

Jaguar

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Panthera onca

Jaguar

Jaguars are often confused with leopards because their patterns and colorings are so similar. The main difference is that jaguars have spots within their rosette markings, unlike leopards that just have rosette markings. Jaguars also tend to be stockier and larger than leopards, weighing anywhere from 250 to 400 pounds.

Jaguars are generally found in South and Central America as well as some parts of Mexico. They prefer to live in lush forests and are excellent swimmers. As opportunistic hunters, jaguars will eat just about anything they catch. They kill with a powerful, fatal bite usually delivered to the prey's head.

As solitary animals, jaguars rarely hunt together. Jaguars may be seen together, but it is usually because of mating purposes. Mother jaguars rear and protect cubs through the first year and often the cubs will remain close to her through their second year. In the wild, jaguars live about 10 years, but in captivity they can live past 20 years.

The IUCN currently lists the jaguar as near threatened.

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