

how to protect cheetah populations? stop trafficking in the Horn of Africa

300

cheetah cubs are estimated to be smuggled each year to be sold as exotic pets

50%

of the smuggled cubs die due to inhumane treatment and transport

7,500 cheetahs are left in the wild

► Cheetah mother and cub at Maasai Mara National Reserve, Kenya.



Challenges facing cheetah populations

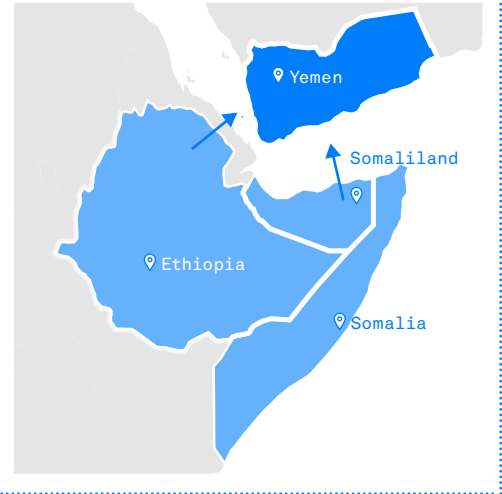
Despite being a top predator and athlete of the highest caliber, cheetah populations are in trouble. The species is currently listed as 'Vulnerable' on the [IUCN red list](#), but with fewer than 7,500 individuals left, scientists are urging for the cheetah to be classified as 'Endangered'. What's pushing them to the brink of extinction? A deadly combination of human-wildlife conflict and illegal pet trade.

Trafficking threatens not only cheetahs in the wild, but also gazelle populations, as cheetahs play a key role in maintaining healthy ecosystems.

Cheetahs living in the Horn of Africa share the land with local communities, comprised of pastoral farmers who rely on livestock as their main source of income. As herds expand and encroach upon nearby habitat and other prey species decline, conflict often arises between cheetahs and farmers. When cheetahs attack livestock, farmers retaliate, looking for ways to reduce the impacts on their livelihoods – and for some, this means illegally capturing and selling cheetah cubs.

Rescued cubs lose their basic survival skills quickly and can rarely be released back into the wild. IFAW is working to find solutions to protect the species in the wild.

Photo: Cheetah Conservation Fund



LICIT addresses the need for stronger laws, enforcement, and cooperation along trade routes

- ◀ 34 cheetahs were confiscated in Somaliland alone in 2020.
- ▶ Cheetahs and gazelles are poached from Ethiopia, Somalia/Somaliland and trafficked out of Yemen.

Legal Intelligence for Cheetah Illicit Trade
 IFAW is partnering with the Cheetah Conservation Fund (CCF) and Legal Atlas to combat cheetah and gazelle trafficking in Ethiopia, Somalia & Somaliland, and Yemen as part of the Legal Intelligence for Cheetah Illicit Trade (LICIT) project.

“Working to address the cheetah trade/trafficking at source, transit and destination through capacity building means we can hopefully slow down the decline in wild populations. It’s crucial to protect this key species.”

Fetene Hailu Buta
 Regional Project Coordinator,
 LICIT, IFAW

LICIT addresses the need for stronger laws, enforcement, and cooperation along trade routes to prevent cross-border trafficking. Together we want to increase awareness of wildlife laws among law enforcers, communities and government officials along trade routes—and support inter-regional collaboration to counter wildlife trafficking.

The four main pillars of the project include:

- ▶ **Identifying legal barriers**
 This is done through detailed analysis of national laws to identify gaps and shortfalls in how illegal wildlife trade offenses are defined, whether they meet international requirements, and the strength of penalties.

- ▶ **Developing tools to increase knowledge of the law around illegal wildlife trade**
 Our partner Legal Atlas developed an online tool to help standardize legal and regulatory best practice when it comes to cheetah trafficking.

- ▶ **Training-of-Trainers and establishing support networks for cross-border cooperation**
 We deliver training workshops that focus on why illegal wildlife trade is damaging not only to the species affected, but to the habitats and communities that coexist with them. The training educates on effective laws and strong enforcement regarding trafficking and poaching. These workshops are aimed at enforcement officers, prosecutors, and community leaders, who can then share their knowledge and awareness with the wider community. The goals of this training are to change community attitudes and behavior, whilst also increasing the law enforcement and prosecution of illegal wildlife crimes.

- ▶ **Community participation in LICIT target countries**
 LICIT will spread awareness about the importance of wildlife as a resource that, sustainably managed, would protect threatened species, support ecosystem and community resilience, and provide opportunities for sustainable livelihoods.

▶ see how at ifaw.org



#StopWildlifeCrime