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TANZANIA

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Tanzania has six species of wild cats, all widely distributed in Africa, lion, leopard, cheetah, serval, caracal, and wild cat. No endemic or endangered species or race is known to occur, although two species, cheetah and leopard, are considered "Vulnerable" in the Red Data Book.

All cats in Tanzania are widely distributed, except for cheetah and caracal which are largely confined to the drier north and north east of the country. But even here several parks and reserves are considered to contain viable populations of both species.

National Parks and Game Reserves cover some 20% of Tanzania, and their legal status and management status are considered adequate in the short and medium term to safeguard species and ecological processes.

The creation of new parks and reserves in Tanzania reinforces belief in Tanzanian conservation in general terms, but some aspects, besides the overall deteriorating state of the economy, do give cause for concern. There is a slow but continual reduction in field work as remote outpost staff are withdrawn and foot and vehicular patrols are reduced. Coupled with this is a reduced knowledge of the bush, the animals, and of natural history in general. There is less information (or knowledge) on say caracal status now than there was previously. The continued decline in activity of the Serengeti Research Centre is another cause for concern.

Despite this, some research into cats has continued. The long-term lion studies continue at a low level. A cheetah study has just finished and a long term ecological study of serval cat in Ngorongoro (perhaps the *first* detailed study of this cat in the wild) is almost fully written up.

What should be done? The continuation of the lion study in the Serengeti/Ngorongoro should be a major priority, and the Tanzanian authorities should be requested to give every assistance to the furtherance of the study.