



# Bengal Tiger

## *Panthera tigris*

**Description:** Tigers are the largest cats in the world, and of the 5 current species of tigers, Bengal Tigers are second largest, weighing between 350 to 580 pounds. From head to tail they can be 8 feet long and stand 3 feet high at the shoulder. Their coat is reddish orange with black, white, and sometimes brown stripes which help them hide in the shadows of tall grasses while hunting.

**Range:** Tigers are found in fragmented areas of Bangladesh, Nepal, India, Bhutan and Burma. They tend to live alone in scent marked territories to ward off predators and even other competing tigers.

**Habitat:** They prefer to live in tropical jungles, brush, marshlands, and tall grasslands. Tigers are usually very shy of humans and know to stay away but their habitat has been considerably decreased from human encroachment on their territory.

**Life Span:** It has been known for a tiger to live 15-20 years in the wild and up to 25 years in captivity, due to proper diet and health care and an absence of competition.

**Natural Diet:** Bengal Tigers will travel a large distance for prey which includes animals like pigs, deer, and buffalo. A hungry tiger can eat up to 60 pounds a night if they haven't hunted in many days, but most of the time they eat much less than that.

**Zoo Diet:** At the zoo the tigers are fed a commercially prepared beef diet, which is supplemented with vitamins and minerals, and beef bones

**Behavior:** Tigers are usually solitary except for when a female is traveling with cubs which can be anywhere from 2-6. They are nocturnal hunters and use scent marking to mark off their territory. Male tigers are especially aggressive about their territory and have a roar that can be heard up to 2 miles away. Tigers love the water and can often be found basking in a pool on a hot day, and have even been known to drag their prey into the water to eat.

**Reproduction:** Gestation period for tigers is about 103 days. Females have an average litter of cubs of 2 to 3, but can be up to 7. Females bear litters every 2 to 3 years due to the fact that tiger cubs are weaned at 4 - 6 months but still depend on their mother for food and protection for another two years and cannot hunt independently until 18 months old.

**Conservation Status:** Endangered

