

Fishing Cat

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Prionailurus viverrinus

Fishing Cat

The fishing cat lives in the wetlands of Southeast Asia and is built for swimming with its waterproof coat and weblike feet. It swims, scoops fish out of the water to eat and has been known to tap on the water's surface to attract fish. It weighs 13 to 26 pounds. The fishing cat's main threats are the disappearance of its wetlands habitat and over-fishing by humans, which eliminates its food supply. Today, 68 fishing cats reside in 23 U.S. zoos.

More zoos are displaying small wildcats through captive-breeding programs. The Cincinnati Zoo remains active in captive-breeding programs for the pallas cat, sand cat, fishing cat and others. The goal is to get people excited about seeing these endangered animals and working for their protection as they have for the larger cats.

A study of small wildcats found that many have the preconditions to become domesticated — a process that takes thousands of years — showing that it was a matter of historical chance that the African wildcat became our domesticated cat. Any of these other small wildcats could have ended up as lovable housecats. Instead, like the cats in this article, they are endangered.

[Click here to learn more about the fishing cat and how you can help.](#)

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