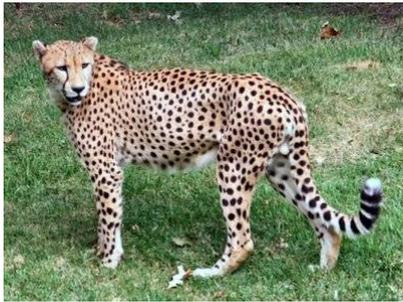


THE CHEETAH TO RETURN HOME TO INDIA



The Indian government has decided to re-introduce the cheetah to India. With the decision come a major financial investment and many potential problems, which the officials, however, are ready to deal with.

India has long prided itself on the presence of big cats on their land. Tiger reserves have been promoting tourism in India and effectively bringing a lot of money to the country. The cheetah, which once used to be a typical endemic species, has not been seen for more than 50 years and the government has recently revealed a plan to bring this beautiful creature back. However, there are consequences which need to be addressed.

The Indian officials would like to reintroduce the cheetah in the hope of attracting more tourist attention. An increased tourist presence will result in more profit and jobs for locals. Another pro-argument is the creation of three large grassland sanctuaries which will be the new home for the cheetah. **The officials claim the cheetah will help restore local ecosystem** and are willing to pay nearly \$600 000 to prepare the grassland and obtain 18 cheetah from the Middle East to be released in the three selected reserves in Rajasthan. Ideally, their numbers should eventually grow and each reserve may be home to approximately 50 big cats.

While such efforts are rather noble, **the critics of this plan point out 23 families will have to relocate from the selected areas.** However, the government is prepared to offer financial compensation and hopes the families will be willing to go.

The cheetah is a very unique and endangered species, with only 10 000 animals remaining in the whole world. In fact, its name is derived from the Sanskrit and many Indians would love to see one of their big cats return back home.

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