

What is a Tiger ?

Tiger

Contents

Tiger

All About

How many subspecies of tiger are there?

Quick

Overview

Scientific Classification

Features of a

Special Stripes

The Biggest of the Big Cats

Tiger Cubs

Juveniles

Reaching Maturity

What do

Where are

What things do

Teaching Video about Endangered Animals

Teaching Resources about

Tiger Fact File and Quiz

Tiger Photo Pack

KS1 All About Tigers PowerPoint

Tigers (*Panthera tigris*) are the largest species of big cat, best known for their amazing orange fur with dark stripes.



All About Tigers – Information for Kids

Tigers are one of the most instantly recognisable animals in the world. As an apex predator, they spend their time roaming their territories in mainland Asia, Russia and the Greater Sunda Islands, stalking prey in the dark.

How many subspecies of tiger are there?

There used to be nine subspecies of tiger, three of which are now **extinct**. Recently, scientists have decided to regroup the old tiger subspecies into two new subspecies. These are the **Continental tiger** (*Panthera tigris*), and the **Sunda tiger** (*Panthera tigris sondaica*).

The old subspecies are split into these new subspecies by the tiger's geography.

The Continental tiger encompasses the tiger populations from mainland Asia and Russia. These include:

- Bengal tiger
- Caspian tiger (extinct)
- Amur or Siberian tiger
- South China tiger (functionally extinct)
- Indochinese tiger
- Malayan tiger

The Sunda tiger encompasses the tiger populations from the Greater Sunda Islands, which are Borneo, Java, Sulawesi and Sumatra. The tigers in this subspecies are:

- Sumatran tiger
- Bali tiger (extinct)
- Javan tiger (extinct)

If a species of animal is **extinct**, it means that it no longer exists.

If a species of animal is **functionally extinct**, it means that there are so few living specimens of the species that the population will never recover.

Quick Tiger Facts for Kids

Overview

Type	Mammal
Diet	Carnivorous
Habitat	Depends on the subspecies. Habitats include grasslands, forests and mangroves.
Size & Weight	180 to 300 cm in length 100 to 270 kg
Life Span	Average of 10 to 15 years in the wild
Located In	Isolated parts of mainland Asia, Russia and the Greater Sunda Islands

Scientific Classification

Kingdom	Animalia
Phylum	Chordata
Class	Mammalia
Order	Carnivora
Suborder	Feliformia
Family	Felidae



Features of a Tiger

Special Stripes

Tigers are known for their striped fur. All tigers have vertical stripes covering their body in dark brown or black. It's thought that these stripes help the tigers with **camouflage**, which means they can blend into their habitat and become hard to see. This is very important, as tigers stalk their prey, so they need to be able to move without being seen.

You don't just get tigers with orange fur. Certain types of tigers have recessive genes that alter the colour of their fur. This is why there are white tigers (white fur with dark stripes) and golden tigers (pale gold fur with brown stripes). Unfortunately, some people breed tigers specifically for these fur colours, which often leads to the tigers having lots of health issues.

Did you know?

Every tiger's stripes are unique, just like humans and their fingerprints.

The Biggest of the Big Cats

Tigers are the largest species of big cat on the planet, with male tigers being up to 1.7 times larger than females. A fully grown male tiger can weigh up to 270 kg and be up to 3 metres long. (The average pet cat that you'll find inside a house only weighs around 4 kg!)

A tiger's tail can grow up to between 60 and 90 cm long. These tails are needed to help the tigers stay balanced as they navigate their habitat. They can also help show the mood of the tiger. Tigers also have very big teeth. Their canine teeth, which are pointed teeth used for holding food and as defence, can reach 90 mm long.

The largest tigers are the Bengal and Siberian tigers, from the Continental tiger subpopulation. The smallest tigers are the Sumatran tigers, which live on the Sunda Islands.



Tiger Life Cycle for Kids

Like the vast majority of mammals, tigers give birth to live young that feed on their mother's milk until they're old enough to eat solid food. After this, they grow and mature until they're ready to live in their own territories.

Tiger Cubs

Tigers have no fixed breeding period, which means that tiger cubs can be born at any point in the year. The most common time for a tiger to give birth is in the spring. Tigers give birth to **between two and four cubs every two years**. The tiger cubs are born with their eyes closed, taking six to eight weeks to gain their eyesight. Tiger cubs also start to eat meat at around eight weeks, too.

Unfortunately, tiger cubs have a high mortality rate, with only 50% of tigers reaching two years old. This is for a number of reasons. **Food scarcity** can mean that only the stronger cubs eat enough, and sometimes, mature male tigers attack tiger cubs.

Juveniles

Juvenile tigers stay with their mother until they're large and strong enough to feed themselves. This can take up to two years. The mother won't have any more cubs until all of her cubs have grown up and found their own territory.

Female tigers tend to find their own territory close to their mother to start off, slowly moving further away as they get older. Male tigers, on the other hand, find territories further away from their mothers and siblings.

Reaching Maturity

Once old enough to live in their own territory, tigers are solitary animals. A tiger's territory is dependent on how much food is available, with territory in locations like Manchuria being up to 1,000 square miles.

Despite being solitary animals, scientists have recorded instances of male tigers sharing their food with female tigers and their cubs, though these relationships haven't lasted for long.

Female tigers reach maturity between three and five years of age and can reproduce after that. In the wild, tigers tend to live for between 10 and 15 years. The oldest known tiger lived in captivity to the age of 26.

Many tigers don't live for long in the wild. Habitat loss and poaching, both from humans, have led to massive drops in the numbers of tigers in the wild, making them an **endangered** animal. An endangered animal is an animal that is at serious risk of extinction.



Tiger Diet

Tigers are **carnivores**, which means that they only eat meat. They hunt on their own at nighttime and can eat up to 38 kg of meat at a time.

What do tigers eat?

Tigers are **apex predators**, meaning that they are at the top of their food chain and there are no animals that prey on them. As apex predators, tigers play an important role in the ecosystems of their habitats by controlling the numbers of animals lower than them in the food chain.

Due to their size, tigers tend to eat medium and large-sized mammals like deer, wild boar and buffalo. They'll also prey upon other predators like bears as well as other big cats, such as leopards. Tigers have also been known to eat smaller mammals like monkeys and ground-based birds.



Tiger Habitats

Tigers are found in the wild in small pockets of land around mainland Asia, Russia and the Greater Sunda Islands. They need lots of space for their territory, which is dictated by the amount of prey available.

Where are tigers located?

Tigers can be found in places like forests, jungles, mangroves and grasslands.

The countries in mainland Asia where Continental tigers live in the wild are:

- India
- Nepal
- China
- Bhutan
- Russia
- Malaysia
- Myanmar

The only island of the Greater Sunda Islands where Sunda tigers live in the wild is Sumatra.

What things do tigers need in their habitat?

Female tigers require a sheltered space, such as a cave or a patch of dense vegetation, to give birth and raise cubs. Being such large animals, tigers need a habitat where they can catch lots of prey to eat.

Tigers require lots of land for them to have their own territories. It's believed that tigers have lost up to 95% of their historical habitat. As their habitats get destroyed, it reduces the amount of space that tigers can live and hunt in, which then leads to food scarcity and starvation.



Teaching Video about Endangered Animals

Teaching Resources about Tigers

Would you like to teach your children about tigers? If the answer is yes, have a look at the selection of resources listed below.

Tiger Fact File and Quiz

Tigers

Tigers belong to the Big Cat family and are the largest cats in the world. They have orange fur with black stripes. Their tail is about as long as a baseball bat. They weigh about the same as ten ten-year-old children! They can live up to 15 years. The tiger is one of the most endangered of all big cats. This is due to the loss of habitat and being hunted for traditional medicine.

Where do tigers live?

- Most tigers live in Asia, in grasslands, savanna, swamps and rainforests.
- They mark their territory with urine or by scratching marks on trees.
- A tiger can tell if it enters another tiger's territory.

Young

Female tigers have around two to four cubs. Tiger cubs are born blind and have to follow the scent of their mother. They begin life living in a den and become very playful after one month. They learn to hunt by watching their mother. Only about half of all tiger cubs reach age two which is when they leave their mother.

Did you know...?

- Tigers enjoy swimming and playing in the water.
- Tiger urine smells like popcorn.
- There are more tigers in captivity than in the wild.

What do tigers eat?

- Tigers are carnivores which means they eat meat.
- They hunt alone and mostly at night.
- Their stripes help to camouflage them.
- Some tigers even eat fish.

Tigers Quiz

Q1. What do tigers weigh as much as?

- a) five ten-year-olds
- b) a ten-year-old
- c) ten ten-year-olds

Q2. Why is the tiger one of the most endangered big cats?

- a) They have orange fur with black stripes
- b) They are used for traditional medicine
- c) They prefer to live alone

Q3. Which food group do tigers belong to?

- a) carnivores
- b) herbivores
- c) omnivores

Q4. How do tigers mark their territory?

- a) with urine or scratch marks
- b) with pee or leaves
- c) by fighting other tigers

Q5. What does a tiger's urine smell like?

- a) orange juice
- b) vinegar
- c) popcorn

ink saving Eco

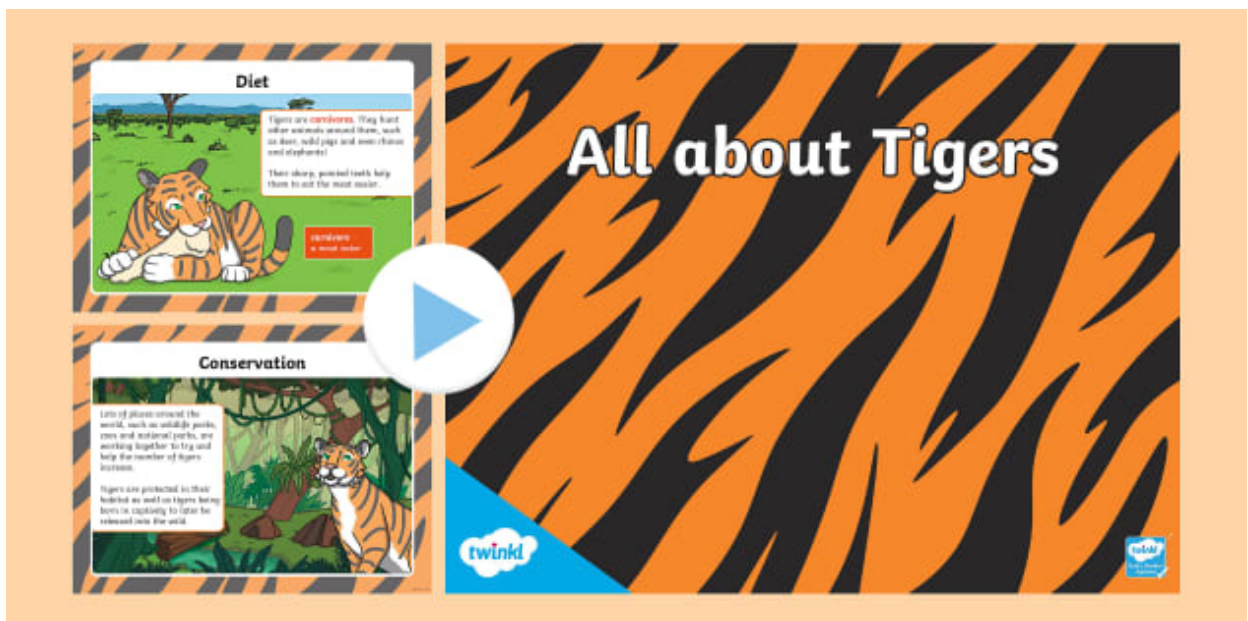
This fact file is a brilliant way of introducing your children to tigers. They can learn lots of key facts from reading the fact file and afterwards, they can test what they've learnt using the accompanying quiz.

Tiger Photo Pack



Would you like to make a classroom display or topic board on tigers? This pack of photos will make an excellent addition. Each photo clearly shows the features of a tiger, with a clear label at the top so your children will know what they're looking at.

KS1 All About Tigers PowerPoint



This PowerPoint is an engaging tool that you can use to teach your KS1 children about tigers. It's full of beautiful images and illustrations that will help you keep your children focused on what they're learning.

Some resources you might like...