



# Amur Tiger

*Panthera tigris altaica*

**Range:** Amur tigers (formerly known as Siberian tigers) are now completely confined to the Amur-Ussuri region of Primorsky Krai and Khabarovsk Krai in far eastern Siberia, where they are now protected.

**Habitat:** Tigers live in a variety of habitats, and are distributed across a wide range of ecological conditions. They are known to occur in tropical lowland evergreen forest,

monsoonal forest, dry thorn forest, scrub oak and birch woodlands, tall grass jungles, and mangrove swamps. Tigers are able to cope with a broad range of climatic variation, from warm moist areas, to areas of extreme snowfall where temperatures may be as low as -40 degrees Fahrenheit.

**Diet:** The majority of a tiger's diet consists of various large ungulate species and wild boar. It will also take smaller prey like lagomorphs (hares, rabbits, and pikas) and fish, including salmon. Tigers may prey on both Brown and Black Bears when ungulate populations decrease.

**Lifespan:** In the wild, tigers can live to be between 16 to 18 years old and up to 26 years old in captivity.

**Description:** Tigers have a reddish-orange coat with vertical black stripes along the flanks and shoulders that vary in size, length, and spacing. Some subspecies have paler fur and some are almost fully white with either black or dark brown stripes along the flanks and shoulders. The underside of the limbs and belly, chest, throat, and muzzle are white or light. White is found above the eyes and extends to the cheeks. A white spot is present on the back of each ear. The dark lines around the eyes tend to be symmetrical, but the marks on each side of the face are often asymmetrical. The tail is reddish-orange and ringed with several dark bands. Body size and morphology varies considerably among subspecies of tigers with Amur tigers being the largest. Male Amur tigers can weigh around 490 lbs. while females can weigh around 260 lbs.

**Breeding:** Tigers are solitary and do not associate with other tigers except for mating. Local males may compete for access to females in estrus every 3 to 9 weeks and are receptive for 3 to 6 days. They have a gestation period of about 103 days (from 96 to 111 days), after which they give birth to 1-7 cubs. Average litter sizes are 2-3 young. Newborn cubs are blind and helpless. Their eyes open between 6 and 14 days after they are born and their ears open between 9 and 11 days after they are born. The mother spends most of her time nursing the young during this vulnerable stage. Weaning occurs at 90-100 days old. Cubs start following their mother at about 2 months old and begin to take some solid food at that time. From 5-6 months old, the cubs begin to take part in hunting expeditions. Cubs stay with their mother until they are 18 months to 3 years old. Young tigers do not reach sexual maturing until around 3-4 years old for females and 4-5 years old for males.

**Behavior/Adaptations:** Tigers are most active at night, when their wild ungulate prey is most active (although they can be active at any time of the day). Tigers prefer to hunt in dense vegetation and along routes where they can move quietly. Tigers have tremendous leaping ability, being able to jump from 8-10 meters. Tigers are excellent swimmers and water doesn't usually act as a barrier to their movement. Tigers are also strong climbers, using their retractable claws and powerful legs. Communication among tigers is maintained by scent markings, visual signals, and vocalization. A facial expression called "flehmen" is often associated with scent detection.

Visual signals made by tigers include spots that have been sprayed, scrapes made by raking the ground, and claw marks left on trees or other objects. Tigers can also communicate vocally with roars, growls, snarls, grunts, mans, mews, and hisses. Each sound has its own purpose, and appears to reflect the tiger's intent or mood. For example, a tiger's roar is usually a signal of dominance; it tells other individuals how big it is and its location. A moan communicates submission.

**Predators:** Humans

**Conservation:** Amur tigers are endangered and it is estimated that only 400-500 individuals are left in the wild.

**The Zoo's Amur Tiger:** Lana is a female tiger born at the Minnesota Zoo on 5/30/2004.

**Interesting Facts:**

- Tigers are the only large wild cats with stripes.
- The stripe patterns of a tiger are not symmetrical from one side of the animal to the other.
- Tigers make a sound called a "chuff." The "chuff" is considered to be a friendly and non-threatening alternative to purring.

Information taken from the following source:

<http://animals.nationalgeographic.com/animals/mammals/siberian-tiger/>