

Ocelot

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Leopardus pardalis

Ocelot

The medium-sized ocelot cat weighs between 17 and 22 pounds. The ocelot lives throughout South and Central America with a small population remaining in southern Texas. They can be found in tropical and subtropical areas and live in both forests and brush areas. They eat rodents, reptiles and fish and are excellent swimmers. Ocelots are good jumpers and climbers, spending lots of time in trees, but they hunt mostly on the ground.

Many pre-Colombian people in South and Central America worshipped the ocelot in the past and many figures and sculptures of ocelots have been found in these areas.

Ocelots often only have one kitten per litter — the smallest of any wildcat — and two years between litters, which is extremely long for wildcats. These two factors make it hard for ocelot populations to recover when they have been devastated. Additionally, this cat has been hunted for its beautifully spotted coat. Hunting and habitat loss are the ocelots' major threats in the wild.

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