# [Jaguar](https://a-z-animals.com/animals/jaguar/" \o "Jaguar):

# **Jaguar Classification and**[Evolution](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/evolution/) The Jaguar is the largest feline on the American continent, and is the only one of the world's 'big' [cats](https://a-z-animals.com/animals/cat/) to be found in the [New World](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-new-world). Jaguars are closely related to [Leopards](https://a-z-animals.com/animals/leopard/) and have a number of similar characteristics including the distinctive spotted pattern on their fur. The Jaguar is the third biggest [Cat](https://a-z-animals.com/animals/cat/) in the world behind the [Tiger](https://a-z-animals.com/animals/tiger/) and the [Lion](https://a-z-animals.com/animals/lion/) and is well known for its immense power and agility. In fact, the name Jaguar is said to come from the Native American word yaguar which means "he who kills with one leap". Despite their incredible power however, Jaguars have been hunted through the ages mainly for their staggeringly beautiful fur. Although hunting for Jaguar fur is now prohibited, population numbers have declined throughout much of their natural range, with Jaguars having completely disappeared from a number of areas. **Jaguar**[Anatomy](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/anatomy/)**and Appearance** The Jaguar is a large and muscular [animal](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-animal) that has a heavier and sturdier body than that of a [Leopard](https://a-z-animals.com/animals/leopard/). They have a large, broad head with jaws so strong that they are said to have the most powerful bite of all the world's [Cats](https://a-z-animals.com/animals/cat/). Jaguars tend to have a cover of either tan or dark yellow fur, which is dotted with darker rose-like patterns that are similar to those of a [Leopard](https://a-z-animals.com/animals/leopard/) (besides the fact that they have dark spots in the middles). Known as rosetting, the pattern on the Jaguar's fur is unique to each [animal](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-animal) much like fingerprints are unique to individual people, and despite its beauty, it actually acts as the perfect [camouflage](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-camouflage) in the surrounding jungle. This [camouflage](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/" \l "jump-camouflage)turns out to be so vital to their chances of survival, that those Jaguars found in the [rainforest](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/rainforest/) are darker in [colour](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/" \l "jump-colour) and often smaller than those found in more open areas. **Jaguar Distribution and**[Habitat](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-habitat) The Jaguar is indigenous to the Western Hemisphere, where it primarily inhabits the tropical [rainforests](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/rainforest/) of Central and South America. Although the historic range of the Jaguar stretched across the whole continent and even into the southern states of the USA, they are today confined to remote pockets of [rainforest](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/rainforest/) particularly in the moist Amazon Basin. Jaguars tend to prefer thick, dense, moist jungle where there is plenty of cover in [order](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-order) to successfully hunt and then ambush [prey](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-prey). They are nearly always found close to water and prefer either permanent swampland or seasonally flooded forests. The Jaguar has been severely affected by [habitat](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-habitat) loss throughout much of its natural range along with poachers who shoot them when they get too close to the growing Cattle ranches. **Jaguar**[Behaviour](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/behaviour/)**and**[Lifestyle](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-lifestyle) Although this elusive [animal](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-animal) spends most of its time either resting in the safety of the trees or hunting in the dense undergrowth, Jaguars love to be in the close proximity of water such as floodplains and slow-moving rivers (which is rare amongst felines), and they rarely venture into arid, more desert-like areas. The Jaguar is an excellent swimmer and can move through the water at surprising speed particularly when in pursuit of [prey](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-prey). As with many other [Cat](https://a-z-animals.com/animals/cat/) [species](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-species), the Jaguar is a solitary [animal](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-animal) with the exception of the first couple of years that Jaguar cubs spend with their mother. Males are particularly territorial and although their [home range](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-home-range) will overlap those of a number of females, they will defend their patch fiercely from other males. Jaguars mark their territories with urine, by scratching marks onto trees, and asserting themselves with growling vocal calls. **Jaguar**[Reproduction](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-reproduction)**and Life Cycles** Despite the fact that most Jaguar cubs are generally born between the months of December and March, it is not uncommon for them to be born at other times of the year. During the mating season, the female Jaguar will use loud vocal calls to attract a male into her [territory](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-territory). Female Jaguars typically give birth to two or three cubs. Once their cubs are born however, the female Jaguar will not tolerate the male in her [territory](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-territory) as she becomes very protective of her young at this stage. Jaguar cubs are born blind and gain their sight after about two weeks. They are weaned by their mother when they are around 3 months old, although the cubs will rely on their mother to hunt and provide for them until they are about 6 months old. At 6 months, the Jaguar cubs will then start to accompany the female jaguar on hunts but will not venture out on their own until they are one or two years old and have established a [territory](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-territory) for themselves. **Jaguar**[Diet](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/diet/)**and**[Prey](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-prey) The majority of a Jaguar's hunting is done down on the ground but they are also known to hunt for [prey](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-prey) both in the water and from the trees, from where the Jaguar can easily ambush its [prey](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/" \l "jump-prey)often killing it with one powerful bite. Medium sized [mammals](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-mammal) make up the majority of the Jaguar's [diet](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/diet/) including [Deer](https://a-z-animals.com/animals/deer/), [Capybara](https://a-z-animals.com/animals/capybara/), Peccaries and [Tapirs](https://a-z-animals.com/animals/tapir/), which they stalk in silence through the dense jungle. When in the water, Jaguars hunt Turtles, [Fish](https://a-z-animals.com/animals/fish/) and even small [Caiman](https://a-z-animals.com/animals/caiman/) when the opportunity presents itself. The Jaguar is known to be a formidable and aggressive hunter and is thought to eat more than 80 different [animal](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-animal) [species](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-species) in [order](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-order) to supplement its [diet](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/diet/). With growing [Human](https://a-z-animals.com/animals/human/) settlements, the Jaguar has also been blamed by ranch owners for stealing their livestock, particularly in areas that encroach on the Jaguar's territory. **Jaguar**[Predators](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-predators)**and Threats** Due to the large [size](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-size) and dominant nature of the Jaguar, there are no other wild [animals](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-animal) that are known to actually consider it as [prey](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-prey). Once found throughout the South American continent, they have been hunted by [Humans](https://a-z-animals.com/animals/human/) mainly for their fur which has led to drastic declines in Jaguar population numbers everywhere. Despite now having legal protection and a reduction in the hunting of them for their fur, the Jaguar is at increasing risk from loss of [habitat](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-habitat) mainly in the form of deforestation to make way for agriculture or growing [Human](https://a-z-animals.com/animals/human/) settlements, which means these large and majestic [animals](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-animal) are being pushed into more remote regions of their native range. **Jaguar Interesting Facts and Features** Jaguars have the strongest bite force of all [Cats](https://a-z-animals.com/animals/cat/) and like other 'big' [Cats](https://a-z-animals.com/animals/cat/) they can roar (other [Cats](https://a-z-animals.com/animals/cat/)cannot). The Jaguar is undoubtedly a strikingly beautiful animal and has naturally caught the attention of both scientists and hunters alike, with many individuals sadly having been poached for their distinctively patterned fur. Although Jaguars usually have yellowish coloured fur, other [colours](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/" \l "jump-colour) are also known including black and white. As with black [Leopards](https://a-z-animals.com/animals/leopard/), they are not completely black as you can still see the spotting (although faint) in strong sunlight. Jaguars are said to be able to cross-breed with both [Leopards](https://a-z-animals.com/animals/leopard/) and [Lions](https://a-z-animals.com/animals/lion/). A Lepjag was produced by the film industry to produce a [Cat](https://a-z-animals.com/animals/cat/) that had the appearance of a Jaguar but was easier to handle with the [temperament](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-temperament) of a [Leopard](https://a-z-animals.com/animals/leopard/). He lives in retirement now in a Big [Cat](https://a-z-animals.com/animals/cat/) sanctuary, and like other 'big' [cat](https://a-z-animals.com/animals/cat/) hybrids he is sterile. **Jaguar Relationship with**[Humans](https://a-z-animals.com/animals/human/) Historically, Jaguars have featured throughout Native American culture, as these people were well aware of the power of this dominant [predator](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-predator) with some believing that the Jaguar was the lord of the underworld. They are feared by [Humans](https://a-z-animals.com/animals/human/) who inhabit areas close to the jungle and are also often blamed by ranch owners for their missing livestock. Although Jaguars hold the reputation for being very aggressive, unprovoked attacks on [Humans](https://a-z-animals.com/animals/human/) are rare. Jaguars have been severely affected by deforestation throughout much of Central and South America, primarily for agriculture with the highest numbers now found in the Amazon Basin. **Jaguar**[Conservation Status](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-conservation-status)**and Life Today** The Jaguar was once found from the tip of South America right up to and beyond, the Mexico-USA border but hunting for their fur and [habitat](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-habitat) loss has led to drastic declines in population numbers. They are today very, very rarely seen in the USA and are considered [endangered](https://a-z-animals.com/animals/endangered/)throughout much of their natural range, although the Jaguar is listed by the IUCN Red List as an [animal](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-animal) that is [Threatened](https://a-z-animals.com/animals/endangered/threatened/) in its surrounding [environment](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-environment). Although the exact population number is unknown, there are an estimated 15,000 Jaguar individuals left roaming the [rainforest](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/rainforest/) today.

# Jaguar Facts:

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| [Kingdom](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-kingdom): | Animalia |
| [Phylum](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-phylum): | Chordata |
| [Class](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-class): | Mammalia |
| [Order](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-order): | Carnivora |
| [Family](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-family): | Felidae |
| [Genus](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-genus): | Panthera |
| [Scientific Name](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-scientific-name): | Panthera onca |
| [Common Name](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-common-name): | Jaguar |
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| [Group](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-group): | Mammal |
| [Number Of Species](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-number-of-species): | 1 |
| [Location](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-location): | Central and South America |
| [Habitat](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-habitat): | Rainforest, swamp and floodplains |
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| [Colour](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-colour): | Tan, Yellow, Brown, White, Black |
| [Skin Type](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-skin-type): | Fur |
| [Size (L)](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-size): | 1.1m - 1.9m (43in - 75in) |
| [Weight](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-weight): | 36kg - 160kg (79lbs - 350lbs) |
| [Top Speed](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-top-speed): | 80kph (50mph) |
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| [Diet](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-diet): | Carnivore |
| [Prey](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-prey): | Deer, Capybara, Tapir |
| [Predators](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-predators): | Human |
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| [Lifestyle](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-lifestyle): | Crepuscular |
| [Group Behaviour](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-group-behaviour): | Solitary |
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| [Lifespan](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-lifespan): | 12 - 15 years |
| [Age Of Sexual Maturity](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-age-of-sexual-maturity): | 3 - 4 years |
| [Gestation Period](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-gestation-period): | 90 - 105 days |
| [Average Litter Size](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-average-litter-size): | 3 |
| [Name Of Young](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-name-of-young): | Cub |
| [Age Of Weaning](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-weaning): | 3 months |
|  | |
| [Conservation Status](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-conservation-status): | Threatened |
| [Estimated Population Size](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-estimated-population-size): | 15,000 |
| [Biggest Threat](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-biggest-threat): | Hunting and habitat loss |
|  | |
| [Most Distinctive Feature](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-distinctive-features): | Beautiful rosetted fur pattern |
| [Fun Fact](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-fun-fact): | The largest feline on the American continent! |