

REPRODUCTION IN THE MALE CHEETAH
Acinonyx jubatus jubatus (SCHREBER, 1776)

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by

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Submitted in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of

Department of Zoology
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Pretoria

M.Sc. (Zoology)

in the

Faculty of Science

University of Pretoria

Pretoria

ABSTRACT

The objective of the study was the promotion of the breeding of cheetahs in captivity. Two means of achieving this end were selected. First a management approach was adopted to ensure the control of breeding activity in the captive population. Secondly cheetah males with the best semen quality were selected for use in the breeding program. Semen was collected from anaesthetized cheetah males by electroejaculation. Semen was evaluated immediately after collection and spermograms were counted on prepared semen smears. Sperm concentrations were determined in samples collected from cheetah males over a 24 h period, in animals that were anaesthetized, electroejaculated and after stimulation with GnRH.

December 1987

During the study period, 1975-1984, >240 cheetah cubs were born from 71 litters and a mean conception rate of 52% was achieved.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author wishes to thank the following people and organizations for their assistance during the study:

Professor J.D. Skinner, supervisor of this study, head of the Zoology Department, Faculty of Science, University of Pretoria.

Miss Ann van Dyk of the De Wildt Cheetah Research Centre, friend and associate who, through her dedication to the task, achieved the unexpected success of breeding cheetahs on a large scale. Ann's moral and substantial financial support made this study possible.

The Council of the National Zoological Gardens of South Africa who gave permission for the study to be undertaken.

The past and present Directors Dr. D.J. Brand and Mr. W. Labuschagne and personnel of the National Zoological Gardens of South Africa and Mrs Schweikert for Figure 1.

The Endangered Wildlife Trust for drawing financial support which made the hormone studies possible.

Colleagues who collaborated with the author: Professor H.J. Bertschinger, Head of the Department of Theriogenology and Professor R.I. Coubrough, Dean, of the Faculty of Veterinary Science, University of Pretoria and Drs. D.E. Wildt and M. Bush, National Zoological Park, Washington, USA.

Personnel of the Department of Physiology, Faculty of Veterinary Science, University of Pretoria: Mrs. F.A. Collett & Mrs M.S. Mulders.

CONCLUSIONS	96
SUMMARY	102
OPINIONING	105
REFERENCES	108
PUBLICATIONS	119

CONTENTS

ABSTRACTii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
CONTENTS	iv
LIST OF TABLES	v
LIST OF FIGURES	vi
INTRODUCTION	1
STUDY AREA	2
MATERIAL & METHODS	2
Management	2
Immobilization	6
Semen collection & evaluation	7
Blood sampling for plasma hormone determinations	11
Radioimmunoassays	11
Diurnal variation in plasma testosterone	15
Plasma testosterone after increasing doses of GnRH	15
Plasma LH & testosterone after 50 µg GnRH	16
Plasma testosterone after 50 µg GnRH in different age groups	16
Plasma testosterone in July & November	17
The effect of anaesthesia on the plasma testosterone response	17
Hormone studies in anaesthetized & electroejaculated males	18
Plasma testosterone and semen quality	20
Plasma testosterone after intravenous & intramuscular GnRH	20
Plasma testosterone after HCG injection	20
RESULTS & DISCUSSION	21
Management	21
Immobilization	24
Semen collection & evaluation	36
Diurnal variation in plasma testosterone	58
Plasma testosterone after increasing doses of GnRH	63
Plasma LH & testosterone after 50 µ GnRH	66
Plasma testosterone after 50 µg GnRH in different age groups	71
Plasma testosterone in July & November	76
The effect of anaesthesia on plasma testosterone response	77
Hormone studies in anaesthetized & electroejaculated males	79
Plasma testosterone and semen quality	86
Plasma testosterone after intravenous & intramuscular GnRH	88
Plasma testosterone after HCG injection	92
CONCLUSIONS	96
SUMMARY	102
OPSOMMING	105
REFERENCES	108
PUBLICATIONS	119

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Characteristics of semen samples classified as good, fair and poor immediately after collection.....	p 9
Table 2. Induction, recovery times and drug dosages in cheetah males captured with a drug combination of ketamine hydrochloride and xylazine hydrochloride.....	p 25
Table 3. Summary of examinations of fresh semen samples carried out immediately after collection.....	p 38
Table 4. Summary of spemiogram results.....	p 42
Table 5. Summary of spermiograms from seven cheetah males that sired 28 litters between 1975 & 1980.....	p 43
Table 6. Plasma luteinizing hormone and testosterone concentrations of different species.....	p 62
Table 7. Plasma testosterone after increasing doses of GnRH.	p 64
Table 8. Plasma testosterone after GnRH in different species.	p 70
Table 9. Plasma testosterone following a standard dose of 50 µg GnRH in cheetahs of different ages.....	p 72
Table 10. Mean time taken to reach maximum plasma testosterone after GnRH stimulation.....	p 74
Table 11. Plasma testosterone after 50 µg GnRH in July & November.....	p 76
Table 12. The relationship of plasma testosterone concentrations and semen quality in 18 cheetah males.....	p 86
Table 13. Plasma testosterone after GnRH by intravenous & intramuscular injection.....	p 89
Table 14. The effect of increasing doses of HCG on plasma testosterone in cheetah males.....	p 92
Figure 16. The plasma testosterone concentrations measured in samples taken at two hourly intervals for a period of 24 h.	p 38
Figure 17. Plasma testosterone after increasing doses of GnRH.	p 83
Figure 18. LH inhibition curve of canine pituitary standard (LH-165-1) and pooled cheetah serum.	p 86

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Plan of the cheetah enclosures at the De Wildt Cheetah Breeding & Research Centre of the National Zoological Gardens of South Africa.....p 4

Figure 2. Frequency distribution of births at De Wildt during the period 1975 to 1984.....p 22

Figure 3. Electroejaculatory stimulus.p 37

Figure 4. Photomicrograph of a normal spermatozoa.& a spermatozoan with an abnormal head & midpiece.....p 39

Figure 5. 'Dag' defects.p 39

Figure 6. Various abnormal spermatozoa..p 40

Figure 7. Spermatozoa with coiled tail, acrosome defect and a normal spermatozoa.p 40

Figure 8. Phase contrast photomicrograph od 'Dag' defects. ..p 41

Figure 9. Phase contrast photomicrograph od 'Dag' defects. ..p 41

Figure 10. Frequency distribution of the percentage normal sperm counts from seven males that sired 28 litters.p 43

Figure 11. Percentage normal spermatozoa counted in semen collected at regular intervals for one year from two different treatment groups of cheetah males.p 44

Figure 12. Scanning electron microscopy of normal spermatozoa.p 46

Figure 13. Scanning electron microscopy of various forms of the 'Dag' defect.p 47

Figure 14. Scanning electron microscopy of acrosomal defects.p 48

Figure 15. Scanning electronmicroscopy of various major defects seen in cheetah spermatozoa.p 49

Figure 16. The Plasma testosterone concentrations measured in samples taken at two hourly intervals for a period of 24 h. .p 58

Figure 17. Plasma testosterone after increasing doses of GnRH.p 63

Figure 18. LH inhibition curve of canine pituitary standard (LER-165-1) and pooled cheetah serum.p 66

INTRODUCTION

Figure 19. Mean response in Plasma LH & testosterone following the administration of 50 µg GnRH.p 67

Figure 20. Plasma testosterone following 50 µg GnRH in animals from different age groups.p 71

Figure 21. A comparison between the response to GnRH in cheetah males anaesthetized with thiopentone sodium or CT1341.p 78

Figure 22. Plasma cortisol concentrations in cheetah males subjected to serial bleeding and regimented electroejaculation under CT1341 anaesthesia.p 80

Figure 23. Plasma testosterone concentrations in cheetah males subjected to serial bleeding and regimented electroejaculation under CT1341 anaesthesia.p 80

Figure 24. Plasma LH concentrations in cheetah males subjected to serial bleeding and regimented electroejaculation under CT1341 anaesthesia.p 81

Figure 25. Plasma testosterone after GnRH by intravenous and inramuscular injection.p 88

Figure 26. Plasma testosterone after increasing doses of HCG p 93

Figure 27. Mean plasma testosterone after HCG & 50 µg GnRH. .p 94

1975).

The present study was undertaken with the aim of promoting the breeding of cheetahs at the De Wildt Centre. The population of cheetahs being kept at the time consisted of 29 animals (20/9). First the management of the population was investigated and changed with the view to stimulate breeding activity. Then the fertility of male cheetahs was examined with the objective of establishing a rational method of selecting males for the breeding program. After it was found that a large proportion of the males being kept at the Centre appeared to have poor semen quality the study was extended to include an investigation into aspects of reproductive endocrinology in the male cheetah. The