Hello Wildlife Warriors!
Stay connected to nature even when you are at home.
Welcome to the 29th issue. This week, we explore the world of the fastest land mammals, Cheetahs! We are going to learn about this swift, agile and graceful member of the Cat family.

We discover how we can take actions for nature, share amazing art done by other students, meet a Nature’s Treasures Photo Competition junior entrant, wild jokes, and much, much more... Please read on!

Stay with us on this fun filled adventure and always remember to share with your family and friends.
JUNIOR PHOTOGRAPHER HIGHLIGHT

Adarsh Nagda participated in the Nature’s Treasures Photo Competition. Here are some of his striking images.
Q. How old are you?
   A. I am 11 yrs old.

Q. Which camera do you use?
   A. I use the Nikon P900 and Nikon P950 for wildlife photography.

Q. What do you like about nature photography?
   A. I love spending time with animals and in nature!

I can connect with nature using my camera, taking spectacular images that have a meaning behind them!

Q. What advice do you have for young and upcoming photographers?
A. Don't be in a rush to go everywhere to watch lions and cheetahs! Sometimes you just have to be patient and an opportunity will arrive! With passion and patience you will click that unique photo.

Follow Adarsh on:
   YouTube - [Adarsh Nagda](http://www.youtube.com/AdarshNagda)
   Website - [www.magicalwild.com](http://www.magicalwild.com)
CHEETAHS (Acinonyx jubatus)

VOCABULARY:

**Camouflage** - a tactic used to disguise appearance by blending with the surrounding.

**Coalition** - a group of cheetahs.

Cheetahs are one of the most elegant members of the cat family that rely on speed rather than stealth to hunt.

At first glance, a cheetah might be mistaken for a leopard. However, cheetahs have more round solid spots, signature tear marks and many other unique features.
Cheetahs live and hunt mainly in the open savanna grassland and bushy areas of Africa and Middle East.

Their body is finely tuned for speed; with a long tail, flexible spine and claws that act like spikes on a sprinters shoes.

Cheetahs are carnivores that prefer to hunt and eat small or medium sized animals such as gazelles, antelopes, hares, impalas, birds among other prey.

Generally, adult males are larger in size than females.
There is only one species of Cheetah, with 5 subspecies found across Africa and Asia.

Kenya is central to the East African subspecies. The other sub species are found in West and Southern Africa.

Unlike lions that sleep for most of the day, cheetahs do not sleep for long and continuous hours. They are alert throughout the day and night. They rest for 2-3 hours at a time; several times in a 24 hour period.
● They can walk for as far 50 km a day when they need to, or they can remain in one location for several days when circumstances allow.

● In 2007, it was estimated that there were about 1,400 cheetahs left in Kenya. This number has reduced to less than 1000 in Kenya, less than 7,000 in the wild in Africa and a small population in Iran of about 50.

● A cheetah can give birth to as many as 11 cubs with an average of 4 cubs per litter. However, their rate of survival is very low. Many cubs die before they reach their first birthday.
Cheetah's speed and hunting

- They are known as the world's fastest land mammals and can reach a speed of up to 110 kph in 3 seconds.

- Cheetahs need oxygen to sustain the chase. Their nostrils are wide. Their lungs, heart, liver, and windpipe are larger in size than other cats.

- They have a finely tuned body, a long tail as a rudder for steering and balance, and claws like shoe spikes.

- They have a flexible spine and can make a stride more than 8 meters long at full speed.

- Cheetahs hunt in the day and can see prey 5km away.

- They can hunt at night only when there is moonlight.

- Cheetahs avoid fights and will give up their catch to larger prey.
Physical descriptions

Spotted skin - The cheetah’s fur is covered in solid round or oval shaped spots that grow from black spots on the skin. Cheetahs can have up to 3000 spots. The spots on their pale yellow fur help in camouflage while hunting or hiding from other predators.

- Tear mark - The black tear stripes running from the eyes to the mouth protect the eyes from direct sun glare and assist to focus on prey at speeds while on the hunt.
- While other cats can retract their claws, cheetahs have short blunt claws closer to that of a dog. They are the only cats with nail marks on their footprint.
Cheetah cubs

- A baby cheetah is called a cub. Two or more cubs are known as a litter.

- Adult female cheetahs only meet with a male to mate. After three months, they give birth to 2-5 cubs.

- Cheetah cubs are born blind with dark fur and blurry spots. Within weeks, they grow a yellowish-grey coat that blends into the dry grass to hide.

- 90% of the cubs are preyed on by predators such as hyenas, leopards, and lions.

- Cubs consume their mothers’ milk until 6-8 weeks.

- Play such as stalking, wrestling, and chasing teaches the cubs hunting skills.

- Cubs leave their mothers at 18 months; each female goes her way as brothers stay and hunt together for life.
Amazing cheetahs facts

- A group of cheetahs is called a coalition; mostly comprised of brothers that live and hunt together.
- Cheetahs have large nostrils to allow for more oxygen intake and larger lungs and heart for fast oxygen circulation.
- Cheetahs can climb trees but not steep ones.
- In the wild, cheetahs live an average of between 4 and 7 years but can live up to 17 years in captivity.
- Cheetahs don't roar, they can chirp like a bird, purr, growl or make a loud yelp that can be heard 2 km away.
- They succeed in 50% of their predation attempts compared to 30% for other carnivores.
- They can go for up to 4 days without drinking water.
- Unlike other cats, cheetahs have poor night vision.
## Differences between cheetahs and leopards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cheetah</th>
<th>Leopard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fur coat with round black spots.</td>
<td>Fur coat with rosette-style markings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black tear marks from the eyes to the mouth.</td>
<td>Have no tear mark on their face.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have larger back feet and semi-retractable claws.</td>
<td>Have larger front feet to lift large prey and retractable claws.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have slender and taller body with light weight.</td>
<td>Shorter, bulkier and more muscular and with great strength.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have a small rounded head.</td>
<td>Have a large head.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunt during the day.</td>
<td>Hunt mostly during the night.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Just like other predators, cheetahs have a special role in the savanna grasslands where they live.

- They keep the population of herbivorous prey in check which in turn prevents over-grazing.
- As successful predators, they keep prey species healthy by killing the weak and old ones.
- Unsuccessful predators can get food by stealing prey killed by cheetahs; the carcasses provide food for vultures.
• **Loss of habitat:** Landscapes are being taken over by humans and development affecting cheetahs that need large areas to hunt and find a mate.

• **Human-wildlife conflict:** Retaliatory killings when farmers kill cheetahs that attack their livestock for lack of natural prey.

• **Diseases:** Cheetahs can contract diseases like anthrax from cattle and rabies from dogs.

• **Illegal wildlife pet trade:** Live cheetah cubs are sold as pets and adults poached for their skin.

• **Road kills:** Killed by speeding vehicles near parks and protected areas.
Q: Tell us about yourself.

I was born in a very small town in the southern section of the state of Michigan in the United States. I grew up on a farm surrounded by corn fields, onion fields and cows’

My rural elementary school had only 11 children in my grade from 1st to 8th grade. My high school had only 97 students from grade 9 - 12.

When I was not in school, I used to follow deer (an animal similar to an antelope) in the woods behind our property. I named the deer that I observed and kept their location a secret from my brothers who wanted to hunt them. I loved animals and always had pet dogs and cats.
Q. How did you get interested in cheetahs and why?

A: I wanted to be a veterinarian, but my university grades were not good enough to be accepted in the programme. I studied zoology with a focus in animal behaviour, but I was very uncertain as I approached graduation what I would do.

One of my advisors recommended that I apply for a position at a zoo, and the first time I ever visited a zoo was when I went for my job interview. It was in that position that I took an interest in the cheetah and what could be done to assure that they would not go extinct in the wild.

© Anthony Ochieng / Tony Wild
Seven years after my first zoo job, when I was 28 years old, I had the opportunity to visit Kenya for the first time and to see my first cheetah in the wild. From that point forward, I dedicated my life to understanding and saving the cheetah from extinction.

I had to learn a lot about working with people because saving cheetahs was not about just loving them, it has to be about helping people learn to love them too!
Q. What is the project about?

A: Since 2009, I have been running an organization called Action for Cheetahs as the Director. Our mission is to promote the conservation of cheetahs through research, awareness and community participation in Kenya.

Research provides an opportunity to identify patterns of cheetah movement in relationship to livestock losses that in turn aids in preventing conflict with communities.
Q: How do you use dogs in your work?

A: We have a team of four dogs that are trained to find cheetah scat (poop). A dog has more than 300 million receptors in its nose compared to 6 million in a human nose. It can smell in 3D and find the cheetah scat as far as 1km away.

So, we bring the dogs to locations where cheetahs have recently been seen in order to find the scat. From the scat, we can learn about cheetah diet, health and even to identify genetic relationships.
This not only helps us to know how healthy the cheetah is, but also to confirm that small populations of cheetahs can find each other to breed and keep the population healthy.

Q. How would a young person get involved in cheetah conservation? What do they need to study?

A: If someone is keen about wildlife they should plan to go to university to study biology or wildlife management, but there are so many other jobs in conservation. Conservation education enables our project to sensitize communities about cheetah and other wildlife in schools and adult programmes.
ACK Staff work in different areas to sensitize the community to co-exist with cheetahs and other wildlife. These include environmental cleanup; vaccination of puppies and adult dogs, etc.
People do not have to go to university in order to work with a project. We use housekeepers to manage our camp, drivers to transport students on projects, and field workers from within the community to help collect data and conduct surveys. If someone wants to be a research scientist or work in community development related to conservation, it is a good idea to work towards a university-level education.

Q. What can we do to protect cheetahs?

A: The best way to protect cheetahs is to learn about them and how to co-exist with them.
• Herders need to be vigilant and aware of cheetah movements to keep livestock from being attacked.

• Protecting our environment by planting trees, reducing waste, and keeping water clean helps people and animals.

• Become an educator in your community to help raise awareness of the beauty of nature and how all living things depend on us to survive!

• Encourage your parents to vaccinate all livestock; pets and any animals in the community in order to control diseases and prevent these spreading to wildlife.
WILD JOKES!

Q: What animal always breaks the law?
A: A cheetah

Q: Why do tigers always beat cheetahs at hide and seek?
A: They have never been spotted

Q: What do you get when you cross a cheetah and a burger?
A: Fast food

Q: Did you hear about the cheetah who robbed a bank?
A: He ran away so fast that he almost got away with it but he was spotted.

Wild Jokes courtesy of Joy Omulupi

Do you have a wild joke to share? Please share with us your joke on
WhatsApp number to +254 746 511 787
WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP NATURE FOR WILDLIFE

Collecting tree seeds
It is from seeds that most trees grow. When trees are mature they produce fruits or pods.

How to collect seeds:
 i. Select a good tree to collect seeds from.

ii. Collect seeds that have fallen on the ground.
 iii. Sun dry and store your seeds in a cool place.
 iv. Start a tree nursery with your collected tree seeds.

NOTE: Do not cut down a whole tree just for seeds.

Wildlife Warriors from Makobe Primary School, Kwale County

Share with us what you are doing to help nature by sharing a picture/video or text on WhatsApp to; +254 746 511 787
Did you know that you are never too young to make a difference? To celebrate International Cheetah Day, join us by sharing this newsletter with your family and friends. Get more information about cheetahs and spread the word about cheetah conservation.

You can also make small changes in your everyday life to help wildlife in your local area. Be involved and stay connected to nature through citizen science projects or start a fundraising project with your friends to help organizations working to save cheetahs.
ART FOR WILDLIFE

Butterfly paintings by students during the Wildlife Warriors Expedition 2019

Please send a photo of your Drawing, Painting, Poem or Essay on WhatsApp to +254 746 511 787.
Did you know that despite having a long neck that could reach leaves at the top of a tree, female giraffes prefers feeding on leaves on the lower branches?

This Sunday on My Wild Africa, we follow the extraordinary lives of the Watchtowers of the Savanna, giraffes.

Tune in at 5:30 pm EAT Citizen TV

Watch the film with your family and tell us what you learnt by sending an SMS or WhatsApp message to +254 746 511787
COMING UP... DON'T MISS

- International Cheetah Day - 4th December
- World Soil Day - 5th December
- My Wild Africa on CITIZEN TV every Sunday at 5:30 pm EAT.
- Jamhuri Day - 12th December
- Monkey Day - 14th December
FOR PARENTS

This newsletter is issued each week to inform, inspire and encourage children who are at home during COVID 19 school closure.

It is distributed completely free of charge to children and their parents anywhere in Kenya, Africa and the world. If you would love to contribute to the Wildlife Warriors Kids, please make a donation to:

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A/C NO: 0100003937598

Email us: info@wildlifedirect.org  
Contact us on: +254 746 511 787

To sign up to this newsletter series, click here:

bit.ly/WWKidsSignup

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