

Pallas Cat

Octocolobus manul



ANIMAL FACTS



*Image courtesy of Frontier
Photography by Kevin Rangel*

Physical Characteristics

- These smaller cats have long, shaggy fur. Their heads are small and spherical, legs are short and stocky, and their tails are of moderate length. Their face is broad and flattened with large eyes and long whiskers.
- Coloration: Their coat color varies between gray, yellow, and white. It appears more gray in the winter and more brownish-yellow with pronounced patterns in summer. There are six to seven black transverse stripes dorsally, a gray tail with a small black tip, and darkened chest and neck.

Size

- Length: Body length is 20-25 in., tail length is 8-12 in.
- Weight: 5.5 to 11 lbs.

Lifespan

- Wild: average of 2.5 years
- Zoos: Up to 12 years

Behaviors

- Crepuscular (active at dawn and dusk)
- Solitary
- Terrestrial
- Males have a home range that is four to five times larger than a female in order to increase their chances of finding a mate. Female home ranges are smaller to keep her litter safe and close to the den.
- Pallas's cats mark territory by spraying and cheek rubbing. Although unconfirmed, it is likely to provide information between individuals to reduce the likelihood of hostile encounters.

Diet

- Wild: Mainly pikas, supplemented with small rodents, birds, and insects
- Zoo: carnivore diet, rodents

Reproduction

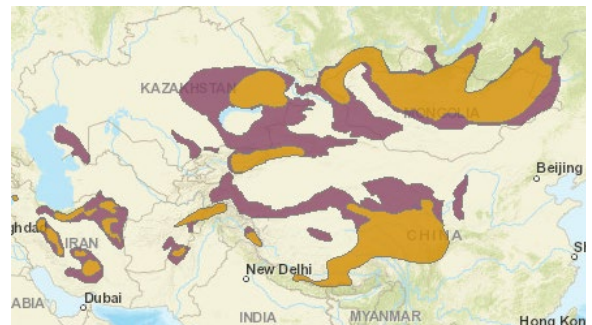
- Breeding Behaviors: A solitary lifestyle and an extremely short period of annual female fertility (estrus occurs for only 26-42 hours) makes breeding among these cats difficult. Breeding occurs between February and March with kittens being born in April or May.
- Gestation Period: 74-75 days
- Litter Size: 3 to 4 kittens
- Parenting: Females are the sole caregiver. Kittens remain in the den for two months until molting into their adult coat after which they continue to follow their mother for an additional 2-3 months before they disperse.

Habitat and Range

- Habitat: Temperate grassland, shrublands, and mountains of central Asia.
- Range: Broad distribution across central Asia and are abundant in Mongolia and the Tibetan Plateau.

Conservation

- IUCN Status: Near threatened
- Contributing factors: Threats include habitat loss, pika/rodent control programs decreasing available prey, secondary poisoning, and direct threats by humans and their dogs.



Classification

- Kingdom: Animalia
- Phylum: Chordata
- Class: Mammalia
- Order: Carnivora
- Family: Felidae
- Genus: *Octocolobus*
- Species: *O. manul*

Interesting Facts

- **Shaggy Cat** - Pallas's cats have the longest, densest fur of any cat, with the hair on their bellies and tails being twice as long as on their back and sides.
- **Looks can be deceiving** - Using their stocky build and long, dense coats to appear much larger than they actually are, a mature Pallas cat is roughly the same size as a domestic cat.
- **Grumpy face** – People have observed that the face of the Pallas's cat looks grumpy or upset. Unfortunately, that is what every Pallas's cat face looks like. This observation has occurred since it was first seen and named. In fact, the Pallas cat's scientific genus, *Otocolobus*, means 'disfigured or ugly-eared.'
- **Which Den?** They live mostly in rocky and ravine areas, using abandoned animal burrows for shelter. They utilize three types of dens - summer, maternal, and winter.