



The largest species of cat in the world, tigers are powerful hunters with sharp teeth, strong jaws and agile bodies. They range across Asia from Russia all the way to the Sumatra and Indochina.

Physical Description

- Tigers have reddish-orange coats with prominent black stripes, white bellies and white spots on their ears.
- Like a human fingerprint, no two tigers have the exact same markings. Because of this, researchers can use stripe patterns to identify different individuals when studying tigers in the wild.
- Tigers are powerful hunters with sharp teeth, strong jaws and agile bodies.
- They are the largest terrestrial mammal whose diet consists entirely of meat. The tiger's closest relative is the lion. In fact, without fur, it is difficult to distinguish a tiger from a lion.
- They communicate through vocalizations, such as roaring, grunting and chuffing, and through signals, such as scent marking and scratches on trees.

Size

- Tigers are the largest cat species in the world, and the Amur tiger is the largest subspecies with males weighing up to 660 pounds and measuring 10 feet.
- Sumatran tigers are the smallest subspecies, maxing out at 310 pounds and 8 feet.
- Female tigers of all subspecies tend to be smaller than their male counterparts.

Fun Fact

- No two tigers have the same pattern of stripes on their coats.
- Tigers are very good swimmers.

Native Habitat

- Tigers are found in a variety of habitats across South and Southeast Asia, China and Eastern Russia.
- They thrive in temperate, tropical or evergreen forests, mangrove swamps and grasslands.
- Sumatran tigers are found only on the Indonesian island of Sumatra.

Food/Eating Habits

- Tigers are solitary ambush predators that rely on stealth and strength to take down prey.
- Tigers primarily hunt large ungulates, such as wild boar and deer, but are also known to consume monkeys, buffalo, sloth bears, leopards and even crocodiles. They may also feed on domestic animals, such as cattle or goats.
- Tigers hunt primarily at night, using sight and sound to identify prey.
- Their striped coats help them blend into their surroundings, where they lie in wait for prey to pass by.
- Tigers pounce on their prey, take it to the ground and finish the kill by breaking or biting the neck.
- Tigers hunt about once a week and consume as much as 75 pounds of food in one night.

Lifespan

- The life span of tigers in the wild is usually between 10 and 15 years.
- In human care, or on rare occasions in the wild, a tiger can live up to 20 years.

Threat to Species

- There are numerous threats to tiger survival, including human-animal conflict driven by human overpopulation, poaching for use in traditional medicines and the destruction and fragmentation of habitat.
- Tigers are considered an endangered species. Only six of the nine tiger subspecies that once existed remain, and the South China tiger is thought to be nearly or entirely extinct in the wild.
- The demand for tiger bones and other body parts used in traditional Asian medicines is also contributing to the tiger's decline.
- It is generously estimated that only 3,900 tigers exist in the wild, including approximately 200 to 400 Sumatran tigers and 360 Amur tigers.

