

# Amur Leopard

(*Panthera pardus orientalis*)

**Kingdom:** *Animalia*

**Phylum:** *Chordata*

**Class:** *Mammalia*

**Order:** *Carnivora*

**Family:** *Felidae*

Amur leopards are very distinct from other leopards. Their long legs and long hair allow them to survive in cold, snowy climates. Their spots are widely spaced rosettes with thick borders. The color of their fur changes from lighter in the winter to a more reddish-yellow in the summer.

- Size of average adult

Weight: Male = 82 - 198 pounds

Female = 62 - 132 pounds

- Approximate life span is 23 years in captivity.

Of the eight subspecies the Far Eastern, or Amur leopard (*Panthera pardus orientalis*) shows the strongest and most divergence in coat pattern. The coat is typically pale-cream (especially in winter) and exhibits widely spaced rosettes with thick, unbroken rings and darkened centers. The length of the coat varies between 2.5cm in summer and 7.5cm in winter.

Amur leopards in zoos show some evidence of breeding seasonality with a peak in births in late spring/early summer. After a gestation period of around 12 weeks cubs are born in litters of 1-4 individuals, with an average litter size of just over 2. The cubs will stay with their mother for up to two years before becoming fully independent. Females first breed at an age of 3-4 years.

The Amur leopard is listed as Endangered by the IUCN and is on CITES Appendix I for protection status. The major threats to survival are depletion of prey species, loss of habitat and conflict with humans. Additionally, the Amur leopard is threatened by the extremely small wild population size, which makes them vulnerable to “catastrophes” such as fire or disease, to chance variation in birth and death rates and ratios (eg all cubs born for two years might be male), and to inbreeding depression. Father-daughter and sibling mating have been observed and it is possible that this may lead to

genetic problems including reduced fertility. Such mating does of course occur naturally to a certain extent in large cat populations, but in a very small population there is no possibility of subsequent out breeding.

Field survey data estimates that there are fewer than 50 leopards left in the wild, making the Amur leopard one of the world's most endangered cat taxa. There are approximately 200 Amur leopards in captivity, mostly in zoos in North America and throughout Europe.

[www.amur.org.uk/](http://www.amur.org.uk/)

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