

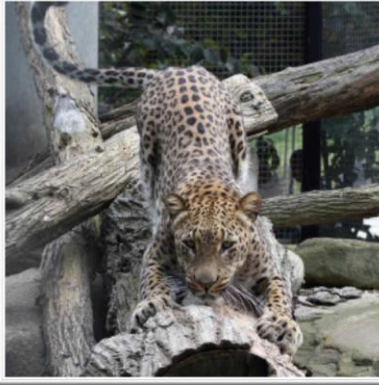
# Persian Leopard

**Scientific Name:** *Panthera pardus saxicolor*

**Class:** Mammalia

**Order:** Carnivora

**Family:** Felidae



Head & body length is 3.5 to 6 ft. Shoulder height is 1.5 to 2.5 ft. and weight is 66 to 155 lbs. Males are larger and heavier than females. The coat is variable, essentially black spots on a fawn to pale-fawn background; inside of spots may be rust-colored. Persian leopards are more densely haired, with finer hair, and are more cold-tolerant than *Panthera pardus* of Africa and India. The hindlimbs are larger than the forelimbs to facilitate jumping. Forward-looking eyes allow for depth perception and the ability to isolate and capture prey. The forepaws are equipped with long, retractile claws to grab and hold prey. The rough tongue is designed to peel the skin of the prey animal away from the flesh, and the flesh from the bone. This is a solitary animal, seeking a mate only during the breeding season. They are nocturnal, doing their hunting at

night, and rest during the day. Leopards are considered the best stalkers among the big cats. They close in silently, attack swiftly, then usually drag their catch into a tree for safekeeping. They are strong swimmers, but are not as fond of water as the tiger. Their eyesight is keen, and their sense of smell is better developed than that of the tiger. They are territorial, marking primarily with urine or calls. Their roar sounds like a saw rasping on coarse wood. They are good climbers. The cubs are born blind and fur-covered, and are kept hidden from 6 to 8 weeks.

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## Range

Northern Iran and Northwestern Afghanistan

## Habitat

Mountainous steppe & coniferous forest

## Gestation

90 to 105 days

## Litter

1 - 3

## Behavior

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## Reproduction

Females reach sexual maturity at about two and a half years of age. Leopards have no particular breeding season, and females are receptive at 3 to 7 week intervals. The cubs are born blind and fur-covered, and are kept hidden from 6 to 8 weeks. They mature at about 2.5 years.

## Wild Diet

Wild goats, sheep, fallow deer, elk, birds and swine