The **cheetah** (*Acinonyx jubatus*) is a [large-sized feline](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Big_cat) (family [Felidae](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Felidae), subfamily [Felinae](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Felinae)) inhabiting most of [Africa](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Africa) and parts of the [Middle East](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Middle_East). It is the [only extant member](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Extant_taxon) of the genus [*Acinonyx*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Acinonyx). The cheetah achieves by far the fastest land speed of any living animal—between 112 and 120 km/h (70 and 75 mph)[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cheetah#cite_note-Sharp1997-2)[[4]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cheetah#cite_note-cbn-3) in short bursts covering distances up to 500 m (1,600 ft), and has the ability to accelerate from 0 to over 100 km/h (62 mph) in three seconds.[[5]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cheetah#cite_note-4)

This cat is also notable for modifications in the species' paws. It is one of the only felids with semi-retractable claws, and with pads that, by their scope, disallow gripping.[[6]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cheetah#cite_note-5) Thus, cheetahs cannot climb upright trees, although they are generally capable of reaching easily accessible branches by leaping.