

# TIGER

## THE GREAT TIGER

**Common Name:** Tiger

**Kingdom:** Animalia

**Phylum:** Chordata (Vertebrata)

**Class:** Mammalia

**Order:** Carnivora

**Family:** Felidae

**Genus:** Pantherinae Panthera

**Species:** tigris

**Sub-species:** Bengal Tiger - *Panthera tigris tigris*, Siberian (Amurian) Tiger - *Panthera tigris altaica*, Sumatran Tiger - *Panthera tigris sumatrae*, Indo-Chinese Tiger - *Panthera tigris corbetti*, South China Tiger - *Panthera tigris amoyensis*, Javan Tiger - *Panthera tigris sondaica* - extinct since early 1980's, Bali Tiger - *Panthera tigris balica* - extinct since the 1940's, Caspian Tiger - *Panthera tigris virgata* - extinct since the early 1970's

**Misc.:** This species has been (and is still) widely hunted throughout its range for sport, for the fur trade, and for the traditional Asian medicine market. For the medicine trade - no part of the tiger's body goes unused (see diagram below). The tiger is one of the best known mammals, and has become a symbol everywhere for conservation. Today, sadly, there are more tigers in captivity than exist in the wild. There are only 500 Siberian tigers left in the wild and less than 400 Sumatran tigers as of 2006. There are more than 15,000 tigers in cages and 90% of them are in miserable roadside zoos, backyard breeder facilities, circus wagons and pet homes.



## SIZE AND APPEARANCE

**Size and Appearance:** The largest of all the living cats, the tiger is immediately recognizable by its unique reddish - orange coat with black stripes. Stripe patterns differ among individuals and are as unique to the animal as are fingerprints to humans. The dark lines above the eyes tend to be symmetrical, but the marks on the sides of the face and body can be different. Males have a prominent ruff or collar, which is especially pronounced in the Sumatran tiger. White tigers have been seen in the wild in India, and one single white cub taken by the name of Mohan was the progenitor of most white tigers now in captivity. White tigers rarely survive in the wild as the white coat is only produced through severe inbreeding. White tigers have brown stripes and blue eyes, and some specimens in captivity have no stripes at all. Black tigers have been reported, but only a single pelt from illegal traders remains the only evidence. The pelt shows that the black only occurs on the top of the head and back, but turns into stripes down the sides, unlike in other cats that are completely and truly black (or melanistic). Body size of the tiger varies with latitude, the smallest occurring at low latitudes and the largest at high altitudes. The largest, the Siberian tiger, can reach weights exceeding 700 pounds and reach lengths of 10+ feet, and the smallest, the Indonesian or Bali tiger, weighs a mere 200 pounds with a total length of 7 ft. In sanctuaries, tigers have lived more than 26 years, as compared to 15 in the wild. Tigers only live 10-12 years in zoos.

## WHERE HAVE ALL THE TIGERS GONE?

**Status:** IUCN: Endangered

**How rare is this cat ?** The largest wild population of tigers are in India. According to statistics released in 2004 there are 1576 tigers left on 27 wildlife reserves in 11 states in India. Tigers are no longer "burning bright" in our world's most famous tiger preserves. Tiger numbers in the wild are thought to have plunged from 100,000 at the beginning of the 20th century to between around 1500 today. The Bali, Javan, and Caspian subspecies, have become extinct in the past 70 years. The South China tiger is on the verge of extinction, with just 20 to 30 remaining in the wild. The International Species Information Service lists in captivity 1098 worldwide in captivity with 330 being registered with ISIS in the U.S.

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## SOCIAL SYSTEM AND REPRODUCTION

**Social System and Communication:** Tigers, like most cats, are solitary, however, they are not anti-social. Males not only come together with females for breeding, but will feed with or rest with females and cubs. There have actually been reports of some tigers socializing and traveling in groups. Females with cubs have also been seen coming together to share meals. Most likely, in all of these cases, they are somehow related. Males will kill cubs from other males, so it is likely that the offspring in question are his own. The females most likely are mother and daughter with overlapping home ranges.

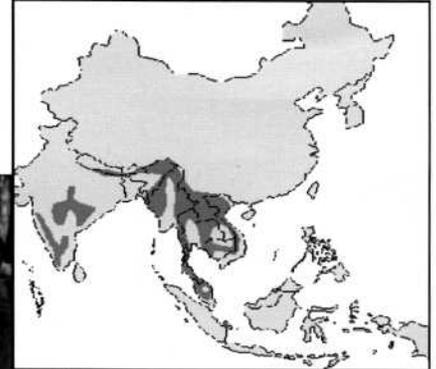
**Reproduction and Offspring:** Tigers will mate throughout the year, but most frequently between the end of November to early April. After a gestation of 103 days, a litter of up to 7 cubs, although averaging 3, is born. Cubs will leave their mothers as young as 18 months old, or as old as 28 months old. During the first year, mortality can be as high as 35% and, of that, the entire litter is lost 73% of the time. The main causes of infant mortality are fire, floods, and infanticide, with the latter being the leading cause.

## HABITAT AND DISTRIBUTION



**Habitat:** Tigers occupy a wide variety of habitats including tropical evergreen forests, deciduous forests, coniferous woodlands (taiga), mangrove swamps, thorn forests and grass jungles. The common factors of all of the tiger's habitats is some form of dense vegetative cover, sufficient large prey, and access to water. Tigers are extremely adept swimmers and readily take to water. They have been recorded easily swimming across rivers achieving distances of just under 20 miles. The tiger also spends much of its time during the heat of the day during hot seasons half submerged in lakes and ponds to keep cool. Indian tigers generally have a range of 8-60 square miles, based on availability of prey. Sumatran tigers have a range of about 150 square miles. Due to the severity of the climate and lack of prey, the Siberian tiger can require a range of 400 square miles. Tigers have lost more than 40% of their habitat in the past decade.

**Distribution:** Indian subcontinent, Amur River region of Russia, China, and North Korea, South central China, Sumatra, Indonesia, and Continental Southeast Asia.



## HUNTING AND DIET

**Hunting and Diet:** Tigers hunt primarily between dusk and dawn, and they attack using the same methods as do the lions. They stalk, chase, and attack, bringing down and killing the prey with usually a bite to the nape of the neck or the throat. The bite to the throat allows the tiger the ability to suffocate the prey bringing death relatively quickly and painlessly. Smaller animals are often killed with the bite to the nape of the neck allowing the tiger to fracture the vertebrae and compress the spinal chord of its victim. Once killed, the tiger either drags or carries its meal into cover. The tiger's enormous strength allows it to drag an animal that would require 13 adult men to move. Tigers consume anywhere from 35 - 90 pounds of meat at one sitting, beginning at the rump of the prey. If undisturbed, they will return to the carcass for 3-6 days, feeding until they have completely consumed their kill. Because tigers are not the most successful hunters, only killing 1 in every 10-20 attempts, it may be several days before one has its next meal. The most common prey items are various species of deer and pig, but they will also take crocodiles, young elephants and rhinos, monkeys, birds, fish, leopards, bears, and even their own kind. They have also been reported to eat carrion.



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## A Picture is worth a thousand words...

Below: Shere Khan and China Doll playing with a nearly indestructible ball. \$200.00

Right: Can You find the Tiger? Look closely in the middle and you will see Shere Khan in his 3 acre enclosure. \$10,000.00



Knowing that you have made a difference in a Tiger's life is priceless. Big Cat Rescue is proud to show you these pictures of the great life our Tigers have due to generous supporters like you. We strive to build the biggest and best cat-a-tats possible for our Tigers, giving them an entire Cypress forest to play and romp in and unlimited access to their lake, where they love to swim. We provide them with fun toys such as the Nearly Indestructible Ball, frozen chickencicles made in a 5 gallon bucket, and pumpkins for enrichment. On behalf of the Tigers we would like to thank you for your contribution and support.

## VISIT BIG CAT RESCUE & HELP TIGERS

Big Cat Rescue is home to more than 100 big cats representing more than a dozen species. The sanctuary offers several ways for the public to learn more about the tigers, as well as the many other big cats that live at Big Cat Rescue.

Special guided tours of the 55-acre sanctuary offer an upclose view of some of the world's most unique exotic cats from tiny sand cats, beautifully spotted

ocelots, and lanky servals to stealthy leopards, curious cougars, and majestic lions and tigers. There are several Day Tours offered throughout the week. Also available are private tours, group tours, scouts and school tours, summer camp, birthday parties, and weddings. Visit our web site for availability and pricing of tours and programs.

Big Cat Rescue's Volunteer Program offers a unique opportunity to put your skills to work for the big cats. Administrative and Animal Husbandry Volunteers are always needed.

Internships are also available for three month terms for individuals looking to gain experience in the animal field programs.

You can help the big cats by making a donation, visiting, volunteering, and by being a voice for the big cats at:

[www.CatLaws.com](http://www.CatLaws.com)

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For any questions or if you would like further information on the programs and experiences that we offer please feel free to contact us by any of the above means.  
-Thank You



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