

Tigers in the wild

Tigers are incredible animals and are the largest cat on earth. They are found in many different habitats, from tropical rainforests to mangrove swamps and grasslands.

There are currently 13 countries that tigers range across: Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Russia, Thailand, and Vietnam.

Tigers are solitary animals and almost always travel alone, with the exception of mothers and their cubs. They are mostly nocturnal meaning that they tend to rest during the day and be more active at night. Their heavily-muscled forelimbs, retractable claws, powerful jaws, sharp teeth and senses make them awesome hunters. Tigers also love water and are fantastic swimmers.

Tigers are carnivorous, eating lots of different prey, including wild pigs, deer, water buffalo, rodents, reptiles, birds, fish and even insects. They can even expand their throats to swallow food in large pieces or even whole.

They have an incredible sense of hearing and a terrific roar that can be heard up to two miles away. Tigers also use scent to communicate by spraying urine and rubbing themselves on trees and bushes to inform other tigers of their whereabouts. Their eyesight is also amazing; they can see six times better than humans in the dark.

The average tiger has more than 100 stripes and no two tigers have the same stripe pattern – very much like a human fingerprint. These distinctive markings blend into the colours and shadows of their habitat.

Sadly, tigers are an Endangered species and there are less than 4,000 left in the wild. Tiger populations are on the brink of extinction in many countries and are threatened by;

- Habitat loss resulting from mining, logging, farming, palm oil plantations, settlements, roads and railways.
- Conflict with local communities
- Hunting for the illegal wildlife trade.

Tigers are also exploited and abused in captivity - in circuses, zoos, tiger farms and in people's private collections of exotic 'pets'.