



OCELOT – FACT SHEET

Felis Paradalis

Status: Endangered

Distribution: Mexico, Central and South America

Habitat: Humid tropical forests to arid desert habitats

Diet: Rodents, rabbits, young deer, monkeys, javelin, birds, snakes and fish (wild)

Diet: Commercial feline diet, chicken with feathers, rats (captivity)

Length: 48 to 64 inches

Weight: 25 – 35 pounds

Reproduction: Ocelots have more trouble recovering from low populations than jaguars and bobcats. This is due to a long gestation of 70 days and small litters of two to four. Their reproduction is non-seasonal, however. Females teach young to hunt starting at 3 months but remain under supervision of mother until one year old. Young males find new territory when they are ready to leave their mothers of fight to death for another males' territory.

Longevity: 7-10 years in wild; 20 years in zoos

General Description: The ocelot is a medium-size, short-hair cat. Its coat tends to be more blotched than spotted and the chain-like blotches and spots are bordered with black, but have a lighter colored center. These markings run the entire length of the cat. The ground color varies from whitish or tawny yellow through reddish gray to gray. The underside is white and the backs of the ears are black with a central yellow spot. These distinctive markings serve as camouflage. Unfortunately, the ocelot is hunted for the beauty of its coat.

Behavior: Hides in the forest and brush. Ocelots are more social than other wild small cats in that the cubs sometime spend time with the male. It hunts at night and swims well. This cat uses lower tree branches to hunt birds, bats, and snakes. Ocelots can travel 1-5 miles in a single night. They are seldom seen.

Did you know? Ocelots once lived as far east as Louisiana but their habitat has been reduced by agriculture. Today only about 100 ocelots live in South Texas. Overall, ocelot populations are high in Central and South America. Two subspecies from southeast Texas and Brazil; however, are close to extinction. Habitat loss due to agriculture and the lumber industry has severely reduced ocelot numbers in the lower Rio Grande Valley and the rain forests of Brazil. Hunting and the illegal pet trade are also a threat to this cat.

Where can you find them? In zoos, as part of species survival plans (an SSP like the one at the Santa Ana Zoo) and in the natural habitat.