

Black Pine Animal Park

Animal Facts

Breed: AFRICAN LEOPARD

Names / Sex / Age:

Chui Male 8

Previous Home: Born in captivity, placed at Black Pine when 2 weeks old in September, 2001. Rescued from the exotic pet trade.

Native to: Africa, primarily south of the Sahara. Nearly extinct in Western Africa due to poaching for their pelts. The number of Black African Leopards living in the wild is unknown.

Weight: 88 to 220 pounds. Males will weigh more than females. Chui currently weighs around 130 lbs.

Life Expectancy: In captivity, about 16-18 years. Around 8-10 in the wild.

Diet: In captivity, fed deer, beef and chicken. Prey in the wild includes small to medium size mammals, rodents (which make up the majority of their diet at about 35%), birds, baboons, snakes, lizards and insects.

Facts:

- African leopards have long bodies and are much stockier than the sleek cheetah
- Their spots are actually made of rosettes, not exact round spots
- Jaguars (native to So. America) are the leopards closest relative
- Leopard spots, when compared to the jaguar, have a more open rosette with no spot in the middle; jaguars have a larger head as well
- Black leopards, also called black phase leopards, carry a melanistic gene
- There is no such thing as a black panther, these are either leopards or jaguars
- Black leopards can be found in Malaysia, tropical forests of southeast Asia (Asian black leopard), and are scarcely found in Africa.
- At one time over 30 subspecies of leopard existed
- The African leopard's biggest enemy is the lion

Personal History:

Chui's name means leopard in Swahili. He was adopted directly from a private breeder in Missouri to help assure his future would not lie in the exotic pet trade where thousands of big cats wind up starving, improperly housed, and posing a threat to humans. Chui is neutered. He was hand-raised by members of the staff and, until the move to a new site in 2006, he was walked on a leash on a very regular basis. This activity provided great enrichment, but also enabled keepers to build a trusting relationship that aids even today in routine medical exams and his daily care. Free contact is no longer allowed for a variety of reasons all related to safety for the cat and humans. Chui loves getting sprayed by the water hose, biting at the water much like a dog would. Leopards are generally unpredictable, often reacting aggressively to strangers – hissing and growling. Chui tends to immediately dislike most men.

Updated 3/1/10