

# Jaguar

The elegant jaguar is a member of the wild cat family that can be found in the rainforest regions. It is the largest of all cats in the Americas and is the third largest in the world (behind the lion and the tiger). They are solitary creatures who tend to live and hunt alone. A male jaguar will aggressively protect its territory from other males.



### Appearance

Jaguars are famous for their beautiful, spotted coats of fur. They can reach up to six feet in length, from their nose to the tip of their tail, and up to three feet tall at the shoulder. They have very powerful jaws and sharp teeth – strong enough to crack bones or pierce a turtle shell. Like most big cats, they can let out a loud and menacing roar.

### Diet

Jaguars mostly hunt for prey at night. They are carnivores with a wide range of smaller animals as potential prey. This extensive list of possible meals includes squirrels, deer and monkeys. They are also known to eat birds and to snatch fish and turtles from the water.

### Habitat

Jaguars are found in rainforests as well as grasslands and woodlands. They spend much of their time on the ground or the forest floor, using their soft padded paws to stalk quietly through the undergrowth. They are also capable of climbing trees either to hunt or to rest. Unlike many other big cats, jaguars are also known to enjoy being around water to hunt, bathe and play.

### Interesting Facts

- Jaguars have no threat from any natural predators – except for humans. Many are shot and killed through fear. They are also hunted for their fur, although this trade has declined in modern times.

## Year 5 Literacy Non chronological reports - information about animals 29.6.2020 / 2.7.2020

One of the big cats, jaguar's are solitary animals, usually hunting at night, they often drag their food up trees for safe keeping, they love to swim and roam the rainforests of Central and South America.

The jaguar is a big cat in the *Panthera* genus, the jaguar's scientific name is *Panthera onca*. The jaguar is the 3rd largest of the big cats after the [tiger](#) and the [lion](#) and it is the largest of all the big cats in the Americas.

Jaguar's are only found in the Americas. Their range extends from Arizona in South-west [United States](#), [Mexico](#), through Central America, into most Amazon River Basin countries in South America and as far south as northern [Argentina](#).

The jaguar's preferred habitat is dense rainforest, but they are also found across other forested areas and open plains.

With its spotted coat the jaguar most closely resembles the [leopard](#) which is found in Asia and Africa, however, the jaguar is larger and has a stockier build than the leopard, it also has less but bigger rosettes (spots) with small dots in the middle. While the jaguars behavioural habits more resemble that of a tiger.

Like the tiger, jaguars enjoy water and are good at swimming.

Jaguars roam, hunt and live alone, only coming together to mate. They leave a scent to mark their territory. Female territories may overlap and range in size from 25 - 40 km<sup>2</sup>. While males territories are double that size, a male will aggressively protect his area (and the resident females within it) from other males.

The jaguar stalks and ambushes its prey, often leaping into water or from a tree.

Jaguars are carnivores, they prey on over 80 species of animal of all sizes, such as [deer](#), [pigs](#), capybara, foxes, [fish](#), [frogs](#) and even large anaconda [snakes](#).

The jaguar has a very powerful jaw, its bite exerts more force than that of a lion.

Male jaguars are about 10-20% larger than females. On average jaguars weigh between 124 - 211 lbs (56–96 kg) and are 4 ft to 6.5 ft (1.2 to 1.95 m) in length.

Jaguars live in the wild for 11-15 years, in captivity they can live over 20 years.

Many ancient American cultures such as the Maya and Aztec, featured the jaguar in their mythologies, it was often regarded as a symbol of strength.

Source: <https://sciencekids.co.nz/sciencefacts/animals/jaguar.html>

<https://www.natgeokids.com/uk/discover/animals/general-animals/jaguar-facts/>

### Jaguar facts

1. Jaguars are the largest of South America's big cats and the third largest cats in the world.
2. At one time jaguars roamed all the way to the US-Mexico border, but jaguars are now only occasionally sighted in Texas and Arizona. Most jaguars are found in the Amazon river basin.
3. The name jaguar comes from the Native American word yaguar, which means 'he who kills with one leap'.
4. Their fur is usually tan or orange with black spots, called "rosettes" because they are shaped like roses.
5. Jaguars live alone and mark their territory with their waste or by clawing trees.
6. The jaguar's scientific name is *Panthera onca*.
7. Jaguars are mammals. They are carnivores and eat a diet rich in meat and fish.
8. They can live to be 12 to 15 years old in the wild.
9. Adult jaguars weigh between 45 to 113 kilograms.
10. From the tip of his nose to the tip of his tail, a jaguar can be 240cm long.

# Year 5 Literacy Non chronological reports - information about animals 29.6.2020 / 2.7.2020

## Jaguars And The Big Cat Family

Jaguars are large, powerfully-built cats. Their backs and sides are yellow or orange coloured, and their undersides are white. Jaguars’ coats are covered in spots called ‘rosettes’. These rosettes are actually more like rings, and each has a smaller spot in the centre.

Jaguars are **felids**, which means that they are part of the cat family, **Felidae**. The same family as your pet cat at home!

Jaguars are also members of a Felidae subfamily called **Pantherinae**. This subfamily also contains lions, tigers, leopards and snow leopards.

Jaguars are the third biggest of all the big cats: only tigers and lions are bigger. Jaguars are the **biggest cat in the Americas** (the continents of North and South America combined).

## Jaguar Information

Jaguars are solitary creatures, each living in its own area, called a territory. Jaguars protect their territories from other jaguars.

Female jaguars give birth to 1 – 4 kittens at a time, and cubs live with their mothers for 2 or more years before they go off on their own.

Jaguars are powerfully built, and are excellent climbers and swimmers.

## Jaguar Vs Leopard ... vs Panther?

Jaguars and leopards are very similar. Both are large, spotted, big cats. However, Jaguars are bigger and more heavily built. Jaguars’ rosettes are bigger, less densely spaced, and have a central spot which leopards don’t have.

Jaguars live in the Americas, and leopards are found in Africa and Asia.

Some jaguars (and leopards) have markings that are so dense that the animals looks completely black. These animals are known as ‘panthers’, but they are in actual fact just jaguars or leopards, and not a separate species.

## Where Do Jaguars live?

Jaguars are found in North, Central, and South America. Jaguars are even occasionally seen in Arizona, in the United States!

However, jaguars are mainly forest creatures, and prefer the dense rainforests of South America. They are also found in wetlands and grasslands.

Jaguars are most numerous in the Amazon Basin (the area around the Amazon river) and The Pantanal — a large wetland area in Brazil and parts of Bolivia and Paraguay.

Jaguars often live near water. Unlike other cats, jaguars are excellent swimmers, and can swim across rivers. They will also approach ambush prey from the water.

## How Big Are Jaguars?

The length of a jaguar’s body is between 4 – 6 feet, and their tails add another 20 – 30”. The jaguar’s tail is the shortest of any big cat.

Jaguars weigh between 100 to 250 lbs (45 – 113 kg). Males are larger than females, and have been recorded to weigh as much as 348 lbs (158 kg).

Jaguars are 25 to 30 in (63 to 76 cm) tall.

## What Does A Jaguar Eat?

Jaguars are carnivores (meat eaters). Their diet includes many kinds of animals, including fish, birds, caimans, deer, monkeys, capybaras and tapirs. Jaguars are also known to eat turtles, and their jaws are strong enough to break open turtles’ shells. Jaguars generally prefer larger prey.

## Jaguar Hunting Methods

Jaguars prefer to stalk or ambush their prey, rather than pursue it. Jaguars are known to climb trees in order to ambush their prey.

In fact, jaguars are known as one of the best ambush hunters of all! If you are in the rainforest, always keep one eye on the trees above you!

Jaguars dispatch their prey with a strong bite to the neck that suffocates the animal. Jaguars can also use their strong jaws to crush the skulls of smaller prey animals, killing the prey instantly.

## Are Jaguars Endangered?

Jaguars are classed as being ‘Near Threatened’ by the [International Union for Conservation of Nature](#) (IUCN). As with many [rainforest species](#), the biggest threat to Jaguars is habitat loss due to deforestation. They are also shot by farmers protecting their livestock, and even today some are shot for their fur. There are only about 15,000 jaguars living in the wild in their natural habitat.

<https://www.activewild.com/jaguar-facts-for-kids/>

# Sloth

Sloths are known for being particularly slow-moving creatures; all of their movements are careful and deliberate. They are mostly nocturnal and spend up to 90% of their time hanging upside down. Sloths have fairly poor vision and hearing so they rely on a strong sense of smell and touch.

## Appearance

Species of sloths are divided into two families: two-toed sloths and three-toed sloths. Both of these species share similar appearance characteristics, including thick fur, rounded heads, flat snouts and stumpy tails. As they spend so much of their time hanging from branches, they have long curved claws to help with grip. Typically, they are between 60cm and 80cm in size, weighing anything between 2kg to 10kg.



As they move so little, they often have algae growing on their fur. Their fur provides the algae with a place to grow and the green colouring from the algae provides camouflage for the sloth. What's more, with insects feeding on the algae, it makes the sloth's whole body like a mini jungle habitat of its own!

## Diet

Some sloth species eat nothing but leaves, while others also eat fruit, insects and even small lizards. No other mammal digests its food as slowly as the sloth. It can take up to a whole month to digest a single leaf. In fact, the slow movements of the sloth are mainly because of their leaf-based diet, which is low in energy and creates a slow metabolism.

## Habitat

Sloths are mostly found in Central and South American rainforests and they mainly live among the branches of trees. They eat, sleep and even give birth while hanging from the branches.

## Interesting Facts

- The sloth moves at an average speed of approximately two to four metres per minute.
- Sloths are surprisingly good swimmers and can swim about three or four times quicker than they can move on land. They are also able to hold their breath for long periods (even more than half an hour) while under water.

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- Sloths are a medium-sized mammal. There are two types of sloth the two-toed sloth and the three-toed sloth, they are classified into six different species.
- All sloths actually have three toes, but the two-toed sloth has only two fingers.
- Sloths are part of the order *Pilosa* so they are related to anteaters and armadillos.
- Sloths are tree-dwelling animals, they are found in the jungles of Central and South America.
- A sloth's body is usually 50 to 60 cm long. Skeletons of now extinct species of sloth suggest some varieties used to be as large as [elephants](#).
- Sloths mainly eat the tree buds, new shoots, fruit and leaves, of the Cecropia tree. Some two-toed sloths also eat [insects](#), small reptiles, and [birds](#).
- Sloths have a four-part stomach that very slowly digests the tough leaves they eat, it can sometimes take up to a month for them to digest a meal. Digesting this diet means a sloth has very little energy left to move around making it one of the slowest moving animals in the world.
- Sloths can move along the ground at just 2 m (6.5 ft) per minute! In the trees they are slightly quicker at 3 m (10 ft) per minute.
- The slow-movement and unique thick fur of the sloth make it a great habitat for other creatures such as moths, [beetles](#), cockroaches, fungi, and algae. In fact, this green colored algae provides a camouflage so sloths can avoid predators.
- Sloths can extend their tongues 10 to 12 inches out of their mouths.
- The sloth has very long, sharp, and strong claws that they use to hold on to tree branches. The claws are also their only natural defense against predators.
- Sloths usually only leave the tree they live in to go to the toilet once a week on the ground. This is when they are most vulnerable to being attacked by their main predators such as [jaguars](#), the harpy eagle and [snakes](#).
- Two-toed sloths are nocturnal, being most active at night. While three-toed sloths are diurnal which means they are most active during the day.
- It used to be thought sloths slept for 15 to 20 hours a day. However, it's now believed they only sleep around 10 hours a day.
- In the wild, sloths live on average 10 - 16 years and in captivity over 30 years.

• <https://www.sciencekids.co.nz/sciencefacts/animals/sloth.html>

## Year 5 Literacy Non chronological reports - information about animals 29.6.2020 / 2.7.2020

Sloths are tree-dwelling mammals that live in the rainforests of South and Central America. In this article, which is part of our [Rainforest Animals](#) series, we'll look at the sloth's life and habitat, and learn where it fits within the rainforest ecosystem. At the end is a list of sloth facts for kids.

Watch the videos further down the page to see sloths in the wild!

### **Sloth Facts At-A-Glance**

- Type of Animal: **Mammal**

- Order: **Pilosa**

- Number of Sloth Families: **2. Two-toed sloths (Megalonychidae) & three-toed sloths (Bradypodidae).**

- Number of Sloth Species: **6 (see below for descriptions & conservation status)**

- Where Found: **Rainforests of Central and South America**

### Sloth Information

Sloths are **arboreal** (tree-dwelling) mammals that live in the rainforests of South and Central America. They are named after the deadly sin of **sloth** (which means laziness) because they move extremely slowly.

Sloths move so slowly that **algae** (plant-like organisms) grow in their fur! This is actually beneficial to sloths, as it gives them a slightly greenish color, helping them to blend in with their surroundings!

Sloths spend most of their lives in the trees, where they hang upside-down from branches and vines. Sloths eat, sleep, mate and even give birth while hanging around in the trees!

Due to the design of their feet and long, curved claws, sloths can hang upside down with **little or no effort**. This actually makes them a less appealing target for human hunters because even when shot, sloths remain hanging in the trees.

## Year 5 Literacy Non chronological reports - information about animals 29.6.2020 / 2.7.2020

### 6 Species, 2 Families

There are six species of sloth, divided between two families: **two-toed sloths** (Megalonychidae) and **three-toed sloths** (Bradypodidae).

You can tell the difference between the two families by counting how many 'fingers' they have. Two-toed sloths have two fingers; three-toed sloths have three.

Perhaps they should have been named two and three ***fingered*** sloths; **both** families of sloths have three toes on their hind legs!

There are two species of two-toed sloth:

**Linnaeus's two-toed sloth** (*Choloepus didactylus*) (Conservation status: Least Concern)

**Hoffmann's two-toed sloth** (*Choloepus hoffmanni*) (Conservation status: Least Concern)

Two-toed sloths are slightly larger and faster-moving than three-toed sloths. They are around 60 cm – 70 cm (24 – 28") in length, and weigh about 6 kg (13 pounds).

There are four living species of three-toed sloth:

**Brown-throated sloth** (*Bradypus variegatus*) (Conservation status: Least Concern)

**Maned sloth** (*Bradypus torquatus*) (Conservation status: Vulnerable)

**Pale-throated sloth** (*Bradypus tridactylus*) (Conservation status: Least Concern)

**Pygmy three-toed sloth** (*Bradypus pygmaeus*) (Conservation status: Critically Endangered)

Three-toed sloths are smaller and slower than two-toed sloths. They grow to around 45 cm – 60 cm (18 – 24") in length and weigh around 4 kg (9 pounds). Although their tails are longer than those of the two-toed sloths, they are still quite short, reaching 6–7 cm (2–3 in) in length.

## Year 5 Literacy Non chronological reports - information about animals 29.6.2020 / 2.7.2020

### Sloth Facts: What Do Sloths Look Like?

Sloths have fairly small, thin bodies with short tails. Their heads are small and round, with short snouts, small ears, and large eyes surrounded by dark masks. The shape of their mouths gives them a permanent smiling expression!

Sloths have long, curved claws. These can grow to be up to 3 – 4 inches (8 – 10 cm) long. Sloths use their claws to climb trees and to hook themselves onto branches.

The long limbs and claws of a sloth are designed for hanging and climbing, not for walking on the ground. Sloths have great difficulty getting around when on the floor

### What Do Sloths Eat?

Sloths are **folivores** (specialist leaf-eaters), and also eat buds and shoots. Their bodies and lifestyles reflect their diet. Leaves contain very little energy and are also low in nutrients. As a result, sloths have large and complex stomachs, which contain bacteria that break down the leaves.

It can take a sloth a month to completely digest a meal! Sloths climb down from the trees in order to urinate and defecate (poop!) only about once a week. The contents of a sloth's stomach account for as much as two-thirds of its body weight.

Because leaves contain very little energy, sloths have a low **metabolism** (the rate at which energy is used by an organism).

Two-toed sloths have been observed eating insects, lizards and birds in addition to plant matter.

### How Fast (Slow?!?) Is A Sloth?

Sloths move extremely slowly, only managing to cover about 6 – 8 feet (1.8 – 2.4 meters) per minute.

As a (not very scientific) comparison, walking at your normal speed you'd probably be moving at about 275 feet (84 meters) per minute. That's close to the length of a standard soccer / football pitch.

So even when walking you're about 39 times faster than a sloth!

### Deep Sleepers

Sloths spend most of their time either eating or sleeping. In the wild, sloths sleep between 9 and 15 hours a day.

### Can Sloths Swim?

They may not be very good on the ground, but sloths are good swimmers. They use a lazy, doggy-paddle stroke to propel themselves through the water.

<https://www.activewild.com/sloth-information-and-facts-for-kids/>

## Scarlet Macaw

The scarlet macaw is one of several species of macaw. The macaws are distinguishable thanks to their differing colours of plumage. Other species include the blue-and-yellow macaw, the great green macaw and the red-fronted macaw. There are at least 17 known species altogether.

Most macaws are intelligent, social birds which often gather together in flocks of ten or more. They make a very loud, throaty squawking noise.



### Appearance

Despite their name, scarlet macaws are multicoloured: predominantly red, yellow and blue. Their bodies are between 80cm and 90cm long; around half of this is made up of their long, pointed tail feathers. Their average weight is around 1kg and they have large, powerful beaks that can crack open nuts. They also use their dry, scaly tongue to eat.

### Diet

They mostly eat fruit and seeds or nuts, but can also eat insects. During the day, they will fly huge distances to gather food to eat – when flying, they can reach speeds of up to 35 miles per hour! Some macaws have even been seen eating clay or soft soil from riverbanks.

### Habitat

Flocks of macaws tend to sleep near each other in the trees at night. They thrive in the tropical, humid atmosphere of the rainforest and can usually be found in either the emergent or canopy layers of the forest.

### Interesting Facts

- Macaws can live up to 40-50 years old.
- Scarlet macaws are now considered endangered, primarily due to their capture as exotic pets and to the increasing loss of their natural habitat.

## Year 5 Literacy Non chronological reports - information about animals 29.6.2020 / 2.7.2020

### Located

Scarlet Macaws are found in Central America and northern South America. They are also located on a small number of Caribbean islands including Trinidad.

### Habitat

In these countries, they live in tropical and sub-tropical rainforests. They will build their **nest** high in the **rainforest canopy**, in the holes of hollow trees.

### Size

These birds grow anywhere from 2.5 feet to 3 feet (.76 - .91m) on average. Their average weight is between 2 and 2.3 lbs (.9 - 1.04kg). It is one of the larger members of the parrot family, but **not** the **largest**. That distinction belongs to the hyacinth macaw.

### Description

The scarlet macaw is one of the most beautiful parrots, and possibly one of the most beautiful animals on Earth. It has bright red plumage (feathers) on most of its body, and beautiful blue and yellow feathers on its wings. It has long red tail feathers and a large, tough beak that helps to break food open.

### Diet

Scarlet Macaws eat a variety of fruits, nuts and seeds. Their strong **talons** and long tongue are well adapted to breaking open the shells of tough nuts and seeds. In the Amazon Rainforest, many macaws will gather on steep river banks to eat the clay located there. Some scientists believe that they perform this ritual so that the clay can help them digest toxic fruits. Other scientists think that the behavior helps supplement their diets with more sodium.

### Reproduction

Like most parrots, these birds lay 2 to 4 eggs at a time in the holes of trees. The incubation time for these eggs to hatch is approximately 25 - 35 days.

### Natural Predators

These birds have a number of natural predators, including large hawks, eagles and owls, [boa constrictors](#) and [jaguars](#).

<https://www.rainforestanimals.net/birds/scarletmacaw/>

## Year 5 Literacy Non chronological reports - information about animals 29.6.2020 / 2.7.2020

The **scarlet macaw** (*Ara macao*) is a large red, yellow, and blue Central and South American [parrot](#), a member of a large group of Neotropical parrots called [macaws](#). It is native to humid evergreen forests of tropical Central and South America. Range extends from south-eastern [Mexico](#) to the Peruvian Amazon, [Colombia](#), [Bolivia](#), [Venezuela](#) and [Brazil](#) in lowlands of 500 m (1,640 ft) (at least formerly) up to 1,000 m (3,281 ft). In some areas, it has suffered local extinction because of [habitat destruction](#) or capture for the parrot trade, but in other areas it remains fairly common. Formerly it ranged north to southern [Tamaulipas](#). It can still be found on the island of Coiba. It is the national bird of [Honduras](#). Like its relative the blue-and-yellow macaw, scarlet macaws are popular birds in aviculture as a result of their striking plumage

### Description

It is about 81 centimeters (32 in) long, of which more than half is the pointed, graduated tail typical of all [macaws](#), though the scarlet macaw has a larger percentage of tail than the other large macaws. The average weight is about 1 kilogram (2.2 lb). The [plumage](#) is mostly scarlet, but the rump and tail-covert [feathers](#) are light blue, the greater upper wing coverts are yellow, the upper sides of the flight feathers of the wings are dark blue as are the ends of the tail feathers, and the undersides of the wing and tail flight feathers are dark red with metallic gold iridescence. Some individuals may have green in the wings.

There is bare white skin around the eye and from there to the [bill](#). Tiny white feathers are contained on the face patch. The upper mandible is mostly pale horn in color and the lower is black. Juveniles have dark eyes; adults have light yellow eyes.

It is frequently confused with the slightly larger green-winged macaw, which has more distinct red lines in the face and no yellow in the wing.

Scarlet macaws make very loud, high and sometimes low-pitched, throaty squawks, squeaks and screams designed to carry many miles to call for their groups.

The scarlet macaw can live up to 75 or even 90 years in captivity, although a more typical lifespan is 40 to 50 years.

## Year 5 Literacy Non chronological reports - information about animals 29.6.2020 / 2.7.2020

### **Behaviour**

A typical sighting is of a single bird or a pair flying above the forest canopy, though in some areas flocks can be seen. They may gather at clay licks. Scarlet macaws communicate primarily through raucous honks; however, vocal communication is highly variable, and captive macaws are known to be adept mimics of human speech.

### **Feeding**

Scarlet macaws eat mostly fruits, nuts and seeds, including large, hard seeds and sodium packed dirt. They also love to eat insects and larvae. They are seen feeding heavily on bugs, snails and foliage. Snails and bugs are great source of protein, as they need additional protein during breeding seasons. They also add flowers and nectar to their diet as a supplement

### **Breeding**

While comparatively docile at most times of the year, scarlet macaws may be formidably aggressive during periods of breeding. Scarlet macaws are monogamous birds, with individuals remaining with one partner throughout their lives. The hen lays two or three white eggs in a tree cavity. The female [incubates](#) the eggs for about five weeks, and the chicks [fledge](#) from the [nest](#) about 90 days after hatching. and leave their parents about a year later. Juveniles reach sexual maturity at five years of age.

### **Distribution and habitat**

The South American [range](#) is extensive and covers the [Amazon basin](#); extending to Peru east of the Andes, to [Bolivia](#). In Bolivia, it is very present in the Aquicuana Reserve, located in the Beni Department, near the city of Riberalta, the Capital of the Bolivian Amazon.

In Central America, the range extends from extreme eastern and southern [Mexico](#) and [Panama](#) through [Guatemala](#) and [Belize](#), the island of Coiba and infrequently on the mainland of Panama, and in Costa Rica in isolated regions on the Pacific Coast; the Nicoya Peninsula the Carara National Park and Peninsula de Osa.

The scarlet macaw has escaped or been deliberately released in to [Florida](#), but there is no evidence that the population is breeding and may only persist due to continuing releases or escapes.

Scarlet macaws inhabit humid lowland [subtropical rain forests](#), open [woodlands](#), river edges, and [savannas](#).

[https://kids.kiddle.co/Scarlet\\_macaw](https://kids.kiddle.co/Scarlet_macaw)