

A close-up, high-resolution photograph of a lion's face, focusing on its eyes, nose, and whiskers. The lion's fur is a mix of golden-brown and tan, with fine details visible in the texture. The eyes are a striking yellowish-gold color with dark pupils. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the contours of the face and the texture of the fur.

# WILDLIFE

- FINE ART -

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## African Lion (*panthera leo*)

The lion (*Panthera leo*) is a large cat of the genus *Panthera* native to Africa and India. It has a muscular, broad-chested body; short, rounded head; round ears; and a hairy tuft at the end of its tail. It is sexually dimorphic; adult male lions are larger than females and have a prominent mane. It is a social species, forming groups called *prides*. A lion's pride consists of a few adult males, related females, and cubs. Groups of female lions usually hunt together, preying mostly on large ungulates. The lion is an apex and keystone predator; although some lions scavenge when opportunities occur and have been known to hunt humans, lions typically do not actively seek out and prey on humans.





**African Lion (*panthera leo*)**

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The lion inhabits grasslands, savannas and shrublands. It is usually more diurnal than other wild cats, but when persecuted, it adapts to being active at night and at twilight. During the Neolithic period, the lion ranged throughout Africa and Eurasia from Southeast Europe to India, but it has been reduced to fragmented populations in sub-Saharan Africa and one population in western India. It has been listed as Vulnerable on the IUCN Red List since 1996 because populations in African countries have declined by about 43% since the early 1990s. Lion populations are untenable outside designated protected areas. Although the cause of the decline is not fully understood, habitat loss and conflicts with humans are the greatest causes for concern.

One of the most widely recognised animal symbols in human culture, the lion has been extensively depicted in sculptures and paintings, on national flags, and in contemporary films and literature. Lions have been kept in menageries since the time of the Roman Empire and have been a key species sought for exhibition in zoological gardens across the world since the late 18th century. Cultural depictions of lions were prominent in Ancient Egypt, and depictions have occurred in virtually all ancient and medieval cultures in the lion's historic and current range.



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## **Cantabrian Brown Bear (*ursus arctos arctos*)**

The Cantabrian brown bear or Iberian brown bear, or just Iberian bear (formerly *Ursus arctos pyrenaicus*) is a population of Eurasian brown bears (*Ursus arctos arctos*) living in the Cantabrian Mountains of Spain.

On average, females weigh 85 kg (187 lb), but can reach a weight of 150 kg (330 lb). Males average 115 kg (254 lb), though they can weigh as much as 200 kg (440 lb). The bear measures between 1.6 and 2 m (5.2 and 6.6 ft) in length, and between 0.90 and 1 m (3.0 and 3.3 ft) at shoulder height. In Spain, it is known as the Oso pardo cantábrico and, more locally, in Asturias as Osu. It is timid and will avoid human contact whenever possible. The Cantabrian brown bear can live for around 25–30 years in the wild, with the exception of man.



### **Giant Panda (*ailuropoda melanoleuca*)**

The giant panda (*Ailuropoda melanoleuca*; Chinese: 大熊猫; pinyin: dàxióngmāo), also known as the panda bear (or simply the panda), is a bear native to South Central China. It is characterised by its bold black-and-white coat and rotund body. The name "giant panda" is sometimes used to distinguish it from the red panda, a neighboring musteloid.



## Giant Panda (*ailuropoda melanoleuca*)

Though it belongs to the order Carnivora, the giant panda is a folivore, with bamboo shoots and leaves making up more than 99% of its diet. Giant pandas in the wild will occasionally eat other grasses, wild tubers, or even meat in the form of birds, rodents, or carrion. In captivity, they may receive honey, eggs, fish, yams, shrub leaves, oranges, or bananas along with specially prepared food.





## Red Panda (*Ailurus fulgens*)

The red panda (*Ailurus fulgens*), also known as the lesser panda, is a small mammal native to the eastern Himalayas and southwestern China. It has dense reddish-brown fur with a black belly and legs, white-lined ears, a mostly white muzzle and a ringed tail. Its head-to-body length is 51–63.5 cm (20.1–25.0 in) with a 28–48.5 cm (11.0–19.1 in) tail, and it weighs between 3.2 and 15 kg (7.1 and 33.1 lb). It is well adapted to climbing due to its flexible joints and curved semi-retractile claws.

The red panda was first formally described in 1825. The two currently recognized subspecies, the Himalayan and the Chinese red panda, genetically diverged about 250,000 years ago. The red panda's place on the evolutionary tree has been debated, but modern genetic evidence places it in close affinity with raccoons, weasels, and skunks. It is not closely related to the giant panda, which is a bear, though both possess elongated wrist bones or "false thumbs" used for grasping bamboo. The evolutionary lineage of the red panda (*Ailuridae*) stretches back around 25 to 18 million years ago, as indicated by extinct fossil relatives found in Eurasia and North America.

The red panda inhabits coniferous forests as well as temperate broadleaf and mixed forests, favoring steep slopes with dense bamboo cover close to water sources. It is solitary and largely arboreal. It feeds mainly on bamboo shoots and leaves, but also on fruits and blossoms. Red pandas mate in early spring, with the females giving birth to litters of up to four cubs in summer. It is threatened by poaching as well as destruction and fragmentation of habitat due to deforestation. The species has been listed as Endangered on the IUCN Red List since 2015. It is protected in all range countries.



### **Golden Eagle (*aquila chrysaetos*)**

The golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*) is a bird of prey living in the Northern Hemisphere. It is the most widely distributed species of eagle. Like all eagles, it belongs to the family Accipitridae. They are one of the best-known birds of prey in the Northern Hemisphere.

## Golden Eagle (*aquila chrysaetos*)

These birds are dark brown, with lighter golden-brown plumage on their napes. Immature eagles of this species typically have white on the tail and often have white markings on the wings. Golden eagles use their agility and speed combined with powerful feet and large, sharp talons to hunt a variety of prey, mainly hares, rabbits, and marmots and other ground squirrels.





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## **Bearded Vulture (*Gypaetus barbatus*)**

The bearded vulture (*Gypaetus barbatus*), also known as the lammergeier and ossifrage, is a very large bird of prey and the only member of the genus *Gypaetus*. Traditionally considered an Old World vulture, it actually forms a separate minor lineage of Accipitridae together with the Egyptian vulture (*Neophron percnopterus*), its closest living relative. It is not much more closely related to the Old World vultures proper than to, for example, hawks, and differs from the former by its feathered neck. Although dissimilar, the Egyptian and bearded vulture each have a lozenge-shaped tail—unusual among birds of prey. It is vernacularly known as Homa, a divine bird in Iranian mythology.

The bearded vulture population is thought to be in decline; in 2004, it was classified on the IUCN Red List as least concern but has been listed as near threatened since 2014. It lives and breeds on crags in high mountains in southern Europe, East Africa, the Indian subcontinent, Tibet, and the Caucasus. Females lay one or two eggs in mid-winter that hatch at the beginning of spring. The bearded vulture is the only known vertebrate whose diet consists of 70–90% bone.





## **Andean Condor (*vultur gryphus*)**

The Andean condor (*Vultur gryphus*) is a giant South American Cathartid vulture and is the only member of the genus *Vultur*. Found in the Andes mountains and adjacent Pacific coasts of western South America, the Andean condor is the largest flying bird in the world by combined measurement of weight and wingspan. It has a maximum wingspan of 3.3 m (10 ft 10 in) and weight of 15 kg (33 lb). It is generally considered as the largest bird of prey in the world.

It is a large black vulture with a ruff of white feathers surrounding the base of the neck and, especially in the male, large white patches on the wings. The head and neck are nearly featherless, and are a dull red color, which may flush and therefore change color in response to the bird's emotional state. In the male, there is a wattle on the neck and a large, dark red comb or caruncle on the crown of the head. The female condor is smaller than the male, an exception to the rule among birds of prey.

The condor is primarily a scavenger, feeding on carrion. It prefers large carcasses, such as those of deer or cattle. It reaches sexual maturity at five or six years of age and nests at elevations of up to 5,000 m (16,000 ft), generally on inaccessible rock ledges. One or two eggs are usually laid. It is one of the world's longest-living birds, with a lifespan of over 70 years in some cases.

The Andean condor is a national symbol of Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru and plays an important role in the folklore and mythology of the Andean regions. The Andean condor is considered vulnerable by the IUCN. It is threatened by habitat loss and by secondary poisoning from lead in carcasses killed by hunters. Captive breeding programs have been instituted in several countries.

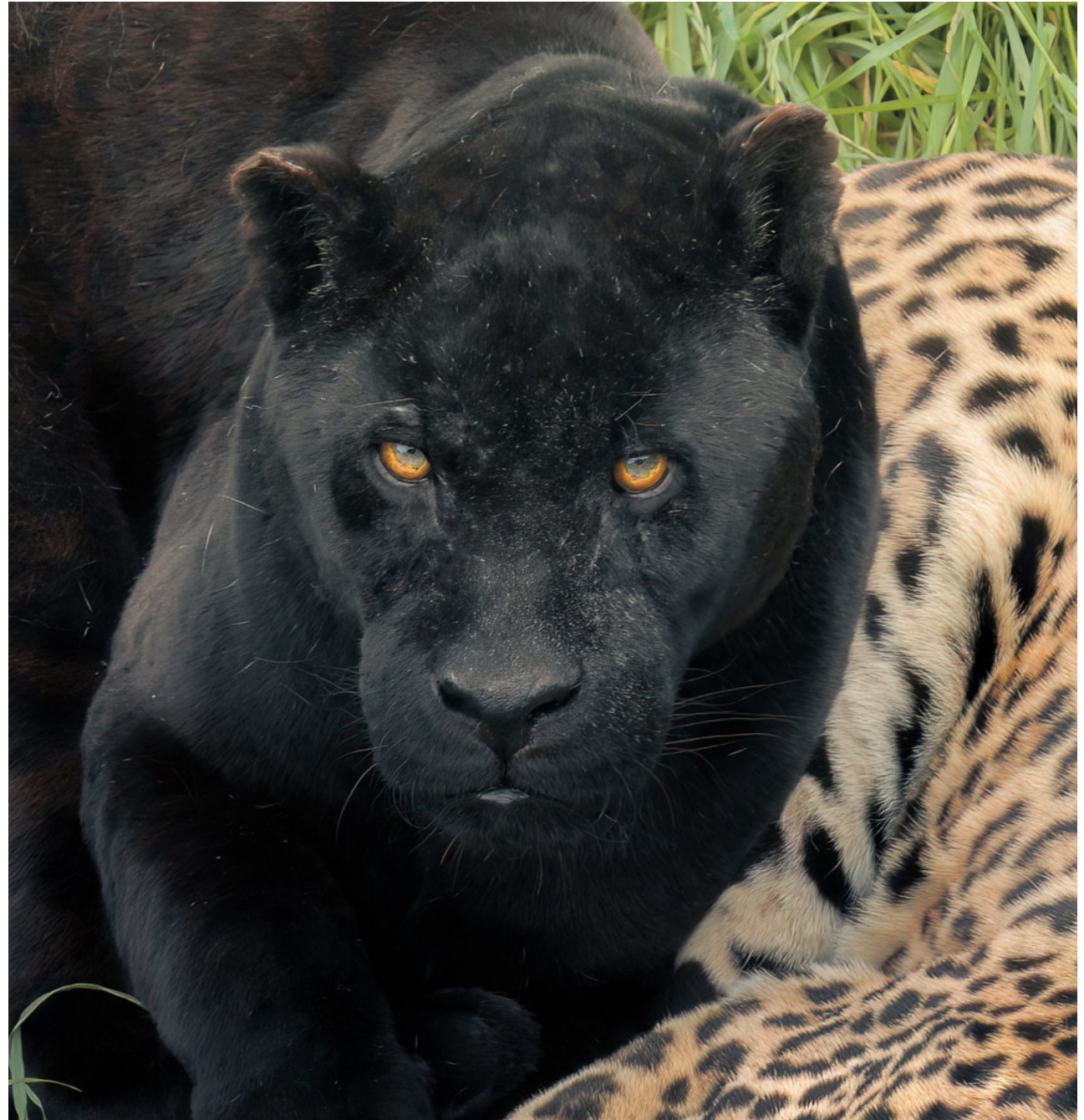
Jaguar (*panthera onca*)



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The jaguar (*Panthera onca*) is a large cat species and the only living member of the genus *Panthera* native to the Americas. With a body length of up to 1.85 m (6 ft 1 in) and a weight of up to 158 kg (348 lb), it is the largest cat species in the Americas and the third largest in the world. Its distinctively marked coat features pale yellow to tan colored fur covered by spots that transition to rosettes on the sides, although a melanistic black coat appears in some individuals. The jaguar's powerful bite allows it to pierce the carapaces of turtles and tortoises, and to employ an unusual killing method: it bites directly through the skull of mammalian prey between the ears to deliver a fatal blow to the brain.

The modern jaguar's ancestors probably entered the Americas from Eurasia during the Early Pleistocene via the land bridge that once spanned the Bering Strait. Today, the jaguar's range extends from core Southwestern United States across Mexico and much of Central America, the Amazon rainforest and south to Paraguay and northern Argentina. It inhabits a variety of forested and open terrains, but its preferred habitat is tropical and subtropical moist broadleaf forest, wetlands and wooded regions. It is adept at swimming and is largely a solitary, opportunistic, stalk-and-ambush apex predator. As a keystone species, it plays an important role in stabilizing ecosystems and in regulating prey populations.



A black panther is the melanistic colour variant of the leopard (*Panthera pardus*) and the jaguar (*Panthera onca*). Black panthers of both species have excess black pigments, but their typical rosettes are also present. They have been documented mostly in tropical forests, with black leopards in Kenya, India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Thailand, Peninsular Malaysia and Java, and black jaguars of the Americas in Mexico, Panama, Costa Rica, Brazil and Paraguay. Melanism is caused by a recessive allele in the leopard, and by a dominant allele in the jaguar.



## **Bengal Tiger (*panthera tigris tigris*)**

The Bengal tiger is a population of the *Panthera tigris tigris* subspecies and the nominate Tiger subspecies. It ranks among the biggest wild cats alive today. It is considered to belong to the world's charismatic megafauna.

The tiger is estimated to have been present in the Indian subcontinent since the Late Pleistocene, for about 12,000 to 16,500 years. Today, it is threatened by poaching, loss and fragmentation of habitat, and was estimated at comprising fewer than 2,500 wild individuals by 2011. None of the *Tiger Conservation Landscapes* within its range is considered large enough to support an effective population of more than 250 adult individuals.

The Bengal tiger's historical range covered the Indus River valley until the early 19th century, almost all of India, Pakistan, southern Nepal, Bangladesh, Bhutan and southwestern China. Today, it inhabits India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan and southwestern China. India's tiger population was estimated at 2,603–3,346 individuals by 2018. Around 300–500 individuals are estimated in Bangladesh, 355 in Nepal by 2022, and 90 individuals in Bhutan by 2015.

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