



JAGUARS

Panthera onca



Key Facts:

Jaguar's home range span from Mexico to Argentina; however, 40 percent of its geographic range has contracted, and the species is completely extirpated from El Salvador and Uruguay.

The word 'jaguar' comes from the indigenous word 'yaguar', which means 'he who kills with one leap'. A jaguar's fur is usually tan and orange with black spots, called "rosettes". The pattern of spots can be used to identify individuals, like a fingerprint.

Jaguars are sacred animals for their natural instinct as a top predator. In the Maya Culture, jaguars are portrayed in the Maya Deer Dance and folklore. For the ancient Mayans, jaguars represent strength, divinity, and domain, a sign of power for Mayans. Jaguars are also represented as Balam, a Mayan jaguar god.

The elusive jaguar is an indicator of a healthy ecosystem. They play an important role in controlling prey populations in the forest food web and help maintain a healthy ecosystem. Conserving habitat for jaguars will not only be beneficial to the species but will provide people with ecosystem goods and services.

Tourists come to Belize just to see the majestic jaguar. Ecotourism is growing as a way for many Belizeans to generate income. For example, the Belize Zoo has jaguars in captivity which serve as ambassadors for their species in public education and awareness.



IUCN Red List

Least Concern	Near Threatened	Vulnerable	Endangered	Critically Endangered
Near Threatened is a species inclined to be threatened with extinction but not qualify for the threatened status under the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List.				



Direct Threats:

Human-Jaguar Conflict

Habitat Loss

Overhunting of Prey Species

Poaching