

Leopards



Have you ever heard of an animal called a leopard? Maybe you've seen one at the zoo or learned about it at school. These big cats have light-colored fur that is covered in dark spots. They are known for being the strongest of the big cats. Sometimes they are mixed up with cheetahs, but they are not the same!

Leopards can be found in many parts of the world like India, China, and Africa. They can live anywhere from deserts to tropical places. Their dark spots help them blend with their surroundings. This is good because leopards are hunters. Their spots help them hide while they search for prey.

The leopard's main food source is meat. It hunts weaker animals in order to have food. Some of its favorite types of food include deer, pigs, and antelope. It will even hunt for fish and crabs in the water because unlike most cats, leopards love the water.

When a leopard catches an animal, it is strong enough to carry it up a tree. This is due to its powerful leg muscles. It can run up to 30 miles an hour, and it can jump forward about 20 feet. Its strong legs are a big help when it comes to hunting and climbing.

The tree is one of a leopard's favorite spots. It can often be found sleeping on large branches or even hunting their next meal from up above.

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Leopards are nocturnal animals. This means they prefer to sleep during the day and move around at night. They have amazing eyesight and can see much better in the dark than a human.

Being nocturnal is good for the leopard because it prefers to be alone most of the time. Males and females only get together when they are mating. Then, they go back to living apart. They speak to each other through growls, coughs, and even purrs when they're happy. They are cats, after all!

While most leopards have light fur with dark spots, there is a different type called the black leopard. It has dark fur with dark spots. It can be hard to see the spots because they blend into the rest of the fur.

Unfortunately, the leopard population has been going down in recent years. This means there are fewer leopards being born. This is especially true in the countries outside of Africa.

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- 1) Which word in the sentence means *to mistake something for something else*? Sometimes they are mixed up with cheetahs, but they are not the same!

- 2) Match each cause to its effect.

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| a) A leopard has powerful leg muscles. | ● | ● | It's difficult to see the spots. |
| b) The dark spots on the fur of the black leopard blend into the rest of the fur. | ● | ● | They hunt for fish and crabs. |
| c) Unlike most cats, leopards love the water. | ● | ● | It can run up to 30 miles an hour. |

- 3) What is the difference between to *prefer* and to *like*?

- 4) Where can leopards be found?

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- 5) Read the third paragraph again, and identify which details below are included in it.
- a) Leopards are the only cats that hunt for fish and crabs.
 - b) Leopards mainly eat meat rather than anything else.
 - c) Leopards are greatly fond of eating deer and pigs.