



Ocelot

Leopardus pardalis

Geographical Range: Once ranging as far east as Arkansas and Louisiana, throughout Texas and Mexico, ocelots are currently found in extreme southern Texas and northeastern Mexico. They are also found in every country south of the United States except Chile.

Habitat: The ocelot is found in very diverse habitats including rain forest, mangrove forest, thick bush, semi-deserts, coastal marsh and along river banks. These habitats provide a lush, secretive, dense, vegetative cover. It is never found in open country.

Exhibit Location: Our ocelot can be found in the M&T Bank Rainforest Falls Exhibit, located in the center of the Zoo.

Physical Characteristics: The ocelot is much larger than its cousins the margay and the oncilla, although they bear a striking resemblance. The ocelot weighs between 17-24 pounds, stands 16-20 inches tall, and reaches lengths of 48-64 inches. Its coat tends to be more blotched than spotted, and the chain-like blotches and spots are bordered with black, with a lighter colored center. These markings run the entire length of the cat. The ground color varies from whitish or tawny yellow through reddish gray to gray. The underside is white, and the backs of the ears are black with a central yellow spot.

Diet: Ocelots are carnivores; they hunt and eat animals such as rodents, rabbits, young deer, birds, snakes and fish. They also feed on ibex, markhor or wild sheep. In captivity they receive commercially prepared feline diet along with treats of hard bones, chopped liver or chicken gizzards.

Did you know?

The ocelot is said to be a picky eater—even more so than other cats! Other cats remove feathers and fur from their prey as they eat it, but ocelots pluck off all the feathers and fur from animals that they catch *before* they eat them!

Status: Endangered or threatened internationally – CITES and in the U.S., SSP