# Thundertigers.net E-book

* Thundertigers.net e-book source-wikipedia thanks to Wikimedia save tigers save life. Save tigers please . thundertigers.net is an all kids initiative. Thundertigers.net e-book source-wikipedia thanks to Wikimedia save tigers save life. Save tigers please . thundertigers.net is an all kids initiative.
* Thundertigers.net e-book source-wikipedia thanks to Wikimedia save tigers save life. Save tigers please . thundertigers.net is an all kids initiative.
* Thundertigers.net e-book source-wikipedia thanks to Wikimedia save tigers save life. Save tigers please . thundertigers.net is an all kids initiative.
* Thundertigers.net e-book source-wikipedia thanks to Wikimedia save tigers save life. Save tigers please . thundertigers.net is an all kids initiative.
* Thundertigers.net e-book source-wikipedia thanks to Wikimedia save tigers save life. Save tigers please . thundertigers.net is an all kids initiative.
* Thundertigers.net e-book source-wikipedia thanks to Wikimedia save tigers save life. Save tigers please . thundertigers.net is an all kids initiative.
* Thundertigers.net e-book source-wikipedia thanks to Wikimedia save tigers save life. Save tigers please . thundertigers.net is an all kids initiative.
* Thundertigers.net e-book source-wikipedia thanks to Wikimedia save tigers save life. Save tigers please . thundertigers.net is an all kids initiative.
* Thundertigers.net e-book source-wikipedia thanks to Wikimedia save tigers save life. Save tigers please . thundertigers.net is an all kids initiative.
* Thundertigers.net e-book source-wikipedia thanks to Wikimedia save tigers save life. Save tigers please . thundertigers.net is an all kids initiative.
* Thundertigers.net e-book source-wikipedia thanks to Wikimedia save tigers save life. Save tigers please . thundertigers.net is an all kids initiative.
* Thundertigers.net e-book source-wikipedia thanks to Wikimedia save tigers save life. Save tigers please . thundertigers.net is an all kids initiative.

Tiger

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

*This article is about the big cat. For other uses, see*[*Tiger (disambiguation)*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger_(disambiguation))*.*

*"Tigress" redirects here. For other uses, see*[*Tigress (disambiguation)*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tigress_(disambiguation))*.*

[Page semi-protected](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Protection_policy#semi)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Tiger Temporal range: Early**[**Pleistocene**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pleistocene)**– Recent** | |
| [http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/2/2f/Tigress_at_Jim_Corbett_National_Park_.jpg/220px-Tigress_at_Jim_Corbett_National_Park_.jpg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Tigress_at_Jim_Corbett_National_Park_.jpg) | |
| A [Bengal tiger](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bengal_tiger) (*P. tigris tigris*) in India's [Jim Corbett National Park](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jim_Corbett_National_Park) | |
| [**Conservation status**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conservation_status) | |
| http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/7/70/Status_iucn3.1_EN.svg/220px-Status_iucn3.1_EN.svg.png [Endangered](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Endangered_species) ([IUCN 3.1](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/IUCN_Red_List))[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-IUCN-1) | |
| [**Scientific classification**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biological_classification) | |
| Kingdom: | [Animalia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Animal) |
| Phylum: | [Chordata](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chordate) |
| Class: | [Mammalia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mammal) |
| Order: | [Carnivora](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carnivora) |
| Family: | [Felidae](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Felidae) |
| Genus: | [*Panthera*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Panthera) |
| Species: | ***P. tigris*** |
| [**Binomial name**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Binomial_nomenclature) | |
| ***Panthera tigris*** ([Linnaeus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carl_Linnaeus), 1758) | |
| [**Subspecies**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Subspecies) | |
| [*P. t. tigris*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bengal_tiger) [*P. t. corbetti*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indochinese_tiger) [*P. t. jacksoni*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Malayan_tiger) [*P. t. sumatrae*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sumatran_tiger) [*P. t. altaica*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siberian_tiger) [*P. t. amoyensis*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_China_tiger) †[*P. t. virgata*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caspian_tiger) †[*P. t. balica*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bali_tiger) †[*P. t. sondaica*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Javan_tiger) | |
| [http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/c/c8/Tiger_map.jpg/220px-Tiger_map.jpg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Tiger_map.jpg) | |
| Tiger's historic range in about 1850 (pale yellow) and in 2006 (in green).[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-dinerstein07-2) | |
| [**Synonyms**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Synonym_(taxonomy)) | |
| ***Felis tigris*** [Linnaeus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carl_Linnaeus), 1758[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-Linn1758-3)  ***Tigris striatus*** [Severtzov](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nikolai_Severtzov" \o "Nikolai Severtzov), 1858  ***Tigris regalis*** [Gray](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Edward_Gray" \o "John Edward Gray), 1867 | |

The **tiger** (*Panthera tigris*) is the largest [cat species](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Felidae), reaching a total body length of up to 3.3 m (11 ft) and weighing up to 306 kg (675 lb). Its most recognizable feature is a pattern of dark vertical stripes on reddish-orange fur with a lighter underside. It has exceptionally stout teeth, and the [canines](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Canine_tooth) are the longest among living felids with a [crown](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crown_(tooth)) height of as much as 74.5 mm (2.93 in) or even 90 mm (3.5 in).[[4]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-Mazak1981-4) In zoos, tigers have lived for 20 to 26 years, which also seems to be their longevity in the wild.[[5]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-der-tiger-5) They are territorial and generally [solitary but social](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Solitary_but_social) animals, often requiring large contiguous areas of habitat that support their prey requirements. This, coupled with the fact that they are indigenous to some of the more densely populated places on Earth, has caused significant [conflicts with humans](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human-animal_interaction).

Tigers once ranged widely across [Asia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asia), from [Turkey](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Turkey) in the west to the eastern coast of [Russia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russia). Over the past 100 years, they have lost 93% of their historic range, and have been extirpated from southwest and central Asia, from the islands of [Java](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Java_(island)" \o "Java (island))and [Bali](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bali), and from large areas of [Southeast](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Southeast_Asia) and [Eastern Asia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eastern_Asia). Today, they range from the Siberian [taiga](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taiga) to open [grasslands](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grassland) and tropical [mangrove](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mangrove) swamps. The remaining six tiger subspecies have been classified as [endangered](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Endangered_species) by [IUCN](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/IUCN). The global population in the wild is estimated to number between 3,062 and 3,948 individuals, down from around 100,000 at the start of the 20th century,[[6]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-6) with most remaining populations occurring in small pockets isolated from each other. Major reasons for population decline include [habitat destruction](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Habitat_destruction), [habitat fragmentation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Habitat_fragmentation) and [poaching](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poaching).[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-IUCN-1) The extent of area occupied by tigers is estimated at less than 1,184,911 km2 (457,497 sq mi), a 41% decline from the area estimated in the mid-1990s.[[7]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-7)

Tigers are among the most recognisable and popular of the world's [charismatic megafauna](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charismatic_megafauna). They have featured prominently in ancient [mythology](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mythology) and [folklore](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Folklore), and continue to be depicted in modern films and literature. Tigers appear on many [flags](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flag" \o "Flag),[coats of arms](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coat_of_arms" \o "Coat of arms), and as [mascots](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mascot) for sporting teams.[[8]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-8) It is the [national animal](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_animal) of [Bangladesh](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bangladesh) (specifically the [Bengal Tiger](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bengal_Tiger)), [India](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India), [Vietnam](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vietnam), [Malaysia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Malaysia) (specifically the [Malayan tiger](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Malayan_tiger)) and [South Korea](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_Korea).

**Contents**

  [[hide](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger)]

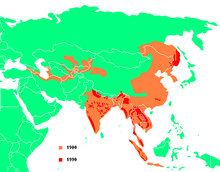
* [1 Taxonomy and etymology](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#Taxonomy_and_etymology)
* [2 Characteristics and evolution](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#Characteristics_and_evolution)
  + [2.1 Characteristics](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#Characteristics)
  + [2.2 Subspecies](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#Subspecies)
  + [2.3 Extinct subspecies](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#Extinct_subspecies)
  + [2.4 Hybrids](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#Hybrids)
  + [2.5 Colour variations](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#Colour_variations)
    - [2.5.1 White tigers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#White_tigers)
    - [2.5.2 Golden tigers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#Golden_tigers)
    - [2.5.3 Other colour variations](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#Other_colour_variations)
* [3 Distribution and habitat](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#Distribution_and_habitat)
* [4 Biology and behaviour](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#Biology_and_behaviour)
  + [4.1 Territorial behaviour](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#Territorial_behaviour)
  + [4.2 Hunting and diet](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#Hunting_and_diet)
  + [4.3 Reproduction](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#Reproduction)
  + [4.4 Interspecific predatory relationships](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#Interspecific_predatory_relationships)
* [5 Conservation efforts](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#Conservation_efforts)
  + [5.1 India](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#India)
  + [5.2 Russia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#Russia)
  + [5.3 China](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#China)
  + [5.4 Population estimate](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#Population_estimate)
* [6 Rewilding](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#Rewilding)
  + [6.1 Origin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#Origin)
    - [6.1.1 Save China's Tigers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#Save_China.27s_Tigers)
  + [6.2 Success story of rewilding](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#Success_story_of_rewilding)
* [7 Relation with humans](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#Relation_with_humans)
  + [7.1 Tiger as prey](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#Tiger_as_prey)
  + [7.2 Man-eating tigers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#Man-eating_tigers)
  + [7.3 Commercial hunting and traditional medicine](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#Commercial_hunting_and_traditional_medicine)
  + [7.4 In captivity](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#In_captivity)
  + [7.5 Cultural depictions](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#Cultural_depictions)
  + [7.6 World's favourite animal](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#World.27s_favourite_animal)
* [8 See also](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#See_also)
* [9 References](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#References)
* [10 Bibliography](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#Bibliography)
* [11 External links](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#External_links)

Taxonomy and etymology

In 1758, [Linnaeus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carl_Linnaeus) first described the species in his work *[Systema Naturae](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Systema_Naturae" \o "Systema Naturae)* under the [scientific name](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scientific_name) *Felis tigris*.[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-Linn1758-3) In 1929, the British taxonomist [Reginald Innes Pocock](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reginald_Innes_Pocock) subordinated the species under the genus *[Panthera](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Panthera" \o "Panthera)* using the scientific name*Panthera tigris*.[[9]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-pocock1939-9)

The word *Panthera* is probably of [Oriental](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oriental) origin and retraceable to the [Ancient Greek](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ancient_Greek) word *panther*, the [Latin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin) word *panthera*, the [Old French](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Old_French) word *pantere*, most likely meaning "the yellowish animal", or from *pandarah* meaning *whitish-yellow*. The derivation from [Greek](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greek_language) *pan-* ("all") and *ther* ("beast") may be [folk etymology](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Folk_etymology) that led to many curious fables.[[10]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-10)

The word "tiger" is traceable to the Latin word *tigris*, meaning "a spotted tigerhound of Actaeon".[[11]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-11) The Greek word *tigris* is possibly derived from a [Persian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Persian_language) source.[[12]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-12)

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Tiger_distribution3.PNG)

[http://bits.wikimedia.org/static-1.23wmf12/skins/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Tiger_distribution3.PNG)

Range of the tiger in 1900 and 1990

Characteristics and evolution



[http://bits.wikimedia.org/static-1.23wmf12/skins/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Panthera_tigris1.ogg)

Video from [Disney's Animal Kingdom](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Disney%27s_Animal_Kingdom)

The oldest remains of a tiger-like cat, called *[Panthera palaeosinensis](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Panthera_palaeosinensis" \o "Panthera palaeosinensis)*, have been found in China and Java. This species lived about 2 million years ago, at the beginning of the [Pleistocene](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pleistocene), and was smaller than a modern tiger. The earliest fossils of true tigers are known from Java, and are between 1.6 and 1.8 million years old. Distinct fossils from the early and middle Pleistocene were also discovered in deposits in China and Sumatra. A subspecies called the **[Trinil tiger](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trinil_tiger" \o "Trinil tiger)** (*Panthera tigris trinilensis*) lived about 1.2 million years ago and is known from fossils found at [Trinil](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trinil" \o "Trinil) in [Java](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Java).[[13]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-13)

Tigers first reached India and northern Asia in the late Pleistocene, reaching eastern [Beringia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bering_land_bridge" \o "Bering land bridge) (but not the American Continent), [Japan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Japan), and [Sakhalin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sakhalin). Fossils found in Japan indicate the local tigers were, like the surviving island subspecies, smaller than the mainland forms. This may be due to the phenomenon in which body size is related to environmental space (see [insular dwarfism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Insular_dwarfism)), or perhaps the availability of prey. Until the [Holocene](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Holocene), tigers also lived in [Borneo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Borneo), as well as on the island of[Palawan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palawan) in the [Philippines](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philippines).[[14]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-14)

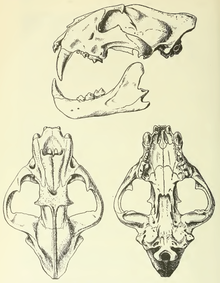
**Characteristics**

*"Tiger tail" redirects here. It is not to be confused with*[*Tiger Tale*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger_Tale)*,*[*Tiger Trail*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger_Trail)*, or [Tigertail](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tigertail" \o "Tigertail).*

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:TigerSkelLyd1.png)

[http://bits.wikimedia.org/static-1.23wmf12/skins/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:TigerSkelLyd1.png)

Skeleton

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:MSU_V2P2_-_Panthera_tigris_altaica_skull.png)

[http://bits.wikimedia.org/static-1.23wmf12/skins/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:MSU_V2P2_-_Panthera_tigris_altaica_skull.png)

Skull, as drawn by N. N. Kondakov.

Tigers have muscular bodies with particularly powerful forelimbs and large heads. The pelage coloration varies between shades of orange or brown with white [ventral](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ventral) areas and distinctive black stripes. Their faces have long whiskers, which are especially long in males. The [pupils](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pupil) are circular with yellow [irises](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iris_(anatomy)). The small, rounded ears have black markings on the back, surrounding a white spot.[[4]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-Mazak1981-4) These spots, called [ocelli](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eyespot_(mimicry)" \o "Eyespot (mimicry)), play an important role in intraspecific communication.[[15]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-schaller1967-15)

The pattern of stripes is unique to each animal, and these unique markings can be used by researchers to identify individuals (both in the wild and captivity), in much the same way as [fingerprints](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fingerprint) are used to identify humans. The function of stripes is likely [camouflage](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Camouflage), serving to help tigers conceal themselves amongst the dappled shadows and long grass of their environments as they stalk their prey. The stripe pattern is also found on the skin of the tiger. If a tiger were to be shaved, its distinctive camouflage pattern would be preserved.

Tigers are the most variable in size of all big cats, even more so than [leopards](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leopard) and much more so than [lions](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lion).[[16]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-Brakefield-16) The [Bengal](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bengal_tiger), [Caspian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caspian_tiger) and [Siberian tiger](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siberian_tiger) subspecies represent the largest living felids, and rank among the biggest felids that ever existed. An average adult male tiger from Northern India or Siberia outweighs an average adult male [lion](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lion) by around 45.5 kg (100 lb).[[16]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-Brakefield-16) Females vary in length from 200 to 275 cm (79 to 108 in), weigh 65 to 167 kg (143 to 368 lb) with a greatest length of skull ranging from 268 to 318 mm (10.6 to 12.5 in). Males vary in size from 250 to 390 cm (98 to 154 in), weigh 90 to 306 kg (198 to 675 lb) with a greatest length of skull ranging from 316 to 383 mm (12.4 to 15.1 in).[[17]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-autogenerated1-17) Body size of different populations seems to be correlated with climate—[Bergmann's rule](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bergmann%27s_rule)—and can be explained by [thermoregulation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thermoregulation).[[4]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-Mazak1981-4) Large male Siberian tigers can reach a total length of more than 3.5 m (11.5 ft) "over curves", 3.3 m (10.8 ft) "between pegs" and a weight of 306 kg (675 lb). This is considerably larger than the size reached by the smallest living tiger subspecies, the [Sumatran tiger](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sumatran_tiger), which reaches a body weight of 75 to 140 kg (165 to 309 lb). Of the total length of a tiger, the tail comprises 0.6 to 1.1 m (2.0 to 3.6 ft).[[18]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-18)[[19]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-19) At the shoulder, tigers may variously stand 0.7 to 1.22 m (2.3 to 4.0 ft) tall.[[5]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-der-tiger-5) The current record weight, per the [*Guinness Book of World Records*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guinness_Book_of_World_Records), for a wild tiger was 389 kg (858 lb) for a [Bengal tiger](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bengal_tiger) shot in 1967, though its weight may have been boosted because it had eaten a [water buffalo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Water_buffalo) the previous night.[[20]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-Wood-20)[[21]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-21)

Tigresses are smaller than the males in each subspecies, although the size difference between male and female tigers tends to be more pronounced in the larger tiger subspecies, with males weighing up to 1.7 times more than the females.[[22]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-22) In addition, male tigers have wider forepaw pads than females. Biologists use this difference in tracks to determine gender.[[23]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-Tigersnow-23) The skull of the tiger is very similar to that of the lion, though the frontal region is usually not as depressed or flattened, with a slightly longer postorbital region. The skull of a lion has broader nasal openings. However, due to the amount of skull variation in the two species, usually, only the structure of the lower jaw can be used as a reliable indicator of species.[[24]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-USSR-24)

**Subspecies**

There are 9 [subspecies](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Subspecies) of tiger, three of which are [extinct](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Extinction). Their historical range in [Bangladesh](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bangladesh), [Siberia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siberia), [Iran](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iran), [Afghanistan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Afghanistan), [India](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India), [China](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/China), and [southeast Asia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Southeast_Asia), including three [Indonesian islands](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indonesia) is severely diminished today. The surviving subspecies, in descending order of wild population, are:

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Tigerramki.jpg)

[http://bits.wikimedia.org/static-1.23wmf12/skins/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Tigerramki.jpg)

A [Bengal tiger](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bengal_tiger) (*P. tigris tigris*) in India's[Bandhavgarh National Park](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bandhavgarh_National_Park)

* The [**Bengal tiger**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bengal_tiger) (*P. t. tigris*), also called the **Indian tiger**, lives in [India](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India), [Nepal](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nepal), [Bhutan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bhutan), and [Bangladesh](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bangladesh), and is the most common subspecies, with populations estimated at less than 2,500 adult individuals. In 2011, the total population of adult tigers was estimated at 1,520–1,909 in India, 440 in Bangladesh, 155 in Nepal and 75 in Bhutan.[[25]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-25) It lives in alluvial grasslands, subtropical and tropical rainforests, scrub forests, wet and dry deciduous forests, and [mangroves](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mangroves). Male Bengal tigers have a total length, including the tail, of 270 to 310 cm (110 to 120 in), while females range from 240 to 265 cm (94 to 104 in). The weight of males range from 180 to 260 kg (400 to 570 lb), while that of the females range from 100 to 160 kg (220 to 350 lb).[[4]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-Mazak1981-4)[[26]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-26) In northern India and Nepal, tigers tend to be of larger size. Males often average 235 kilograms (518 lb), while females average 141 kilograms (311 lb).[[27]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-27) In 1972, [Project Tiger](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Project_Tiger) was founded in India aiming at ensuring a viable population of tigers in the country and preserving areas of biological importance as a natural heritage for the people.[[28]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-28) But the illicit demand for bones and body parts from wild tigers for use in [traditional Chinese medicine](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Traditional_Chinese_medicine#Animal_products) is the reason for the unrelenting [poaching](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poaching) pressure on tigers on the Indian subcontinent.[[29]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-29) Between 1994 and 2009, the [Wildlife Protection Society of India](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wildlife_Protection_Society_of_India) has documented 893 cases of tigers killed in India, which is just a fraction of the actual poaching and [illegal trade](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wildlife_trade#Illegal_wildlife_trade) in tiger parts during those years.[[30]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-30) An area of special conservation interest lies in the *[Terai Arc Landscape](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Terai_Arc_Landscape" \o "Terai Arc Landscape)* in the [Himalayan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Himalaya) foothills of northern India and southern Nepal, where 11 [protected areas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Protected_area) comprising dry forest foothills and tall grass savannas harbor tigers in a landscape of 49,000 square kilometres (19,000 sq mi). The goals are to manage tigers as a single [metapopulation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metapopulation" \o "Metapopulation), the dispersal of which between core refuges can help maintain genetic, demographic, and ecological integrity, and to ensure that species and [habitat conservation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Habitat_conservation) becomes mainstreamed into the rural development agenda. In Nepal, a community-based tourism model has been developed with a strong emphasis on sharing benefits with local people and on the regeneration of degraded forests. The approach has been successful in reducing poaching, restoring habitats, and creating a local constituency for conservation.[[31]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-31)
* The [**Indochinese tiger**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indochinese_tiger) (*P. t. corbetti*), also called [*Corbett's*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jim_Corbett) tiger, is found in [Cambodia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cambodia), [China](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/China), [Laos](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Laos), [Burma](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Burma), [Thailand](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thailand), and [Vietnam](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vietnam). These tigers are smaller and darker than Bengal tigers. Males weigh from 150–195 kg (331–430 lb), while females are smaller at 100–130 kg (220–290 lb).[[4]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-Mazak1981-4) Their preferred habitat is forests in mountainous or hilly regions. According to government estimates of national tiger populations, the subspecies numbers around a total of 350 individuals.[[32]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-iucn-32) All existing populations are at extreme risk from [poaching](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poaching), prey depletion as a result of poaching of primary prey species such as deer and wild pigs, [habitat fragmentation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Habitat_fragmentation), and [inbreeding](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inbreeding). In Vietnam, almost three-quarters of the tigers killed provide stock for Chinese pharmacies.
* The [**Malayan tiger**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Malayan_tiger) (*P. t. jacksoni*), exclusively found in the southern part of the [Malay Peninsula](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Malay_Peninsula), was not considered a subspecies in its own right until 2004. The new classification came about after a study by Luo *et al.* from the Laboratory of Genomic Diversity Study, part of the [National Cancer Institute](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Cancer_Institute) of the United States. According to official government figures, the population in the wild may number around 500 individuals, but is under considerable poaching pressure. The Malayan tiger is the smallest of the mainland tiger subspecies, and the second-smallest living subspecies, with males averaging about 120 kg (260 lb) and females about 100 kg (220 lb) in weight. The Malayan tiger is a national icon in Malaysia, appearing on its [coat of arms](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emblem_of_Malaysia) and in logos of Malaysian institutions, such as [Maybank](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maybank" \o "Maybank).
* The [**Sumatran tiger**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sumatran_tiger) (*P. t. sumatrae*) is found only on the Indonesian island of [Sumatra](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sumatra), and is [critically endangered](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Critically_endangered_species).[[33]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-33) It is the smallest of all living tiger subspecies, with adult males weighing between 100 and 140 kg (220 and 310 lb) and females 75 and 110 kg (165 and 243 lb).[[4]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-Mazak1981-4) Their small size is an adaptation to the thick, dense forests of the island of Sumatra where they reside, as well as the smaller-sized prey. The wild population is estimated at between 400 and 500, seen chiefly in the island's [national parks](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_national_parks_of_Indonesia). Recent genetic testing has revealed the presence of unique genetic markers, indicating it may develop into a separate species,[*[specify](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Citing_sources" \o "Wikipedia:Citing sources)*] if it does not go extinct.[[34]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-34) This has led to suggestions that Sumatran tigers should have greater priority for conservation than any other subspecies. While [habitat destruction](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Habitat_destruction) is the main threat to existing tiger population (logging continues even in the supposedly protected national parks), 66 tigers were recorded as being shot and killed between 1998 and 2000, or nearly 20% of the total population.
* The [**Siberian tiger**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siberian_tiger) (*P. t. altaica*), also known as the **Amur tiger**, inhabits the [Amur](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amur_River)-[Ussuri](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ussuri_River" \o "Ussuri River) region of [Primorsky Krai](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Primorsky_Krai" \o "Primorsky Krai) and [Khabarovsk Krai](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Khabarovsk_Krai) in far eastern [Siberia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siberia).[[35]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-35) It ranks among the largest felids ever to have existed, with a head and body length of 160–180 cm (63–71 in) for females and 190–230 cm (75–91 in) for males, plus a tail of about 60–110 cm (24–43 in), with adult males weighing between 180 and 306 kg (397 and 675 lb) and females 100 and 167 kg (220 and 368 lb).[[4]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-Mazak1981-4)The average weight of an adult male is around 227 kg (500 lb). Siberian tigers have thick coats, a paler golden hue, and fewer stripes.[[4]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-Mazak1981-4) The heaviest wild Siberian tiger weighed 384 kg (847 lb), but according to [Mazák](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vratislav_Maz%C3%A1k" \o "Vratislav Mazák), this record is not reliable.[[5]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-der-tiger-5) In 2005, there were 331–393 adult and subadult Siberian tigers in the region, with a breeding adult population of about 250 individuals. The population has been stable for more than a decade, but partial surveys conducted after 2005 indicate the Russian tiger population is declining.[[36]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-36) At the turn of the century, the [phylogenetic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phylogenetic) relationships of tiger subspecies was reassessed, and a remarkable similarity between the Siberian and [Caspian tigers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caspian_tiger) was observed, indicating the Siberian tiger population is the genetically closest living relative of the extinct Caspian tiger, and strongly implying a very recent common ancestry for the two groups.[[37]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-driscoll-37)
* The [**South China tiger**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_China_tiger) (*P. t. amoyensis*), also known as the **Amoy** or **Xiamen tiger**, is the most critically [endangered subspecies of tiger](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Endangered_subspecies_of_tiger), and is listed as one of the 10 most endangered animals in the world.[[38]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-38) One of the smaller tiger subspecies, the length of the South China tiger ranges from 2.2–2.6 m (87–102 in) for both males and females. Males weigh between 127 and 177 kg (280 and 390 lb) while females weigh between 100 and 118 kg (220 and 260 lb). From 1983 to 2007, no South China tigers were sighted.[[39]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-xinhua-39) In 2007, a farmer spotted a tiger and handed in photographs to the authorities as proof.[[39]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-xinhua-39)[[40]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-40) The photographs in question, however, were later exposed as fake, copied from a Chinese calendar and digitally altered, and the "sighting" turned into a massive scandal.[[41]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-41)[[42]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-42)[[43]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-43) In 1977, the Chinese government passed a law banning the killing of wild tigers, but this may have been too late to save the subspecies, since it is possibly already extinct in the wild. Currently, 59 [captive](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Captivity_(animal)) South China tigers are known, all within China, but these are known to be descended from only six animals. Thus, the [genetic diversity](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Genetic_diversity)required to maintain the subspecies may no longer exist.[[*citation needed*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Citation_needed)] Currently, efforts are being made to breed and reintroduce these tigers to the wild.[[*citation needed*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Citation_needed)]
* [](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Tiger_in_Ranthambhore.jpg)

[Bengal tiger](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bengal_tiger) at [Ranthambore National Park](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ranthambore_National_Park" \o "Ranthambore National Park)

* [](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Tiger_032.jpg)

[Indochinese tiger](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indochinese_tiger)

* [](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Tiger_in_the_water.jpg)

[Malayan tiger](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Malayan_tiger)

* [](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Panthera_tigris_sumatran_subspecies.jpg)

[Sumatran tiger](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sumatran_tiger)

* [](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Tiger_in_the_snow_at_the_Detroit_Zoo_March_2008_pic_2.jpg)

[Siberian tiger](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siberian_tiger)

* [](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Siberian_Tiger_sf.jpg)

[Siberian tiger](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siberian_tiger)

* [](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:2012_Suedchinesischer_Tiger.JPG)

[South China tiger](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_China_tiger)

**Extinct subspecies**

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:BaronOscarVojnich3Nov1911Ti.jpg)

[http://bits.wikimedia.org/static-1.23wmf12/skins/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:BaronOscarVojnich3Nov1911Ti.jpg)

A hunted-down [Bali tiger](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bali_tiger)

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Panthera_tigris_sondaica_01.jpg)

[http://bits.wikimedia.org/static-1.23wmf12/skins/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Panthera_tigris_sondaica_01.jpg)

A [Javan tiger](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Javan_tiger" \o "Javan tiger)

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Panthera_tigris_virgata.jpg)

[http://bits.wikimedia.org/static-1.23wmf12/skins/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Panthera_tigris_virgata.jpg)

A captive [Caspian tiger](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caspian_tiger), [Berlin Zoological Garden](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Berlin_Zoological_Garden) 1899

* The [**Bali tiger**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bali_tiger) (*P. t. balica*) was limited to the Indonesian island of [Bali](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bali), and was the smallest subspecies, with a weight of 90–100 kg (200–220 lb) in males and 65–80 kg (143–176 lb) in females.[[5]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-der-tiger-5) Bali tigers were hunted to extinction—the last Bali tiger, an adult female, is thought to have been killed at Sumbar Kima, West Bali, on 27 September 1937. There is no Bali tiger in captivity. The tiger still plays an important role in [Balinese](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Balinese_Hinduism) [Hinduism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hinduism).
* The [**Caspian tiger**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caspian_tiger) (*P. t. virgata)*, also known as the **Hyrcanian tiger** or **Turan tiger** was found in the sparse forest habitats and riverine corridors west and south of the [Caspian Sea](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caspian_Sea) and west through [Central Asia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Central_Asia) into the [Takla-Makan desert](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Takla-Makan_desert" \o "Takla-Makan desert) of[Xinjiang](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Xinjiang), and had been recorded in the wild until the early 1970s.[[44]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-44) The Amur tiger is the genetically closest living relative of the Caspian tiger.[[37]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-driscoll-37)
* The **[Javan tiger](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Javan_tiger" \o "Javan tiger)** (*P. t. sondaica*) was limited to the island of [Java](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Java_(island)), and had been recorded until the mid-1970s.[[45]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-45) Javan tigers were larger than Bali tigers; males weighed 100–140 kg (220–310 lb) and females 75–115 kg (165–254 lb).[[46]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-mazak06-46) After 1979, no more sightings were confirmed in the region of [Mount Betiri](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meru_Betiri_National_Park).[[47]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-seidensticker1987-47) An expedition to [Mount Halimun Salak National Park](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mount_Halimun_Salak_National_Park) in 1990 did not yield any definite, direct evidence for the continued existence of tigers.[[48]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-zgap1991-48)

**Hybrids**

*Further information: [Panthera hybrid](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Panthera_hybrid" \o "Panthera hybrid),*[*Liger*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liger)*and [Tigon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tigon_(hybrid)" \o "Tigon (hybrid))*

Hybridisation among the big cats, including the tiger, was first conceptualised in the 19th century, when zoos were particularly interested in the pursuit of finding oddities to display for financial gain.[[49]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-hybridisation-49) [Lions](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lion) have been known to [breed](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reproduction) with tigers (most often the [Amur](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siberian_tiger) and [Bengal](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bengal_tiger) subspecies) to create [hybrids](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hybrid_(biology)) called [ligers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liger) and [tigons](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiglon" \o "Tiglon).[[50]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-50) Such hybrids were once commonly bred in zoos, but this is now discouraged due to the emphasis on conserving species and subspecies. Hybrids are still bred in private menageries and in zoos in [China](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/China).

The liger is a cross between a male lion and a tigress.[[51]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-liger-51) Because the lion sire passes on a growth-promoting gene, but the corresponding growth-inhibiting gene from the [female](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Female) tiger is absent, ligers grow far larger than either parent. They share physical and behavioural qualities of both parent species (spots and stripes on a sandy background). [Male](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Male) ligers are sterile, but female ligers are often fertile. Males have about a 50% chance of having a mane, but, even if they do, their manes will be only around half the size of that of a pure lion. Ligers are typically between 10 and 12 feet in length, and can weigh between 800 and 1,000 pounds or more.[[51]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-liger-51)

The less common tigon is a cross between the lioness and the male tiger.[[52]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-52)

**Colour variations**

**White tigers**

*Main article:*[*White tiger*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/White_tiger)

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:White_tiger_bangalore.jpg)

[http://bits.wikimedia.org/static-1.23wmf12/skins/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:White_tiger_bangalore.jpg)

A Bengal white tiger in [Bannerghatta National Park](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bannerghatta_National_Park" \o "Bannerghatta National Park) in [Bangalore](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bangalore)

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Singapore_Zoo_Tigers.jpg)

[http://bits.wikimedia.org/static-1.23wmf12/skins/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Singapore_Zoo_Tigers.jpg)

A pair of white Bengal tigers at the[Singapore Zoo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Singapore_Zoo)

A well-known [allele](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Allele) produces the [white tiger](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/White_tiger), an animal which is rare in the wild but bred in some zoos due to its popularity. Breeding of white tigers will often lead to [inbreeding](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inbreeding) as the trait is [recessive](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Recessive). Many initiatives have taken place in white and orange tiger mating in an attempt to remedy the issue, often mixing subspecies in the process. Such inbreeding has led to white tigers having a greater likelihood of being born with physical defects, such as cleft palates and [scoliosis](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scoliosis) (curvature of the spine).[[53]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-nz-53)[[54]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-54) Furthermore, white tigers are prone to having crossed eyes ([strabismus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Strabismus)). Even apparently healthy white tigers generally do not live as long as their orange counterparts. Records of white tigers were first made in the early 19th century.[[55]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-55) They can only occur when both parents carry the rare allele found in white tigers. An estimated one in 10,000 natural tiger births are white tigers. The white tiger is not a separate sub-species, but only a colour variation; since the only white tigers to have been observed in the wild have been Bengal tigers[[56]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-56) (and all white tigers in captivity are at least part Bengal), the recessive gene that causes the white colouring is commonly thought to be carried only by Bengal tigers.[[53]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-nz-53)[[57]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-57) They are not in any way more endangered than tigers are generally, this being a common misconception. Another misconception is white tigers are [albinos](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Albinism), despite pigment being evident in the white tiger's stripes. They are distinct not only because of their white fur, but also their blue eyes.

The causative mutation changes a single amino acid in the transporter protein [SLC45A2](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SLC45A2).[[58]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-Xu2013-58)

**Golden tigers**

*Main article:*[*Golden tiger*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Golden_tiger)

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Golden_tiger_1_-_Buffalo_Zoo.jpg)

[http://bits.wikimedia.org/static-1.23wmf12/skins/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Golden_tiger_1_-_Buffalo_Zoo.jpg)

A rare [golden tiger](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Golden_tiger) at the [Buffalo Zoo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buffalo_Zoo)

In addition, another recessive gene may create a very unusual "golden" or "golden tabby" colour variation, sometimes known as "strawberry". Golden tigers have light-gold fur, pale legs, and faint orange stripes. Their fur tends to be much thicker than normal.[[59]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-59) Extremely few golden tigers are kept in captivity, around 30 in all. Like white tigers, golden tigers are invariably at least part Bengal. Some golden tigers carry the white tiger gene, and when two such tigers are mated, they can produce some stripeless white offspring. Both white and golden tigers tend to be larger than average Bengal tigers.

**Other colour variations**

No black tiger has been authenticated, with the possible exception of one dead specimen examined in [Chittagong](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chittagong) in 1846.[[60]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-McDougal1977-60) There are unconfirmed reports of a "blue" or slate-coloured tiger, the [Maltese tiger](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maltese_tiger). Largely or totally [black tigers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black_tiger_(animal)) are assumed, if real, to be intermittent mutations rather than distinct species.[[53]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-nz-53)

Distribution and habitat

In the past, tigers were found throughout Asia, from the [Caucasus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caucasus) and the [Caspian Sea](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caspian_Sea) to [Siberia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siberia) and the [Indonesian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indonesia) islands of Java, Bali and [Sumatra](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sumatra). During the 20th century, tigers have been extirpated in [western Asia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Western_Asia) and became restricted to isolated pockets in the remaining parts of their range. Today, their fragmented and partly degraded range extends from [India](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India) in the west to [China](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/China) and [Southeast Asia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Southeast_Asia). The northern limit of their range is close to the [Amur River](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amur_River) in southeastern[Siberia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siberia). The only large island inhabited by tigers today is [Sumatra](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sumatra).[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-IUCN-1)

Tigers were extirpated on the island of Bali in the 1940s, around the Caspian Sea in the 1970s, and on Java in the 1980s. Loss of habitat and the persistent killing of tigers and tiger prey precipitated these extirpations, a process that continues to leave forests devoid of tigers and other large mammals across South and Southeast Asia. Since the beginning of the 20th century, their historical range has shrunk by 93%. In the decade from 1997 to 2007, the estimated area known to be occupied by tigers has declined by 41%.[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-dinerstein07-2)

[Fossil](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fossil) remains indicate tigers were present in [Borneo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Borneo) and [Palawan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palawan_(island)) in the [Philippines](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philippines) during the late [Pleistocene](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pleistocene) and [Holocene](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Holocene).[[61]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-61)[[62]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-62)

Tigers can occupy a wide range of [habitat](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Habitat) types, but will usually require sufficient [cover](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Camouflage), proximity to [water](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Water), and an abundance of [prey](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prey). Bengal tigers live in many types of forests, including wet, [evergreen](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Evergreen), and the semievergreen of [Assam](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Assam) and eastern [Bengal](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bengal); the [swampy mangrove forest](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mangrove) of the [Ganges](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ganges) Delta; the [deciduous forest](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deciduous_forest) of [Nepal](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nepal), and the [thorn forests](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thorn_forest) of the [Western Ghats](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Western_Ghat). In various parts of their range they inhabit or have inhabited additionally partially open [grassland](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grassland) and[savanna](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Savanna) as well as [taiga forests](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taiga) and rocky habitats. Compared to the lion, the tiger prefers denser vegetation, for which its camouflage colouring is ideally suited, and where a single predator is not at a disadvantage compared with the multiple felines in a pride. A further habitat requirement is the placement of suitably secluded den locations, which may consist of caves, large hollow trees, or dense vegetation.[[63]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-Walker-63)

Biology and behaviour

**Territorial behaviour**

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Tiger-2.jpg)

[http://bits.wikimedia.org/static-1.23wmf12/skins/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Tiger-2.jpg)

A tiger in a pool at Zoo Dortmund in[Dortmund](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dortmund), [Germany](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Germany)

Adult tigers lead solitary lives and congregate only on an *ad hoc* and transitory basis when special conditions permit, such as plentiful supply of food. They establish and maintain home ranges. Resident adults of either sex tend to confine their movements to a definite territory, within which they satisfy their needs, and in the case of tigresses, those of their growing cubs. Those sharing the same ground are well aware of each other's movements and activities.[[60]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-McDougal1977-60)

The size of a tiger's home range mainly depends on prey abundance, and, in the case of male tigers, on access to females. A tigress may have a [territory](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Territory_(animal)) of 20 km2 (7.7 sq mi), while the territories of males are much larger, covering 60 to 100 km2(23 to 39 sq mi). The range of a male tends to overlap those of several females.[[64]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-64)

Tigers are strong [swimmers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aquatic_locomotion), and are often found bathing in [ponds](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pond), [lakes](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lake), and [rivers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/River). Among fellow big cats, only the [jaguar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jaguar) shares with the tiger a similar fondness for and capability in the water.[[65]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-65) They may also cross rivers up to 6 to 7 km (3.7 to 4.3 mi) across and can swim a distance of up to 29 km (18 mi) in a day.[[63]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-Walker-63) During the extreme heat of the day, they often cool off in pools. They are able to carry prey through or capture it in the water.

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Sumatraanse_Tijger.jpg)

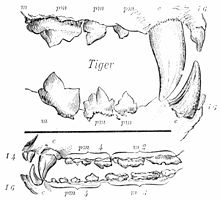
[http://bits.wikimedia.org/static-1.23wmf12/skins/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Sumatraanse_Tijger.jpg)

Tigers for the most part are [solitary](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Solitary_but_social" \o "Solitary but social)animals.

The relationships between individuals can be quite complex, and apparently tigers follow no set "rule" with regards to territorial rights and infringing territories. For instance, although for the most part tigers avoid each other, both male and female tigers have been documented sharing kills, usually with others of the opposite sex, or cubs. George Schaller observed a male tiger share a kill with two females and four cubs. Females are often reluctant to let males near their cubs, but Schaller saw these females made no effort to protect or keep their cubs from the male, suggesting the male might have been the sire of the cubs. In contrast to male lions, male tigers will allow the females and cubs to feed on the kill first. Furthermore, tigers seem to behave relatively amicably when sharing kills, in contrast to lions, which tend to squabble and fight. Unrelated tigers have also been observed feeding on prey together. This quotation is from Stephen Mills' book *Tiger*, as he describes an event witnessed by Valmik Thapar and Fateh Singh Rathore in [Ranthambhore National Park](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ranthambhore_National_Park" \o "Ranthambhore National Park):[[66]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger" \l "cite_note-Mills04-66)

A [dominant](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dominance_(ethology)) tigress they called Padmini killed a 250 kg (550 lb) male [nilgai](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nilgai" \o "Nilgai) – a very large antelope. They found her at the kill just after dawn with her three 14-month-old cubs and they watched uninterrupted for the next ten hours. During this period the family was joined by two adult females and one adult male – all offspring from Padmini's previous litters and by two unrelated tigers, one female the other unidentified. By three o'clock there were no fewer than nine tigers round the kill.

When young female tigers first establish a territory, they tend to do so fairly close to their mother's area. The overlap between the female and her mother's territory tends to wane with increasing time. Males, however, wander further than their female counterparts, and set out at a younger age to [mark out their own area](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Territorial_marking). A young male will acquire territory either by seeking out a range devoid of other male tigers, or by living as a transient in another male's territory until he is old and strong enough to challenge the resident male. The highest mortality rate (30–35% per year) amongst adult tigers occurs for young male tigers which have just left their natal area, seeking out territories of their own.[[66]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-Mills04-66)

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:037tiger.jpg)

[http://bits.wikimedia.org/static-1.23wmf12/skins/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:037tiger.jpg)

Tiger dentition (above), compared with that of an [Asian black bear](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asian_black_bear) (below): The large canines are used to make the killing bite, but they tear meat when feeding using the carnassial teeth.

Male tigers are generally more intolerant of other males within their territories than females are of other females. For the most part, however, territorial disputes are usually solved by displays of intimidation, rather than outright aggression. Several such incidents have been observed, in which the subordinate tiger yielded defeat by rolling onto its back, showing its belly in a submissive posture.[[67]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-Thapar1989-67) Once [dominance](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dominance_(ethology)) has been established, a male may actually tolerate a subordinate within his range, as long as they do not live in too close quarters.[[66]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-Mills04-66) The most violent disputes tend to occur between two males when a female is in [oestrus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Estrous_cycle" \o "Estrous cycle), and may result in the death of one of the males, although this is a rare occurrence.[[66]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-Mills04-66)[[67]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-Thapar1989-67)

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Flehmen_Response_in_a_Sub_Adult_Tiger.jpg)

[http://bits.wikimedia.org/static-1.23wmf12/skins/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Flehmen_Response_in_a_Sub_Adult_Tiger.jpg)

Flehmen Response in a Sub Adult Tiger at [Bandhavgarh National Park](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bandhavgarh_National_Park" \o "Bandhavgarh National Park), [Madhya Pradesh](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Madhya_Pradesh), [India](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India)

To [identify his territory](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Territorial_marking), the male marks trees by [spraying of urine](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Urine_spraying)[[68]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-68)[[69]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-69)[[70]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-70) and [anal gland](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anal_gland) secretions, as well as marking trails with [scat](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Feces). Males show a grimacing face, called the [Flehmen response](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flehmen_response" \o "Flehmen response), when identifying a female's reproductive condition by sniffing her urine markings. Like the other *Panthera* cats, tigers can [roar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roar_(utterance)). Tigers will roar for both aggressive and nonaggressive reasons. Other tiger vocal communications include moans, hisses, growls, and [chuffs](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prusten).

Tigers have been studied in the wild using a variety of techniques. The populations of tigers were estimated in the past using plaster casts of their [pugmarks](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pugmark). This method was criticized as being inaccurate.[[71]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-71) Attempts were made to use camera trapping instead. Newer techniques based on [DNA](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/DNA) from their scat are also being evaluated. Radio collaring has also been a popular approach to tracking them for study in the wild.

**Hunting and diet**

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Ernst_Rudolf_The_Tiger_Hunt.jpg)

[http://bits.wikimedia.org/static-1.23wmf12/skins/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Ernst_Rudolf_The_Tiger_Hunt.jpg)

Ernst Rudolf's "The Tiger Hunt"

In the wild, tigers mostly feed on large and medium-sized [animals](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Animal), with most studies indicating a preference for native [ungulates](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ungulate) weighing 90 kg (200 lb) at a minimum.[[72]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-Old-72)[[73]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-73) [Sambar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sambar_deer" \o "Sambar deer), [chital](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chital), [barasingha](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barasingha" \o "Barasingha),[wild boar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wild_boar), [gaur](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gaur), [nilgai](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nilgai" \o "Nilgai) and both [water buffalo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wild_Asian_Water_Buffalo) and [domestic buffalo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Domestic_buffalo), in descending order of preference, are the tiger's favoured prey in [India](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India).[[72]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-Old-72) Sometimes, they also prey on other predators, including other large species, such as [dogs](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dog), [leopards](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leopard), [pythons](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Python_molurus), [sloth bears](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sloth_Bear), and [crocodiles](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crocodile). In Siberia, the main prey species are [manchurian wapiti](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Manchurian_wapiti" \o "Manchurian wapiti) and wild boar (the two species comprising nearly 80% of the prey selected) followed by [sika deer](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sika_deer" \o "Sika deer), [moose](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moose), [roe deer](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siberian_Roe_Deer), and [musk deer](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Musk_deer).[[74]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-j1-74) In Sumatra, sambar, [muntjac](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muntjac" \o "Muntjac), wild boar, and [Malayan tapir](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Malayan_tapir) are the predominant prey.[[75]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-75)[[76]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-76) In the former Caspian tiger's range, prey included [saiga antelope](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saiga_antelope" \o "Saiga antelope), [camels](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Camel), [Caucasian wisent](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caucasian_Wisent), [yak](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yak), and wild horses. Like many predators, they are opportunistic and will eat much smaller prey, such as [monkeys](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monkey), [peafowl](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peafowl), other large, ground-based [birds](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bird), [hares](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hare), [porcupines](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Porcupine), and [fish](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fish).[[72]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-Old-72)

Adult [elephants](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elephant) are too large to serve as common prey, but conflicts between tigers and elephants, with the huge elephant typically dominating the predator, do sometimes take place.[[77]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-77) A case where a tiger killed an adult [Indian rhinoceros](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_rhinoceros) has been observed, although adult rhinoceroses are often ignored as potential prey due to a combination of very large size, a short temper, and very thick skin, which render them a laborious and very difficult kill.[[78]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-78) Young elephant and rhino calves are occasionally taken. Tigers also sometimes prey on such livestock as [cattle](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cattle), [horses](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Horse), and [donkeys](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Donkey). These individuals are termed cattle-lifters or cattle-killers in contrast to typical game-killers.[[79]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-Perry-79)

Old tigers, or those wounded and rendered incapable of catching their natural prey, have turned into man-eaters; this pattern has recurred frequently across India. An exceptional case is that of the [Sundarbans](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sundarbans" \o "Sundarbans), where healthy tigers prey upon fishermen and villagers in search of forest produce, humans thereby forming a minor part of the tiger's diet.[[80]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-80) Tigers will occasionally eat vegetation for [dietary fiber](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dietary_fiber), the fruit of the [slow match tree](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Careya_arborea) being favoured.[[79]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-Perry-79)

[http://bits.wikimedia.org/static-1.23wmf12/skins/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:A_Bengal_Tiger_(Panthera_tigris_tigris)_with_Indian_Pangolin(Manis_crassicaudata)_Tadoba_Tiger_Reserve_Maharastra.jpg)

A [Bengal Tiger](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bengal_Tiger) (Panthera tigris tigris) with [Indian Pangolin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_Pangolin)(Manis crassicaudata) [Tadoba Tiger Reserve](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tadoba_Andhari_Tiger_Project" \o "Tadoba Andhari Tiger Project), [Maharastra](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maharastra" \o "Maharastra)

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Hunting_Tiger_Ranthambore.jpg)

[http://bits.wikimedia.org/static-1.23wmf12/skins/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Hunting_Tiger_Ranthambore.jpg)

Tiger with kill

Tigers are thought to be nocturnal predators, hunting at night.[[81]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-animaldiversity1-81) However, in areas where humans are typically absent, they have been observed via remote-controlled, hidden cameras, hunting during the daylight hours.[[82]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-82) They generally hunt alone and ambush their prey as most other cats do, overpowering them from any angle, using their body size and strength to knock the prey off balance. Successful hunts usually require the tiger to almost simultaneously leap onto its quarry, knock it over, and grab the throat or nape with its teeth.[[63]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-Walker-63) Even with their great masses, tigers can reach speeds of about 49–65 km/h (30–40 mph), although they can only do so in short bursts, since they have relatively little stamina; consequently, tigers must be relatively close to their prey before they break their cover. If the prey catches wind of the tiger's presence before the moments of the pounce, the tiger will usually abandon the hunt rather than chase prey or battle it head-on. Tigers have great leaping ability; horizontal leaps of up to 10 m (33 ft) have been reported, although leaps of around half this amount are more typical. However, only one in 20 hunts, including any instances of stalking in proximity to potential prey, ends in a successful kill.[[63]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-Walker-63)[[81]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-animaldiversity1-81) An adult tiger can go up to two weeks without eating, but then can gorge on up to 34 kg (75 lb) of flesh at one time. In captivity, adult tigers are fed 3 to 6 kg (6.6 to 13.2 lb) of meat a day.[[63]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-Walker-63) Due to their low hunting success rate, ability to go prolonged periods without food, and naturally low population densities, tigers typically have little to no deleterious effect on the populations of the species on which they prey. Several other large carnivores, such as [gray wolves](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gray_wolves), [spotted hyenas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spotted_hyena), and [lions](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lion), live in groups and need to capture relatively greater quantities of prey to feed and maintain stability in their respective packs, clans, or prides.[[63]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-Walker-63)

When hunting large prey, tigers prefer to bite the throat and use their extremely powerful forelimbs to hold onto the prey, often simultaneously wrestling it to the ground. The tiger remains latched onto the neck until its prey dies of[strangulation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Strangling).[[15]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-schaller1967-15) By this method, gaurs and water buffalos weighing over a ton have been killed by tigers weighing about a sixth as much.[[83]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-83) Although they can kill healthy adults of large bovids weighing at least 1,000 kg (2,200 lb), tigers often select the calves or infirm of very large species.[[17]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-autogenerated1-17) Large prey can be quite dangerous to tackle, with the great bulk and massive horns of large bovids, the strong legs and antlers of mature deer, and the long, powerful tusks of boars all being potentially fatal to the tiger. No other extant land predator routinely takes on prey this large on their own.[[84]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-84)[[85]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-Sunquist-85) Whilst hunting sambars, which comprise up to 60% of their prey in India, tigers have reportedly called out a passable impersonation of the male sambar's rutting call to attract them.[[72]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-Old-72)[[79]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-Perry-79) With small prey, such as monkeys and hares, the tiger bites the [nape](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nape), often breaking the [spinal cord](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spinal_cord), piercing the [windpipe](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vertebrate_trachea), or severing the [jugular vein](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jugular_vein) or [common carotid artery](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Common_carotid_artery).[[86]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-86) Though rarely observed, some tigers have been recorded to kill prey by swiping with their paws, which are powerful enough to smash the skulls of domestic cattle,[[79]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger" \l "cite_note-Perry-79) and break the backs of sloth bears.[[87]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-DHOLE-87) After killing their prey, tigers sometimes drag it to conceal it in vegetative cover, usually pulling it by grasping with their mouths at the site of the killing bite (on the throat in large prey, on the nape in smaller prey). This, too, can require great physical strength. In one case, after it had killed an adult gaur, a tiger was observed to drag the massive carcass over a distance of 12 m (39 ft). When 13 men simultaneously tried to drag the same carcass later, they were unable to move it.[[63]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-Walker-63)

During the 1980s, a tiger named "Genghis" in [Ranthambhore National Park](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ranthambhore_National_Park" \o "Ranthambhore National Park) was observed frequently hunting prey through deep lake water,[[88]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger" \l "cite_note-publishers1992-88) a pattern of behaviour that had not been previously witnessed in over 200 years of observations. Moreover, he appeared to be extraordinarily successful for a tiger, with as many as 20% of hunts ending in a kill.

**Reproduction**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/thumb/4/4a/Commons-logo.svg/30px-Commons-logo.svg.png | Wikimedia Commons has media related to [***Mating tigers***](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Mating_tigers). |

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Tigeress_with_cubs_in_Kanha_Tiger_reserve.jpg)

[http://bits.wikimedia.org/static-1.23wmf12/skins/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Tigeress_with_cubs_in_Kanha_Tiger_reserve.jpg)

A tigress with her cubs in the [Kanha Tiger Reserve](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kanha_Tiger_Reserve" \o "Kanha Tiger Reserve), India

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:India_Tiger_cubs.jpg)

[http://bits.wikimedia.org/static-1.23wmf12/skins/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:India_Tiger_cubs.jpg)

A [Bengal tigress](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bengal_tiger) with her cubs at the[Bandhavgarh National Park](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bandhavgarh_National_Park), India

Mating can occur all year round, but is generally more common between November and April.[[63]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-Walker-63) A female is only receptive for three to six days and [mating](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mating) is frequent during that time period. A pair will copulate frequently and noisily, like [other cats](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Felidae). The gestation period can range from 93 to 112 days, although the average is 104–106 days.[[63]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-Walker-63) The litter size usually consists of one to six cubs, though two or three are usually the norm. Cubs can weigh from 680 to 1,400 g (1.50 to 3.09 lb) each at birth and are born blind and helpless.[[63]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-Walker-63) The females rear them alone, with the birth site and maternal den being sheletered locations such as thickets, caves and rocky crevices. The father of the cubs generally takes no part in rearing them. Unrelated wandering male tigers may even kill cubs to make the female receptive, since the tigress may give birth to another litter within five months if the cubs of the previous litter are lost.[[63]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-Walker-63) The mortality rate of tiger cubs is fairly high – about half do not survive more than two years.[[63]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-Walker-63) Few other predators attack tiger cubs due to the diligence and ferocity of the mother tiger. Beyond humans and other tigers, common causes of cub mortality are starvation, freezing, and accidents.[[85]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-Sunquist-85)

Generally, a [dominant](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dominance_(ethology)) cub emerges in each litter, which tends to be male, but may be of either sex.[[88]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-publishers1992-88) This cub generally dominates its siblings during play and tends to be more active, leaving its mother earlier than usual. The cubs open their eyes at six to 14 days old. At eight weeks, the cubs may make short ventures out of the den with their mother, although they do not travel with her as she roams her territory until they are older. The cubs are nursed in total for a period of three to six months. Around the time they are weaned, they start regularly engaging in territorial walks with their mother. During this stage, the tigress' young are also taught how to hunt. The cubs are often capable (and nearly adult size) hunters by the time they are 11 months old.[[63]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-Walker-63) The cubs become independent around 18 months of age, but it is not until they are around 2–2½ years old that they fully separate from their mother. Females reach sexual maturity at three to four years, whereas males reach sexual maturity at 4–5 years.[[63]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-Walker-63)

Over the course of her life, a female tiger will typically give birth to an approximately equal number of male and female cubs. Tigers breed well in captivity, and the captive population in the United States may rival the wild population of the world.[[89]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-zoogoer-89)The known limit for lifespan in captivity is 26 years, and while captive animals usually outlive wild ones, although a wild adult tiger, with no natural predators as long as it does not run afoul of humans, can likely live to a comparable age.[[63]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-Walker-63)

**Interspecific predatory relationships**

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Tigerdholes.jpg)

[http://bits.wikimedia.org/static-1.23wmf12/skins/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Tigerdholes.jpg)

*Tiger hunted by wild dogs* ([dholes](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dhole)) as illustrated in *Samuel Howett & Edward Orme, Hand Coloured, Aquatint Engravings*, published London 1807

Tigers usually prefer to eat prey they have caught themselves, but are not above eating carrion in times of scarcity and may even [pirate](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kleptoparasitism) prey from other large carnivores. Although predators typically avoid one another, if a prey item is under dispute or a serious competitor is encountered, displays of aggression are a regular occurrence. If these are not sufficient, the conflicts may turn violent and tigers may kill such formidable competitors as [leopards](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leopard), [striped hyenas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Striped_hyena), [pythons](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pythonidae) and even[crocodiles](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crocodile) on occasion.[[90]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-90)[[91]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-91)[[92]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-92)[[93]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-93) In some cases, rather than being strictly competitive, the attacks by tigers on other large carnivores seem to be predatory in nature. Situations where smaller predators, such as [badgers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Badger), [lynxes](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lynx), and [foxes](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fox) are attacked, are almost certainly predatory.[[72]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-Old-72) Interestingly, this species' closest living relative, the lion, deals with competing predators very differently, undoubtedly because it lives in large prides. Lions do not treat other predators as prey, as do tigers, but invest a good deal of time proactively tracking down other predators and killing them, then leaving their bodies uneaten. Lions kill competitors from [honey badgers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Honey_badger) to [spotted hyenas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spotted_hyena) and, in protected areas of Africa, are the leading cause of mortality for [African wild dogs](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/African_wild_dog) and [cheetahs](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cheetah). The tiger does not spend as much time tracking down other predators.[[16]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-Brakefield-16)[[94]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-94)

The considerably smaller leopard dodges competition from tigers by hunting at different times of the day and hunting different prey.[[95]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-Haemig-95) In India’s [Nagarhole National Park](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nagarhole_National_Park" \o "Nagarhole National Park), most prey selected by leopards were from 30 to 175 kg (66 to 386 lb) against a preference for prey weighing over 176 kg (388 lb) in the tigers. The average prey weight in the two respective big cats in India was 37.6 kg (83 lb) against 91.5 kg (202 lb). With relatively abundant prey, tigers and leopards were seen to successfully coexist without competitive exclusion or interspecies [dominance](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dominance_(ethology)) hierarchies that may be more common to the savanna (where the leopard may coexist with the lion).[[96]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-96) Tigers have been known to suppress wolf populations in areas where the two species coexist, mainly via [competitive exclusion](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Competitive_exclusion_principle).[[97]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-IUCN-Reuters-97)[[98]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-savethetiger-98) There are four proven records of Siberian tigers killing wolves and not eating them.[[99]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-99) [Dhole](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dhole) packs have been observed to challenge the big cats in disputes over food and have even killed tigers in rare cases. However, tigers have also been observed killing multiple dholes at once, and dholes will typically only attack a tiger directly if the pack is quite large.[[87]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-DHOLE-87) Lone [golden jackals](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Golden_jackal) expelled from their pack have been known to form[commensal relationships](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Commensalism) with tigers. These solitary jackals, known as *kol-bahl*, will attach themselves to a particular tiger, trailing it at a safe distance to feed on the big cat's kills. A *kol-bahl* will even alert a tiger to a kill with a loud *pheal*. Tigers have been known to tolerate these jackals: one report describes how a jackal confidently walked in and out between three tigers walking together a few feet away from each other.[[100]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-perry-100) When in the presence of a tiger, a golden jackal pack will emit a howl very different from its normal vocalization that is thought to function as a warning to other jackals.[[101]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-101)

Occasionally, a large crocodile may attempt to prey upon a tiger. When seized by a crocodile, a tiger will strike at the reptile's eyes with its paws.[[79]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-Perry-79) Eighteenth-century physician [Oliver Goldsmith](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oliver_Goldsmith) described the frequent conflicts between [mugger crocodiles](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mugger_crocodile) and tigers that occurred during that time. Thirsty tigers would frequently descend to the rivers to drink and on occasion were seized and killed by the muggers, though more often the tiger escaped and the reptile was disabled.[[102]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-102) Mature mugger crocodiles may target much the same prey as the tiger, including sambar and water buffalo. Occasionally, a mugger and a tiger will try to claim a carcass killed by either one, resulting in a "tug of war" at the water's edge until one of them comes away with it.[[103]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-103) A potentially more formidable foe is the larger, more aggressive [saltwater crocodile](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saltwater_crocodile), which the tiger rarely encounters outside of estuarian regions of eastern India.

Other than the rare large crocodile or large dhole pack, the only serious competitors to tigers are bears. Some bears, especially the [brown bear](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brown_bear) of the north, will try to steal tigers' kills, although the tiger will sometimes defend its kill. However, in some cases, bears (especially cubs) are preyed upon by tigers. Although it hunts all its prey by ambush, tigers are especially cautious when handling bears, as many bears are capable of killing a tiger while defending themselves. Predation seems especially prevalent in India, where tigers may attack [sloth bears](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sloth_bear). The sloth bears can be quite aggressive and will sometimes displace young tigers away from their kills or successfully defend themselves with counterattacks. Despite this, sloth bears are killed with some regularity and react fearfully to the presence of tigers or even stimuli related to them (i.e. the call of the [sambar deer](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sambar_deer" \o "Sambar deer) due to the tiger's impersonation of it).[[5]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-der-tiger-5)[[79]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-Perry-79) Bears, both [Asiatic black bears](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asiatic_black_bear) and [brown bears](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brown_bear), make up 5–8% of the tiger's diet in the [Russian Far East](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russian_Far_East).[[5]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-der-tiger-5) Some accounts claim that black bears more successfully avoid predation by tigers because they are skilled tree-climbers, although dietary research has contrarily indicated the smaller, less aggressive black bear (comprising 4–6.5% of the tiger's local diet) is the more common prey species than the brown bear (at 1–1.5% of the diet).[[5]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-der-tiger-5)[[104]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-Kerley-104) Siberian tigers and brown bears usually avoid confrontation, but can sometimes be competitors, with dominance seemingly determined by the age, sex, and size of the rivals rather than species. Older and larger males of both species tend to dominate in this interspecies conflict.[[5]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-der-tiger-5) Some brown bears, upon emerging from hibernation, follow tigers habitually to steal their kills.[[104]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-Kerley-104) Tigers will kill brown bear cubs and even adults on some occasions, especially if they find the bears in their dens during the hibernation cycle or in periods of low prey density in the fall.[[74]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-j1-74) There are also records of brown bears killing tigers up to the size of adult males, either in self-defense or in disputes over kills.[[5]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-der-tiger-5)[[24]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-USSR-24) Tigers may additionally prey upon the other bear species it encounters (or had encountered historically), which includes [giant pandas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Giant_panda) and [sun bears](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sun_bear), but information is very limited on such interactions.[[105]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-105)

Conservation efforts

*For more details on this topic, see*[*Tiger hunting*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger_hunting)*.*

The tiger is an [endangered species](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Endangered_species).[[106]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-106) [Poaching](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poaching) for fur and body parts and destruction of [habitat](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Habitat) have simultaneously greatly reduced tiger populations in the wild. At the start of the 20th century, it is estimated there were over 100,000 tigers in the wild but the population has dwindled outside of captivity to between 1,500 and 3,500.[[107]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-107) Demand for tiger parts for the purposes of [Traditional Chinese Medicine](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Traditional_Chinese_Medicine) has also been cited as a major threat to tiger populations.[[108]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-108)[[109]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-109) Some estimates suggest that there are less than 2,500 mature breeding individuals, with no subpopulation containing more than 250 mature breeding individuals.[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-IUCN-1)

**India**

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Tiger_in_South_India.jpg)

[http://bits.wikimedia.org/static-1.23wmf12/skins/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Tiger_in_South_India.jpg)

A Bengal tiger in a national park in[southern India](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Southern_India). Indian officials successfully reintroduced two Bengal tigers in the[Sariska Tiger Reserve](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sariska_Tiger_Reserve) in July 2008.[[110]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-110)

*Main article:*[*Project Tiger*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Project_Tiger)

India is home to the world's largest population of tigers in the wild.[[111]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-111) According to the [World Wildlife Fund](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_Wildlife_Fund), of the 3,500 tigers around the world, 1,400 are found in India. Only 11% of original Indian tiger habitat remains, and it is becoming significantly fragmented and often degraded.[[112]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-112)[[113]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-113)

A major concerted conservation effort, known as *Project Tiger*, has been underway since 1973, initially spearheaded by [Indira Gandhi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indira_Gandhi). The fundamental accomplishment has been the establishment of over 25 well-monitored tiger reserves in reclaimed land where human development is categorically forbidden. The program has been credited with tripling the number of wild Bengal tigers from roughly 1,200 in 1973 to over 3,500 in the 1990s. However, a tiger census carried out in 2007, whose report was published on February 12, 2008, stated that the wild tiger population in India declined by 60% to approximately 1,411.[[114]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-114) It is noted in the report that the decrease of tiger population can be attributed directly to poaching.[[115]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-Over_half_of_tigers_lost_in_5_years:_census-115)

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:An_Indian_Tiger.jpg)

[http://bits.wikimedia.org/static-1.23wmf12/skins/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:An_Indian_Tiger.jpg)

An Indian tiger at [Guwahati Zoo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guwahati_Zoo) in Assam, India.

Following the release of the report, the Indian government pledged $153 million to further fund the [Project Tiger](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Project_Tiger) initiative, set up a Tiger Protection Force to combat poachers, and fund the relocation of up to 200,000 villagers to minimise human-tiger interaction.[[116]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-116) Additionally, eight new [tiger reserves in India](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger_reserves_in_India) were set up.[[117]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-117) Indian officials successfully started a project to reintroduce the tigers into the [Sariska Tiger Reserve](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sariska_Tiger_Reserve" \o "Sariska Tiger Reserve).[[118]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-118) The [Ranthambore National Park](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ranthambore_National_Park" \o "Ranthambore National Park) is often cited as a major success by Indian officials against poaching.[[119]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-119)

*Tigers Forever* is a collaboration between the [Wildlife Conservation Society](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wildlife_Conservation_Society) and [Panthera Corporation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Panthera_Corporation" \o "Panthera Corporation) to serve as both a science-based action plan and a business model to ensure that tigers live in the wild forever. Initial field sites of *Tigers Forever*include the world's largest tiger reserve, the 21,756 km2 (8,400 sq mi) [Hukaung Valley](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hukaung_Valley" \o "Hukaung Valley) in Myanmar, the [Western Ghats](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Western_Ghats) in India, Thailand's Huai Khai Khaeng-Thung Yai protected areas, and other sites in Laos PDR, Cambodia, the Russian Far East and China covering approximately 260,000 km2 (100,000 sq mi) of critical tiger habitat.[[120]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-120)

**Russia**

The Siberian tiger was on the brink of extinction with only about 40 animals in the wild in the 1940s. Under the [Soviet Union](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soviet_Union), anti-poaching controls were strict and a network of protected zones ([zapovedniks](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zapovednik" \o "Zapovednik)) were instituted, leading to a rise in the population to several hundred. Poaching again became a problem in the 1990s, when the [economy of Russia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Economy_of_Russia) collapsed, local hunters had access to a formerly sealed off lucrative Chinese market, and logging in the region increased. While an improvement in the local economy has led to greater resources being invested in conservation efforts, an increase of economic activity has led to an increased rate of development and deforestation. The major obstacle in preserving the species is the enormous territory individual tigers require (up to 450 km2 needed by a single female and more for a single male).[[121]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-121) Current conservation efforts are led by local governments and [NGO](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/NGO)'s in consort with international organisations, such as the[World Wide Fund](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_Wide_Fund) and the [Wildlife Conservation Society](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wildlife_Conservation_Society).[[122]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-WWF-122) The competitive exclusion of wolves by tigers has been used by Russian conservationists to convince hunters in the Far East to tolerate the big cats, as they limit ungulate populations less than wolves, and are effective in controlling the latter's numbers.[[123]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-123) Currently, there are about 400–550 animals in the wild.

**China**

During the early 1970s, such as in the [United Nations Conference on the Human Environment](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations_Conference_on_the_Human_Environment), China rejected the Western-led environmentalist movement as an impeachment on the full use of its own resources. However, this stance softened during the 1980s, as China emerged from diplomatic isolation and desired [normal trade relations](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Normal_trade_relations) with Western countries. China became a party to the [CITES](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/CITES) treaty in 1981, bolstering efforts at tiger conservation by transnational groups like [Project Tiger](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Project_Tiger), which were supported by the [United Nations Development Programme](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations_Development_Programme) and the [World Bank](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_Bank). In 1988, China passed the Law on the Protection of Wildlife, listing the tiger as a Category I protected species. In 1993, China banned the trade on tiger parts, which led to a drop in the number of tiger bones harvested for use in [traditional Chinese medicine](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Traditional_Chinese_medicine).[[124]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-Yeh-124)

However, as the tiger bone trade was undermined by effective Chinese legislation in the 1990s, the [Tibetan people](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tibetan_people)'s trade in tiger pelts emerged as a relatively more important threat to tigers. As wealth in the Tibetan areas increased, singers and participants in annual Tibetan [horse races](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Horse_race)began to wear *[chuba](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chuba" \o "Chuba)* (coats made out of Tiger skins) with longer trims. Tiger pelt clothing became a standard of beauty, and even mandatory at weddings, with Tibetan families competing to buy larger and larger pelts to demonstrate their [social status](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_status).[[124]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-Yeh-124) In 2003, Chinese customs officials in Tibet intercepted 31 tigers, 581 leopards, and 778 otters, which if sold in the Tibetan capital of [Lhasa](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lhasa) would have netted $10,000, $850, and $250 respectively. By 2004, international conservation organizations such as [World Wide Fund for Nature](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_Wide_Fund_for_Nature), [Fauna and Flora International](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fauna_and_Flora_International), and[Conservation International](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conservation_International) were targeting Tibetans in China in successful environmental propaganda campaigns against the tiger skin trade. In the summer of 2005, the [Environmental Investigation Agency](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Environmental_Investigation_Agency) sent undercover teams to [Litang](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Litang,_Litang_County" \o "Litang, Litang County) and [Nagchu](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nagchu_Town" \o "Nagchu Town) in order to film documentation of Tibetan violations of Chinese environmental law for submission to the Chinese CITES office. In April 2005, [Care for the Wild International](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Care_for_the_Wild_International&action=edit&redlink=1) and [Wildlife Trust of India](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wildlife_Trust_of_India) confronted the [14th Dalai Lama](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/14th_Dalai_Lama) about the Tibetan trade, and his response was recorded as "awkward" and "ambushed", with suspicion against the NGOs for trying to "dramatize" the situation as "mak[ing] it seem as if Tibetans were the culprit".[[124]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-Yeh-124)

Although popular accounts since the 1980s have portrayed the Tibetans as "having always lived in harmony with the earth", according to the Professor of Geography Emily Yeh, "None of the 14th Dalai Lama's seven books published before 1985, nor interviews that he gave from his arrival in India in 1959 through the mid-1980s, make reference to environmental issues or the relationship between Tibetan Buddhism and ecology". However, the NGO campaign in India threatened the goodwill of the Indian government towards the Dalai Lama's [Central Tibetan Administration](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Central_Tibetan_Administration); the Indian environmentalist [Maneka Gandhi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maneka_Gandhi" \o "Maneka Gandhi) even proposed on television to "throw all Tibetans out of India [as] each one of them is a poacher".[[124]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-Yeh-124) In May, the Dalai Lama was confronted in the United States by activists from the [National Geographic Society](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Geographic_Society) with evidence that Tibetans were the primary cause of the illegal tiger trade in China; he reacted as describing himself as "embarrassed". At the 2006 [Kalachakra](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kalachakra) festival in India, he gave a speech to an audience of 10,000, including 8000 Tibetans from China, in which he condemned "following the bad example of the ostentatious garments made of tiger and leopard pelts worn by some protector deities such as Dgra lha" as "shameful". The speech made no reference to ethical or religious issues about killing animals, but instead focused on the reputation of Tibetan exiles and their threatened status as citizens of India.[[124]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-Yeh-124) The Dalai Lama later took credit in a press release for incidents of Tibetans burning their *chuba*s, while decrying the arrest of those who [complied with environmental regulations](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Malicious_compliance) as a political statement in support of him.[[125]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-125)

**Population estimate**

The global wild tiger population is estimated at anywhere between 3,062 and 3,948 individuals. The [World Wide Fund for Nature](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_Wide_Fund_for_Nature) estimates the tiger population at 3,200.[[126]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-126) The exact number of wild tigers is unknown, as many estimates are outdated or come from educated guesses. Few estimates are considered reliable, coming from comprehensive scientific censuses. The table shows estimates per country according to [IUCN](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/IUCN) and range country governments.[[127]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-127)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Country** | **Estimate** |
| [Bangladesh](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bangladesh) [Bangladesh](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bangladesh) | 440 |
| [Bhutan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bhutan) [Bhutan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bhutan) | 75 |
| [Cambodia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cambodia) [Cambodia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cambodia) | 20 |
| [China](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/China) [China](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/China) | 45 |
| [India](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India) [India](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India) | 1,706 |
| [Indonesia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indonesia) [Indonesia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indonesia) | 325 |
| [Laos](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Laos) [Laos](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Laos) | 17 |
| [Malaysia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Malaysia) [Malaysia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Malaysia) | 500 |
| [Myanmar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Myanmar) [Myanmar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Myanmar) | 85 |
| [Nepal](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nepal) [Nepal](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nepal) | 155 |
| [North Korea](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/North_Korea) [North Korea](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/North_Korea) | n/a |
| [Russia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russia) [Russia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russia) | 360 |
| [Thailand](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thailand) [Thailand](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thailand) | 200 |
| [Vietnam](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vietnam) [Vietnam](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vietnam) | 20 |
| **Total** | 3,948 |

Rewilding

**Origin**

Although the term "rewilding" was used in [conservation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conservation_(ethic)) in other contexts since at least 1990,[[128]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-128) it was first applied to the restoration of a single species of carnivores by conservationist and ex-carnivore manager of [Pilanesberg National Park](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pilanesberg_National_Park" \o "Pilanesberg National Park), Gus Van Dyk in 2003.[[*citation needed*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Citation_needed)]

In 1978, the Indian conservationist [Billy Arjan Singh](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Billy_Arjan_Singh) attempted to [rewild](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rewilding_(conservation_biology)" \o "Rewilding (conservation biology)) a tiger in [Dudhwa National Park](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dudhwa_National_Park" \o "Dudhwa National Park); this was the tigress *Tara* who had been born and reared in a zoo.[[129]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-129) Soon after the release, a large number of people were killed and eaten by a tigress who was subsequently shot. Government officials claim that this tigress was Tara, an assertion hotly contested by Singh and some other conservationists. Later on, this rewilding gained further disrepute when it was discovered that the local [gene pool](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gene_pool) had been sullied by Tara's introduction because she was partly Siberian tiger, a fact not known at the time of her release, ostensibly due to poor record-keeping at [Twycross Zoo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Twycross_Zoo" \o "Twycross Zoo) where she had been raised.[[130]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-130)[[131]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-131)[[132]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-132)[[133]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-133)[[134]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-134)[[135]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-135)

**Save China's Tigers**

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Stud_327_with_Blesbuck.jpg)

[http://bits.wikimedia.org/static-1.23wmf12/skins/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Stud_327_with_Blesbuck.jpg)

A South China tiger of the [Save China's Tigers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Save_China%27s_Tigers) project with his [blesbuck](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blesbuck" \o "Blesbuck) kill

*Main article:*[*Save China's Tigers*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Save_China%27s_Tigers)

The organisation Save China's Tigers, working with the Wildlife Research Centre of the State Forestry Administration of China and the Chinese Tigers South Africa Trust, secured an agreement on the reintroduction of Chinese tigers into the wild. The agreement, which was signed in [Beijing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beijing) on 26 November 2002, calls for the establishment of a Chinese tiger [conservation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conservation_biology) model through the creation of a pilot reserve in China where indigenous wildlife, including the South China Tiger, will be reintroduced. Save China's Tigers aims to rewild the critically endangered [South China Tiger](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_China_Tiger) by bringing a few captive-bred individuals to South Africa for rehabilitation training for them to regain their hunting instincts. At the same time, a pilot reserve in China is being set up and the tigers will be relocated and release back in China when the reserve in China is ready.[[136]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-english.savechinastigers.org-136) The offspring of the trained tigers will be released into the pilot reserves in China, while the original animals will stay in [South Africa](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_Africa) to continue breeding.[[137]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-FAQs.7CSave_China.27s_Tigers-137)

South Africa was chosen as a springboard thanks to its leadership in wildlife management, readily available land, and abundant [game](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prey). SCT has also been working with the Chinese government to identify suitable sites for the establishment of pilot reserves in China. The [South China tigers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_China_tiger) of the project have since been successfully rewilded and are fully capable of hunting and surviving on their own.[[136]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-english.savechinastigers.org-136) This project is also very successful in the breeding of these rewilded South China tigers and five cubs have been born in the project, these cubs of the second generation would be able to learn their survival skills directly from their successfully rewilded mothers.[[138]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-138)

**Success story of rewilding**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | This is taken from Wikipedia . |

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Tigerwoods_chasing_blesbucks.jpg)

[http://bits.wikimedia.org/static-1.23wmf12/skins/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Tigerwoods_chasing_blesbucks.jpg)

A rewilded South China tiger of the [Save China's Tigers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Save_China%27s_Tigers) rewilding project hunting[blesbuck](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blesbuck)

Save China's Tigers' South China tiger rewilding and reintroduction project has been deemed a success.[*[citation needed](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Citation_needed" \o "Wikipedia:Citation needed)*] Recently, renowned [scientists](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scientist) have confirmed the role of Rewilding captive populations to save the South China tiger. A rewilding workshop conducted in the October 2010, in Laohu Valley reserve, [South Africa](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_Africa) to access the progress of the rewilding and reintroduction program of Save China's Tigers. The experts present includes Dr. Peter Crawshaw of Centro Nacional de Pesquisa e Conservacão de Mamiferos Carnivoros, Cenap/ICMBIO, Dr. Gary Koehler, Dr. Laurie Marker of Cheetah Conservation Fund, Dr. Jim Sanderson of Small Wild Cat Conservation Foundation, Dr. Nobuyuki Yamaguchi of Department of Biological and Environmental Sciences of Qatar University, and Dr. David Smith of [University of Minnesota](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/University_of_Minnesota), Chinese government scientists as well as representatives of Save China's Tigers.

The tigers involved were born in captive conditions in concrete cages and their parents are all captive animals who are unable to survive in the wild. They were sent to South Africa as part of the Save China's Tigers project to rewilding and ensure that they regain the necessary skills needed for a predator to survive in the wild.

Results of the workshop confirmed the important role of the South China Tiger Rewilding Project in tiger conservation. "Having seen the tigers hunting in an open environment at Laohu Valley Reserve, I believe that these rewilded tigers have the skill to hunt in any environment." Dr. David Smith remarked. Furthermore, Save China's Tigers recovered natural habitat both in China and in South Africa during their attempt to reintroduce South China tigers back into the wild.[[139]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-139)

The goal is of preparing tigers born in captivity for introduction to wild habitat in China where tigers once lived seems to be very possible in the near future based on the success of the rewilding and reintroduction program.[[140]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-140)

Relation with humans

**Tiger as prey**

*Main article:*[*Tiger hunting*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger_hunting)

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:ElephantbackTigerHunt.jpg)

[http://bits.wikimedia.org/static-1.23wmf12/skins/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:ElephantbackTigerHunt.jpg)

Tiger hunting on [elephant](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elephant)-back, India, 1808.

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Maneater_calcutta1903_stereoscopic.jpg)

[http://bits.wikimedia.org/static-1.23wmf12/skins/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Maneater_calcutta1903_stereoscopic.jpg)

Stereographic photograph (1903) of a captured man-eating tiger in the [Calcutta](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Calcutta) zoo; the tiger had claimed 200 human victims.

The tiger has been one of the [Big Five game](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Big_Five_game) animals of [Asia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asia). Tiger hunting took place on a large scale in the early nineteenth and twentieth centuries, being a recognised and admired sport by the [British](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Kingdom) in [colonial India](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Presidencies_and_provinces_of_British_India) as well as the [maharajas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maharaja" \o "Maharaja)and aristocratic class of the erstwhile princely states of pre-independence India. A single maharaja or English hunter could claim to kill over a hundred tigers in their hunting career.[[63]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-Walker-63) Tiger hunting was done by some hunters on foot; others sat up on *[machans](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hunting_blind" \o "Hunting blind)* with a goat or buffalo tied out as bait; yet others on elephant-back.[[141]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-Tiger-hunting-141) In some cases, villagers beating drums were organised to drive the animals into the killing zone. Elaborate instructions were available for the skinning of tigers and there were taxidermists who specialised in the preparation of tiger skins.

**Man-eating tigers**

*Main article:*[*Tiger attack*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger_attack)

Normally wild tigers, especially if they have no prior contact with humans, will actively avoid interactions with humans. However, according to some sources, tigers are thought to be responsible for more human deaths through direct attack than any other wild mammal.[[63]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-Walker-63) Attacks are occasionally provoked, as tigers will lash out after being injured while they themselves are hunted. Occasionally, attacks are provoked accidentally, as when a human surprises a tiger or inadvertently comes between a mother and her young.[[142]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-142) Occasionally human behavior will inadvertently provoke tiger attacks by triggering their natural instincts. In one case, a postman who delivered mail on foot in a rural region of India where interactions with tigers are commonplace, was not bothered by them for several years despite many interactions. Soon after the postman started to use a bicycle, the man was attacked by a tiger, theoretically having been instinctively provoked by the chase.[[143]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-143) Although humans are not regular prey for tigers, occasionally tigers will come to view people as prey. Such attacks tend to be particularly prevalent in areas where population growth, logging, and farming have put pressure on tiger habitats and reduced wild prey for them. Most man-eating tigers are old and missing teeth, acquiring a taste for humans because of their inability to capture their preferred prey.[[144]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-144) This was the case in the [Champawat Tiger](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Champawat_Tiger" \o "Champawat Tiger), a tigress found in [Nepal](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nepal) and then [India](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India), that was found to have had two broken canines. She was responsible for an estimated 430 human deaths, the most attacks known to be perpetrated by a single wild animal per the [Guinness Book of Records](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guinness_Book_of_Records), by the time she was shot in 1907 by [Jim Corbett](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jim_Corbett).[[20]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-Wood-20)

Unlike man-eating leopards, even established man-eating tigers will seldom enter human settlements, usually remaining at village outskirts.[[145]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-145) Nevertheless, attacks in human villages do occur.[[146]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-146) Tigers treat humans as they do other potential prey, engaging in a length stalking phase before pouncing from close range. Despite being mostly a nocturnal predator, tigers attack humans in daytime. According to [Jim Corbett](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jim_Corbett), arguably the greatest expert on man-eating tigers, he had never heard of a tiger attacking a human at night (unlike man-eating leopards, who attack humans only at night, and are afraid of humans in daytime).[[147]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-147) Attacks are also common when people are working outdoors and are physically engaged in distracting tasks, particularly when the work requires them to bend down (collecting firewood, working on field cultivation, or answering the call of nature). Thanks to their natural predatory instincts, such as their use of stealth and surprise and their tendency to attack partially isolated people, early writings tend to profile man-eating tigers and other similarly disposed big cats as "cowardly".[[148]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-KA-148) Due to the size and power of the tiger, few humans survive when a predatory attack is carried out.

Reportedly, in the [Singapore](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Singapore) area (where tigers are now [extirpated](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Local_extinction)) in the 1840s, an estimated 1,000 fatalities occurred from tiger attacks. Man-eaters have been a particular problem in recent decades in India and Bangladesh, especially in [Kumaon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kumaon_division" \o "Kumaon division), [Garhwal](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Garhwal_division" \o "Garhwal division) and the [Sundarbans](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sundarbans" \o "Sundarbans) mangrove swamps of [Bengal](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bengal), where some healthy tigers have been known to hunt humans. Because of rapid habitat loss attributed to [climate change](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Climate_change), tiger attacks have increased in the Sundarbans.[[149]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-149) The Sundarbans area reportedly had 129 human deaths from tigers from 1969 to 1971. In the 10 years prior to that period, according to Chakrabarti (1984), humans were preyed upon at an estimated rate of 100 per year in the Sudarban region, with a possible high of around 430 in some years of the 1960s.[[63]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-Walker-63) Unusually, in some years in the Sundarbans, more humans are killed by tigers than vice versa.[[63]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-Walker-63) In the year of 1972, India's production of [honey](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Honey) and beeswax dropped by 50% when at least 29 people who gathered these materials were devoured.[[63]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-Walker-63)

Almost all tigers that are identified as man-eaters are quickly captured, shot, or poisoned. Current Indian wildlife protection laws state that animals must be saved unless the tiger is a repeat offender and no hope exists for rehabilitation. However, man-eating attacks may still lead to revenge killing of several tigers, including those not involved in the attack. On occasion, man-eating tigers are relocated to large nature preserves, with mixed success. In 1986 in the Sundarbans, since tiger almost always attack from the rear, the idea was implemented that masks with human faces on them be worn to the back of the head, on the theory that tigers will usually not carry through attacks if seen by their prey. This temporarily decreased the number of attack, though the tigers appeared to become habituated to the masks and attacks again increased in the following years.[[150]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-150)

Tigers kept in captivity retain wild instinct and, especially those in privately owned collections where improper handling is more common, may attack humans. An estimated 1.75 fatal attacks occur per year in captivity, with at least 27 people killed or seriously injured in the [United States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States) by tigers from 1998 to 2001.[[151]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-Rescue-151) In large, well-kept public zoos, tiger attacks on humans are very rare and tigers who associate with their zookeepers from birth may be docile and even affectionate towards their handlers once fully grown. However, most zoos are rightfully cautious and, when the tigers must be handled closely (such as medical procedures), it is a necessity to assure that tigers are fully unconscious from anesthesia.[[151]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-Rescue-151) [Tatiana](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/San_Francisco_Zoo_tiger_attacks), a female tiger, escaped from her enclosure in the San Francisco Zoo, killing one person and seriously injuring two more before being shot and killed by the police. The enclosure had walls that were lower than they were legally required to be, allowing the tiger to climb the wall and escape.

**Commercial hunting and traditional medicine**

*See also:*[*Tiger penis*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger_penis)

[http://bits.wikimedia.org/static-1.23wmf12/skins/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:COLLECTIE_TROPENMUSEUM_Een_groep_mannen_en_kinderen_poseert_bij_een_pas_geschoten_tijger_te_Malingping_in_Bantam_West-Java_TMnr_10006636.jpg)

A group of men poses with a killed Javan tiger, 1941

Historically, tigers have been hunted at a large scale so their famous striped skins could be collected. The trade in tiger skins peaked in 1960s, just before international conservation efforts took effect. By 1977, a tiger skin in an [English](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/England) market was considered to be worth $4,250 US dollars.[[63]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-Walker-63)

Many people in China and other parts of Asia have a belief that various tiger parts have medicinal properties, including as pain killers and [aphrodisiacs](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aphrodisiac).[[152]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-152) There is no scientific evidence to support these beliefs. The use of tiger parts in pharmaceutical drugs in China is already banned, and the government has made some offenses in connection with tiger poaching punishable by death. Furthermore, all trade in tiger parts is illegal under the [Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/CITES) and a domestic trade ban has been in place in China since 1993.

However, the trading of tiger parts in [Asia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asia) has become a major black market industry and governmental and conservation attempts to stop it have been ineffective to date.[[63]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-Walker-63) Almost all black marketers engaged in the trade are based in [China](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/China) and have either been shipped and sold within in their own country or into [Taiwan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taiwan), [South Korea](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_Korea) or [Japan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Japan).[[63]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-Walker-63) The Chinese subspecies was almost completely decimated by killing for commerce due to both the parts and skin trades in the 1950s through the 1970s.[[63]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-Walker-63) Contributing to the illegal trade, there are a number of [tiger farms](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Tiger_farm&action=edit&redlink=1) in the country specialising in breeding the cats for profit. It is estimated that between 5,000 and 10,000 captive-bred, semi-tame animals live in these farms today.[[153]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-153)[[154]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-154)[[155]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-155) However, many tigers for traditional medicine black market are wild ones shot or snared by [poachers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poacher) and may be caught anywhere in the tiger's remaining range (from Siberia to India to the [Malay Peninsula](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Malay_Peninsula) to [Sumatra](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sumatra)). In the Asian black market, a tiger penis can be worth the equivalent of around $300 [U.S. dollars](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/U.S._dollar). In the years of 1990 through 1992, 27 million products with tiger deriatives were found.[[63]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-Walker-63)

**In captivity**



[http://bits.wikimedia.org/static-1.23wmf12/skins/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Congenital-deformity-of-the-paw-in-a-captive-tiger-case-report-1746-6148-8-98-S2.ogv)

A captive tiger after undergoing surgery at one of its paws.

In recent years, captive breeding of tigers in China has accelerated to the point where the captive population of several tiger subspecies exceeds 4,000 animals, with a greater number of legally kept tigers in that country alone than all populations of tigers in the wild combined. Three thousand specimens are reportedly held by 10–20 "significant" facilities, with the remainder scattered among some 200 facilities. This makes China home to the second largest captive tiger population in the world, after the [USA](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USA), which in 2005 had an estimated 4,692 captive tigers.[[156]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-Nowell2007-156) In a census conducted by the US based [Feline Conservation Federation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Feline_Conservation_Federation) in 2011, 2,884 tigers were documented as residing in 468 American facilities.[[157]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-157)

Part of the reason for America's large tiger population relates to legislation. Only nineteen states have banned private ownership of tigers, fifteen require only a license, and sixteen states have no regulations at all.[[158]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-158) The success of breeding programmes at American zoos and circuses led to an overabundance of cubs in the 1980s and 1990s, which drove down prices for the animals. The [Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals of Texas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Society_for_the_Prevention_of_Cruelty_to_Animals_of_Texas) estimate there are now 500 lions, tigers and other big cats in private ownership just in the [Houston, Texas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Houston,_Texas).[[*verification needed*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Verifiability)] A private zoo in [Zanesville, Ohio](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zanesville,_Ohio) owned 18 [Bengal tigers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bengal_tigers), all of which were [shot dead](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2011_Ohio_exotic_animal_release) by Ohio authorities after their owner released them, along with many other dangerous animals, before committing suicide on October 18, 2011.

[Genetic ancestry](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Genetic_ancestry) of 105 captive tigers from 14 countries and regions was assessed by using [Bayesian analysis](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bayesian_analysis) and diagnostic [genetic markers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Genetic_marker) defined by a prior analysis of 134 voucher tigers of significant genetic distinctiveness. Of the 105 captive tigers, 49 specimen were assigned to one of five subspecies; 52 specimen had admixed subspecies origins.[[159]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-159)

The Tiger [Species Survival Plan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Species_Survival_Plan) devised by the [Association of Zoos and Aquariums](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Association_of_Zoos_and_Aquariums) has condemned the breeding of [white tigers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/White_tiger) on the allegation that they are of mixed ancestry, hybridized with other subspecies and are of unknown lineage. The[genes](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gene) responsible for white colour are represented by 0.001% of the population. The disproportionate growth in numbers of white tigers points to the relentless [inbreeding](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inbreeding) resorted to among [homozygous](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Homozygous) [recessive](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Recessive) individuals for selectively multiplying the white animals. This progressively increasing process will eventually lead to [inbreeding depression](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inbreeding_depression) and loss of [genetic variability](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Genetic_variability).[[160]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-160)

**Cultural depictions**

*See also:*[*Tiger worship*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger_worship)

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Kuniyoshi_Utagawa,_Tiger.jpg)

[http://bits.wikimedia.org/static-1.23wmf12/skins/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Kuniyoshi_Utagawa,_Tiger.jpg)

19th-century painting of a tiger by [Kuniyoshi Utagawa](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kuniyoshi_Utagawa" \o "Kuniyoshi Utagawa).

The Bengal tiger is the [national animal](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_animal) of India and Bangladesh.[*[citation needed](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Citation_needed" \o "Wikipedia:Citation needed)*] The Malaysian tiger is the national animal of [Malaysia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Malaysia).[[161]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-DiPiazza2006-161) The Siberian tiger is the national animal of [South Korea](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_Korea).

The tiger replaces the lion as King of the Beasts in cultures of eastern Asia representing royalty, fearlessness and wrath.[[162]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-Cooper92-162) Its forehead has a marking which resembles the Chinese character 王, which means "king"; consequently, many cartoon depictions of tigers in China and Korea are drawn with 王 on their forehead.

Of great importance in Chinese myth and culture, the [tiger](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger_(zodiac)) is one of the 12 [Chinese zodiac](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese_astrology) animals. Also in various [Chinese art](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese_art) and martial art, the tiger is depicted as an earth symbol and equal rival of the [Chinese dragon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese_dragon) – the two representing matter and spirit respectively. The Southern Chinese martial art [Hung Ga](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hung_Ga) is based on the movements of the tiger and the crane. In [Imperial China](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_China), a tiger was the personification of war and often represented the highest army [general](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/General_Officer) (or present day [defense secretary](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Secretary_of_Defense)),[[162]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-Cooper92-162) while the emperor and empress were represented by a [dragon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dragon) and [phoenix](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fenghuang), respectively. The [White Tiger](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/White_Tiger_(Chinese_constellation)) ([Chinese](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese_language): 白虎; [pinyin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pinyin): *Bái Hǔ*) is one of the [Four Symbols](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Four_Symbols_(Chinese_constellation)) of the [Chinese constellations](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese_constellation). It is sometimes called the White Tiger of the West (西方白虎), and it represents the [west](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/West) and the autumn season.[[162]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-Cooper92-162)

In Buddhism, it is also one of the Three Senseless Creatures, symbolising anger, with the monkey representing greed and the deer lovesickness.[[162]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-Cooper92-162)

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Durga_Mahisasuramardini.JPG)

[http://bits.wikimedia.org/static-1.23wmf12/skins/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Durga_Mahisasuramardini.JPG)

[Goddess Durga](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Durga) riding a tiger

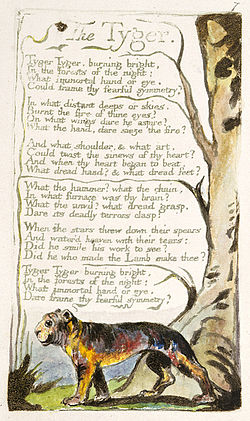
The [Tungusic people](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tungusic_people" \o "Tungusic people) considered the Siberian tiger a near-deity and often referred to it as "Grandfather" or "Old man". The [Udege](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Udege_people" \o "Udege people) and [Nanai](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nani_people" \o "Nani people) called it "Amba". The [Manchu](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Manchu_people) considered the Siberian tiger as Hu Lin, the king.[[23]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-Tigersnow-23)

The widely worshiped Hindu goddess [Durga](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Durga" \o "Durga), an aspect of [Devi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Devi)-[Parvati](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parvati" \o "Parvati), is a ten-armed warrior who rides the tigress (or lioness) Damon into battle. In southern India the god [Ayyappan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayyappan" \o "Ayyappan) was associated with a tiger.[[163]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-163)

The [weretiger](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Werecat" \o "Werecat) replaces the [werewolf](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Werewolf) in [shapeshifting](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shapeshifting" \o "Shapeshifting) folklore in Asia;[[164]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-summers66-164) in India they were evil sorcerers while in Indonesia and Malaysia they were somewhat more benign.[[165]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-javaweretigerstuff-165)

The tiger continues to be a subject in literature; both [Rudyard Kipling](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rudyard_Kipling), in [*The Jungle Book*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Jungle_Book), and [William Blake](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Blake), in [*Songs of Experience*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Songs_of_Innocence_and_of_Experience#Songs_of_Experience), depict the tiger as a menacing and fearful animal. In *The Jungle Book*, the tiger, [Shere Khan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shere_Khan" \o "Shere Khan), is the wicked mortal enemy of the protagonist, [Mowgli](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mowgli). However, other depictions are more benign: [Tigger](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tigger" \o "Tigger), the tiger from [A. A. Milne](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A._A._Milne)'s [Winnie-the-Pooh](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Winnie-the-Pooh) stories, is cuddly and likable. In the [Man Booker Prize](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Man_Booker_Prize) winning novel "[Life of Pi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Life_of_Pi)", the protagonist, Pi Patel, sole human survivor of a ship wreck in the [Pacific Ocean](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pacific_Ocean), befriends another survivor: a large [Bengal tiger](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bengal_tiger). The famous comic strip [*Calvin and Hobbes*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Calvin_and_Hobbes)features Calvin and his stuffed tiger, Hobbes.

Since the successful economies of [South Korea](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_Korea), [Taiwan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taiwan), [Hong Kong](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hong_Kong) and [Singapore](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Singapore) were described as the [Four Asian Tigers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Four_Asian_Tigers), a [tiger economy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger_economy) is a metaphor for a nation in rapid development.

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:The_Tyger_BM_a_1794.jpg)

[http://bits.wikimedia.org/static-1.23wmf12/skins/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:The_Tyger_BM_a_1794.jpg)

Copy A of Blake's original printing of [*The Tyger*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Tyger), c. 1795, Blake's most anthologized poems and one of the most anthologized poems in the English language. Copy A is currently held by the[British Museum](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_Museum)

**World's favourite animal**

In a poll conducted by [Animal Planet](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Animal_Planet), the tiger was voted the world's favourite animal, narrowly beating the dog. More than 50,000 viewers from 73 countries voted in the poll. Tigers received 21% of the vote, dogs 20%, [dolphins](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dolphin) 13%, [horses](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Horse) 10%, [lions](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lion) 9%, [snakes](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Snake) 8%, followed by [elephants](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elephant), [chimpanzees](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chimpanzee), [orangutans](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orangutan) and [whales](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Whale).[[166]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-int.iol.co.za-166)[[167]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-167)[[168]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-168)

Animal behaviourist Candy d'Sa, who worked with Animal Planet on the list, said: "We can relate to the tiger, as it is fierce and commanding on the outside, but noble and discerning on the inside".[[166]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-int.iol.co.za-166)

Callum Rankine, international species officer at the World Wildlife Federation conservation charity, said the result gave him hope. "If people are voting tigers as their favourite animal, it means they recognise their importance, and hopefully the need to ensure their survival," he said.[[166]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#cite_note-int.iol.co.za-166)

Search

Bottom of Form