

CHEETAH REMOVED FROM SOUTH AFRICAN RED DATA BOOK

The cheetah Acinonyx jubatus is no longer considered an endangered species in South Africa and has been removed from the South African Red Data Book.

The 1986 edition by the late Reay Smithers states that there is a small population in the Kalahari Gemsbok National Park and they occur as vagrants along the Botswana border. There is also a resident population in the Kruger National Park, and individuals cross the border from Zimbabwe and Botswana.

The cheetah is a protected wild animal listed under Schedule 4 in the Transvaal; is specially protected in Natal; and is protected in Cape Province as an endangered wild animal. The Red Data Book recommends total protection; capture of problem individuals and translocation to game reserves, as carried out in Transvaal.

In the IUCN Red List 1988 the cheetah overall is still classed as "Vulnerable", while the Asiatic cheetah A.j. venaticus is "Endangered".

Clive Walker reports the discovery of cheetah in the Waterberg Mountains in North Western Transvaal, where he has a 21,000 ha reserve called Lapalala. A neighbour shot the animal under the impression that it was a leopard, for which he had a licence, and which is common in the area. The cheetah measured 225 cm. Local blacks said there were at least five cheetah in the area.

The area of flat tablelands and open woodland consists of private game sanctuaries, Tribal Trust Land and farming areas, mainly for cattle. Wildlife includes roan antelope Hippotragus equinus.
