



## Amur Tiger

Kingdom: Animalia  
 Phylum: Chordata  
 Subphylum: Vertebrata  
 Class: Mammalia  
 Order: Carnivora  
 Family: Felidae  
 Genus: *Panthera*  
 Species: *tigris altaica*



Photo courtesy of Karen Marzynski

### Habitat

- **In the Wild:** The Amur tiger (also known as the Siberian tiger) inhabits areas along the Amur River in extreme eastern Russia. Habitat varies from tropical forests to tall grass jungles and coniferous woodlands. Tigers prefer forest areas or areas that provide dense cover, access to water and sufficient large prey. Known as “The Great Wanderers,” tigers cover large areas ranging from 1,200 to 1,600 square miles.
- **Exhibit Location:** Wildlife Trails

### Characteristics

- Tigers are the largest of the wild cats and the Amur tiger is the largest of the tiger species. Amur tigers range in size from 400 to 700 pounds for adult males and 200 to 300 pounds for females. They have a reddish-orange coat with a white belly and black striped markings. The pattern of the markings is unique to each animal. They have heavily muscled forelegs, large paws with sharp retractable claws and long hind legs for jumping and running down prey.
- **Lifespan: In the Wild** 15 years; **In Captivity** 16 – 20 years

### Behaviors

- Amur tigers often spend days staying cool by swimming in rivers, lakes and ponds. At sundown, they begin the hunt, generally patrolling water holes popular to deer, boar and other large mammals. In the wild, tigers are solitary due to their hunting habits. They hunt their prey by hiding in high grass or other cover and ambushing their intended target.
- Tigers will mark their territories with scent from scent glands, urine and scat. They will also produce claw marks from sharpening their claws on tree trunks. These marks carry scent from their feet. Tigers also advertise their territories by vocalizing, heard most often during the breeding season.
- **Enrichments at the Zoo:** As enrichment, the RGZ uses scents such as peppermint placed on logs. Cut pine trees, a large ball, boxes, paper mache animals, pumpkins and other items are placed in the enclosure to mimic their life in the wild.

### Reproduction

- Sexual maturity is reached at about 3 years of age.
- Siberian tigresses show behavioral estrous cycles and ovarian follicular phase cycles beginning in late January and ceasing in early June. Tigers usually mate from January to June but may mate at any time during the year. Mating will occur many times, up to 4 times per hour. The male will then seek another female in estrous. Litters of 1-4 cubs are born after a gestation of 104 days. The cubs are born blind and remain in the den for 3 months. At 13 weeks of age, the cubs begin to eat meat and are gradually weaned by 17 months of age. They spend the next 12 months learning to hunt before going off at 2 - 3 years of age to their own solitary lifestyle.

## Diet

- **In the Wild:** large prey such as deer or wild pigs; sometimes eggs, carrion, and birds
- **At the Zoo:** commercial horsemeat (15 pounds, 7 days a week for adults), cow bones and frozen rabbit (once a week).

## Conservation Status

- **IUCN status:** Critically Endangered on Red List 2004; **CITES** Appendix I
- Human activities (poaching, hunting, logging, and loss of habitat) are the principal cause of declining tiger populations. Tigers have long been considered trophy animals and are therefore hunted for sport. Tiger parts are also used for ancient Chinese medicines. Native farmers kill tigers that have attacked their livestock.
- Amur tigers are part of the SSP (Species Survival Plan). Tatiana and Karana produced three cubs here in June of 2004, contributing to the SSP. Laws and tiger reserves are also helping to save the tigers in the wild.

## Did You Know?/Fun Facts

- They are super predators, but not efficient hunters. The wild tiger has a successful hunt of about 1 in 20 attempts. They will often make a kill and then gorge on the meat (up to 60 to 110 pounds), then sleep for several days.

## Sources:

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