

# Ocelot

**Scientific Name:**

*Leopardus pardalis*

**Range:**

Areas of Mexico south through the rainforest of Brazil, Venezuela, Columbia, and Peru

**Habitat:**

Areas with dense plant/shrub cover

**Average Size:**

Body Length: 21-39 inches  
Body-Tail Length: 32-56 inches  
Weight: 24-35 pounds

**Lifespan:**

About 20 years

**Diet:**

Wild: Rodents, rabbits, young deer, peccaries, birds, snakes and fish

Zoo: Meat, beef heart, bones and chicken

**Reproduction:**

Gestation: 70 days

Litter size: Usually 2, but maybe as many as four

**Appearance:**

The coat of the Ocelot is one of the most beautiful of any cat. Tawny gold with a variety of stripes, splotches and rosettes are arranged all over the body. Black stripes run from the corner of the eye to the outside of the cheek and the ears have a distinctive white spot.

**Predators:**

Humans

**Population Status:**

Least Concern-Some subspecies considered endangered.



Species Survival Plan



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**About the Animal:**

Ocelots are specialized night hunters. The spotted coats provide excellent camouflage as they move through heavy brush in search of food. They have excellent eyesight and a keen sense of smell to help them track their prey. They prefer to wait for the darkest part of the night to hunt.

Ocelots tend to be solitary in their habits, and will aggressively defend their territory against intruders.

Despite this antisocial tendency, Ocelots spend quite a bit of time communicating with others of their species through scent marking, as well as through meows, growls, screams and yowling.

The Ocelot's front paws are large and flat. This allows them to walk silently through the forest as well as be adept swimmers. In fact, Ocelots are excellent swimmers and will voluntarily take to the water to chase prey and cool off.

At one time this species was endangered, as it was hunted for its beautiful fur as well as for the pet trade. Strict protection laws are now in place in an attempt to help the wild population recover. However, continued degradation and fragmentation of the dense brush cover habitat they prefer are causing a slow decline in the population.

**Mating and Reproduction:**

Most kittens are born during the autumn, and the female is solely responsible for their care. Kittens may stay with the mother for up to a year, especially if female.

**Amazing Information:**

Ocelots are picky eaters – they will actually remove all the feathers or fur from a prey item before eating.



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