

Sand Cat

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Felis margarita

Sand Cat

The sand cat weighs 4 to 8 pounds and lives in the deserts of the Middle East. "They have very big ears, so in the desert environment, they can hear a lot farther than a domestic cat, and this allows them to hear their prey much easier," says Bill Swanson, director of animal research at the Cincinnati Zoo. "They also have very thick fur on the bottom of their feet, allowing their pads to never touch the ground." This thick fur ensures that the cats don't burn their sensitive pads on the hot sand. "They don't really drink in the wild. In the desert there is very little open water, and so they get pretty much all their water from the prey they eat," Swanson says.

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