

Animals of the World: Mammals



THE TIGER



Tigers are the largest cats among the four big cats in the world. They are known for having an orange coat with black and white vertical stripes that generate unique and striking patterns.

These animals, even though admired by humans, are in danger of extinction because of poaching and the destruction of their environment. Slightly less than 4000 specimens of tigers live in their natural habitat.

Currently, there are six subspecies of tigers that are considered endangered:

The Bengal tiger, one of the largest, is found in the warm deserts or grasslands of India or Bangladesh. It can weigh 220 kilograms when they reach adulthood, their tail is very long, and their head is larger than other subspecies of tigers.

The Siberian tiger is another of the largest in the world. In the right conditions, it can reach 3 meters and weigh almost 300 kilograms. As its name implies, it is only found in the cold regions of Siberia.



The Sumatran tiger and the Malaysian tiger are the smallest subspecies with a thinner appearance. They can weigh around 150 kilograms and measure 1.8 meters high. This happens because their habitat is much more limited, and their prey is smaller. Something else about the Sumatran tiger is that it has its stripes very close to each other, which allows them to camouflage themselves better in tall grasses.



The Indochina tiger has an orange coat that is much more intense than other subspecies. Also, they are very difficult to find because they usually live in very remote and isolated mountainous landscapes. They live in regions of Vietnam, Thailand, China, and Cambodia.

The tiger in the south of China has patches of white in its fur that give it a spongy appearance. It is one of the most vulnerable subspecies, so much so that it is on the list of the ten most threatened animals in the world.

Tigers are very fierce animals when they hunt. They make their prey run around until they reach them, stalk them, and attack them by surprise with a devastating bite. Because of their large jaws and claws, they usually hunt animals larger than them, because they have such strength in their legs that they can jump up to 9 meters away, which makes it easier for them to knock down any prey in full hunt.



They are characterized by being solitary, hunting alone, and sharing food with the other tigers. Generally, they grab large herbivores such as hares, deer, wild boars, etc. They also hunt fish because they are very good swimmers.

Tigers have a life expectancy of up to 15 years of age in their natural environment, and up to 20 years in captivity. Typically, females give birth to litters of two to four cubs.



Name _____

Date _____



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Answer the questions.

1. What are the big cats found in the world? Name them and other cat families that you know.

2. What does it mean in the text when it says they are in danger of extinction?

3. Why are tigers in danger of extinction?

4. Of the subspecies of tigers, which are the smallest and why are they the smallest?

5. What does it mean in the text by vulnerable subspecies?

Name _____

Date _____

6. What does it mean to be a threatened animal?

7. Are tigers slow to hunt their prey? Give the reasons for your answer.

8. Do tigers typically hunt in packs? Why or why not?

9. What does the life expectancy of the tiger depend on?

10. What do you think would be an ideal area for tigers to live?

