

Name: _____

The Beautiful, Powerful Jaguar



By Guy Belleranti

What beautiful cat lives in North and South America and is bigger and tougher than a leopard or mountain lion? If you said jaguar, you're right. The only cat species that are larger are the



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blend in among the vegetation and shadows. Black jaguars, meanwhile, blend in better in the darkest forests and jungles.

Like tigers, jaguars live alone most of their lives. Baby jaguars are born in litters of one to four and stay with their very protective mother for two years while they learn to hunt. Then they leave to establish their own territory, marking it with their waste or by clawing marks in trees.

Also like tigers, jaguars love water. They'll sit half-submerged in a cool rainforest stream or pond waiting for prey. Sometimes jaguars will even climb trees to await unsuspecting prey wandering below.

They'll catch water animals like caiman (a relative of alligators and crocodiles), fish, frogs, and turtles. Other times, they'll hunt on land. They'll pounce on tapir, peccaries, capybara, or deer with one quick leap.

A jaguar's bite is so strong, it can even chomp through tortoise shells. They've even been observed using their jaws to drag heavy prey for over a mile.



People often confuse leopards with jaguars. Both are beautiful, spotted cats. However, there are several important differences. Leopards live in Asia and Africa, while jaguars are native to the Americas. Also, jaguars are much bigger. They have heavier chests



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However, these beautiful cats are still illegally hunted for their fur and because they are a threat to ranchers' livestock.

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1. How long do baby jaguars stay with their mothers before going off on their own?
- a. 1 year b. 2 years



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3. Which cat species is smaller than a jaguar?
- a. African lion b. Asiatic lion
c. tiger d. mountain lion
4. What has caused jaguars to become endangered?

5. Which statement is *not* true?
- a. Jaguars can climb trees.
b. Jaguars can sometimes be found in streams or ponds.
c. Jaguars live in large groups throughout most of their lives.
d. Jaguars have stronger jaws than most other animals.

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The scrambled words below are vocabulary words from the article. Unscramble each word and write it on the line. Please be sure each word is spelled correctly.



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4. _____

hint: common; in great number

a h t a t b i

hint: place where an animal lives

5. _____

y a i l l e l l g

hint: doing something against the law

6. _____

f a i l b e u t u

hint: antonym for ugly

7. _____

r e l s i t t

hint: groups of baby cats that are born at the same time

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5. Which statement is not true?

- a. Jaguars can climb trees.
- b. Jaguars can sometimes be found in streams or ponds.
- c. Jaguars live in large groups throughout most of their lives.**
- d. Jaguars have stronger jaws than most other animals.

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7. _____ **litters**

hint: antonym for ugly

r e l s i t t

*hint: groups of baby cats that are born at the
same time*