

Fishing Cat

Scientific Name: *Prionailurus viverrinus*

Class: Mammalia

Order: Carnivora

Family: Felidae



This robust-looking cat has a deep-chested body and comparatively short legs. The front toes are partially webbed and the claws protrude slightly even when retracted because the claw sheaths are not fully developed. Only two other cats cannot fully retract their claws -- the cheetah and the flat-headed cat. Small rounded ears are set well back on the large, broad head. The short, coarse fur is grizzled gray or olive-brown and covered with small black spots. The markings sometimes run in longitudinal lines or rows. Large males may weigh 24 to 27 lb. while females are 13 to 15.5 lb. Head and body length is 25.5 to 34 in. The thick, muscular tail is less than 1/3 this length. Fishing cats have been seen crouching on rocks and sandbanks, using their paw to scoop out fish. They've also been observed to seize fish with their mouths.

Range

India, Sri Lanka, southern Himalayas, Bangladesh, Vietnam, Thailand, Burma, China, Sumatra and Java

Habitat

Areas of thick cover near water, in marshes, mangroves and densely vegetated areas along rivers and streams

Gestation

63-68 days

Litter

1-4

Behavior

Nothing is known about their social system, though it is believed they're solitary. Reports from zoos indicate that they're usually tolerant of one another so that several adults can be kept in the same enclosure. Fishing cats have been seen crouching on rocks and sandbanks, using their paw to scoop out fish. They've also been observed to seize fish with their mouths.

Reproduction

The young suckle until they're about 6 months old and by 8.5 months they are adult sized. Kittens have been seen in the wild in April and June. Eyes open by 16 days and first meat is eaten at 53 days.

Wild Diet

Fish, crustaceans, mollusks, frogs, birds, small mammals, snakes, snails