


Common Name: Siberian tiger	Scientific Name: <i>Panthera tigris altaica</i>
Class: Mammalia Order: Carnivora Family: Felidae 	Feeding Type: Carnivore Statistics: Body: 4.5-9 ft Tail: 2-3 ft Weight: male:400-675lbs female:220-370lbs

DESCRIPTION: The Siberian tiger is the largest living cat in the world. Because Siberian winters are incredibly cold (up to -50 degrees F), Siberian tigers have the shortest legs and tail than any other tiger subspecies, making it easier to stay warm. Background color covering most of the body ranges from reddish orange to reddish ecru, with creamy or white underparts. The fur is longer and thicker than that of the Bengal to withstand the intense cold of a Siberian winter. The head, body, tail, and limbs have a series of narrow black, gray, or brown stripes. Tiger stripes are like human fingerprints; no two tigers have the same pattern. On the flanks, stripes generally run in a vertical direction. The Sumatran tiger has the most stripes of all tiger subspecies, and the Siberian tiger has the fewest. Siberian tigers are very muscular looking in the shoulder area, giving these cats a most powerful look, and are the largest living cats. It is said that tigers carry the Chinese mark of wang or king on their foreheads. This mark looks like E.

RANGE: Formerly found from Lake Baikal to the pacific coast and Korea, apparently now very rare in Manchuria and Korea, and protected in the Ussuri region of the former Soviet Union.

HABITAT: Tigers can live in a variety of habitat types and climatic conditions, but require sufficient cover, year-round access to water, and a steady supply of large prey. They usually reside in the snow-covered taiga of Siberia and surrounding areas.

ADAPTATIONS: A tiger hunts by carefully stalking its prey, approaching from the side or rear and attempting to get as close as possible. However, the tiger depends more on sight and hearing than on smell. It will simultaneously leap upon the quarry and try to throw it down and grab its throat. Killing is by strangulation or a bite to the back of the neck. A carcass is often dragged off to an area within cover or near water, where it is hidden or buried for future meals.

Tigers have round pupils and yellow irises. Due to a retinal adaptation that reflects light back to the retina, the night vision of tigers is six times better than that of humans.

REPRODUCTION/GROWTH: Mating occurs at any time but is most frequent from November to April. Females usually give birth every two to two-and-one-half years. Gestation lasts 104-106 days. Litters are usually two or three cubs. Cubs are taught how to hunt prey and are capable killers at 11 months. Sexual maturity occurs for females after three to four years and for males, after four to five years. Half of all cubs do not survive more than two years.

LONGEVITY: 26 years – captivity
15 years - wild

PREY/PREDATOR: Prey to humans
Predator to other mammals-only 5% of kills are a success
Note: Each tiger needs to eat over 20 pounds of meat per day

to sustain heat in the cold climate!

DIET: WILD: Mainly large mammals such as pigs, deer, antelope and buffalo
SZ: Feline diet and shanks

STATUS: 200-300 individuals are now present in the wild and 570 in captivity. They are very rare in Manchuria and Korea, and protection in the Ussuri region of the Soviet Union seems to have resulted in an increase in numbers there.

Siberian tigers are also called Amur, Manchurian or Northeast Chinese tigers. The tiger species is named after the Mesopotamian Tigris River.

SPECIAL NOTES: There are five subspecies of tigers in the world today: Siberian, Sumatran, Indochinese, South China and Bengal. All five are endangered. Three subspecies: Caspian, Balinese and Javan are believed to be extinct. There are 37 species of cats estimated in the world.

One of the main reasons for tiger endangerment is poaching for hides and body parts for folk medicine. The new drug Viagra, which is being produced to eliminate impotency in men, also has potential for saving tigers. One of the myths about medicinal tiger bone is that it will cure impotency. With Viagra being more accessible and less expensive, this could take some of the burden off the already dwindling tiger population.

At the beginning of the 20th century it is estimated that there were 100,000 wild tigers, including all subspecies; today the number is estimated at less than 8,000. As mentioned above, poaching is one problem. Other problems include population fragmentation – as human populations move into tiger territory, groups of tigers become separated from each other by villages and farms, and can no longer mate with tigers in nearby areas, and fear – many natives fear tigers will kill livestock or children and actively hunt tigers to keep them away from villages. Tiger interactions with humans have increased as habitat is lost and as major food sources for tigers disappear.



BIBLIOGRAPHY:

1. Tiger. American Zoo and Aquarium Species Survival Plan Fact Sheet. 1998. <<http://www.aza.org/programs/ssp/ssp.cfm?ssp=75&Pub=367>>
2. Nowak, Ronald M. Walker's Mammals of the World. 1991 ed. Vol. 2 London: John Hopkins University Press, 1991.

3. WILDLIFE FACT-FILE, 1996 ed. Group 1: Mammals. "Siberian Tiger."