

# Will Asiatic Cheetahs Fall for Calvin Klein Perfume?

**I**ran's last surviving Asiatic cheetahs may have their genetic profile revealed with help from Calvin Klein's perfume, "Obsession for Men".

Already shown to lure ocelots, the perfume has now worked on a female cheetah at the Bronx Zoo in New York, which is owned by the Wildlife Conservation Society. WCS is currently involved in projects to save the last Asiatic cheetahs, which survive only in Iran.

The Bronx Zoo's Mammal Department has been studying the behaviour of its cheetahs in response to a variety of perfumes and spices to help WCS field scientists George Schaller and Peter Zahler, who were looking for ways to attract cheetahs to camera traps in Iran.

It was found that the zoo's female cheetah had an "obsession" for Calvin Klein's "Obsession for Men" and would spend seven minutes at a time rolling and rubbing against objects sprayed with the cologne.

During a visit to the Bronx Zoo, Laurie Marker, director of the Namibia-based Cheetah Conservation Fund, discussed the value of collecting hair samples from wild cheetahs because DNA analysis of the hair could provide insights into the cheetah's distribution and help determine the relationships of cats living in a given area. This led to experiments with a "hair trap". The prototype consisted of a dog grooming brush, minus the handle, anchored to a log and sprayed with Calvin Klein's "Obsession for Men". Within minutes, all the cheetah hair wanted had been collected.

It is hoped that the perfume will work when applied to hair traps set for with cheetahs in the wild.

## Ocelot Obsession

Calvin Klein men's cologne was tried by chance on ocelots in Dallas Zoo, Texas, in 1999, when researchers used various scent sources in order find a way to attract rare ocelots near the Texas border with Mexico. One researcher borrowed her boyfriend's cologne and used it in a test. The ocelots responded "like a cat in heat", according to the researchers.

One female ocelot rubbed against the lure and rolled and lay on it – "it was almost embarrassing", one researcher said.

The effect is similar to that of the scent of catnip (*Nepeta cataria*), a mint family plant native from the eastern Mediterranean to the eastern Himalaya, whose attraction for cats has been known since Roman times.