

FELIDAE





Types of felidae



felidae - кошачьи

[felidae]



panthera - пантера

['pæntəɹə]



leopard - леопард

['lepəd]



lion - лев

['laɪən]



jaguar - ягуар

['dʒæɡjʊə]



**snow leopard -
снежный барс**

[snəʊ 'lepəd]



tiger - тигр

['taɪgə]



**clouded leopard -
дымчатый леопард**

['klaʊdɪd 'lepəd]



**bay cat - борнейская
кошка**

[beɪ kæt]



**Asian golden cat -
Азиатская золотистая
кошка**

[eɪʃn 'gəʊldən kæt]



**marbled cat -
мраморная кошка**

['mɑ:b(ə)ld kæt]



caracal - каракал

['kærəkæɪ]



**kodkod - чилийская
кошка**

[kodkod]



oncilla - онцилла

[oncilla]



**Andean mountain cat
- Андская горная
кошка**

[æn'di:ən 'maʊntɪn kæt]



**Pampas cat - Пампасная
кошка**

[ˈpɑmpəs kæt]



ocelot - оцелот

[ˈɒsɪlət]



**margay -
длиннохвостая кошка**

[ˈmɑːgeɪ]



lynx - рысь

[lɪŋks]



puma - пума

['pju:mə]



cougar - кугуар

['ku:gə]



jaguarundi - ягуарунди

[jaguarundi]



cheetah - гепард

[ˈtʃi:tə]

Felidae



Panthera



Panthera is a genus within the family Felidae that was named and described by Lorenz Oken in 1816 who placed all the spotted cats in this group. Reginald Innes Pocock revised the classification of this genus in 1916 as comprising the species tiger, lion, jaguar, and leopard on the basis of common cranial features. Results of genetic analysis indicate that the snow leopard also belongs to the Panthera, a classification that was accepted by IUCN Red List assessors in 2008.

The tiger, lion, leopard, and jaguar are the only cat species with the anatomical structure that enables them to roar. The snow leopard is the only one that cannot roar in this genus. The primary reason for this was formerly assumed to be the incomplete ossification of the hyoid bone. However, new studies show the ability to roar is due to other morphological features, especially of the larynx.

In Panthera species, the dorsal profile of the skull is flattish or evenly convex. The frontal interorbital area is not noticeably elevated, and the area behind the elevation is less steeply sloped. The basicranial axis is nearly horizontal. The inner chamber of the bullae is large, the outer small. The partition between them is close to the external auditory meatus. The convexly rounded chin is sloping. All Panthera species have an incompletely ossified hyoid bone. Specially adapted larynx with proportionally larger vocal folds are covered in a large fibro-elastic pad. These characteristics enable all Panthera species except the snow leopard to roar. Panthera species can prusten, which is a short, soft, snorting sound; it is used during contact between friendly individuals. The roar is an especially loud call with a distinctive pattern that depends on the species.

Leopard



The leopard (*Panthera pardus*) is one of the five extant species in the genus *Panthera*, a member of the Felidae. It occurs in a wide range in sub-Saharan Africa, in small parts of Western and Central Asia, a small part of European Russia, and on the Indian subcontinent to Southeast and East Asia. It is listed as Vulnerable on the IUCN Red List because leopard populations are threatened by habitat loss and fragmentation, and are declining in large parts of the global range. In Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea, Jordan, Morocco, Togo, the United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan, Lebanon, Mauritania, Kuwait, Syria, Libya, Tunisia and most likely in North Korea, Gambia, Laos, Lesotho, Tajikistan, Vietnam, and Israel, leopard populations have already been extirpated. Contemporary records suggest that the leopard occurs in only 25% of its historical global range.

Compared to other wild cats, the leopard has relatively short legs and a long body with a large skull. Its fur is marked with rosettes. It is similar in appearance to the jaguar, but has a smaller, lighter physique, and its rosettes are generally smaller, more densely packed and without central spots. Both leopards and jaguars that are melanistic are known as black panthers. The leopard is distinguished by its well-camouflaged fur, opportunistic hunting behaviour, broad diet, strength, and its ability to adapt to a variety of habitats ranging from rainforest to steppe, including arid and montane areas. It can run at speeds of up to 58 kilometres per hour (36 mph). The earliest known leopard fossils excavated in Europe are estimated 600,000 years old, dating to the late Early Pleistocene. Leopard fossils were also found in Japan and Sumatra.

The leopard's fur is generally soft and thick, notably softer on the belly than on the back. Its skin colour varies between individuals from pale yellowish to dark golden with dark spots grouped in rosettes. Its belly is whitish and its ringed tail is shorter than its body. Its pupils are round. Leopards living in arid regions are pale cream, yellowish to ochraceous and rufous in colour; those living in forests and mountains are much darker and deep golden. Spots fade toward the white underbelly and the insides and lower parts of the legs. Rosettes are circular in East African leopard populations, and tend to be squarish in Southern African and larger in Asian leopard populations. The fur tends to be grayish in colder climates, and dark golden in rain forest habitats. The pattern of the rosettes is unique in each individual.

Its fur tends to grow longer in colder climates. The guard hairs protecting the basal hairs are short, 3–4 mm in face and head, and increase in length toward the flanks and the belly to about 25–30 mm. Juveniles have woolly fur, and appear to be dark-coloured due to the densely arranged spots. Its white-tipped tail is about 60–100 cm long, white underneath and with spots that form incomplete bands toward the tail's end. The leopard's rosettes differ from those of the jaguar, which are darker and with smaller spots inside. The cheetah has small round spots without any rosettes.

Like most cat species, the leopard has a diploid chromosome number of 38. The chromosomes include four acrocentric, five metacentric, seven submetacentric and two telocentric pairs.

Lion



The lion is a species in the family Felidae and a member of the genus Panthera. It has a muscular, deep-chested body, short, rounded head, round ears, and a hairy tuft at the end of its tail. It is sexually dimorphic; adult male lions have a prominent mane. With a typical head-to-body length of 184–208 cm they are larger than females at 160–184 cm. It is a social species, forming groups called prides. A lion pride consists of a few adult males, related females and cubs. Groups of female lions usually hunt together, preying mostly on large ungulates. The lion is an apex and keystone predator; although some lions scavenge when opportunities occur and have been known to hunt humans, the species typically does not.

Typically, the lion inhabits grasslands and savannas, but is absent in dense forests. It is usually more diurnal than other big cats, but when persecuted it adapts to being active at night and at twilight. During the Neolithic period, the lion ranged throughout Africa, Southeast Europe, and Western and South Asia but today it has been reduced to fragmented populations in sub-Saharan Africa and one critically endangered population in western India. It has been listed as Vulnerable on the IUCN Red List since 1996 because populations in African countries have declined by about 43% since the early 1990s. Lion populations are untenable outside designated protected areas. Although the cause of the decline is not fully understood, habitat loss and conflicts with humans are the greatest causes for concern.

Jaguar



The jaguar is a large felid species and the only living member of the genus *Panthera* native to the Americas. The jaguar is the largest cat species in the New World and the third largest in the world. Due to convergent evolution, it closely resembles the leopard but is usually larger and sturdier. It ranges across a variety of forested and open terrains, but its preferred habitat is tropical and subtropical moist broadleaf forest, swamps, and wooded regions.

The jaguar is largely a solitary, opportunistic, stalk-and-ambush predator at the top of the food chain, adept at swimming. As a keystone species, it plays an important role in stabilizing ecosystems and regulating prey populations. The jaguar has developed an exceptionally powerful bite, even relative to the other big cats. This allows it to pierce the shells of armored reptiles and to employ an unusual killing method with mammals: it bites directly through the skull of prey between the ears to deliver a fatal blow to the brain.

The jaguar's present range extends from the extreme southwestern United States and Mexico in North America, across much of Central America, and south to Paraguay and northern Argentina in South America. Though there are single cats now living within Arizona, the species has almost become locally extinct in the United States since the early 20th century. It is listed as Near Threatened on the IUCN Red List, and its numbers are declining. Threats include loss and fragmentation of habitat.

Snow leopard



The snow leopard, also known as the ounce, is a large cat native to the mountain ranges of Central and South Asia. It is listed as Vulnerable on the IUCN Red List because the global population is estimated to number less than 10,000 mature individuals and is expected to decline about 10% by 2040. It is threatened by poaching and habitat destruction following infrastructural developments. It inhabits alpine and subalpine zones at elevations from 3,000 to 4,500 m, ranging from eastern Afghanistan, northern Pakistan's Himalayas and the Tibetan Plateau, to southern Siberia, Mongolia, and western China. In the countries in the northern part of its range, it also lives at lower elevations.

Taxonomically, the snow leopard was long classified in the monotypic genus *Uncia*. Since phylogenetic studies revealed the relationships among *Panthera* species, it is considered a member of this genus. Two subspecies were described based on morphological differences, but genetic differences between the two have not been confirmed. It is therefore regarded as a monotypic species.

Tiger



The tiger is the largest extant cat species and a member of the genus *Panthera*. It is most recognisable for its dark vertical stripes on orange-brown fur with a lighter underside. It is an apex predator, primarily preying on ungulates such as deer and wild boar. It is territorial and generally a solitary but social predator, requiring large contiguous areas of habitat, which support its requirements for prey and rearing of its offspring. Tiger cubs stay with their mother for about two years, before they become independent and leave their mother's home range to establish their own.

The tiger once ranged widely from the Eastern Anatolia Region in the west to the Amur River basin, and in the south from the foothills of the Himalayas to Bali in the Sunda islands. Since the early 20th century, tiger populations have lost at least 93% of their historic range and have been extirpated in Western and Central Asia, from the islands of Java and Bali, and in large areas of Southeast and South Asia and China. Today's tiger range is fragmented, stretching from Siberian temperate forests to subtropical and tropical forests on the Indian subcontinent and Sumatra.

The tiger is listed as endangered on the IUCN Red List. As of 2015, the global wild tiger population was estimated to number between 3,062 and 3,948 mature individuals, with most of the populations living in small pockets isolated from each other. India currently hosts the largest tiger population. Major reasons for population decline are habitat destruction, habitat fragmentation and poaching. Tigers are also victims of human-wildlife conflict, in particular in range countries with a high human population density.

Clouded leopard



The clouded leopard is a wild cat inhabiting dense forests from the foothills of the Himalayas through mainland Southeast Asia into southern China. The first clouded leopard known to science was brought to London from China in the early 19th century and described in 1821. It has large dusky-grey blotches and irregular spots and stripes forming a clouded pattern. Its head-and-body length ranges from 68.6 to 108 cm with a 61 to 91 cm long tail. It uses its tail for balancing when moving in trees and is able to climb down vertical tree trunks head first. It rests in trees during the day and hunts by night on the forest floor.

The clouded leopard is the first cat that genetically diverged 9.32 to 4.47 million years ago from the common ancestor of the Felidae. Several million years ago, it reached Sundaland, where it diverged 2.0–0.93 million years ago to a different species, the Sunda clouded leopard. Today, the clouded leopard is locally extinct in Singapore, Taiwan, and possibly Hainan Island. Its total population is suspected to be fewer than 10,000 mature individuals, with a decreasing population trend, and no single population numbering more than 1,000 adults. It is therefore listed as Vulnerable on the IUCN Red List since 2008. The population is threatened by large-scale deforestation and commercial poaching for the wildlife trade. Its body parts are offered for decoration and clothing, though it is legally protected in most range countries.

The clouded leopard has been kept in zoological gardens since the early 20th century. Captive breeding programs were initiated in the 1980s. In captivity, the clouded leopard has an average lifespan of 11 years.

Bay cat



The bay cat, also known as Borneo bay cat and Bornean bay cat, is a small wild cat endemic to the island of Borneo that appears to be relatively rare compared to sympatric wild cats, based on the paucity of historical, as well as recent records. Since 2002, it has been listed as Endangered on the IUCN Red List because it is estimated that fewer than 2,500 mature individuals exist, and that the population declined in the past. The bay cat has been recorded as rare and seems to occur at relatively low density, even in pristine habitat.

The bay cat is much smaller than the Asian golden cat. Its fur is of a bright chestnut colour, rather paler beneath, the limbs and the tail being rather paler and redder. The tail is elongated, tapering at the end, with a white central streak occupying the rear half of the lower side, gradually becoming wider and of a purer white towards the tip, which has a small black spot at its upper end. The ears are rounded, covered with a short blackish-brown fur at the outer side, paler brown within and with a narrow brown margin.

In the years between 1874 and 2004, only 12 specimens were measured. Their head-to-body length varied from 49.5-67 cm with 30.0- to 40.3-cm-long tails. They were estimated to have an adult weight of 3-4 kg, but too few living specimens have been obtained to allow a more reliable estimate. The short, rounded head is dark greyish-brown with two dark stripes originating from the corner of each eye, and the back of the head has a dark 'M'-shaped marking. The backs of the ears are dark greyish, lacking the central white spots found on many other cat species. The underside of the chin is white and two faint brown stripes are on the cheeks. Body proportions and the extremely long tail give it the look of the New World jaguarundi.

Asian golden cat



The Asian golden cat is a medium-sized wild cat native to the northeastern Indian subcontinent, Southeast Asia, and southern China. It has been listed as Near Threatened on the IUCN Red List since 2008, and is threatened by hunting pressure and habitat loss, since Southeast Asian forests are undergoing the world's fastest regional deforestation.

The Asian golden cat's scientific name honours the Dutch zoologist Coenraad Jacob Temminck. It is also called Temminck's cat and Asiatic golden cat.

The Asian golden cat is a medium-sized cat with a head-to-body length of 66–105 cm, with a 40–57 cm long tail, and is 56 cm tall at the shoulder. In weight, it ranges from 9 to 16 kg, which is about two or three times that of a domestic cat.

The Asian golden cat is polymorphic in colour. Golden, reddish brown and buff brown individuals were recorded in northeastern India and Bhutan. Reddish brown morphs were recorded in Sumatra. Melanistic individuals were recorded in the eastern Himalayas, and in Sumatra. A spotted Asian golden cat with large rosettes on shoulders, flanks and hips was described for the first time based on a specimen from China in 1872. This morph was recorded in China, Bhutan and in West Bengal's Buxa Tiger Reserve.

Marbled cat



The marbled cat is a small wild cat native from the eastern Himalayas to Southeast Asia, where it inhabits forests up to 2,500 m altitude. As it is present in a large range, it has been listed as Near Threatened on the IUCN Red List since 2015.

The marbled cat was once considered to belong to the pantherine lineage of cats. It is closely related to the Asian golden cat and the bay cat, all of which diverged from other felids about 9.4 million years ago.

The marbled cat is similar in size to a domestic cat, but has rounded ears and a very long tail that is as long as the cat's head and body. The ground colour of its long fur varies from brownish-grey to ochreous brown above and greyish to buff below. It is patterned with black stripes on the short and round head, on the neck and back. On the tail, limbs and underbelly it has solid spots. On the flanks it has irregular dark-edged blotches that fuse to dark areas and look like a 'marbled' pattern. Its paws are webbed between the digits and are completely sheathed. Its coat is thick and soft. Spots on the forehead and crown merge into narrow longitudinal stripes on the neck, and irregular stripes on the back. The legs and underparts are patterned with black dots, and the tail is marked with black spots proximally and rings distally. It has large feet and unusually large canine teeth, resembling those of the big cats, although these appear to be the result of parallel evolution. Marbled cats range from 45 to 62 cm in head-body length with a 35 to 55 cm long and thickly furred tail that indicates the cat's adaptation to an arboreal lifestyle, where the tail is used as a counterbalance. Recorded weights vary between 2 and 5 kg.

Caracal



The caracal is a medium-sized wild cat native to Africa, the Middle East, Central Asia, and India. It is characterised by a robust build, long legs, a short face, long tufted ears, and long canine teeth. Its coat is uniformly reddish tan or sandy, while the ventral parts are lighter with small reddish markings. It reaches 40–50 cm at the shoulder and weighs 8–19 kg. It was first scientifically described by German naturalist Johann Christian Daniel von Schreber in 1776. Three subspecies are recognised.

Typically nocturnal, the caracal is highly secretive and difficult to observe. It is territorial, and lives mainly alone or in pairs. The caracal is a carnivore that typically preys upon small mammals, birds, and rodents. It can leap higher than 4 metres and catch birds in midair. It stalks its prey until it is within 5 m of it, after which it runs it down and kills its prey with a bite to the throat or to the back of the neck. Both sexes become sexually mature by the time they are one year old and breed throughout the year. Gestation lasts between two and three months, resulting in a litter of one to six kittens. Juveniles leave their mothers at the age of nine to ten months, though a few females stay back with their mothers. The average lifespan of captive caracals is nearly 16 years.

Caracals were tamed and used for coursing in India, Persia and Egypt.

Kodkod



The kodkod, also called güiña, is the smallest cat in the Americas. It lives primarily in central and southern Chile and marginally in adjoining areas of Argentina. Its area of distribution is small compared to the other South American cats. Since 2002, it has been listed as Vulnerable on the IUCN Red List as the total effective population may comprise less than 10,000 mature individuals, and is threatened due to persecution and loss of habitat and prey base.

The kodkod's fur color ranges from brownish-yellow to grey-brown. It has dark spots, a pale underside and a ringed tail. The ears are black with a white spot, while the dark spots on the shoulders and neck almost merge to form a series of dotted streaks. Melanistic kodkods with spotted black coats are quite common. It has a small head, large feet, and a thick tail. Adult kodkods are 37 to 51 cm in head to body length with a short 20–25 cm tail and a shoulder height of about 25 cm. Weight ranges between 2 and 2.5 kg.

Oncilla



The oncilla, also known as the northern tiger cat, little spotted cat, and tigrillo, is a small spotted cat ranging from Central America to central Brazil. It is listed as Vulnerable on the IUCN Red List, and the population is threatened by deforestation and conversion of habitat to agricultural land.

In 2013, it was proposed to assign the population in southern Brazil, Paraguay, and Argentina to a new species: the southern tiger cat, *L. guttulus*, after it was found that it does not interbreed with the oncilla population in northeastern Brazil.

The oncilla resembles the margay and the ocelot, but it is smaller, with a slender build and narrower muzzle. It grows to 38 to 59 centimetres long, plus a 20 to 42 centimetres tail. While this is somewhat longer than the average domestic cat, *Leopardus tigrinus* is generally lighter, weighing 1.5 to 3 kilograms.

The fur is thick and soft, ranging from light brown to dark ochre, with numerous dark rosettes across the back and flanks. The underside is pale with dark spots and the tail is ringed. The backs of the ears are black with bold white spots. The rosettes are black or brown, open in the center, and irregularly shaped. The legs have medium-sized spots tapering to smaller spots near the paws. This coloration helps the oncilla blend in with the mottled sunlight of the tropical forest understory. The oncilla's jaw is shortened, with fewer teeth, but with well-developed carnassials and canines.

Some melanistic oncillas have been reported from the more heavily forested parts of its range.

Andean mountain cat



The Andean mountain cat is a small wild cat native to the high Andes that has been listed as Endangered on the IUCN Red List because fewer than 2,500 individuals are thought to exist in the wild. It is traditionally considered a sacred animal by indigenous Aymara and Quechua people.

It was first described by Emilio Cornalia who named it in honour of Jacobita Mantegazza.

The Andean mountain cat has an ashy-gray fur, a gray head, ears and face. The areas around the lips and cheeks are white; two dark brown lines run from the corners of the eyes across the cheeks. There are some black spots on the forelegs, yellowish-brown blotches on the flanks, and up to two narrow, dark rings on the hind limbs. The long bushy tail has 6–9 rings, which are dark brown to black. The markings of juveniles are darker and smaller than those of adults. The skulls of adult specimens range in length from 100.4 to 114.8 mm and are larger than those of the pampas cat and domestic cat.

The Andean mountain cat has a black nose and lips, and rounded ears. On the back and on the tail, the hair is 40–45 mm long. Its rounded footprints are 4 cm long and 3.5 cm wide. Its pads are covered with hair.

Adult specimens range from 57.7 to 85 cm in head-to-body length, with a 41.3 to 48.5 cm long tail. The shoulder height is about 36 cm and body weight is up to 5.5 kilograms.

Pampas cat



The Pampas cat is a small wild cat native to South America. It is listed as Near Threatened on the IUCN Red List as habitat conversion and destruction may cause the population to decline in the future.

It is also known as Pantanal cat and colocolo in parts of its range. It is named after the Pampas, but occurs in grassland, shrubland, and dry forest at elevations up to 5,000 m.

There was a proposal to divide Pampas cat into three distinct species, based primarily on differences in pelage colour/pattern and cranial measurements. Accordingly, three species were recognised in the 2005 edition of Mammal Species of the World: the colocolo, the Pantanal cat, and the Pampas cat with a more restricted definition. This split at species level was not supported by subsequent phylogeographic analysis, although some geographical substructure was recognised, and some authorities continue to recognise the Pampas cat as a single species. In the 2017 revision of felid taxonomy by the Cat Specialist Group, the Pampas cat is recognized as a single species with seven subspecies. A further study released in 2020, found strong evidence for five distinct species within the Pampas cat complex.

Ocelot



The ocelot is a wild cat native to the southwestern United States, Mexico, and Central and South America, as well as the Caribbean islands of Trinidad and Margarita. A medium-sized cat, it is characterized by solid black spots and streaks on its coat, round ears, and white neck and undersides. It weighs between 8 and 15.5 kg and reaches 40–50 cm at the shoulders. It was first described by Carl Linnaeus in 1758. Two subspecies are recognized: *pardalis* and *mitis*.

Typically active during twilight and at night, the ocelot tends to be solitary and territorial. It is efficient at climbing, leaping, and swimming. It preys on small terrestrial mammals, such as armadillos, opossums, and lagomorphs. Both sexes become sexually mature at around two years of age; they can breed throughout the year, though the peak mating season varies geographically. After a gestation period of two to three months, the female gives birth to a litter of one to three kittens. They stay with their mother for up to two years, after which they leave to establish their own territories.

The ocelot prefers areas with dense vegetation cover, high prey availability, and proximity to water sources. It is listed as Least Concern on the IUCN Red List, and is threatened by habitat destruction, hunting, and traffic accidents. Populations are decreasing in many parts of its range. The association of the ocelot with humans dates back to the Aztec and Incan civilizations; it has occasionally been kept by humans as a pet.

Margay



The margay is a small wild cat native to Central and South America. A solitary and nocturnal cat, it lives mainly in primary evergreen and deciduous forest.

Until the 1990s, margays were hunted illegally for the wildlife trade, which resulted in a large population decrease. Since 2008, the margay has been listed as Near Threatened on the IUCN Red List because the population is thought to be declining due to loss of habitat following deforestation.

In his first description, Schinz named the margay *Felis wiedii* in honour of Prince Maximilian of Wied-Neuwied who collected specimens in Brazil.

The margay is very similar to the larger ocelot in appearance, although the head is a little shorter, the eyes larger, and the tail and legs longer. It weighs from 2.6 to 4 kg, with a body length of 48 to 79 cm and a tail length of 33 to 51 cm. Unlike most other cats, the female possesses only two teats.

Its fur is brown and marked with numerous rows of dark brown or black rosettes and longitudinal streaks. The undersides are paler, ranging from buff to white, and the tail has numerous dark bands and a black tip. The backs of the ears are black with circular white markings in the centre.

Lynx



A lynx is any of the four species (Canada lynx, Iberian lynx, Eurasian lynx, bobcat) within the medium-sized wild cat genus Lynx. The name lynx originated in Middle English via Latin from the Greek word λύγξ, derived from the Indo-European root leuk- ('light, brightness') in reference to the luminescence of its reflective eyes.

Lynx have a short tail, characteristic tufts of black hair on the tips of their ears, large, padded paws for walking on snow and long whiskers on the face. Under their neck they have a ruff which has black bars resembling a bow tie, although this is often not visible.

Body colour varies from medium brown to goldish to beige-white, and is occasionally marked with dark brown spots, especially on the limbs. All species of lynx have white fur on their chests, bellies and on the insides of their legs, fur which is an extension of the chest and belly fur. The lynx's colouring, fur length and paw size vary according to the climate in their range. In the Southwestern United States, they are short-haired, dark in colour and their paws are smaller and less padded. As climates get colder and more northerly, lynx have progressively thicker fur, lighter colour, and their paws are larger and more padded to adapt to the snow. Their paws may be larger than a human hand or foot.

The smallest species are the bobcat and the Canada lynx, while the largest is the Eurasian lynx, with considerable variations within species.

Puma



Puma is a genus in the family Felidae that contains the cougar (also known as the puma and mountain lion, among other names), and may also include several poorly known Old World fossil representatives (for example, *Puma pardoides*, or Owen's panther, a large, cougar-like cat of Eurasia's Pliocene). In addition to these potential Old World fossils, a few New World fossil representatives are possible, such as *Puma pumoides* and the two species of the so-called "American cheetah".

Pumas are large, secretive cats. They are also commonly known as cougars and mountain lions, and are able to reach larger sizes than some other "big" cat individuals. Despite their large size, they are thought to be more closely related to smaller feline species. The seven subspecies of pumas all have similar characteristics, but tend to vary in color and size. Pumas are thought to be one of the most adaptable of felines on the American continents, because they are found in a variety of different habitats, unlike other various cat species.

Members of the genus *Puma* are primarily found in the mountains of North and South America, where a majority of individuals can be found in rocky crags and pastures lower than the slopes grazing herbivores inhabit. Though they choose to inhabit those areas, they are highly adaptive and can be found in a large variety of habitats, including forests, tropical jungle, grasslands, and even arid desert regions. Unfortunately, with the expansion of human settlements and land clearance, the cats are being pushed into smaller, more hostile areas. However, their high adaptability will likely allow them to avoid disappearing from the wild forever.

Cougar



The cougar (*Puma concolor*) is a large cat of the subfamily Felinae. Native to the Americas, its range spans from the Canadian Yukon to the southern Andes in South America and is the most widespread of any large wild terrestrial mammal in the Western Hemisphere. It is an adaptable, generalist species, occurring in most American habitat types. Due to its wide range, it has many names including catamount, mountain lion, painter, panther and puma.

The cougar is the second-largest cat in the New World after the jaguar. Secretive and largely solitary by nature, the cougar is properly considered both nocturnal and crepuscular, although daytime sightings do occur. Despite its size, the cougar is more closely related to smaller felines, including the domestic cat, than to any species of subfamily Pantherinae, of which only the jaguar is extant in the Americas.

The cougar is an ambush predator that pursues a wide variety of prey. Primary food sources are ungulates, particularly deer. It also hunts species as small as insects and rodents. It prefers habitats with dense underbrush and rocky areas for stalking, but can also live in open areas. The cougar is territorial, and lives at low population densities. Individual territory sizes depend on terrain, vegetation, and abundance of prey. While large, it is not always the apex predator in its range, yielding prey it has killed to jaguars, American black bears, grizzly bears, American alligators (mainly in Florida), and to groups of gray wolves or coyotes. It is reclusive and mostly avoids people. Fatal attacks on humans are rare, but have recently been increasing in North America, as more people enter cougar territories, and build developments such as farms in their established territory.

Jaguarundi



The jaguarundi is a wild cat native to the Americas. Its range extends from central Argentina in the south to the US–Mexico border in the north, through Central and South America east of the Andes. The jaguarundi is a medium-sized cat of slender build. Its coloration is uniform with two color morphs, gray and red. It has an elongated body, with relatively short legs, a small, narrow head, small, round ears, a short snout, and a long tail, resembling mustelids in these respects. It is around twice as large as a domestic cat, reaching nearly 36 cm at the shoulder, and weighs 3.5–7 kg.

Secretive and alert, the jaguarundi is typically solitary or forms pairs in the wild, though captive individuals are more gregarious. Unlike other sympatric cats such as the ocelot, the jaguarundi is more active during the day and hunts mainly during daytime and evening hours. Individuals live in large home ranges, and are sparsely distributed within a region. The jaguarundi is an efficient climber, but typically prefers hunting on ground. It feeds on various kinds of prey, especially ground-feeding birds, reptiles, rodents and small mammals. Mating occurs throughout the year, with peaks at different times of the year across the range. After a gestation period of 70 to 75 days, a litter of one to four kittens is born. Lifespan of up to 15 years has been recorded in captivity.

The jaguarundi inhabits a broad array of closed as well as open habitats ranging from tropical rainforests and deciduous forests to deserts and thorn scrubs. It is fairly common in Brazil, Peru and Venezuela, but may have been extirpated in the US. It is listed as Least Concern on the IUCN Red List, but populations are in decline in many parts of its range due to loss and fragmentation of habitat and persecution for killing poultry.

Cheetah



The cheetah is a large cat native to Africa and central Iran. It is the fastest land animal, capable of running at 80 to 128 km/h, and as such has several adaptations for speed, including a light build, long thin legs and a long tail. Cheetahs typically reach 67–94 cm at the shoulder, and the head-and-body length is between 1.1 and 1.5 m. Adults typically weigh between 20 and 65 kg. Its head is small, rounded, and has a short snout and black tear-like facial streaks. The coat is typically tawny to creamy white or pale buff and is mostly covered with evenly spaced, solid black spots. Four subspecies are recognised.

More gregarious than many other cats, the cheetah has three main social groups—females and their cubs, male "coalitions" and solitary males. While females lead a nomadic life searching for prey in large home ranges, males are more sedentary and may instead establish much smaller territories in areas with plentiful prey and access to females.

The cheetah is active mainly during the day and hunting is its major preoccupation, with peaks during dawn and dusk. It feeds on small- to medium-sized prey, mostly weighing under 40 kg, and prefers medium-sized ungulates such as impala, springbok and Thomson's gazelles. The cheetah will typically stalk its prey to within 60–70 m, charge towards it, trip it during the chase and bite its throat to suffocate it to death. Breeding occurs throughout the year; after a gestation of nearly three months a litter of typically three or four cubs is born; cheetah cubs are highly vulnerable to predation by other large carnivores such as hyenas and lions. Weaning happens at around four months, and cubs are independent by around 20 months of age.