

## Jaguars

Jaguars are the largest cats in South America. When you think of a jaguar, you probably think of a golden brown spotted coat. While most jaguars have this color and pattern, some of these cats are reddish-brown or black with spotted coats, and a few are solid black. Jaguars look something like leopards, but they are actually more closely related to tigers. They are one of four cats in the Panthera genus that also includes tigers, lions and leopards.

Jaguars live in rainforests, and they enjoy swimming, which is somewhat unusual for cats. They have bites so powerful that their teeth can cut through the shells of reptiles. Jaguars have short, sturdy legs unlike other wild cats. This makes them more suited to sneaking up on prey rather than chasing and outrunning it. Jaguars are very good climbers and can crawl very close to the ground to stalk their prey. They also have excellent eyesight and hearing.

Jaguars are carnivores; they eat only meat. These animals are at the top of the food chain and are not hunted themselves. There are more than 85 species of animals that are prey to jaguars. Both male and female jaguars hunt, but males travel longer distances to find prey. Jaguars hunt mostly at dawn and at dusk.

Jaguars are loners. While cubs will stay with their mothers for about a year or two, most adult jaguars keep to themselves. Each jaguar will find its own territory and guard it from invasion by other jaguars. They communicate with each other by making different sounds. For example, a jaguar will warn other jaguars to stay out of its territory by roaring. They also make mewing and grunting sounds. Male jaguars have territories that are more than twice the size of females' territories. When male jaguars find mates, they will sometimes get into physical fights with other males over their females, but this is rare. Most jaguars prefer to avoid each other and stay out of each other's way.

## Jaguars Questions

1. Jaguars are
  - a. golden brown with spotted coats.
  - b. black with spotted coats.
  - c. solid black.
  - d. All of these
  
2. Jaguars are part of the group (genus) of cats known as Panthera. Which cat is not included in that group?
  - a. tigers
  - b. lions
  - c. bobcats
  - d. leopards
  
3. Which big cats are most closely related to jaguars?
  - a. tigers
  - b. lions
  - c. bobcats
  - d. leopards
  
4. Which of the following is not a behavior of jaguars?
  - a. They swim.
  - b. They stalk their prey.
  - c. They run very fast.
  - d. They are good climbers.
  
5. Jaguars have
  - a. excellent eyesight and poor hearing.
  - b. excellent hearing and poor eyesight.
  - c. poor eyesight and poor hearing.
  - d. excellent eyesight and excellent hearing.

### Jaguars Questions (Cont'd)

6. Jaguars
  - a. have many predators.
  - b. are at the top of the food chain.
  - c. eat only a few kinds of meat.
  - d. eat both meat and plants.
  
7. Jaguars
  - a. are loners and mostly keep to themselves.
  - b. live in groups called prides.
  - c. often fight with each other.
  - d. are nomads, so they rarely stay in one place for long.
  
8. A jaguar might warn other jaguars to stay out of its territory by
  - a. chasing the other jaguars away.
  - b. pacing back and forth.
  - c. roaring.
  - d. barking.
  
9. Baby jaguars
  - a. become loners right away.
  - b. stay with their mothers for a year or two.
  - c. stay with their mothers until they are old enough to mate.
  - d. hunt with their fathers as soon as they can walk.
  
10. Which statement is true?
  - a. Male and female jaguars have territories that are about the same size.
  - b. A male jaguar's territory is larger than a female's.
  - c. Female jaguars have larger territories than males because they need extra space for their cubs.
  - d. Jaguars are not territorial.

Name \_\_\_\_\_



Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Jaguars Answers

1. d
2. c
3. a
4. c
5. d
6. b
7. a
8. c
9. b
10. b