



It's a Cat's Life

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What's for Dinner?



BIRDS ON THE WING:

The African Serval eats a variety of small prey, but when he has a taste for fresh birds, he uses his remarkable long body to leap straight up in the air to catch the birds he flushes from the tall grass.



FRESH FISH:

Many wild cats like fresh fish when they can get it, but the Fishing Cat of Borneo specializes in aquatic cuisine. Your housecat may avoid the water--most domestics hate it. The Fishing Cat jumps right in.



FAST FOOD:

The cheetah catches medium sized prey like antelopes where speed is the secret of success. With a burst of speed that would do well on a highway, they catch dinner to go. They have to eat fast too, because they are often driven off their kills.



LEFTOVERS:

Despite their reputation as hunters, lions are willing to eat what they find unguarded. They also eat what is guarded if it belongs to something smaller. Their digestive tract is strong enough to eat old carrion (leftovers).



GRASS:

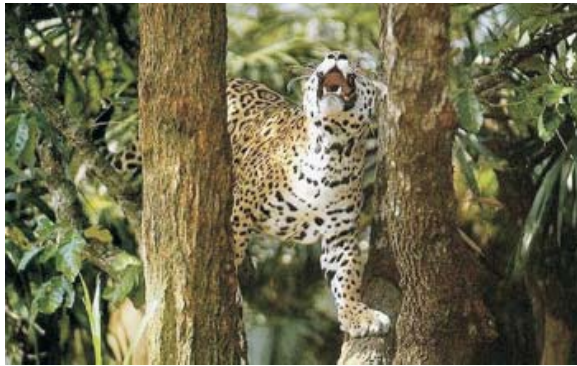
Yes, grass. They don't eat very much, but once in a while a snack of grass seems to aid a cat's digestion. Your domestic cat will also eat grass from time to time. Wild cats have also been seen eating fruits and berries, though they strongly prefer meat.

Dressed for Success



STRIPES:

The tiger hides among the tall reeds and trees of his home. Though his orange fur is bright to you, most prey find it hard to tell reddish colors from greenish ones. He has white fur beneath where shadows would be and dark fur on the top where the sunlight would be. All these effects together make it hard for the prey to see the tiger coming.



SPOTS:

The jaguar lives in the forest, and the pattern of its spots blends with the rustling leaves and the changing patterns of light under the trees. Sometimes this cat will wait on a low branch for prey to pass beneath and spring down upon it.



SOLIDS:

In a golden sea of grass, the lion is just the right color...which is to say all one color. Like the tiger, the lion is not very fast. He's a lot faster than you and I, but not a lot faster than his prey. He also cannot run as far as the animals he eats, so he has to be hidden until the last possible moment.



SNUG AND WARM:

While a cougar can keep warm in the snow, nobody beats the snow leopard at braving the worst that winter has to offer. This cool cat shrugs off the chill with the densest coat of any cat. When the gales are fiercest, they curl up in a protected spot, their long furry tail wrapped tightly around the face like a muff.

Where Do We Live?



SIZE MATTERS:

How big is a cat? As big as it needs to be! Large, powerful cats like lions and tigers hunt the large, powerful animals of the African Savanna and Asian forests. There are also a lot of fascinating small cats that stalk through the bushes and tall grasses in search of rodents and birds. This division of jobs and living space allows several types of cats to live in the same environment.



IN GROUPS, OR NOT:

Lions hunt together in groups called "prides." Cheetah brothers stay together for life. The other cats spend a great deal of time alone except for mothers and their young. Still, there are times when cats seek out the company of their own kind, and not just during the breeding season. Tigers play, jaguars tussle, and feral cats form groups called "clowders."



UP, DOWN, AND ALL AROUND:

Some cats like leopards spend a lot of time in trees. Others like ocelots almost never come down. Lions spend most of their time on the ground though some sleep in trees. Servals try to bridge the gap between both worlds, hiding in the tall grass and making spectacular leaps to catch low-flying birds. Tigers climb rather well, but only when they have to.



WHERE THEY CAN:

Sand cats live in hot deserts where their oversized ears help him stay cool. Snow leopards have a different problem...they live in an icy, windy world where only their thick coat and long, bushy tail keeps them warm. Cats are found in jungles, mountain passes, grasslands, almost everywhere that they can find enough to eat.



WHERE THEY ARE TAKEN:

Animals released where they do not belong often die off or spread too fast. In Australia, rabbits brought in for hunting multiplied out of control. Domestic cats were brought in to control the rabbits, but they ended up killing native wildlife. The adjustment of a cat to his world is a delicate and special thing that deserves our respect...and caution.

Kits, Kittens and Cubs



TIGER:

A tiger cub is born with his unique pattern of stripes that mark him as an individual. During the two years he spends with his mother, he will grow a tremendous amount. Of course that takes a lot of meat, and his mother has to work very hard to feed him and his two sisters while taking care of herself.



LION:

Lion cubs are actually born with spots that help keep them safe from predators. As they grow, the spots disappear, though some adult lions keep a few spots on the legs. Unlike the tiger cub, this lion will have "aunties" in the pride that help him along. Female cubs tend to stay in the pride of their birth. Male cubs move along when their mane starts to emerge and wander about as bachelor males until they find a new home.



AFRICAN LEOPARD:

African leopard cubs spend a great deal of time in trees with their mother. They learn at an early age the climbing skills that help them survive as adults. When this cub becomes an adult, he will be able to take an entire antelope into a tree to eat without disturbance from scavengers below.



SNOW LEOPARD:

Snow leopard cubs come prepared for the harsh weather of their natural habitat. Still, nature gives them every chance for survival since they are born at a time of relative warmth and plenty. The mother's rich milk helps them generate the body heat and grow the body mass necessary to face the long winter ahead.



CHEETAH:

Cheetah cubs start out life with a fuzzy mane that runs the length of their back. It helps them hide from predators, and that's rather important. Cheetahs have the lowest infant survival rate of any of the big cats. African tribesmen share a story that the distinctive black marks running from the eyes to the mouth are the tear stains of the mother crying for her lost children.



CLOUDED LEOPARD:

Clouded leopard cubs share the African Leopard cubs' love of climbing, though they are not closely related at all. The Clouded Leopard is not a true leopard. As you can see, this cub has blue eyes. Most cubs have blue eyes, but they soon change to the adult brown color.



COUGAR:

Cougar kits, like all infant big cats, have to learn how to stay put when mom is away hunting. Their spot pattern keeps them safely hidden in the brush till dinner is served. They are curious about a great many things. Some, like turtles, can be very frustrating. Others, like porcupines, can be very dangerous. But mom teaches them that a porcupine that is flipped over to reveal the unprotected stomach can make a great meal.



BOBCAT:

Bobcat kittens, like all young cats, spend hours playing and exploring. While enjoying themselves, they learn the skills they need to survive as adults. Though they may look like the kittens in your pet store, they already have the ear tufts and short tail that set them apart.



JAGUAR:

Jaguar cubs, like leopard cubs, can be born spotted or all black. Like their mother, they enjoy being in and around the water. They hope you will take good care of their world so they can enjoy the same life their parents had.