

About your adopted Leopard **Loli**



scientific name *Panthera pardus*

Swahili name *Chui*

Biological significance:

Leopards are most easily recognized by their rosette-patterned coats and extremely long tails. Sometimes confused with South America's jaguar, leopards are less stocky and their rosette markings are generally smaller and have no internal spots. There are subspecies of leopard still surviving in many parts of Africa, the Middle East, and Asia, where, for instance, the snow leopard can be found high in the Himalayas.

Africa's leopards are the most secretive, elusive, and shrewdest of the continent's large carnivores. Pound for pound, a leopard is the strongest climber of the large cats and is capable of killing prey larger than itself. Standing about 28 inches at the shoulder, a leopard weighs about 140 pounds. Its coat of fur comes in a wide variety of colors, from a light tawny in dryer areas to darker shades in deep forests.

Leopards prefer dense bush in rocky surroundings and forested areas near rivers, but they can adapt to many places in both warm and cold climates. Their adaptability, in fact, has helped them survive the loss of habitat that continues to occur with expanding human settlement. Leopards are primarily nocturnal, usually resting during the daytime in trees or thick bush.

When a leopard like Loli stalks prey, she keeps a low profile and slinks through the grass or bush until she is close enough to pounce. When not hunting, she can move through herds of antelopes without unduly disturbing them by flipping her tail over her back to reveal the white underside, a sign that she is not seeking prey.

Leopards are basically solitary and go out of their way to avoid one another. Each animal has a home range that

overlaps with its neighbors but they announce their presence to other leopards with a rasping or sawing cough. Leopards also mark their ranges with urine and leave claw marks on trees to warn other leopards to stay away.

A leopard's litter includes two or three cubs, whose coats appear smoky gray until the hallmark rosettes become clearly delineated. The female abandons her nomadic wandering until her cubs are large enough to accompany her. Until then, like Loli she keeps them hidden, bringing meat to them, and suckling them for three or more months.



AWF at work to save the Leopard

Leopards and other wild cats have long captured people's imaginations, but they are also feared by people who have moved into their habitats and now compete with them for the food, water, and land they both need to survive.

There is an urgent need to find ways to make space for leopards and other wide-ranging predators. Africa's national parks and other protected areas play a critical role. But ways must also be found to save a place for Africa's free-ranging wildlife as human communities expand. This is a key objective of many AWF projects, including the Laikipia carnivore project in Kenya, the large predator research project near Chobe National Park, and our work at Tanzania's Lake Manyara Ranch.

Your leopard adoption also helps AWF secure government funding to address the twin threats of habitat loss and poaching that continue to take a toll on leopards and other big cats. Many of these endangered species are struggling to survive in developing countries with scarce funds for conservation, making their survival a global priority for everyone who cares about wildlife.

For more information, go to

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