

Cheetah Research in Kruger National Park

Cheetah in South Africa's Kruger National Park may suffer from mange because of ecological stress in an area which is not ideal cheetah habitat. Gus Mills, Senior Research Officer in the Kruger, who has been studying cheetah for over two years, reports that two cheetah, which moved into rather thick bush, where their style of hunting was difficult, developed severe sarcoptic mange within a few weeks. To test the theory Mills treated a cheetah for mange and released it with a radio collar. Within six weeks it had again developed mange.

Mills has also been tracking three cheetah he calls "The Three Musketeers" because they are inseparable. In a range of about

175 km² they prey mainly on adult male impala, but also on duiker, kudu and waterbuck calves. They have taken newly-born zebra foals. Their nutritional requirements appear to be satisfied by one large impala, or its equivalent, per week.

A radio-collared female cheetah and her cubs have accepted the presence of a vehicle, thereby permitting collection of information on feeding habits and movement patterns. It is hoped to monitor the cubs' dispersal in due course.

(Mills, M.G.L. 1989. Cheetah and Wild Dog Research in the Kruger National Park in 1988. Quagga: Journal of the Endangered Wildlife Trust. Johannesburg)