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Agenda Item 30.2.1

PROPOSAL FOR THE INCLUSION OF THE CHEETAH (*Acinonyx jubatus)* POPULATION OF ZIMBABWE ON APPENDIX I AND II OF THE CONVENTION*

Summary:

The Government of Zimbabwe has submitted the attached proposal for the inclusion of the Cheetah *(Acinonyx jubatus)* population of Zimbabwe in Appendix I and II of CMS.

This revision was done by the proponent, reducing the scope of the proposal to the cheetah populations of Zimbabwe only.

*The geographical designations employed in this document do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the CMS Secretariat (or the United Nations Environment Programme) concerning the legal status of any country, territory, or area, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. The responsibility for the contents of the document rests exclusively with its author

PROPOSAL FOR THE INCLUSION OF THE CHEETAH (Acinonyx jubatus) POPULATION OF ZIMBABWE ON APPENDIX I AND II OF THE CONVENTION

A. PROPOSAL

Inclusion of the Cheetah *(Acinonyx jubatus)* population of Zimbabwe in Appendix I and II of the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS).

B. PROPONENT

Zimbabwe

C. SUPPORTING STATEMENT

The inclusion in Appendix I seeks to encourage new conservation measures for the species and its habitat and to strengthen binational and multi-institutional cooperation, considering its declining population size (Durant, Mitchell et al. 2017, Durant, Groom et al. 2022). Appendix II listing (CMS Article IV paragraph 2) would allow Range States to agree on cooperative arrangements to manage even geographically separate parts of the cheetah population. In addition to the CMS Standing Committee recommendation for listing, there is an urgent need for both financial and technical support to recover the cheetah populations. Listing without financial and technical support will not achieve the desired results.

1. Taxonomy
   - 1.1 Class Mammalia
   - 1.2 Order Carnivora
   - 1.3 Family Felidae
   - 1.4 Genus *Acinonyx jubatus* (Schreber, 1775)
   - 1.5 Sub Species *Acinonyx jubatus* (Schreber 1775) distributed across Southern and Eastern Africa.
   - 1.6 Scientific synonyms
   - 1.7 Common English name, Cheetah

2. Overview

The proposal seeks to include the Cheetah *(Acinonyx jubatus*) populations of Zimbabwe in Appendix I and Appendix II. The species is already included in Appendix I of the Convention with the exception of the populations of Namibia, Botswana and Zimbabwe. The global Cheetah *(Acinonyx jubatus)* population is estimated at ca. 6,517 mature individuals (7,100 adult and adolescent animals) distributed over 3,100,000 km2 of land, with populations having been eradicated from 95% of their historical range (Durant, Groom et al. 2022). Cheetahs are currently enlisted as "vulnerable" on the IUCN Red List hence require urgent conservation attention. Cheetah population of Botswana has remained relatively stable and currently does not meet the IUCN Red List criteria for classification as ‘Endangered’. With its steep decline in range and numbers and current small population size, Zimbabwe’s Cheetah population would qualify as ‘Endangered’ under IUCN Red List criteria A2, C1 and D (IUCN SSC 2012). Namibia’s Cheetah population has experienced a less dramatic decline than Zimbabwe’s population, yet the decline of Namibia’s Cheetah population is substantial and enough to be considered as ‘Endangered’ under IUCN Red List criteria C1(van der Meer 2016)

CMS COP13 requested that the Scientific Council should, after consultation with the respective Range States affected, make recommendations to CMS COP concerning possible amendments to the list of Cheetah populations presently excluded from CMS Appendix I to

reflect the current conservation status and inform a Decision by CMS COP14. As such, the CMS Scientific Council, at the 5th meeting of its Sessional Committee (ScC-SC5), established an Intersessional Working Group (IWG) on the Conservation and Management of the Cheetah (*Acinonyx jubatus*) and African Wild Dog (*Lycaon pictus*) to conduct these consultations. The IWG, in February 2023 and in consultation with Range States, reviewed the report on the Conservation status of the Cheetah populations of Botswana, Namibia and Zimbabwe and considerations for listing on CMS appendices (2023), that was commissioned by the CMS Secretariat and prepared by a group of Cheetah experts. The IWG reported its findings to the Sessional Committee at its 6th meeting and informed adoption of Decision 14.162 at COP14. Upon request and in line with Decision 14.162 Zimbabwe submitted on 30 April 2024 its report on the Status of the African cheetah *(Acinonyx jubatus) in Zimbabwe* to the CMS Secretariat and subsequently to the IUCN Cat Specialist Group. According to the Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority report (2024), the last census of the cheetah population was conducted between 2012 and 2013 and gave an estimate of 150 adult cheetahs, leaving the status largely unknown in recent years. The report further states that a population census conducted between 2022 and 2024 estimated a population of 134-143 cheetahs in 2024 (Zim-Parks, 2024). According to Van der Meer (2023), the Cheetah population of Namibia consists of ca. 1,498 adult and adolescent Cheetahs which reside in ca. 60% of the country. In Zimbabwe, since 2000, large scale land use change has resulted in a ca. 85% reduction of Cheetah numbers, therefore Zimbabwe's Cheetah population qualifies as Endangered under IUCN Red List criteria. The Cheetah population of Zimbabwe currently consists of ca. 150-170 adult and adolescent Cheetahs which reside in 12% of the country (Van der Meer, 2023). Most of the cheetahs in the Southern African population are part of a transboundary population covering Angola, Botswana, Namibia, South-Africa, Zambia, Mozambique and Zimbabwe (IUCN/SSC, 2007). The main reasons for the drastic decline in global cheetah range and numbers are habitat loss and fragmentation, loss of prey and human persecution due to livestock depredation (IUCN/SSC, 2007). The cheetah is listed as vulnerable by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (Durant et al., 2015), meaning the species faces a high risk of extinction in the wild (IUCN/SSC, 2012).

Having considered all the reports, including the Report on the Conservation status of the Cheetah populations of Botswana, Namibia and Zimbabwe and considerations for listing on CMS appendices by the IUCN SSC Cat Specialist Group and the Report by Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority (ZimParks) in collaboration with the Cheetah Conservation Project Zimbabwe on the Status of the African cheetah (*Acinonyx jubatus)* in Zimbabwe, the 7th Meeting of the CMS Scientific Council's Sessional Committee, in collaboration with the IUCN Cat Specialist Group concluded that the Zimbabwean cheetah populations were in decline hence merited eligibility for CMS Appendix I listing. The Scientific Council submitted its recommendations to the 56th Meeting of the Standing Committee. The 56th Meeting of the Standing Committee subsequently approved the recommendation from the Scientific Council to list the cheetah populations hence it is on that basis that this listing proposal is made. This listing shall allow sustainable legal offtake in areas where Cheetah population estimates are based on sound scientific methods with the Parties providing monitoring offtakes to ensure sustainability through the application of the exception under Article III(5)(b) to the prohibition of taking. This is very important to ensure stakeholder support for Cheetah conservation and reduction in unmonitored illegal offtake.

3 Migrations

3.1 Kinds of movement, distance, the cyclical and predicable nature of the migration

Cheetahs have large home ranges on the order of 800-1,500 km² and are semi-nomadic, ranging widely to follow prey movements and avoid other large competing predators (Nowell and Jackson 1996).

3.2 Proportion of the population migrating, and why that is a significant proportion

Most (94%) of the ca. 4,297 Cheetahs in the Southern African Cheetah population are part of a single transboundary population stretching across Southern Angola, Botswana, South-Western Mozambique, Namibia, Northern South Africa, Southern Zambia, and South-Western Zimbabwe, with some additional isolated populations in central Angola, Mozambique, Zambia, and Zimbabwe (IUCN SSC 2015, Durant *et al.* 2015, Weise *et al.* 2017). Botswana's, Namibia's and, to a lesser extent, Zimbabwe's Cheetahs are at the core of the Southern African Cheetah population (van der Meer 2016). All three national populations are considered part of the larger Southern African transboundary population and are included in several Transfrontier Conservation Initiatives in the region, most notably the Kavango-Zambezi TFCA. TFCA treaties between partner states aim to "facilitate and enhance the free movement of animals across international boundaries by joining fragmented wildlife habitats into a mosaic of protected areas and wildlife corridors through the provisioning of socio-economic benefits to stakeholders, and stakeholder involvement in planning, establishment, and management of TFCAs" (Peace Parks Foundation, 2009). TFCA treaties do not specifically address the conservation needs of vulnerable species such as Cheetah. The Tuli area between Botswana and Zimbabwe is part of the Greater Mapungubwe Transfrontier Conservations Area (TFCA), for which the governments of Zimbabwe, Botswana and South Africa signed a memorandum of understanding in 2006. Although there does not seem to be a resident Cheetah population in the Zimbabwe component of the Greater Mapungubwe TFCA (Fig. 12) (van der Meer 2016), Cheetah movement between Zimbabwe's Tuli Circle Safari Area and Botswana's Northern Tuli Game Reserve was confirmed based on photographic records: a coalition of three males which spent most of their time in the Northern Tuli Game Reserve has been seen in the Tuli Circle Safari Area on several occasions (ca. 20km) (Brassine 2014, van der Meer 2016). In 2020, Liuwa Plain National Park, the Zambian Carnivore Programme and the Zoological Society of London reported the first documented transboundary movement of Cheetah between Zambia and Angola: a collared female Cheetah split from her family group in Liuwa Plain National Park and dispersed to the Northwest of the park, eventually passing into Angola, after which she appeared to move back East into Zambia, returning to the wildlife-rich parts of the upper West Zambezi Game Management Area (AP 2020). While this movement is relatively short in distance, it illustrates how cheetahs can move from areas of rich prey density into areas of low prey abundance and hence demonstrates their potential for recolonization (van der Meer 2018).

4 **Biological data (other than migration)**

4.1 Distribution (current and historical)

Current Range States in Africa are Algeria, Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Botswana, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gambia, Kenya, Libya, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Senegal, Somalia, South Africa, Sudan, Tanzania, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe (CMS, 2009). The Southern African Cheetah population consists of free ranging Cheetah populations in Angola, Botswana, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe (IUCN SSC 2015, Durant *et al.* 2017) (Figure 1) and are shared species among the Range States. While Angola, South-Africa, Mozambique and Zimbabwe have been Parties to CMS since 2006, 1991, 2009 and 2012 respectively, Botswana, Namibia and Zambia have remained non- Parties (https://www.cms.int/en/parties-range-states).

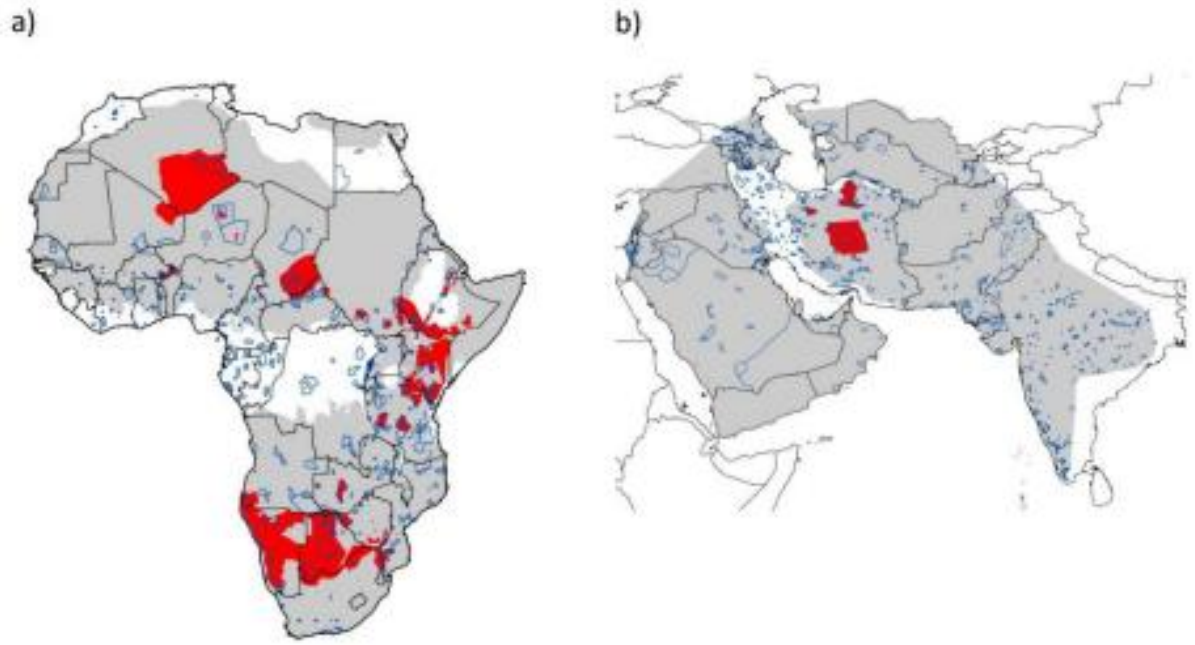

Figure 1. Known Cheetah distribution in (a) Africa and (b) Asia. Gray shading denotes historical range, and red shading shows the range where Cheetah is known to be resident. Boundaries of PAs under IUCN categories I–IV are marked in blue (copied from Durant *et al.* 2017)

4.2 Population (estimates and trends)

Zimbabwe used to hold the world's third largest cheetah population (CITES, 1992). The species occurred throughout the country (ZPWMA, 2009) and population estimates ranged from 400 in 1975 (Meyers, 1975) to more than 1 500 cheetahs in 1999 (Davison, 1999a). By the late 90s the cheetah population had increased considerably in both range and density (Davison, 1999b). While cheetah numbers in National Parks Estates declined in the 1990s, on commercial farmland, the population continued to increase (Heath, 1997). A survey of 37 ranches showed an increase from 220 to 700 cheetahs in just one decade (Heath, 1997). Towards the late 1990s/ early 20020s, the authorities carried out a country-wide assessment which showed that cheetah densities had continued to increase on commercial farmland, causing unacceptably high levels of stock loss; the status of the cheetah on communal farmlands was uncertain, numbers were probably low, and the species was not commonly reported as a pest; cheetah numbers in national park areas were low and not increasing, probably due to intra-carnivore competition: the cheetah population was estimated at a minimum of 1 200 cheetahs on commercial farmlands and 320 cheetahs in National Parks areas (Davison, 1999a). Between 2013 and 2015, the Cheetah Conservation Project Zimbabwe carried out a county-wide cheetah population survey which revealed a worrying 90% decline in Zimbabwe's cheetah population, reducing from 1,500 individuals in the 1990s to between 150-170 cheetah population (van der Meer 2016). According to the Zimbabwe report (2024) the last census of the cheetah population was conducted between 2012 and 2013 and gave an estimate of 150 adult cheetahs, leaving the status largely unknown in recent years. The report further states that a population a population census conducted between 2022 and 2024 estimated a population of 134-143 cheetahs in 2024. According to Van der Meer (2023), the Cheetah population of Namibia consists of ca. 1,498 adult and adolescent Cheetahs which reside in ca. 60% of the country. In Zimbabwe, since 2000, large scale land use change has resulted in a ca. 85% reduction of Cheetah numbers, therefore Zimbabwe's Cheetah population qualifies as Endangered under IUCN Red List criteria. The Cheetah population of Zimbabwe currently consists of ca. 150-170 adult and adolescent Cheetahs which reside in 12% of the country (Van der Meer, 2023).

4.3 Habitat (short description and trends)

In Africa at least, until recently, the cheetah has generally been considered to be an animal of open country and grasslands. This impression is probably due to the ease of sighting cheetahs in the shorter grass, and the long-term studies conducted on cheetahs in East Africa (Caro,1994,). However, cheetahs use a wider variety of habitats and are often found in dense vegetation, e.g. the Kora Reserve in Kenya, Botswana's Okavango Delta, and Namibian farmlands (Broomhall 2001, CMS, 2009).

4.4 Biological characteristics

Formerly included in the subfamily Acinonychinae, which is a monophyletic group, (Wozencraft 1993), molecular evidence now clusters the Cheetah with the Puma (*Puma concolor*) and Jaguarundi (*Herpailurus yagouaroundi*) in the tribe Acinonychini, diverging some 6.9 million years ago (O'Brien and Johnson 2007). Although further genetic analyses are needed to assess the validity of the existence of sub-species, currently four subspecies are recognized (Kitchener *et al*. 2017):
• *Acinonyx jubatus jubatus* (Schreber 1775) distributed across Southern and Eastern Africa. This subspecies combines two subspecies previously documented by Smithers (1975): *Acinonyx jubatus jubatus* (Schreber 1775) and *Acinonyx jubatus raineyi* (Heller 1913).
• *Acinonyx jubatus soemmeringii* (Fitzinger 1885) distributed across North-Eastern Africa.
• *Acinonyx jubatus venaticus* (Griffith 1821) currently only surviving in Iran; and
• *Acinonyx jubatus hecki* (Hilzheimer 1913) distributed across Western and North-Western Africa.

Cheetah males are often social and hold small territories, while cheetah females are solitary and have large home ranges (CMS, 2009). The sizes of territories and home ranges for males and females can vary greatly across different landscapes, from as little as 37 km2 to as high as 3,000 km2. Territorial males' scent-mark their territory and defend it against intruders, whereas females tolerate other cheetahs in their home range that often overlaps with the home ranges of other cheetahs (CMS, 2009). On average, cheetahs can survive up to 11 or 12 years in the wild and have their first litter at two years, while males start to breed at three years. Mating in cheetahs occurs throughout the year; the gestation period is 90-95 days, and litter sizes range from 3 to 5 cubs. Cubs are born with their black spots, and a Mohawk-type mane that they shed as they grow older. Cub mortality in cheetahs can be as high as 95%, and recruitment very low (CMS, 2009). This is because females rarely defend their cubs against larger predators, and cubs are killed by other larger predators such as lions. On average, cubs stay with their mother for 18-22 months; during this time, the mother teaches them how to hunt and avoid predators. After that, the mother leaves them behind to fend for themselves. Cubs usually stay together in sibling groups for several months before the males and females go their separate ways (CMS, 2009).

Cheetahs have low competitive ability and suffer from competition with lion *(Panthera leo)*, leopard *(Panthera pardus)* and spotted hyaena *(Crocuta crocuta)* (Caro 1994, Durant 2000b, Mills *et al.* 2004, Hunter *et al.* 2007). Predation by these larger carnivores is the main cause of Cheetah cub mortality (Laurenson 1994, Mills and Mills 2014). Especially within the first four months after birth, cub mortality due to predation can be as high as 56.9-88.9% (Laurenson 1994, Mills *et al.* 2004), and reproductive success of Cheetah females has been found to decrease with an increase in lion and spotted hyaena densities (Durant 2000a). Furthermore, between 3.3% and 13.1% of the Cheetah's kills are stolen by lions and spotted hyaenas (Mills *et al.* 2004, Bissett and Bernard 2007, Hunter *et al.* 2007), the likelihood of a kill being stolen seems higher in open habitats (Mills *et al.* 2004, Bissett and Bernard 2007).

4.5 Role of the taxon in its ecosystem

Cheetahs are an apex predator in the savanna ecosystem. They are habitat generalists and can be found in many habitats ranging from open plains, woodland, savanna, and thick bush. Habitat preference is often determined by two main factors: (a) the abundance of prey and (b) the presence/absence of sympatric carnivores such as lions, leopards, and hyenas as they are direct competitors. Cheetahs prey on medium-sized antelopes (15-30 kg) and avoid areas with high prey densities to avoid prey-dependent large predators such as lions.

5. Conservation status and threats

5.1 IUCN Red List Assessment

Globally, the Cheetah is currently assessed as 'Vulnerable' on the IUCN Red List, with a high risk of qualifying as 'Endangered' in the near future (Durant *et al.* 2015).

5.2 Equivalent information relevant to conservation status assessment

In terms of the Parks and Wildlife Act, Chapter 20:14, the cheetah is a specially protected species and is listed on Convention in International Trade of Endangered Species flora and fauna (CITES) Appendix I, providing it with high protection.

5.3 Threats to the population (factors, intensity)

Cheetah numbers throughout their ranges are declining due to loss and fragmentation of habitat, and a declining prey base (Nowell and Jackson 1996). The Cheetah is threatened indirectly by loss of prey base through human hunting activities and directly because it is considered to be a threat to livestock. Livestock overgrazing has a negative effect on the habitat. Low population densities make cheetahs vulnerable to human induced threats (Nowell and Jackson 1996). Intra-guild competition from more aggressive predators decreases cheetah survivability in protected game reserves, causing larger numbers of cheetahs to live outside protected areas and therefore coming into conflict with humans (Caro 1994, Nowell and Jackson 1996). Cheetahs may suffer from the associated risks of low genetic diversity from a hypothetical bottleneck that occurred 10,000 years ago. A potentially critical factor for the long-term persistence of the cheetah is its lack of genetic variation relative to other felids. The genetic structure of the cheetah has received considerable attention over the past several years (Driscoll et al. 2002 (Driscoll et al. 2002, May 1995, Menotti-Raymond and O'Brien 1993, Merola 1996, O'Brien et al. 1985, O'Brien et al. 1987, O'Brien et al. 1983). It has been suggested that the genetic homogeneity could make the species more susceptible to ecological and environmental changes (Menotti- Raymond and O'Brien 1993). This has been interpreted in the context of two potential risks, including the expression of recessive deleterious alleles, and increased vulnerability to viral and parasitic epizootics that can affect genetically uniform populations (O'Brien et al. 1985). In all three countries, pressure on Cheetah populations is expected to grow in future as the human population grows, leading to greater competition for available resources and increased conflict. In Botswana, there have already been considerable land use changes over the last 50 years primarily due to the expansion of livestock operations into wilderness areas (Perkins and Ringrose 1996). This has resulted in widespread rangeland degradation, through bush encroachment, and loss of productivity as a result of dominance of less nutritious grass species (Dougill *et al.* 2016). Threats also include widespread human-wildlife conflict; prey loss resulting from overhunting and bushmeat harvesting; and illegal trade (IUCN SSC 2007, 2012a, 2015). Most of the world's known Cheetah range (77%) and Cheetah population (67%) is found on unprotected land where Cheetahs are particularly vulnerable to anthropogenic pressures (Durant *et al.* 2017). In addition, protected areas (PAs) are usually not large enough to maintain viable populations of Cheetahs (Durant *et al.* 2017) and wide-ranging carnivores like Cheetahs

frequently come into conflict with people as soon as they range across the borders of PAs (Woodroffe and Ginsberg 2008).

5.4 Threats connected especially with migrations

The threats include conflict with livestock and game farmers as the animals move through and across human settlements. The animals would be subjected to illegal hunting.

5.5 National and international utilization

In 1992, Botswana, Namibia and Zimbabwe were granted five, 150, and 50 CITES tags respectively for the export of live Cheetah or hunting trophies (CITES 1992). With 90% of the total net trophy exports, Namibia is the main exporter (Nowell and Rosen 2018) and legally exported an average of ca. 120 animals per annum between 2002 and 2012 (Nowell 2014). However, within the past decade, this number seems to have been reduced to an annual average of ca. 30 Cheetahs (exporter reported quantities, CITES trade database). Since 1992, Botswana exported one live Cheetah (in 1999) and one hunting trophy (a skull, in 2000) to South Africa. Based on the most recent information on population estimates and offtake, trophy hunting is currently not considered the main threat to Cheetah survival in Botswana, Namibia and Zimbabwe.

6. Protection status and species management

6.1 National protection status

Nationally, in response to the need for biodiversity or wildlife protection, Zimbabwe established its own legal framework for regulation of wildlife related activities. The legal framework includes the Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment (No.20) Act, 2013. The Parks and Wildlife Act [Chapter 20:14] as amended by the Parks and Wildlife Amendment Act, 2024 is Zimbabwe's framework legislation regarding wildlife protection, that is, it is the apex Act regulating wildlife conservation. This Act is administered by the Minister for Environment, Climate and Wildlife. The Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment (No. 20) Act, 2013 promotes environmental protection through promoting conservation and the prevention of ecological degradation as outlined in section 73. Some of the relevant wildlife regulations derived from the Parks and Wildlife Act [Chapter 20:14] include the Parks and Wildlife (General) Regulations, 1990 and the Parks and Wildlife (Import and Export) (Wild life) Regulations, 1998. The Cheetah is a Specially Protected Species in terms of Parks and Wildlife Act [Chapter 20:14] hence has the most harvesting and trade restrictions.
Zimbabwe also has an existing Cheetah Management Plan that guides conservation of the species both on public and private land in line with the Regional Cheetah Management Plan. Furthermore, there are plans to reintroduce the species in identified parts of the parts of the country especially in Protected Area.

6.2 International protection status

In Southern African Angola, South-Africa, Mozambique and Zimbabwe have been Parties to CMS since 2006, 1991, 2009 and 2012 respectively, Botswana, Namibia and Zambia have remained non- Parties.

In 2011, the Governments of Angola, Botswana, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe signed an agreement for the establishment of the Kavango-Zambezi TFCA (peaceparks.org). The Kavango-Zambezi TFCA is the largest Transfrontier conservation area in the world and potentially connects Cheetah populations in Angola, Botswana, Namibia, Zimbabwe and, to a lesser extent, Zambia (Fig 2). Although transboundary movement has not been confirmed, it is pos-

sible that, like other large carnivore species such as African wild dogs (Painted Dog Conservation *unpublished data*), Cheetahs do disperse from the wildlife areas along the Western boundary of Zimbabwe into Botswana and vice versa. Apart from the Greater Mapungubwe TFCA and Kavango-Zambezi TFCA, Zimbabwe is party to the Great Limpopo TFCA which may connect the Cheetah populations in the Southeast of the country to populations in South Africa and Mozambique, to which the Great Limpopo TFCA expands

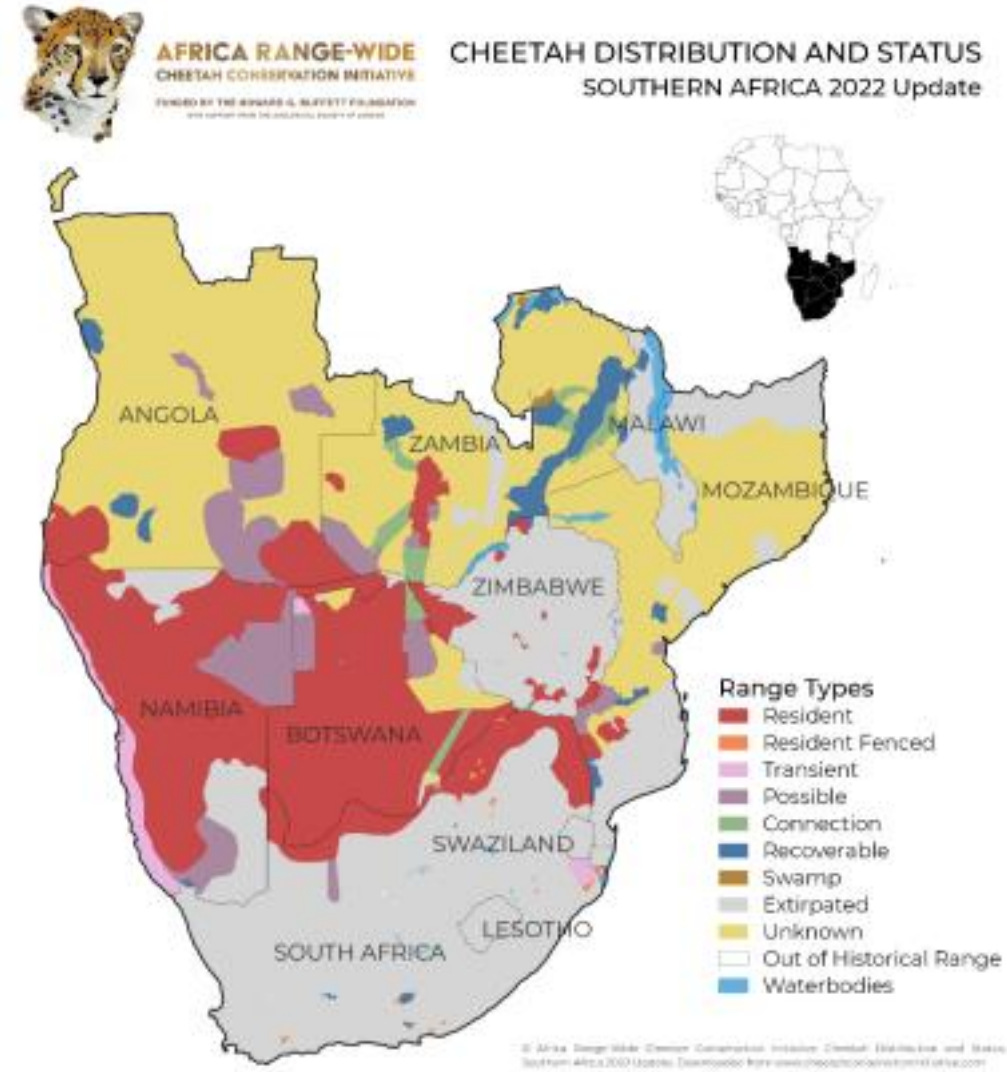

Figure 2. Distribution of Cheetah across Southern Africa as mapped by participants at the 2015 IUCN SSC Range Wide Conservation Planning Workshop for Cheetah and Wild Dogs (source: Africa Range Wide Cheetah Conservation Initiative website, 2022).

6.3 Management measures

Management Interventions such as law enforcement patrols, population monitoring and ecological restoration are done in line with Park and Species-specific management plans.

6.4 Habitat conservation

Most Protected Areas have active Park Management Plans which provide for habitat and population management and conservation for all species. Zimbabwe has taken a deliberate

effort to create creating wildlife corridors to promote ecological connectivity. Biodiversity mainstreaming across all sectors is also underway through various programmes through the third National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP 2025 – 2030) and other community-based community-based initiatives and promotion of coexistence through community education and conflict mitigation.

6.5 Population monitoring

Zimbabwe through the Parks and Wildlife Management Authority and its partners is making efforts to conserve and protect the cheetah inside, and outside wildlife protected areas. Research and monitoring are ongoing in key range areas. As seen for the data collected, stakeholders know the cheetah as seen from the photos shared. Since 2015, when it was confirmed that the numbers are declining, all hunting of trophy cheetahs was stopped in Zimbabwe. Efforts are being made to manage the wildlife habitat and there is proposed reintroduction of the cheetah in some areas. However, there is need sustainable funding and collaboration in research and monitoring at national and transboundary level to ensure that cheetahs are protected at landscape level and ensure connectivity across different land use types. Cheetahs are not an easy species to see when doing surveys, there is need for robust methods to be used to ensure that there is no overestimation or underestimating the species numbers for management
purposes.

7. Effects of the proposed amendment

7.1 Anticipated benefits of the amendment

The global Cheetah population is highly fragmented: the Southern African population is one of the two remaining strongholds, with at its core the Cheetah populations of Botswana and Namibia which represent 24% and 21% of the global Cheetah population respectively. This, in combination with regional differences in transboundary conservation and trade, hence the Southern African Cheetah population would benefit from a regional agreement between Range States which specifically addresses transboundary connectivity (e.g., through collaborative land use planning) and illegal trade in Cheetahs in relation to South Africa's export of captive bred Cheetahs. It is only under CMS Appendix II that Range States are encouraged to take action to conclude agreements for geographically separate parts of the population of any species which periodically crosses one or more national jurisdictional boundaries. If circumstances so warrant, a migratory species may be listed both on CMS Appendix I and CMS Appendix II (CMS Article IV paragraph 2).

7.2 Potential risks of the amendment

Adding restrictions on commercial harvesting will likely reduce potential income for property owners who may wish to harvest the animals in future, hence reduce the incentive for conservation.

7.3 Intention of the proponent concerning development of an Agreement or Concerted Action

There is a clear need for the development of Concerted Action for the species

8. Range States

Botswana, Namibia and Zimbabwe,

9. Consultations

The proponents wrote a letter of consultation which was sent out to all range states, that is Botswana and Namibia. Responses are yet to be received and will be included as an annexes to this proposal. The proponent also consulted with the IUCN Cat Specialist Group which prepared a report.

10. Additional remarks

The three Range States of the Southern African Cheetah population are encouraged to address transboundary connectivity and illegal taking and trade in Cheetahs through cooperation under the Joint CITES-CMS African Carnivores Initiative (ACI). CMS Secretariat and the international community are encouraged to either provide or facilitate provision of financial and technical support to improve the population status of the cheetah population

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