
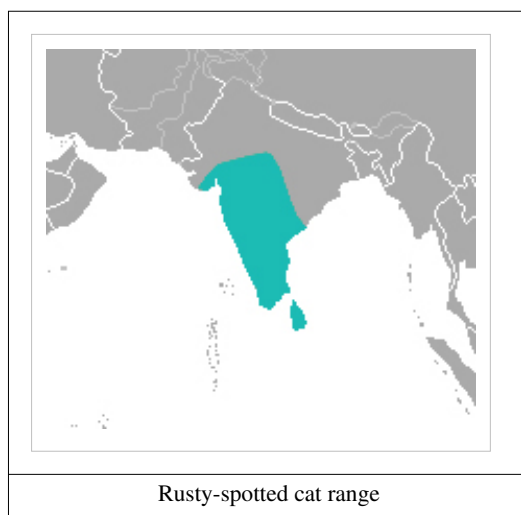


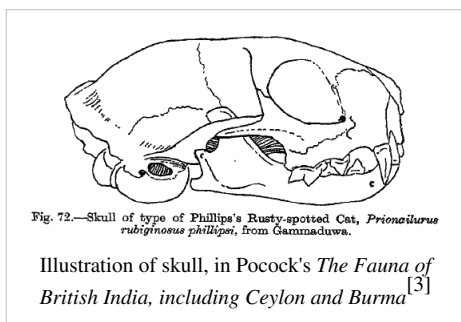
Rusty-spotted Cat

Rusty-spotted Cat ^[1]	
	
Conservation status	
<div><div>Extinct</div><div>Threatened</div><div>Least Concern</div><div><div>EX</div><div>EW</div><div>CR</div><div>EN</div><div>VU</div><div>NT</div><div>LC</div></div></div> <p>Vulnerable (IUCN 3.1)^[2]</p>	
Scientific classification	
Kingdom:	Animalia
Phylum:	Chordata
Class:	Mammalia
Order:	Carnivora
Family:	Felidae
Genus:	<i>Prionailurus</i>
Species:	<i>P. rubiginosus</i>
Binomial name	
<i>Prionailurus rubiginosus</i> Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire, 1831	



The **Rusty-spotted Cat** (*Prionailurus rubiginosus*) is the cat family's smallest member and found only in India and Sri Lanka.^[3] It has been listed as Vulnerable by IUCN in 2002 as the total effective population size is below 10,000 mature individuals, with a declining trend due to habitat loss, and no subpopulation containing more than 1,000 mature breeding individuals.^[2]

Characteristics



The rusty-spotted cat rivals the Black-footed Cat as the world's smallest wild cat. It is 35 to 48 cm (14 to 19 in) in length, with a 15 to 30 cm (5.9 to 12 in) tail, and weighs only 0.9 to 1.6 kg (2.0 to 3.5 lb). The short fur is grey over most of the body, with rusty spots over the back and flanks, while the underbelly is white with large dark spots. The darker colored tail is thick and about half the length of the body, and the spots are less distinct. There are six dark streaks on each side of the head, extending over the cheeks and forehead.^[4]

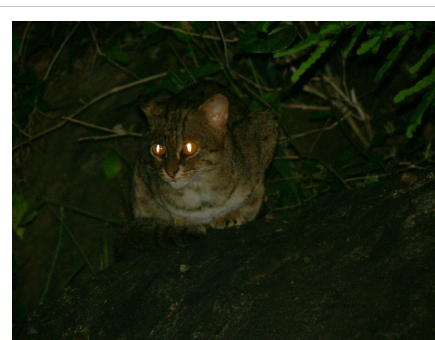
Distribution and habitat

Rusty-spotted cats have a relatively restricted distribution. They mainly occur in moist and dry deciduous forests as well as scrub and grassland, but are likely absent from evergreen forest.^[5] They prefer dense vegetation and rocky areas.^{[6] [7]}

Distribution of subspecies

Two subspecies are recognized:^[1]

- *Prionailurus rubiginosus rubiginosus* — lives in India
- *Prionailurus rubiginosus phillipsi* — lives Sri Lanka



Rusty-spotted cat in its natural habitat in southern India

In India, they were long thought to be confined to the south, but records have established that they are found over much of the country.^[5] They were observed in the Gir Wildlife Sanctuary and National Park, in the Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve in Maharashtra, on India's east coast, and in eastern Gujarat.^{[7] [8] [9] [10]} Camera trapping revealed

their presence in the Pilibhit Tiger Reserve in the Indian Terai and in the Nagzira Wildlife Sanctuary in Maharashtra.^[11] ^[12] In western Maharashtra, there is a breeding population of rusty-spotted cats in a human dominated agricultural landscape, where rodent densities are high.^[13] In July and August 2011, camera trap stations recorded the feline also in Corbett Tiger reserve in Uttarakhand.^[14]

In Sri Lanka, there are a few records from montane and lowland rainforest. There are two distinct populations, one in the dry zone and the other in the wet zone.^[15]

Ecology and behaviour

The rusty-spotted cat is nocturnal and partly arboreal, spending the day sleeping in dense cover or shelter such as hollow logs. It feeds mainly on rodents and birds, but may also take lizards, frogs, or insects. They hunt primarily on the ground, making rapid, darting movements to catch their prey; they apparently venture into the trees primarily to escape larger predators rather than for food. As with other cats, they mark their territory by spraying urine.^[4]

Reproduction

Oestrus lasts five days, and mating is unusually brief. Since the cat is likely to be vulnerable during this period, its brevity may be an adaptation to help it avoid larger predators. The mother prepares a den in a secluded location, and gives birth to one or two kittens after a 65-70 day gestation. At birth, the kittens weigh just 60 to 77 g (2.1 to 2.7 oz), and are marked with rows of black spots. The cat reaches sexual maturity at around 68 weeks, by which time it has developed the distinctive adult coat pattern of rusty blotches. Rusty-spotted cats have lived for twelve years in captivity, but their lifespan in the wild is unknown.^[4]

Threats

Habitat loss and the spread of cultivation are serious problems for wildlife in both India and Sri Lanka. Although there are several records of rusty-spotted cats from cultivated and settled areas, it is not known to what degree cat populations are able to persist in such areas. There have been occasional reports of rusty-spotted cat skins in trade.^[5] In some areas, they are hunted for food or as livestock pests.^[4]

Due to their affectionate nature they are taken in as a pet.^[16]

Conservation

The Indian population is listed on CITES Appendix I. The Sri Lankan population is included on CITES Appendix II. The species is fully protected over most of its range, with hunting and trade banned in India and Sri Lanka.^[2]

Local names

In Sri Lanka, the rusty-spotted cat is known as *Handun Diviya* (හඳුන් දිවියා) or *Kola Diviya* (කල දිවියා).^[5]

The terms 'Handun Diviya' and 'Kola Diviya' are also used by the local community to refer to the Fishing Cat. Both animals are nocturnal and elusive, and therefore it is difficult to determine, which cat is specifically referred to as 'Handun Diviya'.

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External links

- IUCN Cat Specialist Group: *Rusty-spotted Cat Prionailurus rubiginosus* (<http://www.catsg.org/catsgportal/cat-website/catfolk/rubig01.htm>)
- ARKive: *Rusty-spotted cat (Prionailurus rubiginosus)* (http://www.arkive.org/species/GES/mammals/Prionailurus_rubiginosus/)

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