

# **It's Great to Be a Cheetah**

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**by  
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# I Am a Sleek and Beautiful Animal

- ✱ **My fur is yellowish, with dark spots, which allows me to hide in grasses or dappled shade.**
- ✱ **I am almost six feet in length. About one-third of my length is because of my long rudder-like tail.**
- ✱ **I weigh nearly 125 pounds.**
- ✱ **I chirp and purr, instead of roaring.**



Hear me chirp



Hear me purr



- ✱ **I was one of the lucky ones. Only half of the cheetahs that are born live to independent adulthood.**
- ✱ **My average expected lifespan is 12 to 14 years.**

# I Am Built for Speed

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✦ **I have a small head, which helps me to have low wind resistance and run faster.**

✦ **I have long, muscular legs that help me take long strides, up to 25 feet.**

✦ **I have a large heart and large lungs, which allow me to hold lots of oxygen.**

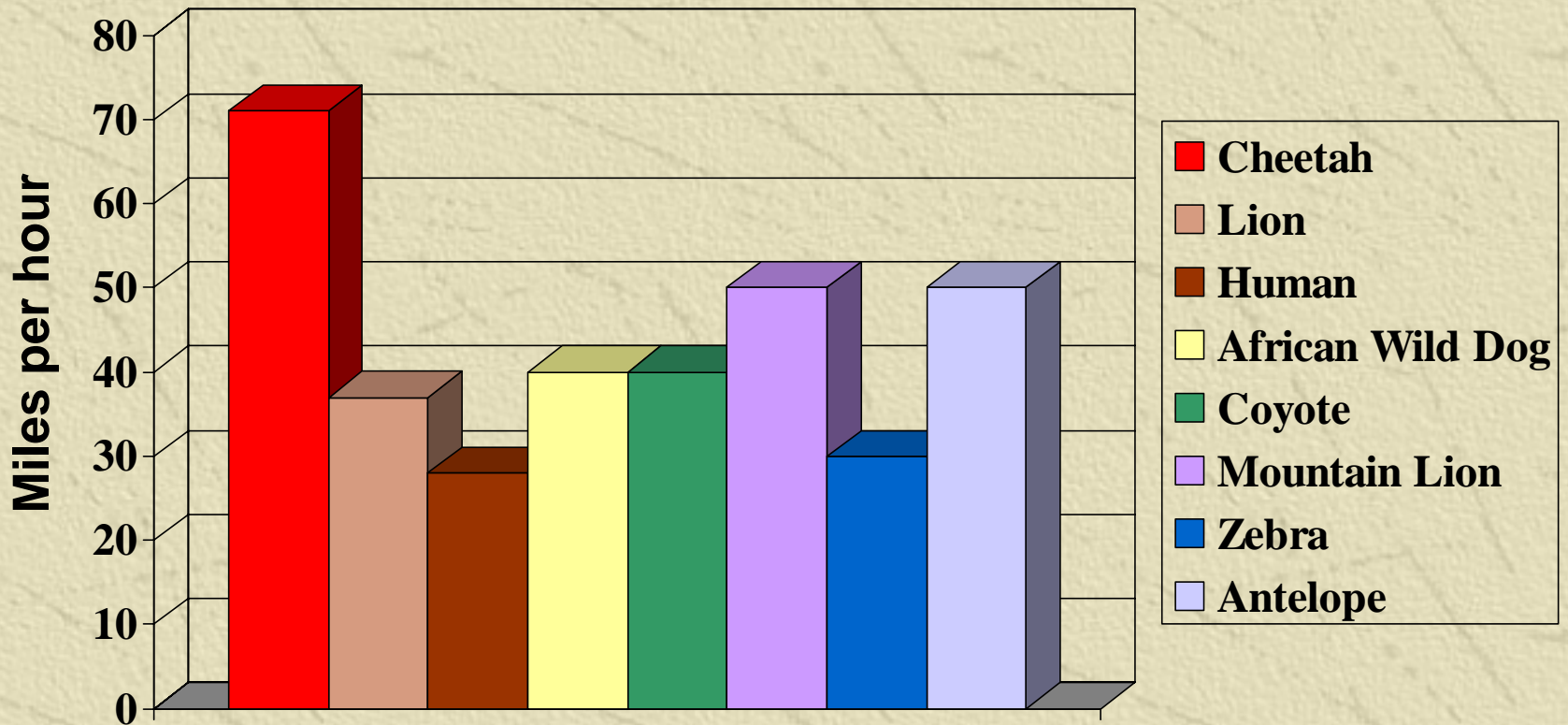
✦ **I have non-retracting claws that help me to have lots of traction and stability when I run at great speeds.**

✦ **I have a long tail that helps me to have great balance and agility at high speeds.**



✦ **I can run at speeds up to 70 mph for distances up to 1,000 yards.**

# Top Speed Comparison



# I Live Among Friends

**Like most cheetahs, I live in Namibia, Africa.**



**Namibia, a small country in Africa, is the cheetah capital of the world. With over 2,000 cheetahs, Namibia is home to about one-sixth of the world's 12,000 cheetahs.**

**About 2,000 other cheetahs are captive in zoos and reserves in other parts of the world.**

# **I Am Perfectly Suited for My Habitat**

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**I live in a wooded grassland savannah which is perfect for finding my prey. I eat hooved animals that feed on grass.**

**The grasslands are good grazing grounds for cattle and sheep, which are especially tasty.**

**I hunt during the day. My low stature allows me to sneak through the tall grass of the savannah without being seen. The ability to perform a surprise attack on my target is important if I want to have something to eat.**

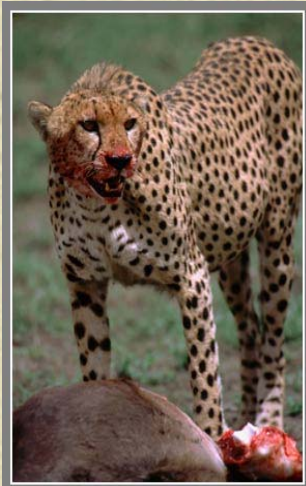


Encarta Encyclopedia, M.P. Kahl/Photo Researchers, Inc.

# I Am a Great Hunter

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**I sneak within 100 feet of my prey. Then, I race in at close to 70 miles an hour, and pounce on my target, quickly pulling down my prey.**



© 1999 Hugh Thomas.

**My small jaw doesn't allow me to kill in one deadly bite, so I press on the throat of my victim until it suffocates.**

**I am not dependent on water holes like my prey; I get most of the water I need from the animals I eat.**

**My main sources of food are antelope, gazelle, hares and impala.**



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# I Am a Consumer in the Food Web

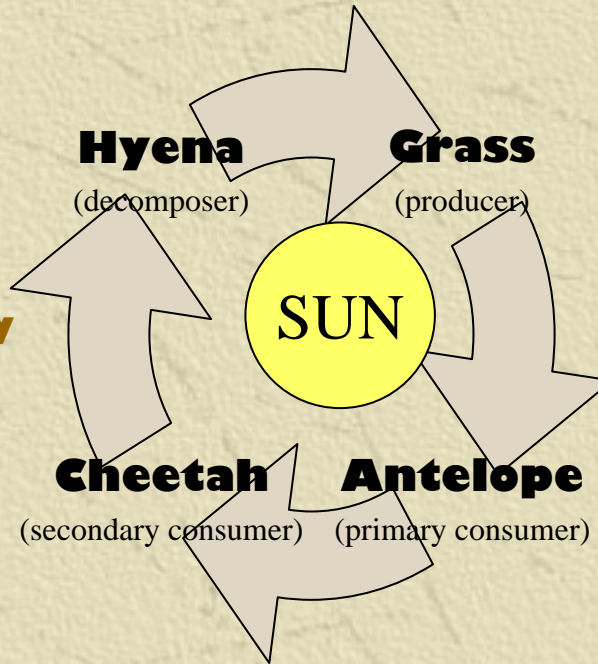
The sun gives life and energy to all the plants and animals.



The grass gives energy to the antelope.



The antelope gives energy to me when I eat it.



I eventually give energy to the hyena which feeds on me once I have died or am sick.



When the hyena dies or is killed it gives energy to the soil so the grass grows.

All animals give back to the soil when they die or through their waste.

Key

 = Gives energy to



# What Is the Price of Life?

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- ✘ **Cheetahs are an endangered species.**
  - ✘ **Without protection from humans, my population will soon be extinct.**
  - ✘ **We are living things and need humans to protect us since humans are the ones taking away our homes and killing us for money.**
  - ✘ **You can't put a price on a living thing's life. Every life is important and animals like me have just as much a right to live a long healthy life as humans do.**
  - ✘ **Once we are gone, you can never bring us back! Cheetahs are beautiful, graceful creatures that need protection!**
  - ✘ **Without us, an important piece in the circle of life would be missing. Other animals, like antelope, would suffer if we were not part of their food web.**
  - ✘ **Life has no price!**

# **It's Great to Be a Cheetah**

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**Even though cheetahs are an endangered species, if you are an African animal, a cheetah is great animal to be!**

- ◆ **Cheetahs are sleek and beautiful animals.**
- ◆ **We are built for speed.**
- ◆ **We live among friends.**
- ◆ **We are perfectly suited for our habitat.**
- ◆ **We are great hunters.**
- ◆ **We are consumers in the food web.**
- ◆ **We are protected animals.**

**It's great to be a cheetah. Don't you agree?**