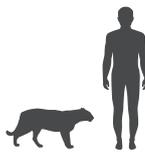


FISHING CAT



DESCRIPTION

The fishing cat's coat is a camouflaged grey-brown with distinctive black spots and stripes. Its cheeks have white highlights and black marks, and its eyes are ringed with white fur. The ears are short and round, and the back of the ears are black. When viewed from the front, they have a distinctive white spot in the centre.

This cat is powerfully built with short limbs and a stocky body. Its head is round and elongated. Unlike many cats, fishing cats readily swim. Their front toes are partially webbed and their claws protrude slightly even when retracted. This facilitates the capture of prey, especially while underwater.

A compact, dense layer of fur right against the cat's skin is composed of tightly packed strands of hair, which prevents water from reaching the cat's skin, keeping it warm in chilly waters.

DIET

They will feed on small mammals and fish, reptiles and frogs. Anything that fits within their prey size.

BEHAVIOUR

Primarily a crepuscular species (active dawn and dusk) or nocturnal, very little is known of the social behaviour of wild fishing cats. They are most likely solitary, unless breeding or with young.

THREATS

Fishing Cats face many threats in South-east Asia. Their wetland habitat is being destroyed and fragmented. Conflict with humans over loss of livestock and being poached for bushmeat are all causing populations to decline.



FAST FACTS

Scientific Name: *Prionailurus viverrinus*

Conservation Status: Vulnerable

Body Length: 80 - 115cm (incl. tail)

Wild Population: < 10000

Weight: 6 - 16kg

Gestation: 63 - 70 days

Number of Young: 1 - 4

Habitat: Primarily found in densely vegetated water ways such as marshes, mangrove swamps and thickets.

Distribution: Found across Southeast Asia. Sri Lanka, India, Bangladesh and small populations in Vietnam and elsewhere.

