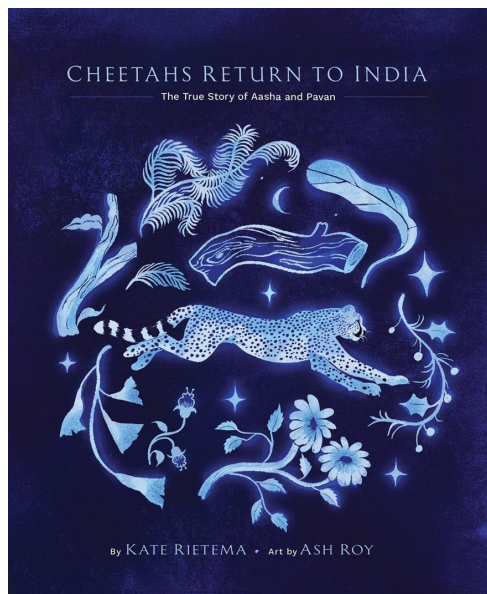


ACTIVITY PACKET

CHEETAHS RETURN TO INDIA: THE TRUE STORY OF AASHA AND PAVAN



ABOUT THE BOOK

Long ago, cheetahs roamed India's grasslands and forests. But as farms expanded and cities grew, India's cheetah population dwindled . . . to nothing. Seventy years later, hope—and cheetahs—return to India. From a selection of cheetahs sent from Africa, Aasha and Pavan are chosen as the first cheetahs to be released into the wild. Will they survive in their new home? Will they thrive? Will India finally see a return of their beloved cheetahs?

Illustrator: Ash Roy

Publisher: Tilbury House, 2025

ISBN: 978-1668955192

Format: 40 page picture book

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Kate Rietema is the author of three children's books and almost 100 stories and poems in publications like Highlights, Cricket Media, and The School Magazine. She lives and writes in a red house in Michigan with her husband and five daughters.

Kate hopes that cheetahs will always survive, and that this book will inspire readers to learn more about wildlife conservation. You can find more about Kate's books at www.katerietema.com.



CHEETAH CODE

Use letters from the paw prints to decode the cheetah fact below:



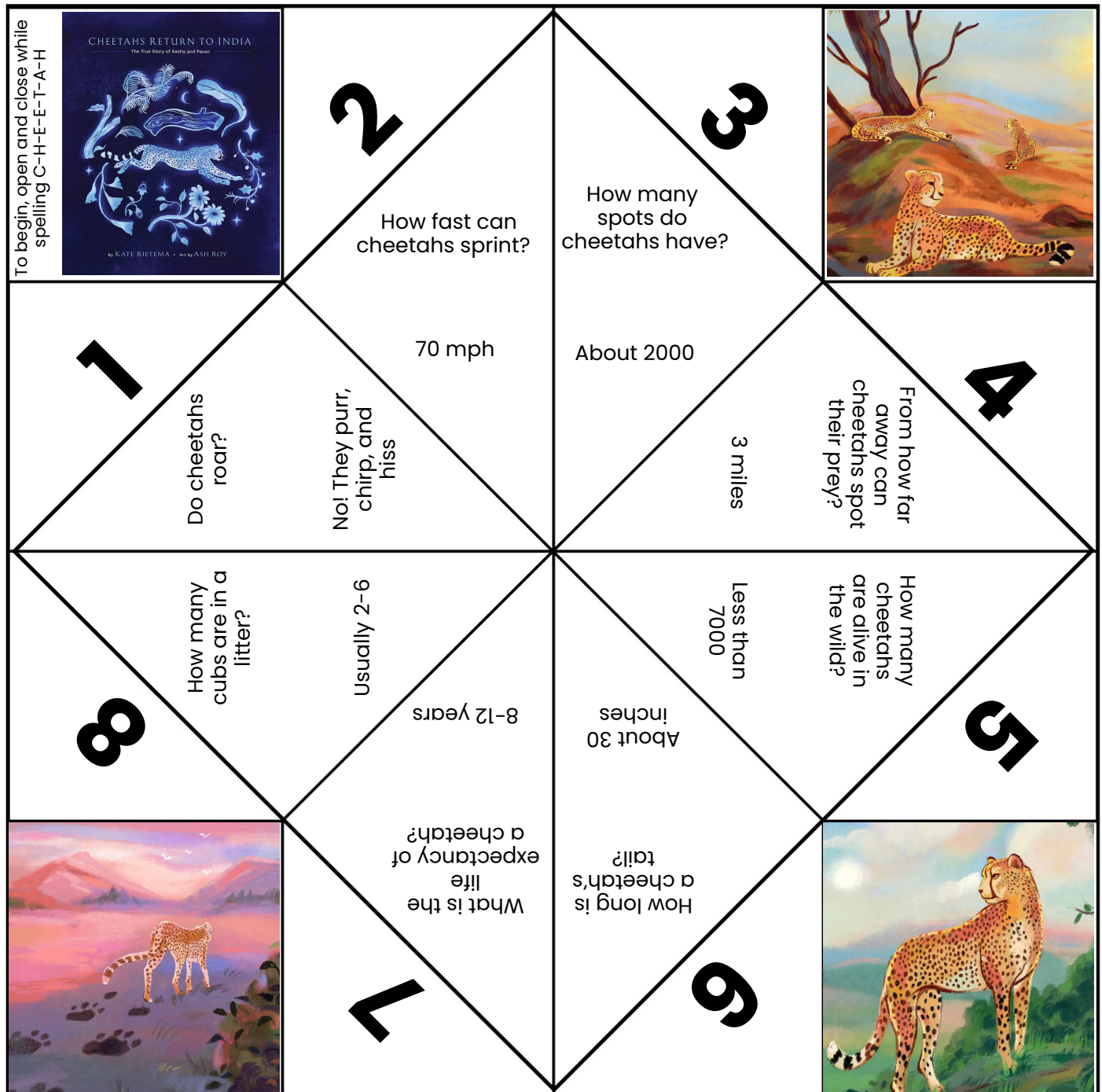




CHEETAH FACT CATCHER

Folding Instructions:

1. Cut on outside line and place paper print side down
2. Fold paper corner to corner in both directions to make creases in the shape of an X
3. Flatten paper back out
4. Fold each corner to the center of the X
5. Flip paper over so the folds are facing down
6. Fold each corner to the center of the paper again, like in step 4
7. Reinforce creases by folding paper in half lengthwise and widthwise with numbers facing inward
8. With cheetah images facing up, pull the tabs up and out while helping the center pop upward



DRAW A CHEETAH

My cheetah's name is:

INCLUDE THESE UNIQUE TRAITS IN YOUR DRAWING

long legs

slender body

rounded ears

black spots

white throat

claws

tear markings

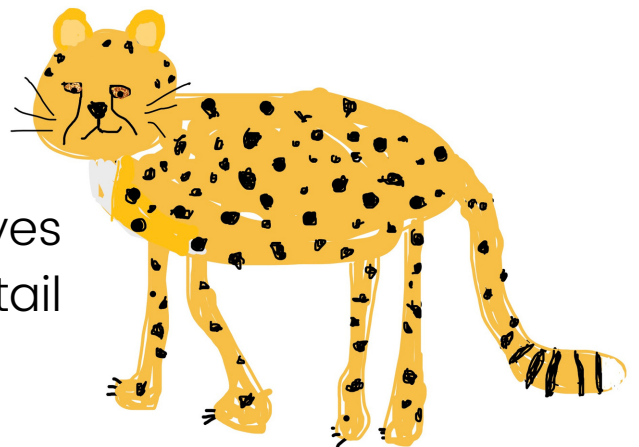
whiskers

long tail

golden brown eyes

partially striped tail

white-tipped tail





VULNERABLE AND ENDANGERED ANIMAL WORD SEARCH

Circle words in the puzzle below:

A	R	K	G	O	R	I	L	L	A
P	X	U	X	N	J	S	C	T	B
K	O	A	L	A	G	E	H	A	L
R	J	L	X	Q	W	A	E	P	U
D	H	T	A	E	R	O	E	B	E
U	M	I	X	R	F	T	T	C	W
R	A	G	N	X	B	T	A	U	H
S	K	E	X	O	D	E	H	S	A
O	H	R	X	X	L	R	A	G	L
E	L	E	P	H	A	N	T	R	E

cheetah

rhino

koala

gorilla

sea otter

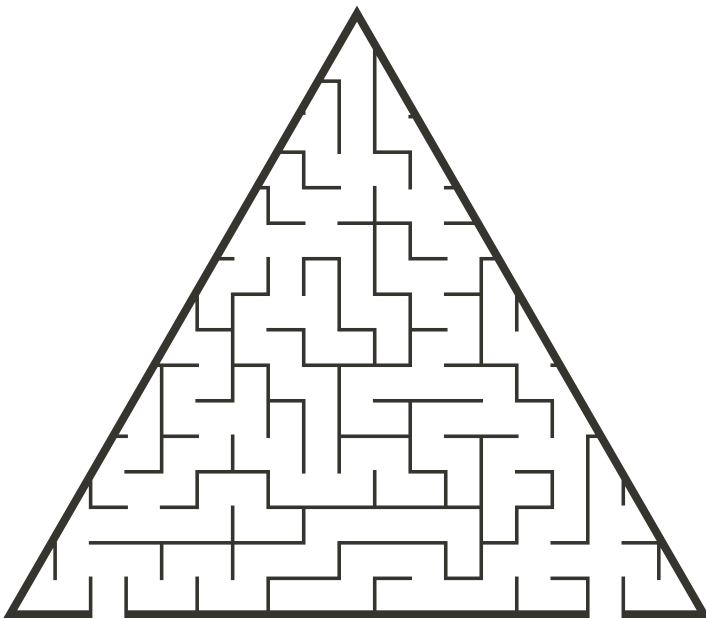
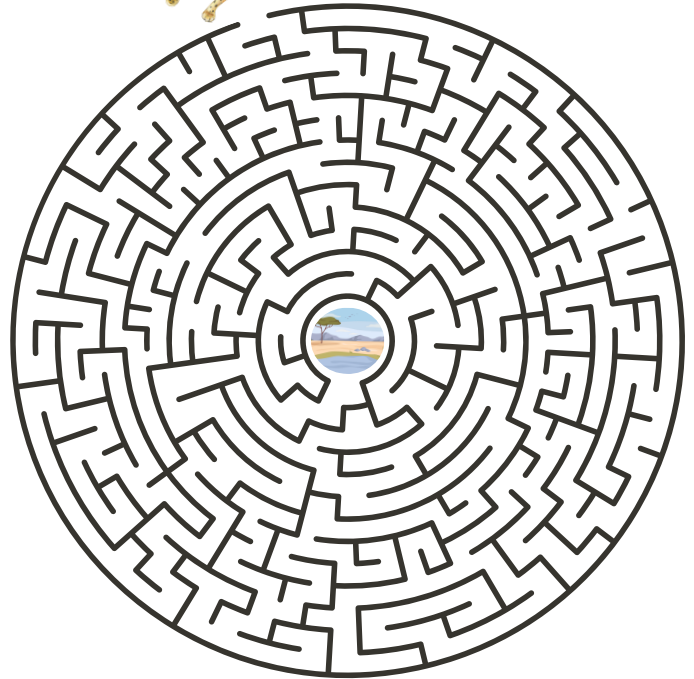
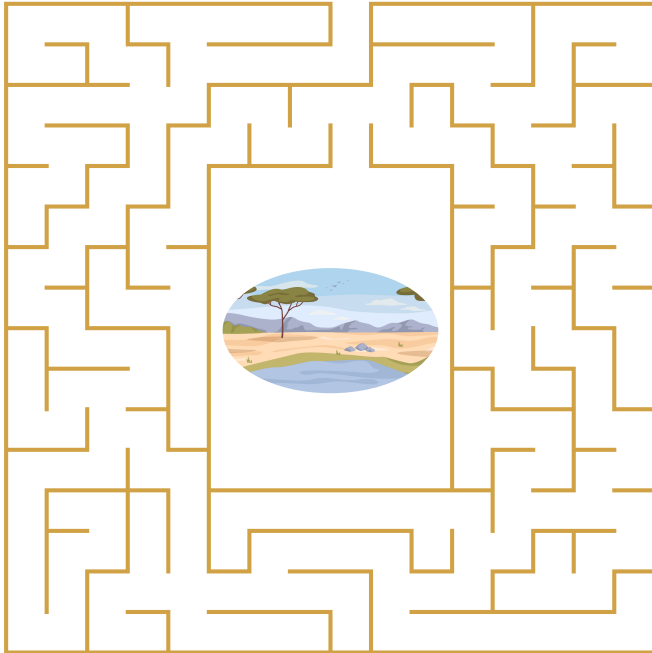
tiger

blue whale

elephant

polar bear

HELP THE CHEETAHS FIND THEIR WATERING HOLES



BOOK REVIEW

Book Title: _____

Author: _____ Illustrator: _____

Genre: _____

Topic: _____

Your book rating:

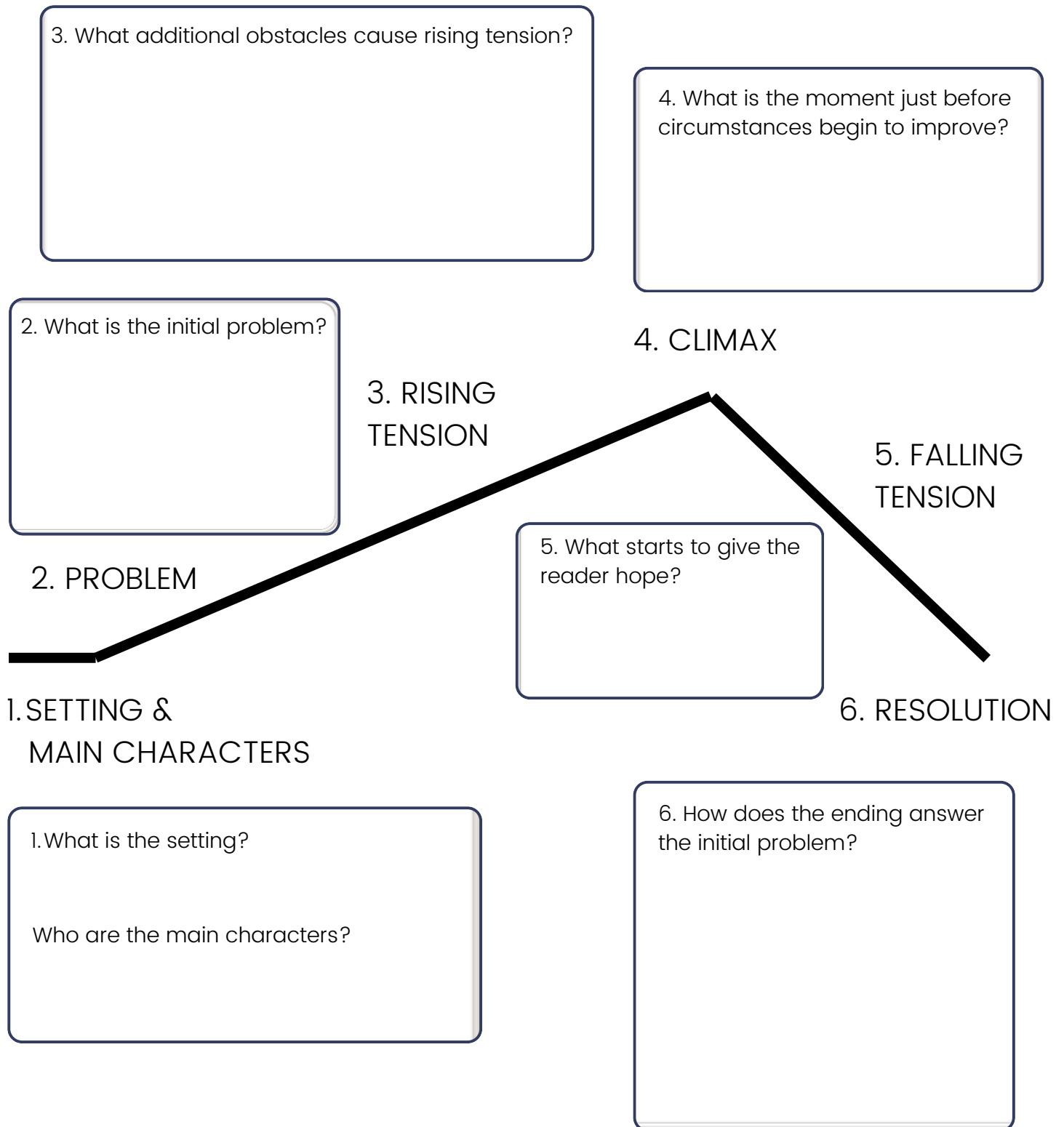


Would you recommend this book? YES NO

What did you learn?

What was your favorite part?

STORY ANALYSIS



MAPPING ACTIVITY

In the early 1900's, it's estimated that 100,000 cheetahs roamed freely throughout Africa, the Middle East, and parts of Asia.



Sadly, the population of cheetahs has dropped to less than 7,000 today.



The largest populations of cheetahs now live in Namibia and South Africa.

Cheetahs were officially declared extinct in India in 1952. Recently, a group of conservationists have been working hard to bring cheetahs back to India. In 2022, the first group of cheetahs were flown from Namibia, Africa to Kuno National Park in India.

Using the map below, identify the country by drawing a line between the dots:

INDIA ●

UNITED STATES ●

NAMIBIA ●



ENDANGERED ANIMAL VOCABULARY CHECK-IN

EXTINCT

A species is extinct when there are no living members anywhere on Earth.

REGIONALLY EXTINCT

A species is regionally extinct when they have completely disappeared from a geographical location they once inhabited.

India's last three cheetahs were killed by an Indian prince in 1947 (see photo). The species was officially declared extinct in India in 1952. This means that cheetahs were regionally extinct—they disappeared in India, but still survived in other countries.



Image from the Journal of Bombay Natural History Society, 1948

ENDANGERED

A species is endangered when they are at a very high risk of extinction.

An animal is listed as endangered if any of the following is true:

- There are less than 2,500 adults in the wild.
- There's a 20% chance the species will become extinct within 20 years.
- The population declined by 50% or more in the last 10 years.

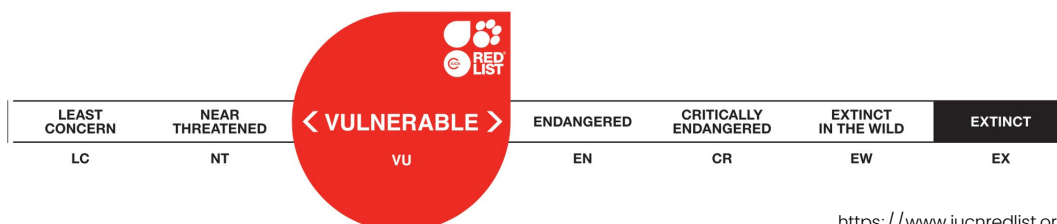
VULNERABLE

A species is considered vulnerable when they are at a high risk of extinction.

An animal is listed as vulnerable if any of the following is true:

- There are less than 10,000 adults in the wild.
- There's a 10% chance the species will become extinct within 100 years.
- The population declined by 30% or more in the last 10 years.

The International Union for Conservation (IUCN) of Nature's Red List of Threatened Species identifies cheetahs as vulnerable. Cheetahs need our help to survive!



<https://www.iucnredlist.org>

With an adult's permission, visit the IUCN website to search the status of other animals.

CONSERVATION CHAMPIONS

WORDS TO KNOW

Wildlife conservation: The protection and careful management of plants, animals, and their habitats.

Conservationist: A person who works to protect the environment and wildlife.

CONSERVATIONISTS HARD AT WORK

The Cheetah Conservation Fund (CCF) is an important organization in Namibia, whose mission is the conservation of cheetahs and their habitats. The CCF played a major role in bringing cheetahs back to India. Let's look at other ways they're helping cheetahs:

TROUBLE FOR CHEETAHS

HOW CCF IS HELPING



Bushblok product, photo credit: CCF

Habitat Loss:

Available land for cheetahs is decreasing due to human development and bush encroachment.

One way the CCF is working toward habitat restoration is through their Bushblok initiative. Encroaching thornbushes are harvested, dried, processed, and compressed into fuel blocks. This initiative creates usable land for cheetahs and their prey.



Anatolian Shepherd guarding goats, photo credit: Andre Harrington/CCF

Human-Wildlife Conflict:

A farmer's job is to protect his livestock. Many farmers are afraid cheetahs will kill their sheep and goats. Unfortunately, thousands of cheetahs have been shot by farmers.

The CCF trains guard dogs and sells them to farmers at a very low cost. The guard dogs protect the farmer's livestock by scaring away cheetahs and other predators. The guard dog program helps farmers and cheetahs get along.



Cubs rescued from wildlife trafficking in Somaliland, photo credit: CCF

Illegal Wildlife Trafficking:

Cheetahs are beautiful animals and relatively gentle. Unfortunately, this makes some people want them for pets. Each year, about 300 cheetah cubs are stolen from the wild to be sold. Sadly, most of these cubs don't survive.

Should wild animals be pets? No! The CCF works hard to educate communities in high risk areas, train wildlife officials, and provide care for rescued cubs.

Learn more about the Cheetah Conservation Fund at www.cheetah.org.

3RD GRADE NGSS 3-ESS2-2 TEACHER DISCUSSION GUIDE

3-ESS2-2. OBTAIN AND COMBINE INFORMATION TO DESCRIBE CLIMATES IN DIFFERENT REGIONS OF THE WORLD

OBJECTIVE: Students will be able to explain how regional climates affected African cheetahs after they were relocated to India.

MAIN IDEA: Many animal adaptations occur in response to their regional climate. When an animal experiences a major relocation, it will take time to develop adaptations appropriate to their new climate.

WORDS TO KNOW: hemisphere, climate, monsoon season, adaptation

1. READ: "Cheetahs Return to India: The True Story of Aasha and Pavan" by Kate Rietema
2. STUDY: Locate Namibia and India on a map. Are these countries located in the Northern or Southern Hemisphere? (Discuss: Namibia is in the Southern Hemisphere, India is in the Northern Hemisphere.)
3. THINK: How does the location of each country affect weather? What temperatures would you expect in June? (Discuss: In India, summer lasts from March-June, so the weather would be very hot. In Namibia, June is in the winter and temperatures drop to freezing during the night.)
4. APPLY: Consider the cheetahs from our book today.
 - a. Where did the cheetahs come from? (Answer: Namibia, Africa)
 - b. What weather would Namibian cheetahs expect to have in June? (Discuss: Winter/cold)
 - c. What adaptation occurs to an animal's fur coat in winter? (Discuss: Their coat gets thicker to keep them warm.)
 - d. What weather did the Namibian cheetahs actually experience in June in India? (Discuss: Summer/hot)
 - e. Imagine cheetahs with winter coats in summer weather. What is the danger of this situation? (Discuss: Cheetahs could overheat and get dehydrated.)
 - f. Can you think of other weather-related concerns for cheetahs in a new climate? (Discuss: Rain! The monsoon season in India is June-September. Remember that the cheetahs are used to June being the coldest month, so this is when their coat is thickest.)
 - g. What do you think happens when an animal's thick winter coat gets really wet? What was the result of this happening to Aasha and Pavan? (Discuss: The book says Pavan "scratched with muddy claws, and infection spread like fire." The illustrations don't show it, but the cheetahs wore radio collars around their necks. When the rain soaked the cheetahs' thick neck scruff, the radio collars caused additional trouble by trapping wetness. Then, the cheetahs scratched their irritated skin, creating open wounds that became infected. Both Aasha and Pavan suffered infections during their first summer in India. They were captured, treated, and recovered.)
5. WRAP UP: How did humans support cheetahs who were affected by a rapid change of regional climates? (Discuss: conservationists set up shade tarps, water misters, and extra locations for drinking water. The cheetahs who suffered from infection were captured and treated.)