Amur Leopard

the rarest big cat on earth

84

estimated individuals left world wide

Extinction risk level

People usually think of leopards in the savannas of Africa but in the Russian Far East, a rare subspecies has adapted to life in the temperate forests that make up the northern-most part of the species' range. Similar to other leopards, the Amur leopard can run at speeds of up to 37 miles per hour. This incredible animal has been reported to leap more than 19 feet horizontally and up to 10 feet vertically.

Due to extensive habitat loss and conflict with humans, the situation concerning the Amur leopard is critical. However, the fact that its more eminent cousin – the Amur tiger – recovered from a precarious state of fewer than 40 individuals some 60-70 years ago gives conservationists hope. It is believed that the Amur leopard can be saved from extinction if the present conservation initiatives are implemented, enhanced and sustained.

EX	No reasonable doubt that the last individual has died
EW	Known only to survive in cultivation, in captivity or as a naturalised population
CR	**Facing an extremely high risk of extinction in the Wild**
EN	Facing a high risk of extinction in the Wild
VU	No reasonable doubt that the last individual has died
NT	Known only to survive in cultivation, in captivity or as a naturalised population
LC	Facing an extremely high risk of extinction in the Wild

Description

The Amur leopard, also known as the Far East leopard, the Manchurian leopard or the Korean leopard, is adapted to the cool climate by having thick fur which grows up to 7.5 cm long in winter. For camouflage in the snow, their coat is paler than other leopard subspecies. The Amur leopard's rosettes are widely spaced and larger than those seen on other leopards.

Weight - Males
32 - 48 kg / 70 - 105 lbs

Weight - Females
25 - 43 kg / 55 - 94 lbs

Speed
up to 65 Kmph / 35 Mph

Habitat
Temperate, Broadleaf, and Mixed Forests

Scientific name
Panthera pardus orientalis

Longevity
10 - 15 years / up to 20 years in captivity

Location

Amur leopards live in the temperate forests of Far Eastern Russia, experiencing harsh winters with extreme cold and deep snow, as well as hot summers.

They are found in Southwest Primorye in the Russian Far East, and along the Russian border with Heilongjiang Province and Jilin Province in North East China. It is possible that a few leopards also exist in North Korea, but so far we have not been able to survey this area.

Threats

The Amur leopard is poached largely for its beautiful, spotted fur. In 1999, an undercover investigation team recovered a female and a male Amur leopard skin, which were being sold for $500 and $1,000 respectively in the village of Barabash, not far from the Kedrovaya Pad reserve in Russia.

Agriculture and villages surround the forests where the leopards live. As a result the forests are relatively accessible, making poaching a problem—not only for the leopards themselves, but also for important prey species, such as roe deer, sika deer and hare, which are hunted by the villagers both for food and cash.

There are still large tracts of suitable habitat left across the Amur in Russia and China. In China the prey base is insufficient to sustain large populations of leopards and tigers. Prey populations will recover if measures are taken to limit the poaching of prey species and the forests are managed for logging more sustainably. For the Amur leopard to survive for the long term, it needs to repopulate its former range. But for that to happen, prey populations need to recover first.

What we can do

WWF (World Wild Life) implements programs to stop the illegal trade in Amur leopard parts. Together with TRAFFIC, the world's largest wildlife trade monitoring network, we help governments enforce domestic and international trade restrictions on Amur leopard products. Amur leopards are listed on CITES Appendix I, prohibiting all commercial trade in the species.

WWF monitors Amur leopard populations and its habitat. Our camera traps have often yielded amazing results, allowing the world to catch a glimpse the world's rarest wild cat. We also work to increase the population of leopard prey like roe deer, sika deer and wild boar including releasing such deer into new reserves in China to provide founder animals to rebuild prey populations.

This work includes increasing areas of protected land in both Russia and China, reducing illegal and unsustainable logging practices, and facilitating trade between companies committed to responsible forestry practices. In 2007, WWF and other conservationists successfully lobbied the Russian government to reroute a planned oil pipeline that would have endangered the leopard's habitat.

Find out how you can help

First Name

Last Name

Email Address

Zip Code

Mobile phone (Optional)

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