

# MEET THE LEOPARD

## ABOUT ME

I'm a Leopard. I am a powerful big cat, closely related to lions, tigers and jaguars. I live in sub-Saharan Africa, Northeast Africa, Central Asia, India and China. However, my population is becoming endangered, especially outside of Africa.

You can identify me by my light colour and distinctive dark spots, called rosettes, because they resemble the shape of a rose. These patterns camouflage my body as I move through the grass and trees.

## DID YOU KNOW?

We are fast cats and can run at up to **58km/h**! We're super springy, too, and can jump **6m** forward through the air – that's the length of three adults lying head to toe!

## How far can you jump?

## DID YOU KNOW?

We are very solitary and spend most of our time alone. We each have our own territory, and leave scratches on trees, urine scent marks and poop to warn other leopards to stay away! Males and females will cross territories, but only to mate.

## Do you have your own room?

## MY NAMES

My name, '**LEOPARD**', is a combination of the Greek words leōn (lion) and pardos (panther), which reflects the old belief that we are a hybrid between a lion and a panther.

## How many names do you have?

## TOP THREATS

We are poached particularly for our beautiful fur coats, but also for our body parts which are used in traditional Asian medicine. We face a lack of prey, human wildlife conflict and habitat loss.

Some of us are captured and kept in zoos for human entertainment. We get extremely unhappy and can be seen pacing up and down. It is instinctive for us to protect our territory from other big cats as well as hunt, climb trees and be free.

## WHY WE ARE IMPORTANT

We are the largest predators of our ecosystem and we play an important role in maintaining its health. We keep a control on the population of plant eaters and remove the unhealthy animals from our habitat. This keeps diseases from spreading and maintains a population of fit and healthy wild animals.

## CAPE LEOPARD

We are about half the size of savanna leopards, but still the same species. We have much bigger territories and are more threatened because of growing cities and loss of suitable habitat. Our main food is rock rabbits (dassies), klipspringers and porcupines.



## WHAT WE LIKE TO EAT

We are **CARNIVORES**.

Our diet includes many types of antelope, birds, rodents, fish and even insects! We are nocturnal animals and do most of our hunting at night. When it comes to hunting for food, we know our stuff!

**Have you ever caught your own food? Like fish?**

## MY FAMILY

A group of leopards is called a heap; we communicate with each other through distinctive calls. When a male wants to make his presence known, he'll make a hoarse, raspy cough. We also growl when we are angry. We stay with our moms until we are about two years old, when we are old enough to hunt and take care of ourselves.