

Caracal

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Caracal caracal

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Because of the long, black ear tufts on the caracal, scientists originally thought it was closely related to the lynx. However, this is not the case. Their tufts actually help them locate their prey. Caracal coat colors vary from gray to reddish-brown to yellowish-brown, but all-black coats have been reported too. These cats are about the size of a large dog. They live in semi-deserts, woodlands, forests and savannas almost anywhere in Africa and Western Asia.

Caracals like to hunt rodents, rabbits, ostriches, antelopes and gazelles at night. Occasionally they also eat grapes, grass and insects. Like most cats, they are solitary and are seen together only during mating season. Easily tamable, caracals have been trained and used as hunting cats in India and Iran. In the wild, caracals live up to 12 years, and in captivity, they can live up to 18 years.

The IUCN currently lists the caracal as least concern.

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