

# CHEETAHS FROM NAMIBIA GET A NEW HOME IN INDIA

Relevant for: Environment | Topic: Biodiversity, Ecology, and Wildlife Related Issues

The introduction of the cheetah in India is being done under Project Cheetah. According to the Environment Ministry, this is the first time a large carnivorous species has been moved across continents for establishing a new population.

The released cheetahs are radio-collared and their movements will be tracked. Each animal has its dedicated tracking team. There is also a team of wildlife scientists, biologists and Laurie Marker, a renowned zoologist and founder of the Cheetah Conservation Fund, which has worked on restoring the species in Africa. The process to bring cheetahs into India spans several decades, including an ingenious proposal in 2005 by the CSIR- Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology, Hyderabad, to clone an Asiatic cheetah. This came to naught after Iran refused to share an animal.

In 2010, the Environment Ministry put together a plan recommending locations in India suitable for the cheetah and for sourcing cheetahs from Africa. This, however, brought legal problems as conservationists challenged estimates by the Wildlife Institute of India of the suitability of Indian sanctuaries for the animal. Kuno Palpur was originally intended as a second home for the Asiatic lions in Gir but the Gujarat government has opposed despite a Supreme Court order directing the transfer.

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