[Template:About](/wiki/Template:About" \o "Template:About) [Template:Pp-semi-indef](/wiki/Template:Pp-semi-indef) [Template:Pp-move-indef](/wiki/Template:Pp-move-indef) [Template:Use dmy dates](/wiki/Template:Use_dmy_dates) [Template:Automatic taxobox](/wiki/Template:Automatic_taxobox)

The **jaguar** (*Panthera onca*) is a [big cat](/wiki/Big_cat), a [feline](/wiki/Felidae) in the [*Panthera*](/wiki/Panthera) [genus](/wiki/Genus), and is the only [extant](/wiki/Extant_taxon) *Panthera* species native to the Americas. The jaguar is the third-largest feline after the [tiger](/wiki/Tiger) and the [lion](/wiki/Lion), and the largest in the [Americas](/wiki/Americas). The jaguar's present range extends from [Southwestern United States](/wiki/Southwestern_United_States) and [Mexico](/wiki/Mexico) across much of [Central America](/wiki/Central_America) and south to [Paraguay](/wiki/Paraguay) and northern [Argentina](/wiki/Argentina). Apart from a known and possibly breeding population in [Arizona](/wiki/Arizona) (southeast of [Tucson](/wiki/Tucson)) and the bootheel of [New Mexico](/wiki/New_Mexico), the cat has largely been [extirpated](/wiki/Local_extinction) from the United States since the early 20th century.

This spotted cat most closely resembles the [leopard](/wiki/Leopard) physically, although it is usually larger and of sturdier build and its behavioral and [habitat](/wiki/Habitat_(ecology)) characteristics are closer to those of the tiger. While dense [rainforest](/wiki/Tropical_and_subtropical_moist_broadleaf_forests) is its preferred habitat, the jaguar will range across a variety of forested and open terrains. Its preferred habitats are usually swamps and wooded regions, but jaguars also live in scrublands and deserts. The jaguar is notable, along with the tiger, as a feline that enjoys swimming. The jaguar is largely a [solitary](/wiki/Solitude), opportunistic, stalk-and-ambush [predator](/wiki/Predator) at the top of the food chain (an [apex predator](/wiki/Apex_predator)). It is a [keystone species](/wiki/Keystone_species), playing an important role in stabilizing [ecosystems](/wiki/Ecosystem) and regulating the populations of the animals it hunts. The jaguar has an exceptionally powerful bite, even relative to the other big cats.<ref name=Bite/> This allows it to pierce the shells of armored reptiles<ref name=HAMDIG/> and to employ an unusual killing method: it bites directly through the [skull](/wiki/Skull) of prey between the ears to deliver a fatal bite to the brain.<ref name=rosa/>

The jaguar is a [near threatened](/wiki/Near_threatened) species and its numbers are declining. Threats include loss and [fragmentation of habitat](/wiki/Fragmentation_of_habitat). While international trade in jaguars or their parts is prohibited, the cat is still frequently killed by humans, particularly in conflicts with ranchers and farmers in South America. Although reduced, its range remains large. Given its historical distribution, the jaguar has featured prominently in the mythology of numerous [indigenous American cultures](/wiki/Indigenous_peoples_of_the_Americas), including those of the [Maya](/wiki/Maya_civilization) and [Aztec](/wiki/Aztec).

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## Etymology[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=1)]

The word 'jaguar' comes to English from one of the [Tupi–Guarani languages](/wiki/Tupi–Guarani_languages), presumably the Amazonian [trade language](/wiki/Pidgin) [Tupinambá](/wiki/Nheengatu_language), via [Portuguese](/wiki/Portuguese_language) *jaguar*.<ref name=etymology/> The Tupian word, *yaguara* "beast", is sometimes translated as "dog".<ref name=r1/><ref name=r2/> The specific word for jaguar is *yaguareté*, with the suffix -*eté* meaning "real" or "true".<ref name=etymology/><ref name=r3/>

The first component of its taxonomic designation, *Panthera*, is [Latin](/wiki/Latin), from the [Greek](/wiki/Greek_language) word for [leopard](/wiki/Leopard), πάνθηρ, the [type species](/wiki/Type_species) for the genus. This has been said to derive from the παν- "all" and θήρ from θηρευτής "predator", meaning "predator of all" (animals), though this may be a [folk etymology](/wiki/Folk_etymology)<ref name=r4/>—it may instead be ultimately of [Sanskrit](/wiki/Sanskrit) origin, from *pundarikam*, the Sanskrit word for "tiger".<ref name=r5/> In [Mexican Spanish](/wiki/Mexican_Spanish), its nickname is *el tigre*: 16th century Spaniards had no native word in their language for a cat smaller than a lion but bigger than a leopard nor had ever encountered such a creature in the Old World, and so named it after a cat whose ferocity would have only been known to them through Roman writings, popular literature during the Renaissance.[[1]](#cite_note-1) *Onca* is the Portuguese [*onça*](/wiki/Wiktionary:onça), with the [cedilla](/wiki/Cedilla) dropped for typographical reasons, found in English as *ounce* for the [snow leopard](/wiki/Snow_leopard), *Panthera uncia*. It derives from the Latin *lyncea* [lynx](/wiki/Lynx), with the letter L confused with the [definite article](/wiki/Definite_article) (Italian *lonza*, [Old French](/wiki/Old_French) *l'once)*.<ref name=r6/>

## Taxonomy and evolution[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=2)]

The jaguar, *Panthera onca*, is the only extant New World member of the genus *Panthera*. [DNA](/wiki/DNA) evidence shows the lion, tiger, [leopard](/wiki/Leopard), jaguar, snow leopard, and [clouded leopard](/wiki/Clouded_leopard) share a common ancestor, and that this group is between six and ten million years old; the fossil record points to the emergence of *Panthera* just two to 3.8 million years ago.[[2]](#cite_note-2) [Phylogenetic](/wiki/Phylogenetic) studies generally have shown the clouded leopard (*Neofelis nebulosa*) is [basal](/wiki/Basal_(phylogenetics)) to this group.<ref name=Johnson2006/><ref name=Yu/><ref name=Johnson1997/><ref name=Janczewski/> The position of the remaining species varies between studies and is effectively unresolved.

Based on morphological evidence, British [zoologist](/wiki/Zoology) [Reginald Pocock](/wiki/Reginald_Pocock) concluded the jaguar is most closely related to the leopard.<ref name=Janczewski/> However, DNA evidence is inconclusive and the position of the jaguar relative to the other species varies between studies.<ref name=Johnson2006/><ref name=Yu/><ref name=Johnson1997/><ref name=Janczewski/> Fossils of extinct *Panthera* species, such as the [European jaguar](/wiki/European_jaguar) (*Panthera gombaszoegensis*) and the [American lion](/wiki/American_lion) (*Panthera atrox*), show characteristics of both the lion and the jaguar.<ref name=Janczewski/> Analysis of jaguar [mitochondrial DNA](/wiki/Mitochondrial_DNA) has dated the species' lineage to between 280,000 and 510,000 years ago, later than suggested by fossil records.<ref name=Eizirik/>

While jaguars now live only in the Americas, they are descended from Old World cats. Two million years ago, scientists believe, the jaguar and its closest relative, the similarly spotted leopard, shared a common ancestor in Asia.[[3]](#cite_note-3) In the early [Pleistocene](/wiki/Pleistocene), the forerunners of modern jaguars crossed [Beringia](/wiki/Beringia), the land bridge that once spanned the Bering Strait and connected Asia and North America. These jaguar ancestors then moved south into [Central](/wiki/Central_America) and [South America](/wiki/South_America), feeding on the deer and other grazing animals that once covered the landscape in huge herds.[[3]](#cite_note-3)[thumb|While numerous subspecies of the jaguar have been recognized, recent research suggests just three. Geographical barriers, such as the](/wiki/File:Jaguar_(Panthera_onca_palustris)_male_Rio_Negro_2.JPG) [Amazon river](/wiki/Amazon_river), limit gene flow within the species.

### Geographical variation[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=3)]

[thumb|right|Fossil skull of Pleistocene North American jaguar (*Panthera onca augusta*)](/wiki/File:Panthera_onca_augusta.JPG) The last taxonomic delineation of the jaguar [subspecies](/wiki/Subspecies) was performed by Pocock in 1939. Based on geographic origins and skull [morphology](/wiki/Morphology_(biology)), he recognized eight subspecies. However, he did not have access to sufficient specimens to critically evaluate all subspecies, and he expressed doubt about the status of several. Later consideration of his work suggested only three subspecies should be recognized.<ref name=Seymour/>

Recent studies have also failed to find evidence for well-defined subspecies, which are no longer recognized.<ref name=r10/> Larson (1997) studied the morphological variation in the jaguar and showed there is [clinal](/wiki/Cline_(population_genetics)) north–south variation, but also the differentiation within the supposed subspecies is larger than that between them, and thus does not warrant subspecies subdivision.<ref name=Larson/> A genetic study by Eizirik and coworkers in 2001 confirmed the absence of a clear geographical subspecies structure, although they found that major geographical barriers, such as the [Amazon River](/wiki/Amazon_River), limited the exchange of genes between the different populations.<ref name=Eizirik/> A subsequent, more detailed study confirmed the predicted population structure within the [Colombian](/wiki/Colombia) jaguars.<ref name = Columbia/>

Pocock's subspecies divisions are still regularly listed in general descriptions of the cat.<ref name=MANUALTAXONOMY/> Seymour grouped these in three subspecies.<ref name=Seymour/>

1. *Panthera onca onca*: [Venezuela](/wiki/Venezuela) through the [Amazon](/wiki/Amazon_rainforest), including
   * *P. o. peruviana* ([Peruvian jaguar](/wiki/Peruvian_jaguar)): Coastal [Peru](/wiki/Peru)
2. *P. o. hernandesii* (Mexican jaguar'): Western Mexico – including
   * *P. o. centralis* ([Central American jaguar](/wiki/Central_American_jaguar)): [El Salvador](/wiki/El_Salvador) to [Colombia](/wiki/Colombia)
   * *P. o. arizonensis* (Arizonan jaguar): Southern [Arizona](/wiki/Arizona) to [Sonora](/wiki/Sonora), Mexico
   * *P. o. veraecrucis (*[Panthera onca veraecrucis](/wiki/Panthera_onca_veraecrucis)): Central Texas to southeastern Mexico
   * *P. o. goldmani* (Goldman's jaguar): [Yucatán Peninsula](/wiki/Yucatán_Peninsula) to [Belize](/wiki/Belize) and [Guatemala](/wiki/Guatemala)
3. *P. o. palustris* ([Pantanal jaguar](/wiki/Pantanal_jaguar), it is the largest subspecies, weighing more than 135 kg or 300 lb):<ref name=r8/> The [Pantanal](/wiki/Pantanal) regions of [Mato Grosso](/wiki/Mato_Grosso) and [Mato Grosso do Sul](/wiki/Mato_Grosso_do_Sul), Brazil, along the [Paraguay River](/wiki/Paraguay_River) into [Paraguay](/wiki/Paraguay) and northeastern [Argentina](/wiki/Argentina).

The *Mammal Species of the World* continues to recognize nine subspecies, the eight subspecies above and additionally *P. o. paraguensis*.<ref name=MSW3>[Template:MSW3 Wozencraft](/wiki/Template:MSW3_Wozencraft)</ref> In addition, extinct subspecies [*P. o. augusta*](/wiki/Panthera_onca_augusta) *and* [*P. o. mesembrina*](/wiki/Panthera_onca_mesembrina) lived throughout the [Americas](/wiki/Americas) during the Pleistocene.

## Biology and behavior[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=4)]

### Physical characteristics[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=5)]

[thumb|The head of the jaguar is robust and the jaw extremely powerful. The size of jaguars tends to increase the farther south they are located.](/wiki/File:Jaguarskull.jpg) The jaguar, a compact and well-muscled animal, is the largest cat in the New World and the largest carnivorous mammal in Central and South America.[[4]](#cite_note-4) Size and weight vary considerably: weights are normally in the range of 56–96 kg (124–211 [lb](/wiki/Pound_(mass))). Larger males have been recorded to weigh as much as [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert)[[5]](#cite_note-5) (roughly matching a tigress or lioness; however note this animal was weighed with a full stomach).[[6]](#cite_note-6) The smallest females have low weights of [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert).<ref name=r10/> Females are typically 10–20 percent [smaller than males](/wiki/Sexual_dimorphism). The length, from the nose to the base of the tail, of the cats varies from [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert). Their tails are the shortest of any big cat, at [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) in length.<ref name=r10/><ref name=r9/> Their legs are also short, considerably shorter when compared to a small tiger or lion in a similar weight range, but are thick and powerful. The jaguar stands [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) tall at the shoulders.<ref name=WCS/> Compared to the similarly colored [Old World](/wiki/Old_World) [leopard](/wiki/Leopard), the jaguar is bigger, heavier and relatively stocky in build.<ref name=Seymour/>

Further variations in size have been observed across regions and habitats, with size tending to increase from the north to south. A study of the jaguar in the [Chamela-Cuixmala Biosphere Reserve](/wiki/Chamela-Cuixmala_Biosphere_Reserve) on the Mexican Pacific coast, showed ranges of just about 50 kg (110 lb), about the size of a female [cougar](/wiki/Cougar).<ref name = foodhabits/> Jaguars in Venezuela or [Brazil](/wiki/Brazil) are much larger with average weights of about 95 kg (220 lb) in males and of about [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) to [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) in females.<ref name=Seymour/> In the Brazilian Pantanal, weights of [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) or more are not uncommon in old males,<ref name=JSSP/> with the highest recorded weight, for a Jaguar weighed on an empty stomach being [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert).[[7]](#cite_note-7) Forest jaguars are frequently darker and considerably smaller than those found in open areas (the Pantanal is an open wetland basin), possibly due to the smaller numbers of large, herbivorous prey in forest areas.<ref name=CAP/>

A short and stocky limb structure makes the jaguar adept at climbing, crawling, and swimming.<ref name=WCS/> The head is robust and the jaw extremely powerful, it has the third highest bite force of all felids, after the lion and tiger. A 100 kg (220 lb) jaguar can bite with a force of 503.57 kgf (1110 lbf) at canine teeth and 705.79 kgf (1556 lbf) at carnassial notch.[[8]](#cite_note-8) This strength adaptation allows the jaguar to pierce turtle shells.<ref name=HAMDIG/> A comparative study of bite force adjusted for body size ranked it as the top felid, alongside the clouded leopard and ahead of the lion and tiger.<ref name=r11/> It has been reported that "an individual jaguar can drag an [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) bull [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) in its jaws and pulverize the heaviest bones".<ref name=r12/> The jaguar hunts wild animals weighing up to 300 kg (660 lb) in dense jungle, and its short and sturdy physique is thus an adaptation to its prey and environment.

### Coloration[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=6)]

The base coat of the jaguar is generally a tawny yellow, but can range to reddish-brown and black, for most of the body. However, the [ventral](/wiki/Ventral) areas are white.<ref name=WCS/> The cat is covered in [rosettes](/wiki/Rosette_(zoology)) for [camouflage](/wiki/Camouflage) in the dappled light of its forest habitat. The spots vary over individual coats and between individual jaguars: rosettes may include one or several dots, and the shapes of the dots vary. The spots on the head and neck are generally solid, as are those on the tail, where they may merge to form a band.<ref name=Seymour/>

While the jaguar closely resembles the leopard, it is sturdier and heavier, and the two animals can be distinguished by their rosettes: the rosettes on a jaguar's coat are larger, fewer in number, usually darker, and have thicker lines and small spots in the middle that the leopard lacks. Jaguars also have rounder heads and shorter, stockier limbs compared to leopards.<ref name=akron/>

#### Color morphism[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=7)]

[thumb|right|A melanistic jaguar is a color morph which occurs at about 6 percent frequency in populations.](/wiki/File:Black_Jaguar_(Panthera_onca).JPG) Color [morphism](/wiki/Polymorphism_(biology)) occurs in the species. A near-black [melanistic](/wiki/Melanism) form occurs regularly. Jaguars with melanism appear entirely black, although their spots are still visible on close examination.

The black morph is less common than the spotted form but, at about six percent of the population,<ref name=r13/> it is several orders of magnitude above the [mutation rate](/wiki/Mutation_rate). Hence, it is being supported by [selection](/wiki/Natural_selection). Some evidence indicates the melanism [allele](/wiki/Allele) is dominant.<ref name=Meyer/> The black form may be an example of [heterozygote advantage](/wiki/Heterozygote_advantage); breeding in captivity is not yet conclusive on this.

Melanistic jaguars are informally known as [black panthers](/wiki/Black_panther), but (as with all forms of [polymorphism](/wiki/Polymorphism_(biology))) they do not form a separate species.

Extremely rare [albino](/wiki/Albino) individuals, sometimes called [white panthers](/wiki/White_panther), also occur among jaguars, as with the other big cats.<ref name=CAP/> As usual with albinos in the wild, selection keeps the frequency close to the rate of mutation.

### Reproduction and life cycle[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=8)]

[thumb|Mother about to pick up a cub by the neck](/wiki/File:Jaguarpickingupcub08.jpg) Jaguar females reach [sexual maturity](/wiki/Sexual_maturity) at about two years of age, and males at three or four. The cat is believed to mate throughout the year in the wild, although births may increase when prey is plentiful.<ref name=MANUALREPRODUCTION/> Research on captive male jaguars supports the year-round [mating](/wiki/Mating) hypothesis, with no seasonal variation in semen traits and ejaculatory quality; low reproductive success has also been observed in captivity.<ref name=r14/> Female [estrus](/wiki/Estrus) is 6–17 days out of a full 37-day cycle, and females will advertise fertility with [urinary scent marks](/wiki/Spraying_(animal_behavior)) and increased vocalization.<ref name=MANUALREPRODUCTION/> Both sexes will range more widely than usual during courtship.

[Pairs](/wiki/Breeding_pair) separate after mating, and females provide all parenting. The gestation period lasts 93–105 days; females give birth to up to four cubs, and most commonly to two. The mother will not tolerate the presence of males after the birth of cubs, given a risk of [infanticide](/wiki/Infanticide_(zoology)); this behavior is also found in the tiger.<ref name=MANUALHIST&BEHAV/>

The young are born blind, gaining sight after two weeks. Cubs are weaned at three months, but remain in the birth den for six months before leaving to accompany their mother on hunts.<ref name=SWWL/> They will continue in their mother's company for one to two years before leaving to establish a [territory](/wiki/Territory_(animal)) for themselves. Young males are at first nomadic, jostling with their older counterparts until they succeed in claiming a territory. Typical lifespan in the wild is estimated at around 12–15 years; in captivity, the jaguar lives up to 23 years, placing it among the longest-lived [cats](/wiki/Felids).<ref name=JSSP/>

### Social activity[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=9)]

[thumb|right|200px|Jaguars at](/wiki/File:Jaguars.JPG) [Cameron Park Zoo](/wiki/Cameron_Park_Zoo) in Waco, Texas Like most cats, the jaguar is solitary outside mother–cub groups. Adults generally meet only to court and mate (though limited noncourting socialization has been observed anecdotally<ref name=MANUALHIST&BEHAV/>) and carve out large territories for themselves. Female territories, which range from 25 to 40 km2 in size, may overlap, but the animals generally avoid one another. Male ranges cover roughly twice as much area, varying in size with the availability of game and space, and do not overlap. The territory of a male can contain those of several females.<ref name=MANUALHIST&BEHAV/><ref name=r15/> The jaguar uses scrape marks, urine, and feces to [mark its territory](/wiki/Territorial_marking).<ref name=Rabinowitz/>[[9]](#cite_note-9) Like the other big cats, the jaguar is capable of roaring<ref name=r16/><ref name=r17/> and does so to warn territorial and mating competitors away; intensive bouts of counter-calling between individuals have been observed in the wild.<ref name=Emmons87/> Their roar often resembles a repetitive cough, and they may also vocalize mews and grunts.<ref name=JSSP/> Mating fights between males occur, but are rare, and aggression avoidance behavior has been observed in the wild.<ref name=Rabinowitz/> When it occurs, conflict is typically over territory: a male's range may encompass that of two or three females, and he will not tolerate intrusions by other adult males.<ref name=MANUALHIST&BEHAV/>

The jaguar is often described as [nocturnal](/wiki/Nocturnal), but is more specifically [crepuscular](/wiki/Crepuscular) (peak activity around dawn and dusk). Both sexes hunt, but males travel farther each day than females, befitting their larger territories. The jaguar may hunt during the day if game is available and is a relatively energetic feline, spending as much as 50–60 percent of its time active.<ref name=CAP/> The jaguar's elusive nature and the inaccessibility of much of its preferred habitat make it a difficult animal to sight, let alone study.

### Hunting and diet[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=10)]

[thumb|right|The jaguar has an exceptionally powerful bite that allows it to pierce the shells of armored reptiles.](/wiki/File:Panthera_onca_at_the_Toronto_Zoo_2.jpg) Like all cats, the jaguar is an obligate [carnivore](/wiki/Carnivore), feeding only on meat. It is an opportunistic hunter and its diet encompasses at least 87 species.<ref name=CAP/> The jaguar can take virtually any [terrestrial](/wiki/Terrestrial_animal) or [riparian](/wiki/Riparian) [vertebrate](/wiki/Vertebrate) found in Central or South America, with a preference for large prey. The jaguar is more of a dietary generalist than its Old World cousins: the American tropics have a high diversity of small animals but relatively low populations and diversity of the large [ungulates](/wiki/Ungulate) which this genus favors.<ref name= Brakefield>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref> They regularly take adult [caimans](/wiki/Caiman),<ref name=r18/> [deer](/wiki/Deer), [capybaras](/wiki/Capybara), [tapirs](/wiki/Tapir), [peccaries](/wiki/Peccary), dogs, [zorros](/wiki/South_American_fox), and sometimes even [anacondas](/wiki/Anaconda).<ref name=Seymour/> However, the cat will eat any small species that can be caught, including [frogs](/wiki/Frog), [mice](/wiki/Mice), [birds](/wiki/Bird) (mainly ground-based species such as [cracids](/wiki/Cracidae)), [fish](/wiki/Fish), [sloths](/wiki/Sloth), [monkeys](/wiki/Monkey), and [turtles](/wiki/Turtle); a study conducted in [Cockscomb Basin Wildlife Sanctuary](/wiki/Cockscomb_Basin_Wildlife_Sanctuary) in Belize, for example, revealed that the diets of jaguars there consisted primarily of [armadillos](/wiki/Armadillo) and [pacas](/wiki/Paca).[[10]](#cite_note-10) Some jaguars will also take domestic livestock.<ref name=r19/>

There is evidence that jaguars in the wild consume the roots of [Banisteriopsis caapi](/wiki/Banisteriopsis_caapi).[[11]](#cite_note-11) While the jaguar often employs the deep throat-bite and suffocation technique typical among *Panthera*, it sometimes uses a killing method unique amongst cats: it pierces directly through the [temporal bones](/wiki/Temporal_bone) of the [skull](/wiki/Skull) between the ears of prey (especially the [capybara](/wiki/Capybara)) with its [canine teeth](/wiki/Canine_tooth), piercing the brain.<ref name=r20/> This may be an adaptation to "cracking open" turtle shells; following the late Pleistocene extinctions, armored reptiles such as turtles would have formed an abundant prey base for the jaguar.<ref name=CAP/><ref name=Emmons87/> The skull bite is employed with mammals in particular; with reptiles such as the caiman, the jaguar may leap onto the back of the prey and sever the [cervical vertebrae](/wiki/Cervical_vertebrae), immobilizing the target. When attacking [sea turtles](/wiki/Sea_turtle), including the huge [Leatherback sea turtle](/wiki/Leatherback_sea_turtle) which weighs about [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) on average, as they try to nest on beaches, the jaguar will bite at the head, often beheading the prey, before dragging it off to eat.[[12]](#cite_note-12) Reportedly, while hunting horses, a jaguar may leap onto their back, place one paw on the muzzle and another on the nape and then twist, dislocating the neck. Local people have anecdotally reported that when hunting a pair of horses bound together, the jaguar will kill one horse and then drag it while the other horse, still living, is dragged in their wake.[[13]](#cite_note-13) With prey such as smaller dogs, a paw swipe to the skull may be sufficient to kill it.

[thumb|Illustration of a jaguar killing a](/wiki/File:Jagvstapir.jpg) [tapir](/wiki/Tapir), the largest native land animal in its range

The jaguar is a stalk-and-ambush rather than a chase predator. The cat will walk slowly down forest paths, listening for and stalking prey before rushing or ambushing. The jaguar attacks from cover and usually from a target's blind spot with a quick pounce; the species' ambushing abilities are considered nearly peerless in the animal kingdom by both indigenous people and field researchers, and are probably a product of its role as an [apex predator](/wiki/Apex_predator) in several different environments. The ambush may include leaping into water after prey, as a jaguar is quite capable of carrying a large kill while swimming; its strength is such that carcasses as large as a heifer can be hauled up a tree to avoid flood levels.<ref name=MANUALHIST&BEHAV/>

On killing prey, the jaguar will drag the carcass to a thicket or other secluded spot. It begins eating at the neck and chest, rather than the midsection. The heart and lungs are consumed, followed by the shoulders.<ref name=MANUALHIST&BEHAV/> The daily food requirement of a [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) animal, at the extreme low end of the species' weight range, has been estimated at [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert).<ref name=FEDERAL/> For captive animals in the [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) range, more than [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) of meat daily are recommended.<ref name=r21/> In the wild, consumption is naturally more erratic; wild cats expend considerable energy in the capture and kill of prey, and they may consume up to [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) of meat at one feeding, followed by periods of famine.<ref name=MANUALNUTRITION/> Unlike all other *Panthera* species, jaguars very rarely attack humans. However, jaguar attacks appear to be on the rise with increased human encroachment on their habitat and a decrease in prey populations.<ref name=r22/> Sometimes jaguars in captivity attack zookeepers.<ref name=r23/>

## Ecology[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=11)]

### Distribution and habitat[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=12)]

The jaguar has been an American cat since crossing the [Bering Land Bridge](/wiki/Beringia) during the [Pleistocene](/wiki/Pleistocene) epoch; the immediate ancestor of modern animals is [*Panthera onca augusta*](/wiki/Panthera_onca_augusta), which was larger than the contemporary cat.<ref name = Columbia/> Its present range extends from Mexico, through Central America and into South America, including much of Amazonian Brazil.<ref name=CONSERVATION/> The countries included in this range are [Argentina](/wiki/Argentina), Belize, [Bolivia](/wiki/Bolivia), Brazil, [Colombia](/wiki/Colombia), Costa Rica (particularly on the [Osa Peninsula](/wiki/Osa_Peninsula)), [Ecuador](/wiki/Ecuador), [French Guiana](/wiki/French_Guiana), Guatemala, [Guyana](/wiki/Guyana), Honduras, [Mexico](/wiki/Mexico), Nicaragua, [Panama](/wiki/Panama), Paraguay, [Peru](/wiki/Peru), Suriname, the [United States](/wiki/United_States) and [Venezuela](/wiki/Venezuela). The jaguar is now extinct in El Salvador and [Uruguay](/wiki/Uruguay).[[14]](#cite_note-14) It occurs in the 400 km² [Cockscomb Basin Wildlife Sanctuary](/wiki/Cockscomb_Basin_Wildlife_Sanctuary) in Belize, the 5,300 km² [Sian Ka'an](/wiki/Sian_Ka'an) [Biosphere](/wiki/Biosphere) Reserve in Mexico, the approximately 15,000 km2 [Manú National Park](/wiki/Manú_National_Park) in Peru, the approximately 26,000 km2 [Xingu National Park](/wiki/Xingu_National_Park) in Brazil, and numerous other reserves throughout its range. [thumb|The jaguar can range across a variety of forested and open habitat, but is strongly associated with the presence of water.](/wiki/File:Standing_jaguar.jpg) The inclusion of the United States in the list is based on occasional sightings in the southwest, particularly in [Arizona](/wiki/Arizona), [New Mexico](/wiki/New_Mexico) and Texas. In the early 20th century, the jaguar's range extended as far north as the [Grand Canyon](/wiki/Grand_Canyon), and as far west as [Southern California](/wiki/Southern_California).<ref name=FEDERAL/> The jaguar is a protected species in the United States under the [Endangered Species Act](/wiki/Endangered_Species_Act), which has stopped the shooting of the animal for its pelt. In 1996 and from 2004 on, wildlife officials in Arizona photographed and documented jaguars in the southern part of the state. Between 2004 and 2007, two or three jaguars have been reported by researchers around [Buenos Aires National Wildlife Refuge](/wiki/Buenos_Aires_National_Wildlife_Refuge) in southern Arizona. One of them, called 'Macho B', had been previously photographed in 1996 in the area.<ref name=r24/> For any permanent population in the USA to thrive, protection from killing, an adequate prey base, and connectivity with Mexican populations are essential.<ref name=r25/> In February 2009, a [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) jaguar was caught, radio-collared and released in an area southwest of [Tucson](/wiki/Tucson,_Arizona), Arizona; this is farther north than had previously been expected and represents a sign there may be a permanent breeding population of jaguars within southern Arizona. The animal was later confirmed to be indeed the same male individual ('Macho B') that was photographed in 2004.<ref name=r26/> On 2 March 2009, Macho B was recaptured and [euthanized](/wiki/Animal_euthanasia) after he was found to be suffering from kidney failure; the animal was thought to be 16 years old, older than any known wild jaguar.<ref name=r27/>

Completion of the [United States–Mexico barrier](/wiki/United_States–Mexico_barrier) as currently proposed will reduce the viability of any population currently residing in the United States, by reducing gene flow with Mexican populations, and prevent any further northward expansion for the species.<ref name=r28/>

The historic range of the species included much of the southern half of the United States, and in the south extended much farther to cover most of the South American continent. In total, its northern range has receded 1,000 km (621 mi) southward and its southern range 2,000 km (1243 mi) northward. [Ice age](/wiki/Last_glacial_period) fossils of the jaguar, dated between 40,000 and 11,500 years ago, have been discovered in the United States, including some at an important site as far north as [Missouri](/wiki/Missouri). Fossil evidence shows jaguars of up to 190 kg (420 lb), much larger than the contemporary average for the animal.<ref name=MSI/>

The habitat of the cat includes the [rain forests](/wiki/Tropical_and_subtropical_moist_broadleaf_forests) of [South](/wiki/South_America) and [Central America](/wiki/Central_America), open, seasonally flooded wetlands, and dry grassland terrain. Of these habitats, the jaguar much prefers dense forest;<ref name=CAP/> the cat has lost range most rapidly in regions of drier habitat, such as the Argentine [pampas](/wiki/Pampas), the arid grasslands of Mexico, and the southwestern United States.[[14]](#cite_note-14) The cat will range across tropical, subtropical, and dry deciduous forests (including, historically, oak forests in the United States). The jaguar prefers to live by rivers, swamps, and in dense rainforest with thick cover for stalking prey. Jaguars have been found at elevations as high as 3,800 m, but they typically avoid montane forest and are not found in the high [plateau](/wiki/Mexican_Plateau) of central Mexico or in the [Andes](/wiki/Andes).<ref name=CAP/> The jaguars preferred habitats are usually swamps and wooded regions, but jaguars also live in scrublands and deserts.[[15]](#cite_note-15)

### Ecological role[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=13)]

The adult jaguar is an [apex predator](/wiki/Apex_predator), meaning it exists at the top of its food chain and is not preyed on in the wild. The jaguar has also been termed a [keystone species](/wiki/Keystone_species), as it is assumed, through controlling the population levels of prey such as [herbivorous](/wiki/Herbivore) and [granivorous](/wiki/Seed_predation) mammals, apex felids maintain the structural integrity of forest systems.<ref name=foodhabits/><ref name=PHOENIX/> However, accurately determining what effect species like the jaguar have on ecosystems is difficult, because data must be compared from regions where the species is absent as well as its current habitats, while controlling for the effects of human activity. It is accepted that mid-sized prey species undergo population increases in the absence of the keystone predators, and this has been hypothesized to have cascading negative effects.<ref name=MONGA/> However, field work has shown this may be natural variability and the population increases may not be sustained. Thus, the [keystone predator](/wiki/Keystone_predator) hypothesis is not accepted by all scientists.<ref name=r30/>

The jaguar also has an effect on other predators. The jaguar and the [cougar](/wiki/Cougar), the next-largest feline of the Americas, are often [sympatric](/wiki/Sympatric) (related species sharing overlapping territory) and have often been studied in conjunction. Where sympatric with the jaguar, the cougar is smaller than normal and is smaller than the local jaguars. The jaguar tends to take larger prey, usually over [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) and the cougar smaller, usually between [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert), reducing the latter's size.[[16]](#cite_note-16)<ref name=r31/> This situation may be advantageous to the cougar. Its broader prey niche, including its ability to take smaller prey, may give it an advantage over the jaguar in human-altered landscapes;<ref name=foodhabits/> while both are classified as [near-threatened](/wiki/Near_threatened) species, the cougar has a significantly larger current distribution.

## Conservation status[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=14)]

[thumb|right|A melanistic jaguar](/wiki/File:black_jaguar.jpg) Jaguar populations are rapidly declining. The animal is considered [Near Threatened](/wiki/Near_Threatened) by the [International Union for Conservation of Nature](/wiki/International_Union_for_Conservation_of_Nature) (IUCN),<ref name=iucn/> meaning it may be threatened with extinction in the near future. The loss of parts of its range, including its virtual elimination from its historic northern areas and the increasing fragmentation of the remaining range, have contributed to this status. The 1960s had particularly significant declines, with more than 15,000 jaguar skins brought out of the [Brazilian Amazon](/wiki/Brazilian_Amazon) yearly; the [Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species](/wiki/CITES) of 1973 brought about a sharp decline in the pelt trade.<ref name=r32/> Detailed work performed under the auspices of the [Wildlife Conservation Society](/wiki/Wildlife_Conservation_Society) revealed the animal has lost 37 percent of its historic range, with its status unknown in an additional 18 percent. More encouragingly, the probability of long-term survival was considered high in 70 percent of its remaining range, particularly in the Amazon basin and the adjoining [Gran Chaco](/wiki/Gran_Chaco) and [Pantanal](/wiki/Pantanal).<ref name=CONSERVATION/> In 1990 Belize created the [Cockscomb Basin Wildlife Sanctuary](/wiki/Cockscomb_Basin_Wildlife_Sanctuary) as the world's first wilderness reserve for jaguar protection and study.

Given the inaccessibility of much of the species' range, particularly the central Amazon, estimating jaguar numbers is difficult. Researchers typically focus on particular bioregions, thus species-wide analysis is scant. In 1991, 600–1,000 (the highest total) were estimated to be living in Belize. A year earlier, 125–180 jaguars were estimated to be living in Mexico's 4,000-km2 (2400-mi2) [Calakmul Biosphere Reserve](/wiki/Calakmul_Biosphere_Reserve), with another 350 in the state of [Chiapas](/wiki/Chiapas). The adjoining [Maya Biosphere Reserve](/wiki/Maya_Biosphere_Reserve) in Guatemala, with an area measuring 15,000 km2 (9,000 mi2), may have 465–550 animals.<ref name=GUIDELINESPOPULATION/> Work employing [GPS](/wiki/Global_Positioning_System) [telemetry](/wiki/Telemetry) in 2003 and 2004 found densities of only six to seven jaguars per 100 km2 in the critical Pantanal region, compared with 10 to 11 using traditional methods; this suggests the widely used sampling methods may inflate the actual numbers of cats.<ref name=r34/>

The major risks to the jaguar include [deforestation](/wiki/Deforestation) across its habitat, increasing competition for food with human beings,<ref name=iucn/> [poaching](/wiki/Poaching), [hurricanes](/wiki/Hurricane) in northern parts of its range, and the behavior of ranchers who will often kill the cat where it preys on livestock. When adapted to the prey, the jaguar has been shown to take cattle as a large portion of its diet; while land clearance for grazing is a problem for the species, the jaguar population may have increased when cattle were first introduced to South America, as the animals took advantage of the new prey base. This willingness to take livestock has induced ranch owners to hire full-time jaguar hunters.<ref name=JSSP/>

The jaguar is regulated as an [Appendix I](/wiki/CITES_Appendix_I) species under CITES: all international trade in jaguars or their parts is prohibited. All hunting of jaguars is prohibited in Argentina, Belize, Colombia, French Guiana, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Suriname, the United States (where it is listed as endangered under the [Endangered Species Act](/wiki/Endangered_Species_Act)), Uruguay and Venezuela. Hunting of jaguars is restricted to "problem animals" in Brazil, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Mexico and Peru, while [trophy hunting](/wiki/Trophy_hunting) is still permitted in Bolivia. The species has no legal protection in Ecuador or Guyana.<ref name=MANUALTAXONOMY/>

### Jaguars in the United States[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=15)]

[thumb|right|220px|Adult jaguar in Waco, Texas'](/wiki/File:Jaguar_-_Cameron_Park_Zoo_-_Waco,_Texas.jpg) [Cameron Park Zoo](/wiki/Cameron_Park_Zoo) [thumb|El-Jefe](/wiki/File:El-jefe-jaguar-fws1.jpg) The only extant cat native to North America that roars,<ref name=TwoSightings/> the jaguar was recorded as an animal of the Americas by [Thomas Jefferson](/wiki/Thomas_Jefferson) in 1799.[[17]](#cite_note-17) There are multiple zoological reports of jaguars in California, two as far north as [Monterey](/wiki/Monterey,_California) in 1814 ([Langsdorff](/wiki/Grigori_Ivanovitch_Langsdorff)) and 1826 ([Beechey](/wiki/Frederick_William_Beechey)).<ref name=Seton/> The coastal Diegueño ([Kumeyaay people](/wiki/Kumeyaay_people)) of [San Diego](/wiki/San_Diego,_California) and [Cahuilla](/wiki/Cahuilla_people) Indians of [Palm Springs](/wiki/Palm_Springs,_California) had words for jaguar and the cats persisted there until about 1860.<ref name=r36/> The only recorded description of an active jaguar den with breeding adults and kittens in the U.S. was in the [Tehachapi Mountains](/wiki/Tehachapi_Mountains) of California prior to 1860.<ref name=Seton/> In 1843, [Rufus Sage](/wiki/Rufus_Sage), an explorer and experienced observer recorded jaguar present on the headwaters of the [North Platte River](/wiki/North_Platte_River) 30–50 miles north of [Long's Peak](/wiki/Long's_Peak) in [Colorado](/wiki/Colorado). [Cabot's](/wiki/Sebastian_Cabot_(explorer)) 1544 map has a drawing of jaguar ranging over the [Pennsylvania](/wiki/Pennsylvania) and [Ohio](/wiki/Ohio) valleys. Historically, the jaguar was recorded in far eastern [Texas](/wiki/Texas), and the northern parts of [Arizona](/wiki/Arizona) and [New Mexico](/wiki/New_Mexico). However, since the 1940s, the jaguar has been limited to the southern parts of these states. Although less reliable than zoological records, Native American artefacts with possible jaguar motifs range from the [Pacific Northwest](/wiki/Pacific_Northwest) to Pennsylvania and [Florida](/wiki/Florida).<ref name=r37/>

Jaguars were rapidly eliminated in the United States. The last female jaguar in the United States was shot by a hunter in Arizona's [White Mountains](/wiki/White_Mountains_(Arizona)) in 1963. Arizona outlawed jaguar hunting in 1969, but by then no females remained and over the next 25 years only two male jaguars were found (and killed) in Arizona. Then in 1996, Warner Glenn, a rancher and hunting guide from [Douglas, Arizona](/wiki/Douglas,_Arizona), came across a jaguar in the [Peloncillo Mountains](/wiki/Peloncillo_Mountains_(Cochise_County)) and became a jaguar researcher, placing webcams which recorded four more Arizona jaguars.<ref name=r38/> None of the other four male jaguars sighted in Arizona in the last 15 years have been seen since 2006.<ref name=r39/> Then, in 2009, a male jaguar named Macho B, died shortly after being radio-collared by [Arizona Game and Fish Department](/wiki/Arizona_Game_and_Fish_Department) (AGFD) officials in 2009. In the Macho B incident, a former AGFD subcontractor pleaded guilty to violating the endangered species act for trapping the cat and a Game and Fish employee was fired for lying to federal investigators.<ref name=TwoSightings/> In 2011, a 200-pound male jaguar was photographed near [Cochise](/wiki/Cochise,_Arizona) in southern Arizona by a hunter after being treed by his dogs (the animal left the scene unharmed). A second 2011 sighting of an Arizona jaguar was reported by a [Homeland Security](/wiki/United_States_Department_of_Homeland_Security) border pilot in June 2011, and conservation researchers sighted two jaguars within 30 miles of the Mexico/U.S. border in 2010.<ref name=TwoSightings/> In September 2012, a jaguar was photographed in the [Santa Rita Mountains](/wiki/Santa_Rita_Mountains) of Arizona, the second such sighting in this region in two years.[[18]](#cite_note-18) Apparently this jaguar has been photographed numerous times over the past nine months through June 2013.[[19]](#cite_note-19) On February 3, 2016, the Center for Biological Diversity released a video of this jaguar - now named [El Jefe](/wiki/El_Jefe_(jaguar)) - roaming the Santa Rita Mountains, about 25 miles south of downtown Tucson.[[20]](#cite_note-20) Legal action by the [Center for Biological Diversity](/wiki/Center_for_Biological_Diversity) led to federal listing of the cat on the [endangered species list](/wiki/Endangered_Species_Act) in 1997. However, on January 7, 2008, [George W. Bush](/wiki/George_W._Bush) appointee [H. Dale Hall](/wiki/H._Dale_Hall), Director of the [United States Fish and Wildlife Service](/wiki/United_States_Fish_and_Wildlife_Service) (USFWS), signed a recommendation to abandon jaguar recovery as a federal goal under the Endangered Species Act. Critics, including the Center of Biological Diversity and [New Mexico Department of Game and Fish](/wiki/New_Mexico_Department_of_Game_and_Fish), were concerned the jaguar was being sacrificed for the government's new border fence, which is to be built along many of the cat's typical crossings between the United States and Mexico.<ref name=r40/> In 2010, the [Obama Administration](/wiki/Presidency_of_Barack_Obama) reversed the [Bush Administration](/wiki/Presidency_of_George_W._Bush) policy and pledged to protect "critical habitat" and draft a recovery plan for the species. The USFWS was ultimately ordered by the court to develop a jaguar recovery plan and designate critical habitat for the cats.<ref name=TwoSightings/> On August 20, 2012, the USFWS proposed setting aside 838,232 acres in Arizona and New Mexico—an area larger than Rhode Island—as critical jaguar habitat.[[21]](#cite_note-21) On March 4, 2014 Federal wildlife officials set aside nearly 1,200 square miles along the U.S.-Mexico border as habitat essential for the conservation of the jaguar. The reservation includes parts of Pima, Santa Cruz and Cochise counties in Arizona and Hidalgo County in New Mexico.[[22]](#cite_note-22) In September 2015 the jaguar "El Jefe" was photographed via camera trap and analysis of his spots confirms that he has been in southeastern Arizona (30 miles south of Tucson) since 2011. Jaguars have been present in this region every year since 1997.[[23]](#cite_note-23) El Jefe and other males may have originated from a breeding population in Sonora, Mexico, 125 miles (200 kilometers) to the south of Tucson.[[24]](#cite_note-24)

### Conservation approaches[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=16)]

Current conservation efforts often focus on educating ranch owners and promoting [ecotourism](/wiki/Ecotourism).<ref name=WWF/> The jaguar is generally defined as an [umbrella species](/wiki/Umbrella_species) – its home range and habitat requirements are sufficiently broad that, if protected, numerous other species of smaller range will also be protected.<ref name=r33/> Umbrella species serve as "mobile links" at the landscape scale, in the jaguar's case through predation. Conservation organizations may thus focus on providing viable, connected habitat for the jaguar, with the knowledge other species will also benefit.<ref name=WWF/>

Jaguar conservation is complicated by the species' extremely large range which spans 18 countries with different policies and regulations. One approach has been to pinpoint specific areas of high importance for jaguar conservation efforts, so-called "hotspots". These hotspots, described as jaguar conservation units, are large areas populated by about 50 jaguars. This method has been used in tiger conservation, and has seen some success. Each unit was graded on a scale integrating unit size, connectivity, habitat quality, jaguar hunting, prey hunting, and jaguar population status into a prioritization assessment. The result of an analysis across the Jaguar’s historic range was the identification of about 51 areas that are priorities for jaguar conservation.<ref name=sanderson/> However, recent studies underlined that to maintain the robust exchange across the jaguar gene pool necessary for maintaining the species, it is important that jaguar habitats are interconnected. To facilitate this, a new project, the [Paseo del Jaguar](/wiki/Paseo_del_Jaguar), has been established to connect several jaguar hotspots.<ref name=r35/>

In setting up protected reserves, efforts generally also have to be focused on the surrounding areas, as jaguars are unlikely to confine themselves to the bounds of a reservation, especially if the population is increasing in size. Human attitudes in the areas surrounding reserves and laws and regulations to prevent poaching are essential to make conservation areas effective.<ref name=gutierrez/>

To estimate population sizes within specific areas and to keep track of individual jaguars, [camera trapping](/wiki/Camera_trap) and [wildlife tracking telemetry](/wiki/Telemetry#Fishery_and_wildlife_research_and_management) are widely used, and feces may be sought out with the help of detector dogs to study jaguar health and diet.<ref name=soisalo/><ref name=furtado/>

[Ecotourism](/wiki/Ecotourism) setups are being used to generate public interest in charismatic animals such as the jaguar, while at the same time generating revenue that can be used in conservation efforts. Audits done in Africa have shown that ecotourism has helped in African cat conservation. As with large African cats, a key concern in jaguar ecotourism is the considerable habitat space the species requires, so if ecotourism is used to aid in jaguar conservation, some considerations need to be made as to how existing ecosystems will be kept intact, or how new ecosystems that are large enough to support a growing jaguar population will be put into place.<ref name=mossaz/>

## In mythology and culture[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=17)]

### Pre-Columbian Americas[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=18)]

[Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also) [thumb|left|Moche Jaguar (300 AD)](/wiki/File:MocheJaguarLarcoMuseum.jpg) [Larco Museum](/wiki/Larco_Museum) Lima, Peru [thumb|Jaguar warrior in the Aztec culture](/wiki/File:Jaguar_warrior.jpg) In [pre-Columbian](/wiki/Pre-Columbian_era) Central and South America, the jaguar was a symbol of power and strength. Among the [Andean](/wiki/Andes) cultures, a jaguar cult disseminated by the early [Chavín culture](/wiki/Chavín_culture) became accepted over most of what is today Peru by 900 BC. The later [Moche](/wiki/Moche_(culture)) culture of northern Peru used the jaguar as a symbol of power in many of their ceramics.<ref name=r41/><ref name=b1/><ref name=b2/>

In [Mesoamerica](/wiki/Mesoamerica), the [Olmec](/wiki/Olmec)—an early and influential culture of the [Gulf Coast region](/wiki/Gulf_Coast_of_Mexico) roughly contemporaneous with the Chavín—developed a distinct "[were-jaguar](/wiki/Olmec_were-jaguar)" motif of sculptures and figurines showing stylised jaguars or humans with jaguar characteristics. In the later [Maya civilization](/wiki/Maya_civilization), the jaguar was believed to facilitate communication between the living and the dead and to protect the royal household. The Maya saw these powerful felines as their companions in the spiritual world, and a number of Maya rulers bore names that incorporated the Mayan word for jaguar (*b'alam* in many of the [Mayan languages](/wiki/Mayan_languages)). The [Aztec](/wiki/Aztec) civilization shared this image of the jaguar as the representative of the ruler and as a warrior. The Aztecs formed an elite warrior class known as the [Jaguar Knights](/wiki/Jaguar_warrior). In [Aztec mythology](/wiki/Aztec_mythology), the jaguar was considered to be the [totem](/wiki/Totem) animal of the powerful deity [Tezcatlipoca](/wiki/Tezcatlipoca).<ref name=MANUALHIST&BEHAV/><ref name=b3/>

### Contemporary culture[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=19)]

The jaguar and its name are widely used as a symbol in contemporary culture. It is the [national animal](/wiki/List_of_national_animals) of [Guyana](/wiki/Guyana), and is featured in its [coat of arms](/wiki/Coat_of_arms_of_Guyana).<ref name=r42/> The [flag of the Department of Amazonas](/wiki/Flag_of_the_Department_of_Amazonas), a Colombian department, features a black jaguar silhouette pouncing towards a hunter.<ref name=r43/> The jaguar also appears in banknotes of [Brazilian real](/wiki/Brazilian_real). The jaguar is also a common fixture in the mythology of many contemporary native cultures in South America,<ref name=r44/> usually being portrayed as the creature which gave humans the power over fire.

Jaguar is widely used as a product name, most prominently for a [British luxury car brand](/wiki/Jaguar_Cars). The name has been adopted by sports franchises, including the [NFL's](/wiki/National_Football_League) [Jacksonville Jaguars](/wiki/Jacksonville_Jaguars) and the [Mexican](/wiki/Primera_División_de_México) [soccer](/wiki/Association_football) club [Chiapas F.C.](/wiki/Chiapas_F.C.) The crest of [Argentina's](/wiki/Argentina) [national federation](/wiki/Argentine_Rugby_Union) in [rugby union](/wiki/Rugby_union) features a jaguar; however, [because of a journalist error](/wiki/Argentina_national_rugby_union_team#Colours_and_name), the country's [national team](/wiki/Argentina_national_rugby_union_team) is nicknamed *Los Pumas*.[[25]](#cite_note-25) In the spirit of the ancient Mayan culture, the 1968 Olympics in Mexico City adopted a red jaguar as the first official Olympic mascot.<ref name=r45/>

## See also[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=20)]

* [List of solitary animals](/wiki/List_of_solitary_animals)

## References[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=21)]

[Template:Reflist](/wiki/Template:Reflist)

### Bibliography[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=22)]

* [Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)

## Further reading[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=23)]

* Brown, David, and Carlos A. López González (2001). *Borderland Jaguars*. [University of Utah Press](/wiki/University_of_Utah_Press). ISBN 978-0-87480-696-0.

## External links[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=24)]

[Template:Commons category](/wiki/Template:Commons_category) [Template:Wikispecies](/wiki/Template:Wikispecies)

* [Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)
* [Sound of a jaguar roar at Vivanatura.org](http://vivanatura.org/sounds/Jaguar%20(Panthera%20onca).wav)
* [Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)
* [Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)
* [People and Jaguars a Guide for Coexistence](http://www.amazonarium.com.br/docs/peopleandjaguarcomplete.pdf)
* [Sky Island Alliance website](http://www.skyislandalliance.org/about-us/)
* [Felidae Conservation Fund](http://felidaefund.org/)
* [Template:Cite Americana](/wiki/Template:Cite_Americana)

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