The cheetah’s coat

Dear children,

Cheetahs have marvellously interesting colours on their coat. First, let’s have a look at what a baby cheetah looks like.



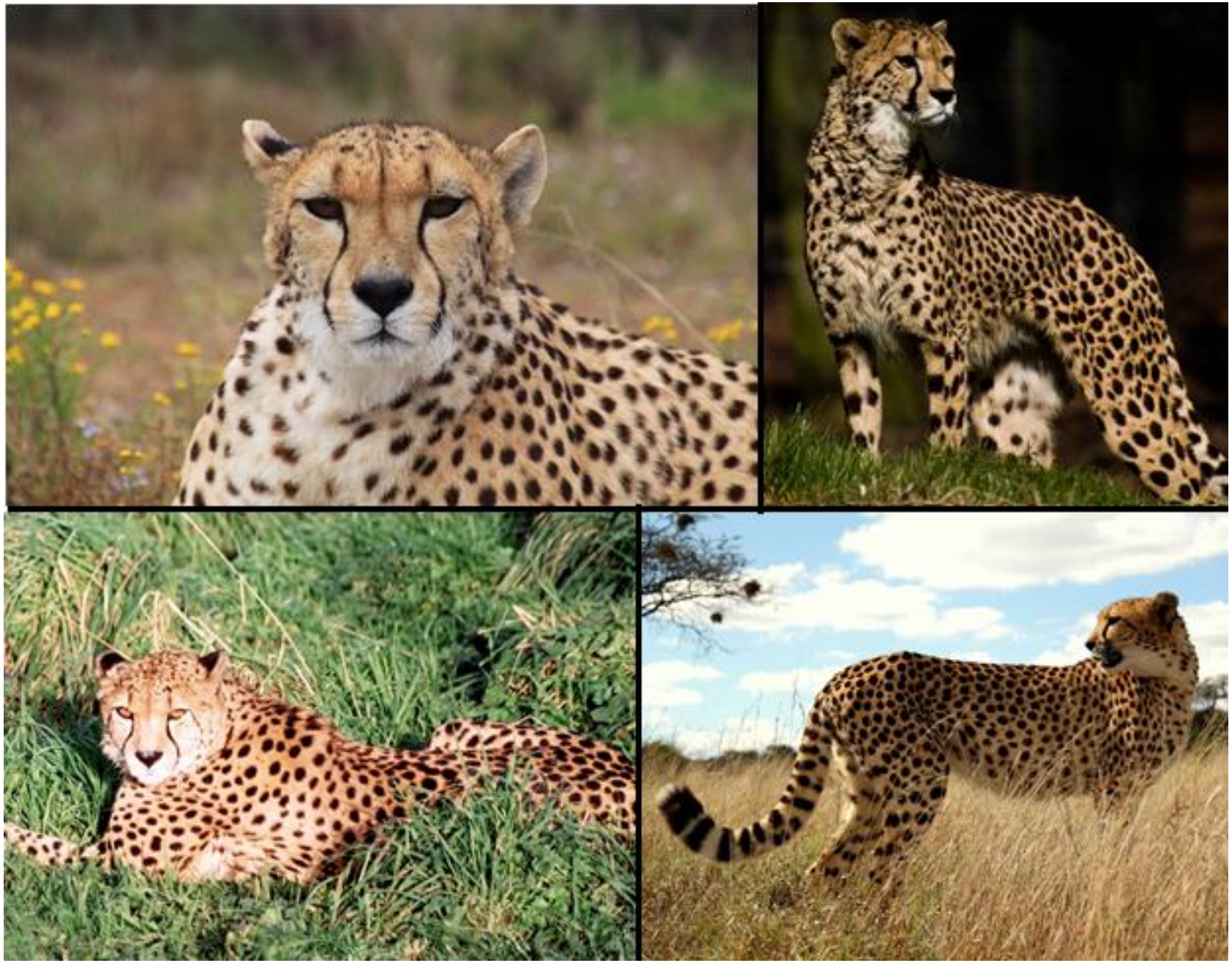


Do you notice how the baby cheetah has a white mane of hair on its back and head? Some people think that the baby cheetah is trying to look like a honey badger. Can you think why that would help the baby cheetah? It’s because the honey badger is such a fierce animal. If the baby cheetah looks like a honey badger, other predators may be frightened off and leave the baby alone.





Now let’s look at an adult cheetah. What patterns do you see, apart from all the spots? Do you see the white around its mouth, the white on the chest, the thick black stripe on the end of its tail, and the black marks behind the ears? Why do you think the adult cheetah has these noticeable markings?



The Honey Badger and I think it might be because the adult cheetah is trying to look like a lion. If you look at pictures of a lion, you will also see the white around the mouth, the white on the chest, the white underneath the tail, and the black markings on the back of the ears.



So the cheetah is making itself look as fierce as a lion using its clever coat. This could protect it against its enemies like hyenas and leopards. Do you think that the hyenas and leopards will be scared off when they see an animal that looks a bit like a lion? The Honey Badger and I think so. What a clever cheetah!

All the best from the Bio-edge,

Robin

