

India's Cheetah Population in 2026

Prelims: Current events of national and international importance | Environment

Why in News?

Recently, Kuno National Park released the "Four Years of Cheetahs in India - A Status Review", covering the period from September 17, 2022 to September 17, 2026.

SHANKAR IAS PARLIAMENT

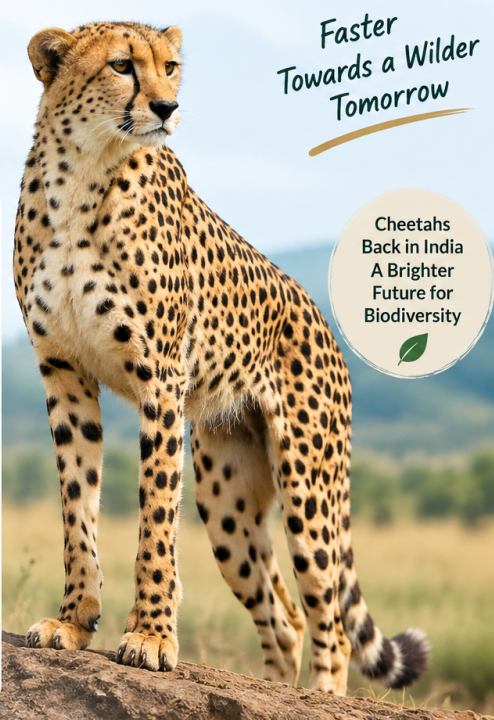
Cheetah

Speed • Grace • A Second Chance in India

	Scientific name	<i>Acinonyx jubatus</i>
	Family	Felidae
	Known for	Fastest land animal
	Distinctive feature	Non-retractable claws; tear marks on face
	Habitat	Grasslands, savannas and open habitats
	India	Extinct historically; reintroduction underway

*Faster
Towards a Wilder
Tomorrow*

Cheetahs
Back in India
A Brighter
Future for
Biodiversity



- **Population Numbers and Locations**

- Total cheetah population as of September 2026 - 52 individuals.
- India-born individuals - 32 cubs and juveniles.

- **Distribution**

- Kuno National Park (Sheopur, Madhya Pradesh) - 49 cheetahs.
- Gandhi Sagar Wildlife Sanctuary (Madhya Pradesh) - 3 cheetahs.

- **Release status in Kuno** - Of the 49 cheetahs, 17 are free-ranging in the wild, while 32 remain in soft-release bomas, including 19 cubs under one year of age.

- **Source Countries** - Founder stock includes cheetahs from Namibia and South Africa, with recent additions from Botswana.

- **Key Translocation Batches**

- **September 2022** - First translocation from Namibia, marking the project

launch.

- **February 2023** - Twelve cheetahs from South Africa were introduced to Kuno National Park.
- **Feb 2026** - 9 cheetahs from Botswana introduced to improve genetic diversity.
- **Objective** - To re-establish the cheetah population in India following local extinction and to restore grassland and open forest ecosystems.
- **Global significance** - This initiative is promoted as the **world's first intercontinental translocation of a large wild carnivore**.
- **Current phase** - The project is in a phase of consolidation and expansion, with emphasis on cub survival, metapopulation management, and identification of new release sites.
- **Habitat Expansion** - Protected habitat under integrated management encompasses approximately 3,428 square kilometers, including Kuno National Park and Gandhi Sagar Wildlife Sanctuary.
- **Identified future release sites**
 - Nauradehi Wildlife Sanctuary (MP).
 - Banni Grasslands (Gujarat).



Reference

[DD News | India's Cheetah Population](#)

