

# Record of a White Cheetah

The Moghul Emperor of India, Jahangir, recorded having a white cheetah presented to him in 1608.

In an article in the Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society, Divyabhanusinh, a leading expert on the history of the cheetah *Acinonyx jubatus venaticus* in India, states that in his memoirs, *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, the Emperor said that in the third year of his reign: "Raja Bir Singh Deo brought a white cheetah to show me. Although other sorts of creatures, both birds and beasts have white varieties....I had never seen a white cheetah. Its spots, which are (usually) black, were of a blue colour, and the whiteness of the body also inclined to bluishness."

Divyabhanusinh indicates that his researches and discussions with Persian scholars (the memoirs were written in Persian, which was the Moghul Court language) substantiate the record.

Jahangir also recorded the first known successful mating of captive cheetahs in the 1,000 kept by his father, Akbar. He

wrote in the eighth year of his reign (1613 AD): "It is an established fact that cheetahs in unaccustomed places do not pair off with a female, for my revered father once collected together 1,000 cheetahs. He was very desirous that they should pair, but this in no way came off. He had many times coupled male and female cheetahs together in gardens, but there, too, it did not come off. At this time a male cheetah, having slipped its collar, went to a female and paired with it, and after two and half months three young ones were born and grew up. This has been recorded because it appeared strange."

Divyabhanusinh notes that this is the only record in history of trained cheetahs breeding, and the only record in captivity until Philadelphia Zoo, USA, bred African cheetahs in 1956.

*(Divyabhanusingh 1987. Record of two unique observations of the Indian cheetah in Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri, J. Bombay Natural History Society Vol.84, No.2, p.269)*