeast Africa. Grevy's zebras live in herds of less than ten animals, consisting of a territorial stallion, several mares, and their offspring. The male often stands away from the females, watching for any potential rivals. The females work together watching for predators. These zebras have large ears that help them listen for danger and can be used in communication. They point their ears in the direction of the concern. Mutual grooming is an activity that reinforces social bonds.

**Status: Endangered**



### **KENYA IMPALA** *(Aepyceros melampus rendilis)*

Although there are several subspecies of the impala throughout Africa, this subspecies is confined to Kenya and Uganda. The impala is highly gregarious, with one buck presiding over a harem of 15 or more females. The champion jumper of all antelope, an impala can leap 8 to 10 feet vertically while covering 30 to 35 feet in a single bound. The impala is a fast runner and can reach speeds of 35 to 40 miles per hour. The genus *Aepyceros* is Latin for "high horns" and refers to the long, lyre-shaped horns of the male. The species name *melampus* is Greek for "black footed," referring to the tufts of black hair on the heels of the hind legs. These tufts are scent glands and, when alarmed, they disperse a scent as the animal leaps, which may confuse a predator.

**Status: Conservation Dependent**



### **MARABOU STORK** *(Leptoptilos crumeniferus)*

The marabou stork possesses one of the largest wingspans of any land-dwelling bird, averaging 8 feet across. The stork weighs between 12 and 16 pounds and is found in Africa, south of the Sahara, in open and semi-arid areas. In these extreme conditions, the marabou stork dissipates heat by extending a sac on the throat. It also uses this sac, along with bill clapping, to make noises during courtship. The marabou stork frequents drying pools, especially when searching for food to feed its young, and is often found with other bird and mammal scavengers around carcasses. Its naked head and neck help to keep the bird clean when feeding. Marabou storks are opportunistic feeders.

**Status: Least concern**

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### **NILE LECHWE OR MRS. GRAY'S WATERBUCK** *(Kobus megaceros)*

Nile lechwe are found on the flood plains along the Nile River ranging throughout Ethiopia and Sudan. They are one of the most aquatic of the grazing antelope, feeding on river grasses and spending large amounts of time in water sometimes up to their back. Typical of aquatic species, they have elongated hooves that provide support on soft ground. The females are reddish tan with white shading underneath. Mature males are chocolate brown with a white shoulder patch and long horns that sweep backward. Males, at an average of 225 pounds, weigh about 50 pounds more than females. This species is extremely sexually dimorphic.

**Status: Near threatened**



### **NORTHERN WHITE RHINOCEROS** *(Ceratotherium simum cottoni)*

The northern white rhinoceros is one of the most endangered animals in the world. Both the northern and the southern white rhinoceros are square-lipped grazers and similar in appearance and habits, but the two are considered to be separate subspecies. Northern white rhinos originally ranged throughout southern Sudan, on the west bank of the Nile as far west as Bahr el Ghazal province, the Central African Republic, Zaire, and Uganda. Today there is only a small, wild population residing in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, formerly known as Zaire. The San Diego Zoo Safari Park is the only facility in the western hemisphere to have the northern white rhino; the other captive population is in the Czech Republic.

**Status: Critically Endangered**



### **OSTRICH** *(Struthio camelus)*

The ostrich is the largest living bird and also the heaviest, reaching heights of 8 to 9 feet and weighing up to 350 pounds. It has large eyes, which give the bird excellent eyesight when scanning for danger. Although flightless, the ostrich is a fast runner, reaching speeds up to 45 miles per hour, which can be maintained to out-distance predators. The ostrich is the only species where the toes have been reduced to two, the inner of which is thick and strong with a sturdy claw. Its wings are used for display and in thermoregulation. When running at full speed, the ostrich uses the wings for balance and can change direction quickly. One ostrich egg is equivalent to the weight of about 24 chick eggs!

**Status: Near threatened in some areas**



## Africa Tram Species Guide



**PATTERSON'S ELAND**  
*(Taurotragus oryx pattersonianus)*

Eland are the largest of all African antelope. Females weigh 850 to 1,300 pounds, and males weigh 1,000 to 2,000 pounds. They are native to grasslands and open woodlands of eastern, southern, and central Africa. Eland feed on grass and the foliage of trees and bushes and can go without water indefinitely, obtaining the water they need from the food they eat. Both sexes have spiral horns and a dewlap, which increases the body's surface area through which heat loss occurs. Despite their large size, eland have been known to clear a 5-foot fence and may run up to 40 miles per hour. Calves are very attached to each other and form defensive nursery herds. In addition, they only go to their mother when called to nurse.

**Status: Conservation Dependent**



**PINK-BACKED PELICAN**  
*(Pelecanus rufescens)*

Pink-backed pelicans are found in central and southern Africa, Saudi Arabia, and Madagascar. They live near rivers, marshes, lakes, and flood plains and prefer to nest in trees near the waterfront. Contrary to popular belief, the pelican's pouch does not serve as a storage area for food. When fish are captured, several gallons of water enter as well. The water is strained out, and the fish are immediately swallowed. Pelicans have an expandable gular pouch that can hold three times more fish than the bird's stomach. The pouch also helps the pelican thermoregulate.

**Status: Least concern**



**RED-FRONTED GAZELLE**  
*(Gazella rufifrons)*

The red-fronted gazelle has a golden brown back, white underside, and a faint, dark line across the midriff. This species inhabits grasslands during the wet season and scrubby acacia woodlands during the dry season. While most large African predators hunt gazelles, cheetahs are their primary threat. This gazelle's low center of gravity helps it to outmaneuver the agile cheetah. Territorial gazelle males attempt to herd wandering groups of females, trying to keep them in their territory for as long as possible. Humans have hunted red-fronted gazelles for a long time. Continued hunting and competition with livestock threaten them today.

**Status: Vulnerable**

## Africa Tram Species Guide



### ROAN ANTELOPE

*(Hippotragus equinus)*

The roan antelope is a light brown antelope with a black-and-white face mask. Both males and females have relatively short-curved horns. They prefer well-watered grasslands with some access to cover. This species is water dependent and needs to drink at least every other day. Both males and females are territorial. Males mark territory by depositing dung at specific intervals. Female roan are territorial around waterholes and maintain their hierarchy by low-intensity sparring matches. Young males form bachelor herds until they are strong enough to establish their own territories. Females stay with their mother and may inherit her status in the herd.

**Status: Lower Risk/Conservation Dependent**



### SABLE ANTELOPE

*(Hippotragus niger niger)*

The sable antelope is still hunted for trophies, and much of its former habitat is gone. Its home is the savanna woodlands and grasslands of eastern and southern Africa. It is found in herds from 10 to 20 animals, led by a master bull. The sable is very adept at defending itself, even against powerful predators such as lions, which seldom attempt to attack. It is a large antelope and weighs 400 to 550 pounds. The sable fights down on its knees, better enabling it to hook up with its long, curved, and heavily ringed horns, which average 40 inches. Sable antelope mostly eat grass but at times eat herbs and leaves from shrubs and trees. The male is colored dark brown to sable black, while the female is reddish brown.

**Status: Conservation Dependent**



### SCIMITAR- HORNED ORYX

*(Oryx dammah)*

Scimitar-horned oryx are mostly white with reddish brown necks. Both males and females possess curved-back horns that can grow to be several feet long. Now extinct in the wild, they once lived in the arid plains and deserts of northern Africa. Their white coat helps to reflect the heat of the sun. Scimitar-horned oryx eat grasses, herbs, and juicy roots. To cope with the shortage of water, they can raise their body temperature by several degrees to avoid sweating. This oryx species has unusually broad hooves that allow it to travel easily across sand and gravel. San Diego Zoo Global participates in the Sahelo-Saharan Project, which is beginning a multiple-country reintroduction effort.

**Status: Extinct in the Wild**



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### SOEMMERING'S GAZELLE

*(Gazella soemmerringii)*

The Soemmerring's gazelle is tall and light brown, with a white underside and a white patch that extends well above the tail. This gazelle spends much of the year in hilly woodlands but migrates into the lowland plains to take advantage of the green grasses in the wet season. Although its visibility can be obscured by brush, the high, white rump patch allows the gazelle to follow and keep track of others. Seasonally, herds may contain hundreds of animals, causing competition for resources. The black-and-white throat display on the face and the lyre-shaped horns help individuals intimidate rivals.

**Status: Vulnerable**



### SOMALI WILD ASS

*(Equus africanus somalicus)*

Somali wild asses inhabit flat, arid, and rocky land with hills that the animals stand on to scan the horizon. Temperatures can reach 122 degrees Fahrenheit during the day, and shade is scarce. Herds usually consist of 10 to 15 individuals and are very gregarious. Today, the Somali wild ass is critically endangered in the wild, and the Safari Park is involved in the captive-breeding efforts to save this species.

**Status: Critically Endangered**



### SOUTH AFRICAN SPRINGBOK

*(Antidorcas marsupialis marsupialis)*

The springbok is one of the champions of pronking among antelope, leaping stiff legged and with arched back as much as 10 feet into the air, an action often triggered by the presence of predators but can also be seen when simply playing or surprised. During this behavior, the white hairs on the rump are erected. The South African springbok is the only gazelle native to southern Africa, occurring in dry savannas and semi-deserts. It weighs 55 to 90 pounds and is the smallest of all springbok subspecies.

**Status: Conservation Dependent**

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**SOUTHERN GROUND HORNBILL***(Bucorvus leadbeateri)*

The southern ground hornbill is a heavy, black bird with white primary feathers and a large, down-curved bill. The male has bare, red facial skin and an inflatable, bright red throat patch. The female has a patch of blue on her red throat skin. Both sexes have long eyelashes, which is unusual in birds. They inhabit savanna and woodland areas, often visiting grassland and adjoining patches of forest. They eat insects, small mammals, reptiles, and even birds. These hornbills rarely fly but do take flight into trees to escape danger. They nest in trees or stumps and occasionally in small caves in a cliff face. This is the only species of hornbill in which the female is not walled into the nest with the young.

**Status: Common****SOUTHERN WHITE OR SQUARE-LIPPED RHINOCEROS***(Ceratotherium simum simum)*

All rhinoceroses are herbivores dependent on plant foliage; they ingest between three to five percent of their body weight in plant matter. The white rhino species exclusively grazes. Its wide, flat lips and lengthened skull, which can weigh 800 to 1,000 pounds, enable the rhino to graze easily on the short grasses it prefers. The white rhino has a prominent hump on the back of its neck that contains the ligaments supporting the weight of its massive head. Rhinos have poor eyesight, only being able to see clearly up to 30 feet. They do possess a keen sense of smell and hearing. Rhinos are also fast runners, reaching speeds of 30 miles per hour.

**Status: Conservation Dependent****SPUR-WINGED GOOSE***(Plectropterus gambensis)*

This species is the largest waterfowl in Africa and is sometimes found in numerous congregations. The spur-winged goose is named for the bony protrusion, or spur, on the wings that is used for defense. It spends most of the day in swamps or on open water and can perch freely on trees. At night, spur-wings feed on grass and crops of all kinds including sweet potatoes, ground nuts, and fallen figs. These geese can breed in most months of the year and produce, on average, 12 eggs. The weight of an adult male is 12 to 15 pounds and females weigh 9 to 12 pounds.

**Status: Least concern**



## Africa Tram Species Guide



### **THOMSON'S GAZELLE** *(Gazella thomsoni thomsoni)*

The Thomson's gazelle is one of 10 gazelle species found throughout Africa. They live on open, short-grass plains in southeastern Sudan, Kenya, and Tanzania. In the Serengeti region, they spend the rainy season in the grasslands and the dry season in the bush country or lowland hills. When agitated, Thomson's gazelles display a number of signals, like skin shivering, foot stamping, tail waving, and high, bouncing leaps. The leaping is called "stotting" and is a diversionary tactic used to confuse predators and give a clear view for the gazelle of what lies ahead. The Thomson's gazelle weighs, on average, about 50 pounds and is capable of running 50 miles per hour for a considerable distance. They are the favorite prey of the cheetah.

**Status: Conservation Dependent**



### **UGANDA (OR THOMAS'S) KOB** *(Kobus kob thomasi)*

The Uganda kob is found in western Kenya and eastern Uganda. It tends to prefer regions near a water source with little seasonal changes. These medium-sized antelope weigh 150 to 250 pounds and are strongly, but gracefully, built, with a short, glossy golden coat. Characteristic features include a whitish area around the eyes, a white patch on the throat, and black markings on the forelegs. Only males have horns, which are lyrate, thick, and heavily ridged. Habitat destruction and political turmoil throughout Uganda have drastically reduced the Uganda kob's population in the wild. This kob subspecies is named after zoologist Oldfield Thomas.

**Status: Conservation Dependent**



### **WESTERN RUEPPELL'S VULTURE** *(Gyps rueppellii)*

The western Ruppell's vulture has dark feathers with pale tips that give a scaled appearance. The head and neck are mostly bare. This species lives in open sub-Saharan habitats of arid grasslands up to 14,000 feet in elevation. It roosts and breeds in cliffs and gorges. The vulture's diet consists of the carrion of large mammals. Its bare neck and head allow the bird to feed without getting its feathers contaminated with blood and bacteria. Its strong neck allows it to get its head under the skin or into the ribs of a carcass. This vulture feeds communally; individuals get access to food based on rank, body size, and hunger.

**Status: Threatened**

## Africa Tram Species Guide



### YELLOW-BILLED STORK

*(Mycteria ibis)*

The yellow-billed stork is large and heavily built, 42 inches long from bill to tail. Its plumage is pinkish white with black primary feathers. It has red legs, a bare, red face, and a long, slightly down-curved yellow bill. The bird inhabits mostly inland waters and is rarely found on the coast. It eats frogs, small fish, and other aquatic prey. These storks are tactile feeders, walking and probing the water with their bills. The long toes may also be used to stir up the water or mud in search of prey. They are often seen raising one wing during fishing, possibly to reduce surface reflection to better locate fish. These birds are colonial tree nesters, often nesting with other bird species.

**Status: Common to abundant**



### ZAMBEZI OR RED LECHWE

*(Kobus leche leche)*

The red lechwe is a reddish brown antelope with lighter under parts, throat and facial markings. Males darken with age, possibly seasonally, and have lyre-shaped horns that curve backward. Lechwe inhabit swamps and wetlands and eat the abundant and nutritious grasses growing in meadows bordered by rivers and lakes. Their long, splayed hooves are an adaptation to this type of habitat, helping to support them on soft ground. They are not very fast runners on dry ground but are excellent swimmers. Lechwe are highly gregarious and can be found in large herds. Females and calves are usually found closer to the water for the safety of the young, while adult males are typically found on drier ground.

**Status: Conservation Dependent**



Opening birds include, but are not limited to:

- |                               |                                    |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. Tuzo                       | Abyssinian Ground Hornbill; Africa |
| 2. Phoenix                    | Crested Caracara; Mexico           |
| 3. Ed and/or Sue              | Vulturine Guinea fowl; Africa      |
| 4. 3 Stooges                  | Helmeted Guinea fowl; Africa       |
| 5. Bernard & Isabelle         | Scarlet Ibis; South America        |
| 6. Macaws of varying species; | Central and South America          |

*(After the last “opening” bird is clear, the speaker runs out.)*

Hello everyone, and welcome to Frequent Flyers! Great flights by all of our opening birds *(speaker names a few of them)*. My name is \_\_\_\_\_, and here at the Park we think birds are so amazing that they deserve their own show. So, today you’ll learn about our birds, and the Park’s efforts in their conservation, as well. You will be seeing birds from all over the world, and we will be bringing them as close to you as we possibly can. So, I have to take this time to warn you. If you feel that during this show you might need to duck.....duck! In fact we insist, if a bird is in the air, please stay in your seats and keep your hands down. Let these birds do what we trained them to do. We have conditioned these animals to be very comfortable coming in very close to your heads. And you never know just where a bird might come from...like this one right here.



Scarlet Macaw

**Opening Macaw** (if there is one)

This is Star, our **Scarlet Macaw**.

She has dropped in to illustrate that very point. Now that our show has started, we ask everyone to please stay seated, and let our birds fly in as close to you as they feel comfortable doing. So on that note, it’s time to say good-bye to Star, our Scarlet Macaw.



East African Crowned Crane

**Crane**

The next bird you are going to see is also one of the tallest birds you will be seeing on this stage today. She hails all the way from East Africa, ladies and gentlemen, this is Taji/Monjo, our **East African Crowned Crane**.

There are many species of cranes that do some very serious migrating. For example, the Siberian Crane will migrate over 10,000 miles just to find the right place to nest.



East African Crowned Crane

### Crane Continued

The East African Crowned Crane gets its name for that fine crown of feathers you see on top of Taji's head. At the moment, these birds are not endangered, but 11 out of the 15 species of cranes are endangered or considered vulnerable. Here at the Park, we do what we can to help. We have 6 species of endangered cranes here that are set up for breeding. Sometimes we do something that you might find interesting. We will do a process called "cross-fostering". We always prefer that the parents raise their own chicks. But, if we have a pair of cranes that are not taking care of their eggs, we will cross-foster their eggs and give them to a different pair of birds who are experienced parents, even if it's a different species of bird. For example, here at the Park, we have turtle doves raising a very endangered bird called the Mauritius Pink Pigeon, and some zoos have gone as far as to let chickens incubate the eggs of bald eagles...apparently, if you don't tell the chicken that she's sitting on a predator, then it's all good!

Ladies and gentlemen that was Taji, our East African Crowned Crane.



Eurasian Eagle Owl

### Owl

Throughout Europe and Asia there is a striking species of owl. It is the largest type of owl in the world. Generally, owls do not migrate, they find everything they need right where they live. They lie in wait, in the cover of darkness waiting for their opportunity to catch their prey. Ladies and gentlemen, usually the owl sees you before you see the owl. Focus your attention to the top cave of the rock, this is Beethoven and he is our **Eurasian Eagle Owl** (Or Hinckley/Thatcher, our **Milky Eagle Owl**, found in the southern regions in Africa).

There are many myths that surround the owl. One myth is that these birds are wise. Well that's not true at all, but what they lack in intelligence they make up for by an incredible set of senses. During the day, the owl can see 10 times better than we can (it is a myth that the daylight harms their eyes). At night the owls can see 100 times better than we can. Also, his hearing is very acute; he can hear a mouse step on a twig from 75 feet away, even if that mouse is hiding 2 feet under the snow. Another incredible adaptation this bird possesses is the gift of completely silent flight. He can accomplish this because the edges of his flight feathers are slightly frayed allowing the wind to pass silently through without making a sound. The owl doesn't rely on speed to catch its prey. He relies on the ability to sneak up on his prey in the darkness.

That was Beethoven our Eurasian Eagle Owl.



Milky Eagle Owl



### Rats

You know, a bird like Beethoven/Hinckley/ Thatcher can eat two to three thousand mice or rats in a single year. That might sound like a lot.....but let me put it to you this way. If you took 2 mice and put them in a field for a year, you would have over a **million** mice in that field from that one initial pair. So, you can understand how crucial it is to have all the birds of prey around, to keep the rodent population down, and a nice healthy balance out in nature.



Lanner Falcon

### Falcon

We just showed you a nocturnal predator, we are now going to show you a diurnal or daytime hunter. We are going to show you the hunting style of a falcon. Falcons are unique from other birds of prey because they prefer to hunt other birds, birds that they take right out of the air. \_\_\_\_\_ will be swinging around a leather lure. That leather lure simulates another bird in flight. You see, falcons will repeatedly dive at their prey, until they can out maneuver it, and knock it out of the sky. So, ladies and gentlemen, it is my pleasure to introduce to you Bukura, our **Lanner Falcon**. (*lure-flight of varying lengths*) And she's caught her prey! Ladies and Gentlemen: that's Bukura!

There is a piece of meat tied to that leather lure. It makes the lure more life like to the falcon, as if she really did catch a bird. When she is done eating \_\_\_\_\_ will pick her up and walk her around so you can get a closer look at her when she is not moving quite so fast.

Falcons will fly high above a flock of birds. They will single one bird out from the rest of the flock by diving at it repeatedly. When that one bird is separated from its flock the falcon will seize its opportunity and knock that bird right out of the sky.

As I mentioned, the peregrine falcon is the fastest animal in the world. These birds have been spotted from a few hundred, to a few thousand feet in the air, and it is from those heights that falcons have been clocked in hunting dives at speeds greater than 280mph. This easily makes the falcon the fastest animal in the world.

Many of you might be familiar with the Peregrine Falcon for another reason. In the 70's, we almost lost this bird to extinction. This was primarily due to pesticide contamination. Pesticides, such as DDT had built up in the food chain and caused some severe reproduction



Lanner Falcon

### Falcon Continued

problems in many species of birds. In the peregrines case, it made their egg shells so weak and thin that the eggs would break under the nesting parent falcon. But luckily, with bans placed on those particular pesticides, and with the help of falconers and captive breeding programs, these birds have been released all of the country and they

have made a remarkable come back today. In fact, we are pleased to say that as of August of 1999, the North American Peregrine Falcon was officially removed from the endangered species list. This is a huge accomplishment, and one of the few success stories of putting an endangered species back into the wild through captive breeding and conservation. We are very proud to have a falcon here to show you today! Thank you \_\_\_\_\_ with Bukura, our Lanner Falcon.

### African Gray Parrot

Most birds are known for their amazing ability to fly, while some birds have completely different talents. Joining me now is \_\_\_\_\_ and Congo/Kusema, our **African Gray Parrot**.

Well, hello everybody, my name is \_\_\_\_\_, but more importantly this is Congo. Congo is an African gray parrot, they can be found in the Congo River basins of Africa. Congo is a pretty entertaining guy and don't let his straight face fool you for a minute because he feeds on your attention, so if Congo does anything that you like, make sure you let him know it.

Well what do you say we get started Congo. Go ahead and test the mic for me. Oh, good it's working. So Congo lives in our office back stage and he of course hears all sorts of funny sounds. In fact we have a water cooler back stage and like all water coolers it bubbles.

We also have a telephone. Oh yea, you think that's fun? Guess how fun it is when you can't tell which one just rang. And like many of us these days, Congo has his very own cell-just no volume control on this one.

Wow, Congo this is a good crowd, do you think they're cute? Congo they think you're cute too. In fact many people might think parrots are so cute that they want to get one as a pet, however in some cases this can cause direct harm to the wild population of parrots as people will steal little gray guys like this to sell them illegally into the pet trade. Congo has heard of this and he doesn't like it one bit. In fact he can sum up the exact feelings with one very eloquent expression. Do you guys want to hear it? Congo, tell all these people, what are your feelings on poachers? It's a feeling that comes from deep within. Wow Congo they think your funny. He cracks himself up too.



African Gray Parrot





African Gray Parrot

### African Gray Parrot Continued

One thing we never joke about though is how appreciative we are of your visit to the park today. In fact you, our members, our donors and our guests are the reason we can fund so many conservation projects here and around the world. It's clear, when it comes to conservation you all have taken charge. In fact, Congo would like to thank each and every one of you for your visit today with a kiss.

You know, conservation is one of Congo's all time favorite topics. Every time we talk about if Congo gets really excited. You see here at the park we conserve all sorts of animals. We work with rhinos, elephants, cheetahs...even little old duckies. But it's not just the big animals we help. We can conserve something as tiny as a frog. Apparently that's a squished frog.

Well Congo, I think we should keep going, is that okay? Why don't you give everyone out there a high four. Do it again Congo, high four. Well <speaker> has joins us back on stage. She/he's got a lot more birds to share with you, but before we go Congo's a very polite little dude, say ba-bye! Bye folks. Have a great day at the park.

(Kusema's show behaviors are slightly different.)



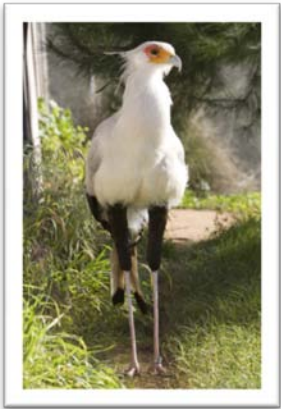
Nicobar Pigeon

### Nicobar

Now it's time for one of my favorite parts of the show, when I get to have a volunteer up here with me to meet a bird up close and personal. (*Volunteer intro, wave to the audience.*)

Now in order to catch this bird, put your left arm out like a tree branch, because Gertrude is going to land on your arm. Now, we train our birds using positive reinforcement, which means that when bird does what we ask, it gets a reward or reinforcement. So, I'm going to put these condor treats in the palm of your hand and all I want you to do is to look out at the audience and keep smiling no matter what happens here onstage. It's time to say hello to Gertrude, our **Nicobar Pigeon**.

The Nicobar pigeon is a large fruit-eating pigeon from small islands in south East Asia. The Nicobar's home is threatened with habitat destruction, human disturbances, and introduced predators.



Secretary Bird

### Secretary Bird

What kind of bird looks like a crane, but acts more like an eagle? That is rather unique African bird of prey called the **Secretary Bird**. So unique, they're in their own scientific family. This bird is unique for two main reasons. One, how they look. Two, for how they capture their food. They tend to swallow their prey whole, so the secretary bird hunts insects and small mammals and reptiles, including snakes.

The secretary bird is the tallest bird of prey, and is also the most terrestrial bird of prey. That means that although capable of flight, this bird will generally stalk her prey by walking around the open grassland and savanna.

Joining us from our hillside is Karani, our Secretary Bird! Certainly unusual looking, isn't she?

Like other raptors, she'll use her feet to kill her prey. However, instead of flying after it and grasping it, she'll usually chase it, and....stomp that prey to death! They often aim for the head of their intended prey with the first strike. The scales on her legs are quite thick, and offer a measure of protection from venomous bites, allowing her to hunt even some of the most deadly reptiles.

Some biologists believe the two long tail feathers will confuse a snake, so the snake doesn't know exactly where to strike. These birds have been called "marching eagles," although they are in fact not related to eagles.

Folks, that's Karani, our Secretary Bird!

Why "secretary" bird, you're asking? There are two theories. Some people say the long tail feathers and head plumes reminded early biologists of a legal secretary wearing a gray tail coat with a quill pen tucked behind his ear. The more likely theory is the word "secretary" is a derivation of an Arabic term meaning "hunter-bird". Either way, many secretary birds these days prefer the title "administrative assistant" bird.





Andean Condor

### Andean Condor

Just fewer than 8000 animals call the San Diego Zoo and San Diego Zoo Safari Park home, and as you meet some of these animals today, you'll notice that a number of them are endangered or threatened. One of the rarest and highest profile species that calls the Park home is the California condor. In the 1800's, the California condor ranged as far north as Oregon, south as Baja, but by the 1980's, the population had dwindled to only 27 birds. Here at the Park, we were sure we could help the species out, by breeding these birds, then releasing their offspring back to the wild. The only problem was that nobody knew very much about the California condor's biology; we weren't sure what made them tick.

That's where the California condor's closest relative, the Andean condor, comes in. Andean condors have been a part of the San Diego

Zoo's collections since early in our history, and we knew that if we could convince our Andean condors to lay eggs, the California condor breeding program had a chance. Twenty years later, the California condor has become one of our greatest success stories; thanks to our cooperative breeding program, this species now numbers over 200, and you can once again see the California condor soaring the skies above five protected sites in California, Mexico, and Arizona.

We'd like to meet one of our **Andean Condors** now; she's a truly impressive bird, one of the largest flying birds on earth, with a wingspan just under 11 feet. Her name is \_\_\_\_\_, and she'll be soaring down right over the tops of your heads. She weighs in right around 20 pounds, and male Andeans can weigh closer to 25 pounds! Due to their large size, it seems that many people were afraid that the condors would prey on their livestock. In 1973, the Andean condor was added to the Endangered Species List. We know now that these birds aren't really hunters at all, but scavengers, playing an important role in their native South American habitat. They are some of nature's original recycling centers, in fact.

Andean condors have been known to fly at altitudes of 21,000 feet. That's higher than the tallest mountain in North America (Mt. McKinley, at 20,300 ft.).

Captive breeding and release programs have worked very well for the Andean condors, too; in fact, we learned a lot from our original releases, so that we knew what to expect when we started to send California condors back to the wild.

Andean condors can migrate up to 200 miles each day in search of food.

What makes them beautiful and graceful in the air...makes them quite goofy on the ground. Ladies and Gentlemen, that's Califia/Suyana, our Andean condor!



African Fish Eagle

### African Fish Eagle

Throughout history, many cultures around the world have revered the eagle as a symbol of strength and power. Today, those ancient beliefs are truly undeniable when you see these magnificent birds in flight. The best example I can give you is our own nations symbol, the Bald Eagle.

Of the 74 currently recognized eagle species, 32 are listed as vulnerable. Positioned at the top of the food chain, eagles play a crucial role in the balance of healthy ecosystems and are indicators of environmental change.

The eagle we will introduce to you today is a relative of the Bald Eagle, known as the **African Fish Eagle**. These birds are found in most the waterways of Africa, from rivers to coastlines to lakes. Although 90% of their diet is fish they will hunt other water birds such as Ibis, Storks, Herons and Spoonbills, and especially the Lesser Flamingo.

The African Fish Eagle is an expert water hunter, skimming its prey off from the surface of the water and flying away with it. This eagle is capable of flying away with something half of its bodyweight. However, if it catches a prey that is too heavy to fly away with, the African Fish Eagle will land in the water hanging on to its prey, use its powerful wings as oars, paddle to the side and drag its prey up onto land. These eagles are so successful at hunting that they spend on average 15 minutes a day hunting for their food.

Their distinctive call has been referred to as “the voice of Africa.”

We are about to introduce you to our fish eagle and one of our more popular Animal Ambassadors here at the park. Ladies and gentlemen, this is Cairo our African Fish Eagle.

One of the differences between this eagle and the Bald Eagle is the fact that the African Fish eagle has white feathering that extends down her front as well as the back, while the Bald Eagle’s white stops at the neckline.

Thank you \_\_\_\_\_, and that’s Cairo, our African Fish Eagle!



### Conclusion

As human populations continue to grow and habitat continues to decrease it is collections, like here in our park, that allow you to connect with wildlife and the wonders of nature. But, keep in mind, no matter how many birds we hatch here, it doesn't help if we don't protect where they need to feed, live, and **migrate**. And, we also must not forget to protect what is here in our own backyard.

(And/Or: A naturalist once said that in the end, we will conserve only what we love, we will love only what we understand, and we will understand only what we have been taught. We hope that all of you will learn what you can about your own environment, and how you can protect it, because conservation begins with us, in our own homes, and in our own backyards.)

On that note, we have one more species to share with you.....



Ferruginous Hawk

### Ferruginous Hawk - Orion

If any of you are visiting from the western parts of the US, you may have seen this species in your own backyard. She is a **Ferruginous Hawk**, the largest species of hawk in North America. The Ferruginous hawk is a winter migratory species here in southern California, and a relatively shy species. They can travel in a stoop as fast as 200 miles per hour, so don't blink, but do focus your attention to our hillside, and here comes Orion, our Ferruginous Hawk.

These birds get their name from that rust-coloration all along her body. This hawk can soar over a mile up in the sky, and still spot her prey on the ground.

Thank you so much for coming to our show today, and supporting conservation!

OR



Harris Hawk

### Harris Hawks

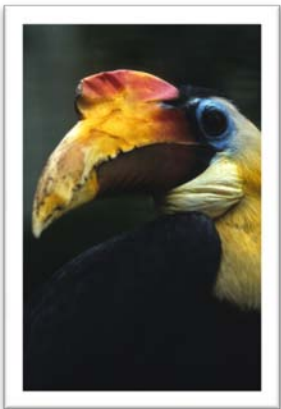
These next birds are unusual for birds of prey because they are social hunters. The **Harris Hawk** is found in the desert southwest of the US (Texas, Arizona, New Mexico). Working together allows them to capture prey much larger than a single hawk could subdue on its own. They'll hunt in groups of 2 up to 20 or more, and can catch a 13 pound jackrabbit! Their cooperative hunting has earned them the nickname "wolves of the sky."

Focus your attention to our hillside and meet Yuma, followed by Mesa.

Ladies and Gentlemen, meet the boys!

Thank you so much for joining us here at the bird show, and have a wonderful day here at the park!

(\*Often, right before the hawk is released, our Guinea Fowl, the 3 stooges, come flying down to stage, we make a joke about the hawk coming so you'd better leave, and they run offstage.)



Wrinkled Hornbill

### Wrinkled Hornbill - Zazu

A lot goes on behind the scenes at the San Diego Zoo Safari Park. Some work is so far behind the scenes, it's on other continents. We have sent our bird keepers to Africa to help raise endangered Southern Ground Hornbills for release into the wild. There are 57 species of hornbill, all of which are found in Africa and Asia.

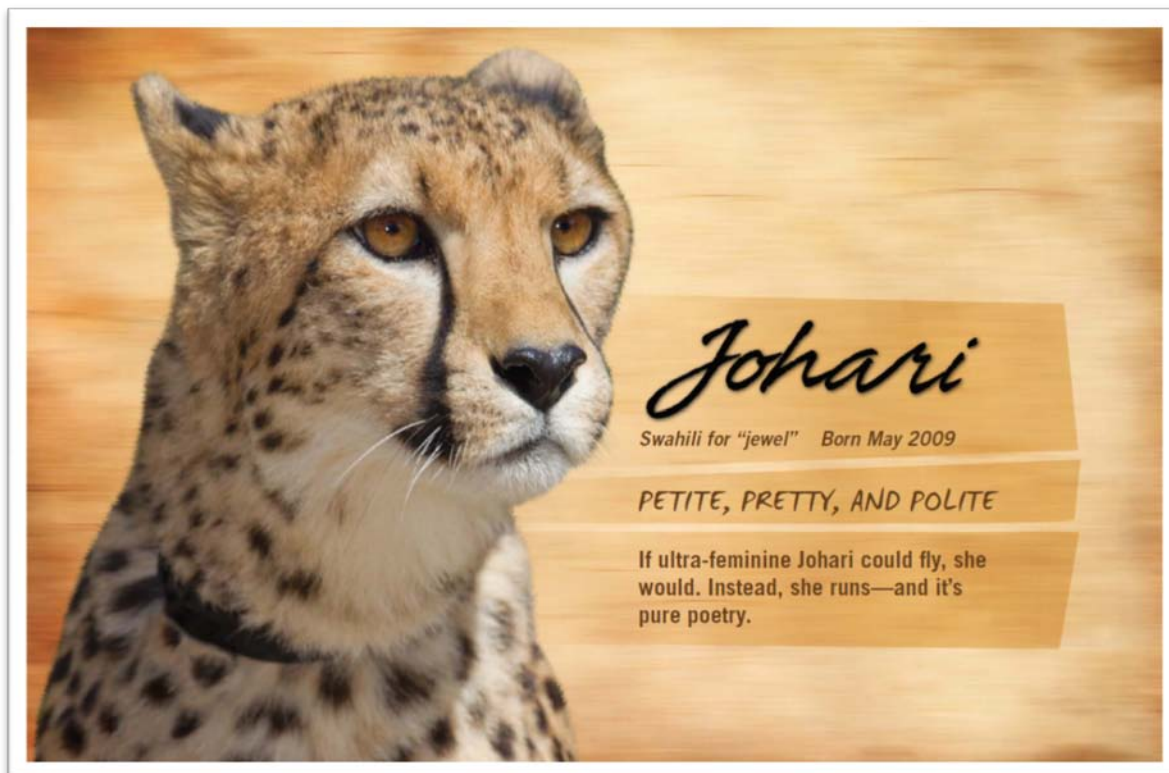
Zazu is a **Wrinkled Hornbill**, a species native to the islands of Southeast Asia. Hornbills generally have a hard casque on the upper beak.

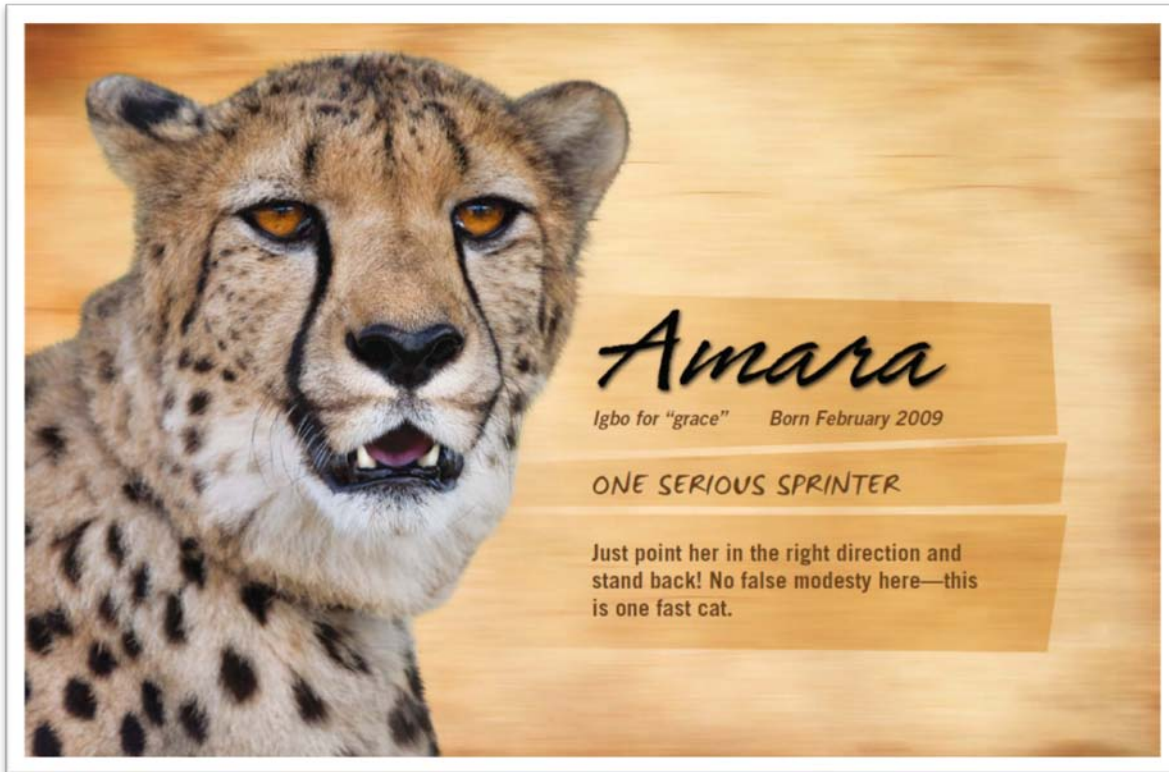
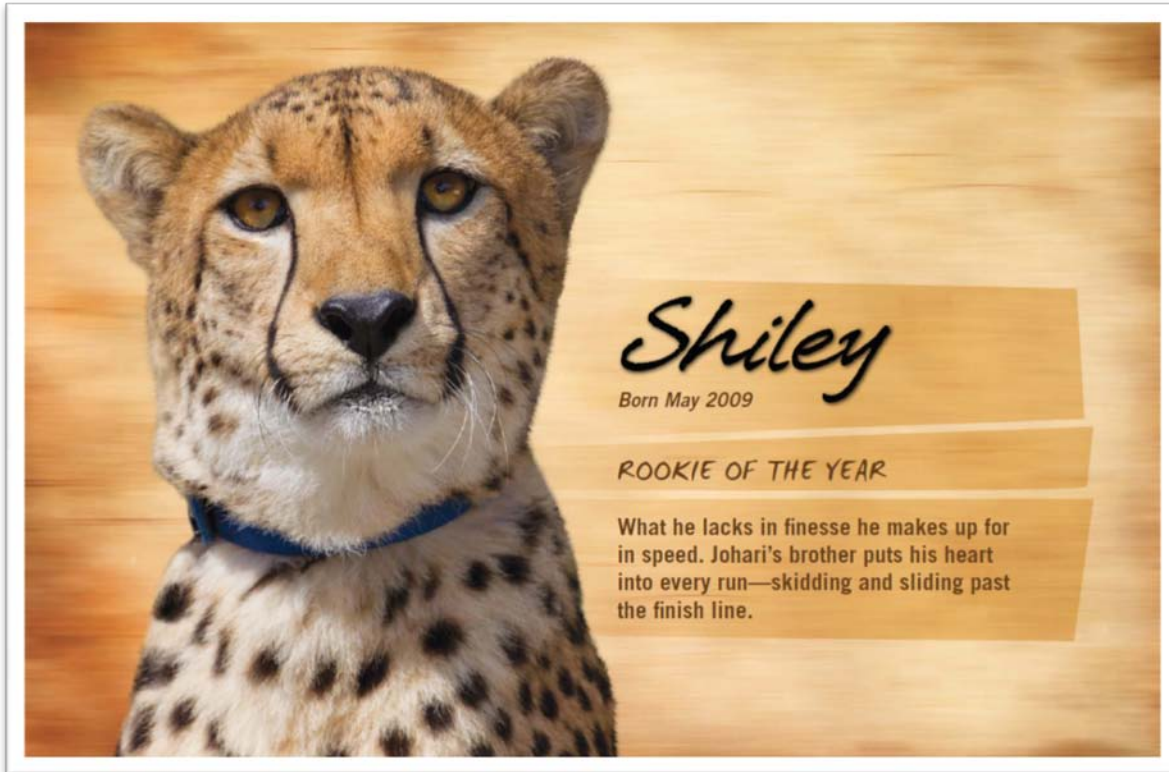
Keepers within San Diego Zoo Global have cared for over half of species of Hornbills that exist today, making our keepers excellent candidates for conservations projects in the field.

Other facts to insert:

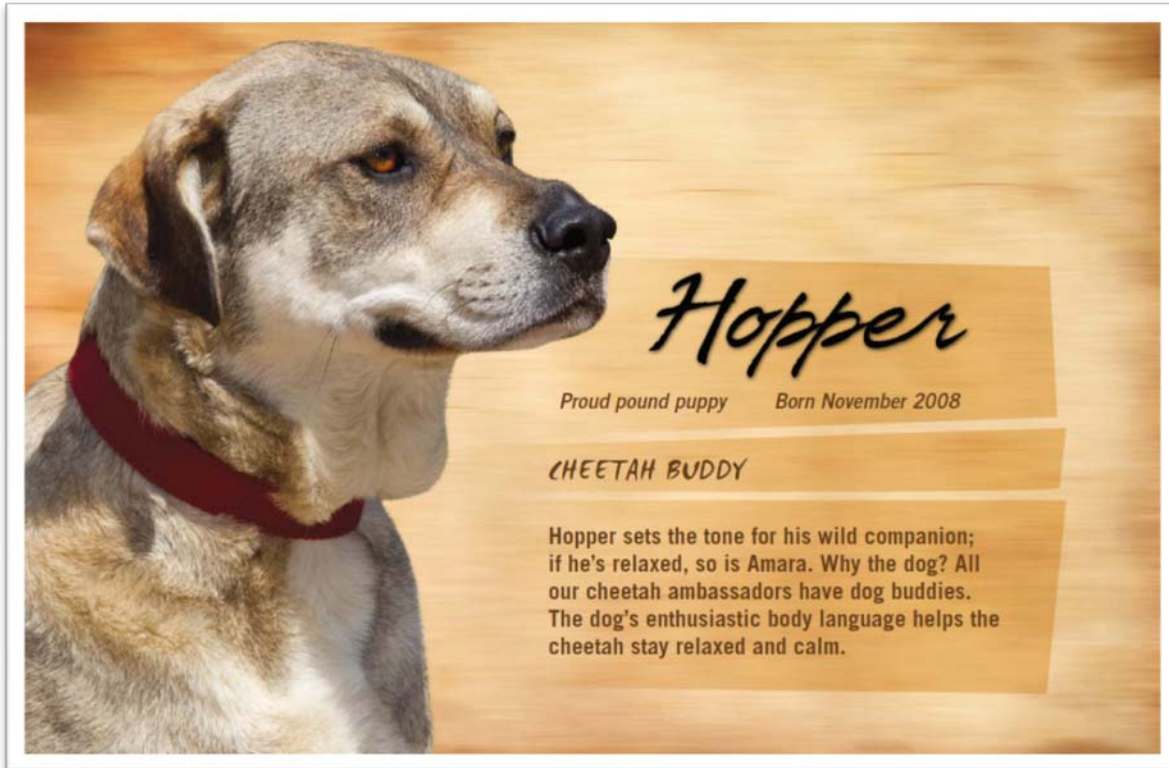
- San Diego Zoo Global has had 34 of the 57 species of hornbill
- San Diego Zoo Global has hatched 400+ hornbill chicks
- The Safari Park has 15 species
- The Safari Park had the first 4 breedings













*Yeti*

Anatolian Shepherd Born March 2009

**CHEETAH BUDDY**

She was just a playful pup when she made friends with the cheetah cubs. She's here to show them that everything is OK—and even fun. Why the dog? All our cheetah ambassadors have dog buddies. The dog's enthusiastic body language helps the cheetah stay relaxed and calm.

## Opening

- Hello! Welcome to Cheetah Run! In just a few minutes you'll see the fastest land mammal run the quickest hundred-meter dash you'll ever see. I'm (NAME), and I'm a Safari Park animal trainer and your host for today's event. I'd like to introduce you to my co-trainers: (INTRODUCE OTHER TRAINERS).
- We may be in the Safari Park's "Lion Camp," but for the next 20 minutes, the cheetah will rule... You're about to witness the fastest animal on land doing what it does best, running full speed—potentially 70 miles per hour (mph)—just a few feet in front of you. You will become one of the few people on Earth to actually stand this close to a cheetah in full-speed pursuit.
- The reason why we can offer you this unique experience is twofold: 1) The extensive training we invest in our ambassador cheetahs, and 2) The design of our track. We are the only facility in the United States that runs our cheetahs "outside" of an exhibit. We have the longest dedicated running track in the world. This track measures 100 meters or 330 feet. That's good news for you because it takes at least 300 feet for a cheetah to reach full speed and have enough room to stop. We are certain that this experience will leave a lasting impression with you and inspire you to continue to support the conservation of this endangered species.
- Let's talk about that cheetah speed. 70 mph... The fastest race horse runs 43 mph, the fastest human tops out at 28 mph. 70 mph! That's faster than you are allowed to drive on the freeway! And yet, that is not the most impressive part of the cheetah's ability. More impressive than 70 mph top speed is the rate of acceleration that the cheetah can achieve. A cheetah can move from 0-60 mph in just 3.4 seconds! A cheetah can move from 0 to 40 mph in just 3 steps! Incredible! How are you doing down there in "Reserved Viewing?" (*Motion to Reserved Viewing area*) You have the best seat in the house for what we refer to as the "cheetah launch" and to see firsthand this amazing acceleration rate. Good luck with photos.
- For our run today, the cheetah will be chasing (HOLD UP LURE) the elusive headless wiener dog. (*MOTION TO LURE OPERATOR.*) Our lure operator, (TRAINER NAME) will reel in a soft toy like this one on a line attached to a winch and powered by a starter motor.
- Operating the lure is quite possibly the most intense job on this track. Our equipment pulls at 70 mph plus but it cannot out-accelerate a cheetah in the beginning of the run - So, it takes a lot of skill and training to get the pull just right. Let's encourage (lure operator/Trainer) with a round of applause.
- Our runner today is (CHEETAH NAME) a (AGE)-year-old (MALE/FEMALE) cheetah. (HE/SHE) will be accompanied on the track by (HIS/HER) companion dog, (DOG NAME).



## Cheetah Run

- (DOG NAME) is a (AGE)-year-old (POUND PUPPY/ANATOLIAN SHEPHERD) who is (CHEETAH NAME)'s best friend.
- We are going to have (dog's name) run first today. We do this for 3 reasons: 1) (Name) is working in his/her traditional capacity as the companion animal to the cheetah. By running the track first, with the cheetah watching, the dog is demonstrating that it will be safe for the cheetah to do the same thing. 2) We get to test our equipment. It's good to know that the equipment works before we let the cheetah out. 3) You get to see the entire run at a much slower speed. Helpful hint: if you cannot get an outstanding picture of the dog running, I would not even try to get a photo of the cat running. Okay, folks; make sure to cheer for our dog today as s/he runs the track. Now let's watch (dog's name)'s version of the "Cheetah Run!"  
*Give the dog's time.*
- Now it's time for the speed you've been waiting for. (CHEETAH NAME) is a dangerously fast cat, known for —
  - *Johari*: her quick start
  - *Shiley*: sprinting right past the finish line! You see, his size and speed create such momentum that at times he will skid more than 30 feet past the end of his run.
  - *Amara*: her fierce intensity for the run
  - *Majani*: his TV appearances
- Joining (lure operator) at the end of the track will be (cheetah trainer's name); he/she will blow a loud whistle to signify the end of the run to the cheetah. At that time the cheetah receives a large reward and is put back on leash.
- Remember the hand signals, (release trainer) will put his/her arm up when the cheetah is ready to go. When he/she lowers his/her arm, the door will open and the run has begun.
- The entire 100-meter run will take this cat in the neighborhood of just six seconds to complete. Don't blink—you'll miss a lot.
- A cheetah chase like this requires such incredible physical exertion that we can never guarantee our cheetah will run more than this one time today. So do consider putting your camera down and just taking mental pictures. Trust me, this amazing event is sure to leave a lasting impression on you, and you won't need a photo to remember it! Many people do miss the entire run trying to find the cat in a viewfinder.

## Cheetah rests

- Our run today lasted exactly (TIME), and a cheetah chase on the African savanna doesn't last much longer. Once a cheetah charges, the chase lasts just 20 to 30 seconds. Because of the exertion required to reach that incredible speed, running any longer than that might result in overexertion or heat exhaustion.
- CHEETAH NAME is going to need some time to relax and recover from its run; you may want to stick around, as there could be a second run today. While we give (cheetah name) time to recover and allow our trainers to monitor the cat, I will talk to you about the cheetah's adaptations and ways that you can continue to help this endangered species. During my talk the trainers will indicate to me whether or not (cheetah name) is capable of a second run and that will either cause my announcement of a second run or the end of our program - so again, you may want to stay with us and see how (cheetah's name) ends our event today.

## Cheetah adaptations for the chase

- Everything about the cheetah is built for speed. Tall, thin, high shoulders, small and aerodynamic head and ears. That is the body of an Olympic sprinter, not a wrestler—you've got to look into Lion Camp to find that physique. The cheetah is the world's best sprinter, and there are many more adaptations to help them achieve that title.
- If you can get a look at a cheetah's foot, you'll see its unsheathed claws, which is one of the things that set this wild cat apart from other species. Because the claws aren't protected by a sheath of skin and fur, they aren't as sharp as, say, a lion's. But they are advantageous for running. Do any of you play baseball? How about soccer? What do you wear on your feet to run fast and keep from slipping? (*CLEATS*) Right! A cheetah's exposed claws are like built-in cleats for this amazing runner.
- Cheetah's use their long tail as a rudder during high-speed chases.
- A cheetah's enlarged nostrils, lungs, and heart are adaptations that help a cheetah exert itself physically by taking in and processing oxygen quickly and efficiently.

## Cheetah hunt

- How many of you took the Africa Tram Safari today? If you did, you may have seen Thompson's gazelles, a smaller gazelle species of about 50 pounds, tan on top, white underneath, with a dark racing stripe down the center. This is the second fastest animal on the land and the cheetah's favorite prey – we call them “Tommy burgers.” That gazelle can run 55 mph for a much longer period of time than a cheetah can.
- Cheetahs hunt by sight. But before it attacks or even begins to stalk its prey, a cheetah will watch a herd from a high vantage point like a termite mound or a tree. It will pick out its prey—maybe a young or very old animal that isn't quite keeping up with the rest of its herd, or an animal that wanders away from the herd—and creep as close as it can without being noticed. It stalks its prey semi-crouched with its head lowered, and it will freeze and drop to the ground to avoid being discovered. A cheetah tries to get within about 165 feet, or 50 meters, before it charges.
- You've just seen what a charging cheetah looks like. You might think that a cheetah's prey doesn't stand a chance, but cheetahs don't always catch the prey they are chasing. In fact, cheetahs catch their prey in only 50 percent of the hunting attempts they make.
- Other predators frequently steal a cheetah's food. What do you think might steal food from a cheetah? (*REPEAT RESPONSES, NOTING WHICH ONES ARE RIGHT AND WHICH ONES ARE GOOD GUESSES*).
- Lions and hyenas especially are known for driving a cheetah off its kill, but baboons, leopards, jackals, and vultures do it, too. In fact, other carnivores steal many of the animals a cheetah kills.
- As a matter of fact, right here at Shiley's Cheetah Run, you may have noticed that our lions also enjoy watching the cheetahs. This has been an interesting element to our training. When the event first started, the lions were amazed to see the cheetahs run. Honestly, the lions were our biggest fans – no pun intended. Unfortunately, one of our cheetahs, Johari, happened to notice the lions and their...over-enthusiasm. This made Johari feel very uncomfortable, and so we had to have the lions exit their exhibit for a period of time so that our cheetahs could focus on the run, and we could change some design elements that would specifically avoid the lions startling the cheetahs as they enter or exit the track. Now that those design elements are in place, our lions are back on exhibit, as you can see. Over time, our pride's interest in the cheetahs has waned, which is exactly what we predicted and wanted. Although we still take extra precautions with Johari, the lions and cheetahs are once again tolerating each other – due to training and habituation.



Of course, in the wild these animals would have an antagonistic relationship. Wild cheetahs are smart not to tolerate lions being in such close proximity.

## Dog

- Why do we have dogs with our cheetahs? Well, do any of you have a dog? Dogs are naturally comfortable with people—often even people that they don't recognize, right? And they're comfortable in groups. Well, cheetahs are quite a bit more cautious and wary of new situations, and for them, having a dog buddy who can show them that everything is okay—and even fun—helps them to feel comfortable and relaxed. The dog's body language communicates that there's nothing to fear, and that relaxes and calms the flight tendencies of the cheetah.
- Now, of course, we have to give a cheetah the opportunity to get to know the dog, so we introduce a dog buddy when the cheetah is just a cub. Cubs are naturally playful, and of course dogs are always ready to play! So by spending time together, they get to know each other and become buddies.
- The Anatolian shepherd is a very old breed that has been bred specifically to be very hardy guard dogs and protect livestock.

## Cheetahs are endangered

- Once cheetahs were widespread throughout Africa and the Arabian Peninsula into central India, but they have disappeared from huge areas of their historic range. Only about 10,000 to 12,000 cheetahs survive in less than a quarter of the wild African lands that used to be this species' home. And in all of Asia, only about 200 cheetahs remain in Iran. All of these cheetahs are endangered.
- So what happened? In most parts of Africa, the devastating decline in cheetah populations is mostly due to habitat loss and fragmentation due to increases in agriculture and human populations. And as habitat has diminished, so have the cheetah's wild prey—such as gazelles and other small mammals.
- Also, many farmers and ranchers in Africa kill cheetahs, thinking that they are protecting their livestock. In southern Africa, this conflict is the major threat to cheetahs, despite research that shows cheetahs are only responsible for three percent of livestock losses to predators.

## Cheetah breeding

- Having cheetahs in a managed-care environment like the San Diego Zoo Safari Park is important for assurance populations. But even in managed care, cheetah populations have never been stable because it can be difficult to get them to breed.
- They lack genetic diversity compared to other mammal species.

- The Safari Park has one of the most successful breeding programs in the world and is considered a top organization for successful cheetah management.

### Physical Characteristics

- The name “cheetah” comes from the Hindu word *chita*, which means “spotted one.”
- Adult cheetahs weigh about 85 to 140 pounds (39 to 64 kilograms). A cheetah is about 44 to 53 inches (112 to 135 centimeters) long, not including its tail, which can be 26 to 33 inches (66 to 84 cm) long.
- A cheetah’s small feet support long, thin legs. The pads on its feet are extremely hard and pointed in the front.

### Hunting

- Cheetahs tend to hunt in the morning and at dusk, between about 7-10 a.m. and 4-7 p.m. During the middle of the day, they rest.
- High speed chases up to 64 miles (103 km) per hour—that’s 95 feet (29 meters) per second over distances of hundreds of meters.

### Predators

- Now, cheetahs are predators, but they are also prey. What do you think might prey on a cheetah? (*REPEAT RESPONSES, NOTING WHICH ONES ARE RIGHT AND WHICH ONES ARE GOOD GUESSES*).
- Lions, leopards, hyenas, and wild dogs prey on cheetah cubs that are left unattended. In fact, researchers have found that lions and hyenas kill up to 70 percent of cheetah cubs before they are independent. And on the open, short-grass plains of the Serengeti, where there aren’t a lot of good hiding places for a mother cheetah to leave her cub, juvenile mortality can be as high as 95 percent, largely due to predation by lions.
- Lions also kill adult cheetahs.
- Cheetahs have to learn to avoid lion and hyenas. Rescued orphaned cheetahs and cheetahs that are born in a sheltered environment don’t know that they’re supposed to avoid these predators, so reintroducing them into the wild environment, with its associated risks, can be a problem.

### Breeding

- Female cheetahs are mature when they are about 2 years old. Males take a little longer—they are mature when they reach about 2½ or 3 years old.
- An expectant cheetah mom is pregnant for 90 to 98 days.

- A cheetah litter usually includes three or four cubs, but more or less—including singletons—isn't uncommon.

## Cubs

- A cheetah cub opens its eyes when it is 4 to 11 days old.
- At about 3 weeks, a cheetah's deciduous teeth erupt, and they start walking.
- Cheetah cubs stay in their den until they are about 6 weeks old.
- A cub's coat is dirty white-gray on top and black below. A long ruff of gray hair covers the back, nape, and crown. The coat turns tawny and shows spots at about 3 months, but traces of the ruff persist until it's about 15 months old.
- A cub spends up to two years with its mother.

## Habitat

- Cheetahs primarily live in open grasslands.

## Population and Threats

- The most likely causes of their demise in Asia are the depletion of their wild prey base, especially gazelles, development of their habitat, and direct killing of cheetahs themselves.
- The largest population of wild cheetahs is in Namibia, home to more than 2,000 cheetahs. About 1,000 cheetahs live in Botswana.
- Some African habitat is protected, but most cheetahs live outside of those protected areas.
- Cheetahs need large areas, and they require conservation action on a landscape scale (for example, human-wildlife conflict mitigation, zoning for land-use to maintain habitat connectivity, and wild prey restoration)
- In a managed-care environment, a cheetah's lifespan is about 10 to 12 years. Here at the Safari Park, it is fairly common for a cheetah to live to be 15 years old.



