

# 'NO SPOTTED DEER BROUGHT TO KUNO AS PREY FOR CHEETAHS'

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

Relocation of chital is for better access to food and water, say authorities. JOTHI RAMALINGAM  
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The Madhya Pradesh Forest Department has denied reports that chital, or spotted deer, from Rajasthan are being ferried to the Kuno National Park (KNP) in Madhya Pradesh for the newly acquired cheetahs to prey on them.

On Tuesday, several media outlets reported that members of the Bishnoi community in Rajasthan which is active in wildlife conservation had written to the Prime Minister, protesting against the alleged capture of chital by Forest Department officials to bolster prey numbers in the Kuno reserve.

On Saturday, Mr. Modi released three cheetahs — out of a batch of eight brought from Namibia — into a protected enclosure at the KNP. Sambar and chital would constitute preferred prey for the wild cats. “No chital has been brought from Rajasthan into Kuno. There are already close to 20,000 chital in the forest here. There are several wildlife parks in Madhya Pradesh with surplus chital population. During summers, many spots see a scarcity of water and fodder and these animals are sometimes relocated to help them access food and water,” Madhya Pradesh Chief Wildlife Warden Jasbir Singh Chauhan said in a statement.

As part of these relocations, chital were being moved to the Satpura National Park, Sanjay Gandhi National Park, Nauradehi forest and KNP. These animals were also moved around because they would graze on standing crop and cause losses to those who lived in the vicinity, he added.

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