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Cover

South African cheetah cub (Acinonyx jubatus). The cheetah is the world’s fastest mammal and the most morphologically specialized felid. The modern species appears to be striking in its biochemical genetic uniformity compared to other felids or mammals in general, possibly as a result of a severe bottleneck or series of bottlenecks in its natural history. The consequences of this genetic monomorphism are readily apparent in captive cheetah, and the species provides a graphic biological example for the adaptive value of accumulated genetic variation in outbred mammalian species. See page 1428.