

FISHING CAT FACTFILE



NAME	Fishing Cat
SCIENTIFIC NAME	<i>Prionailurus viverrinus</i>
GEOGRAPHIC RANGE	Patches across South and South East Asia. Countries include India, Thailand, Sri Lanka and Nepal.
HABITAT	Wetland habitats, mangroves, marshlands, rivers and streams.
LIFESPAN	Average approx. 12 years
WEIGHT	5– 16kg
DIET	Predominantly fish but also include rodents and birds.
WILD POPULATION	Approx 3,000 individuals.

IUCN RED LIST STATUS



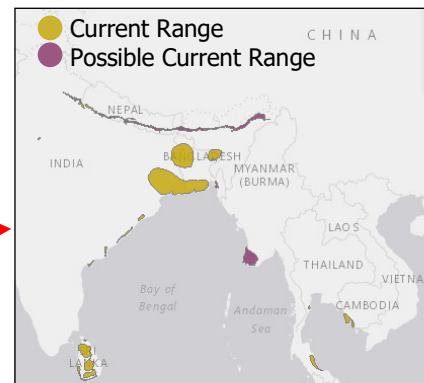
A high risk of becoming extinct in the wild.



GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Fishing cats are specially adapted for wetlands. They are powerful cats with short limbs and a stocky body. The front toes of the fishing cat are partially webbed and their claws are only semi retractable, meaning they find it easier to catch prey, particularly underwater. The structure of fur on a fishing cat also helps it live a semi-aquatic life. They have a dense layer of tightly packed hairs against the skin preventing water from reaching this area, keeping them warm. Longer 'guard' hairs give the fishing cat its colour pattern, helping it to camouflage.

Fishing cats are a solitary species, and are mainly nocturnal. They have white rings lining their eyes, illuminating them, allowing fishing cats to see better when hunting at night. Fishing cats feed on whatever is available, but this largely comprises of fish. In the wild fishing cats sit at the edge of bodies of water, and then either dive in head first to catch fish or scoop their prey out with their claws.



FISHING CAT RANGE

THREATS

- **Habitat Loss and Fragmentation**— the destruction of wetlands because of human settlement, drainage for agriculture, pollution and wood-cutting. Aquaculture in the form of shrimp farms is of particular concern to fishing cat populations. Deforestation for logging also reduces the land's ability to recharge its water supply and maintain soil health. Without trees and natural vegetation, silt accumulates too quickly eroding waterways, washing downstream and settling in bodies of still water. This alters the landscape by filling in marshes and wetlands, isolating fishing cat populations.
- **Prey depletion**— mainly due to unsustainable fishing practices. Effluent, trash, chemical pollution and agricultural runoff also results in polluted water sources, killing or contaminating fish.
- **Poaching**— fishing cats are poached for their fur and in some areas poached for the bush meat trade. Fishing cats are also poached to prevent livestock predation.
- **Traffic collisions**— roads cross through essential habitat and as a result collisions with fishing cats are becoming more frequent.

