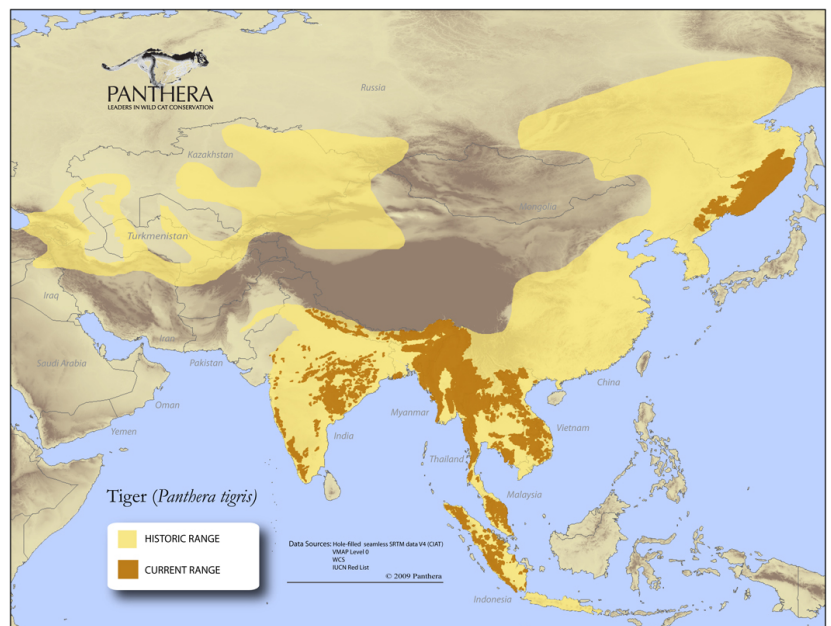


## Basic Tiger Facts



**Scientific Name:** *Panthera tigris*

- Range: Asia
- Population: 3,200 in the wild
- Lifespan: 8-10 years in the wild
- Largest species of cat in the world
- Only striped cat in the world
- Diet: meat, prefer hoofed animals
- 6 out of 9 subspecies remain today
- Smallest: Sumatran tiger (up to 330lbs)
- Largest: Amur tiger (up to 700lbs)
- Top speed of 35 mph



## How did Tigers get their Name?

Tiger comes from the Indian word “tigris” which means arrow. This is because of their hunting prowess, which is fast and accurate, like an arrow shot by an experience hunter!



## Natural History about Tigers

Fossil records and genetics indicate that tigers first appeared approximately 2 million years ago in Asia. They radiated throughout Asia and became the dominant predator. Nine subspecies emerged as they adapted to the diverse ecosystems of Asia. The size and behavior differs depending on the sub-species of tiger. Three subspecies (Caspian, Bali, and Javan) have gone extinct from hunting and habitat loss.

## Tigers Are Endangered

Unfortunately, tigers are critically endangered. 100 years ago, there were 100,000 tigers in the wild. Today, less than 3,200 tigers remain. Within the last century, tigers have seen a 97% decline in their population. Causes for the decline include poaching, habitat loss, human-wildlife conflict, disease and lack of prey.

## Behavior of Tigers

Tigers are solitary predators. They use their quick speed to ambush and take down their prey. Territories of males are larger than those of females, and often overlap the territories of several females and breeds with them when they are in estrous. Tigers control population sizes of herbivores in their territory, and prevent them from lingering in one location and degrading the habitat through overgrazing.



## Life History of Tigers

Wild tigers have a very high infant mortality rate of around 80%. Their average litter size is 3.5 tigers. The cubs are totally dependent on their mother for the first 2 to 3 years until they reach sexual maturity. After the cub reaches sexual maturity, the females will generally obtain a portion of her mother's territory, while males are kicked out and disperse to find a territory of their own. The life span of a tiger is 8-10 years in the wild.

## Diet of a Tiger

Tigers only eat meat and prefer hooved mammals also known as ungulates. These animals include various deer species, boar, water buffalo, guar, and others. Despite their hunting prowess, tigers are frequently unsuccessful at catching prey, succeeding only around 10% of the time. Tigers usually catch and consume one medium sized prey animal per week and can consume over 70lbs of meat in one day!



## **Tigers are a Keystone Species**

A keystone species is a species that has a disproportionately large effect on the communities in which it occurs. It is analogous to a keystone that holds up an arch. If you remove the keystone from the arch, everything falls apart. Tigers are the top predator in their ecosystem and maintain balance by keeping populations of herbivores and other carnivores under control.

KEYSTONE SPECIES

