

CLASSROOM READY Weekly News

LEVEL 1

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Clouded Leopard Kittens

On February 11, two clouded leopard kittens were born at the Miami Zoo in Florida. There is one male cub and one female cub.

The births are an important event because clouded leopards are an **endangered species**. There are only 10,000 clouded leopards living in the wild.

Photos of the leopard kittens have been shared online and in newspapers, but the babies are mostly staying out of sight in their den. They are busy bonding with their mother.

Wild clouded leopards live in forests in southeast Asia, as well as on the islands of Sumatra and Borneo. The cats get their name from their beautiful fur coats. Like other leopards, their coat has a pattern of spots. On the clouded leopard, the spots

are black and dark grey, and they look like clouds.

Clouded leopards are arboreal cats. They like to climb, play, and hunt in trees. They have long tails that help them keep their balance while climbing. They also have special anklebones that are more flexible than many other cats. This allows them to curve their paws around tree branches, allowing them to hang on to branches and climb head-first down trees.

Clouded leopards are also considered secretive. They are rarely seen. They are nocturnal, meaning they hunt and move around mostly at night. They also tend to be solitary. They keep away from people and other animals, including other clouded leopards.

Clouded leopards' populations have fallen 30 percent over the past 60 years. This has scientists worried the cats could become

extinct. One reason for their shrinking population is **poaching**. People hunt clouded leopards for their fur and bones. Another problem is the forests where clouded leopards live have been shrinking as people cut down trees to make way for farms and cities. ★



DID YOU KNOW

Scientists sometimes divide wild cats into big cats (lions and tigers) and small cats (house cats, bobcats). Besides size, one of the main differences is that big cats can roar, while small cats can purr. The clouded leopard can neither roar nor purr, so it doesn't fit easily into either category.

To view videos, go to:
<http://resources.dynamic-classroom.ca/books/hrmu>

Video



WORD POWER

ENDANGERED SPECIES: A species of animal or plant of which there are very few left, so that they are at risk of becoming extinct.

EXTINCT: When there are no longer any living members of a species.

POACHING: The act of hunting or catching on another person's land without the right to do so.

Clouded Leopard Kittens

1. What happened on February 11?

2. Why are the births important?

3. From where do the cats get their name?

4. What features help the clouded leopards to climb, play, and hunt in trees?

5. What are some of the characteristics of clouded leopards?

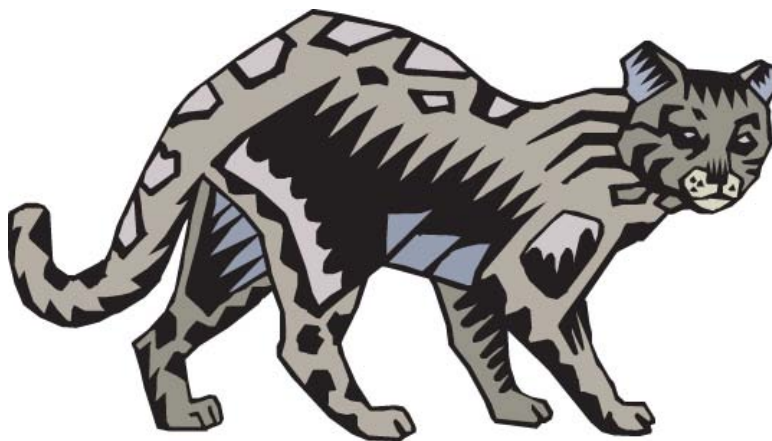
CRITICAL THINKING

1. What are some other nocturnal animals?

Big Versus Small Cats

Below is a list of cats. For each one, determine if it is considered to be a big cat or a small cat. You may have to do some research.

African wildcat	Big	Small	Iberian lynx	Big	Small
Asian golden cat	Big	Small	Jaguar	Big	Small
Bay cat	Big	Small	Jaguarundi	Big	Small
Black-footed cat	Big	Small	Leopard	Big	Small
Bobcat	Big	Small	Lion	Big	Small
Canada lynx	Big	Small	Ocelot	Big	Small
Cheetah	Big	Small	Rusty-spotted cat	Big	Small
Clouded leopard	Big	Small	Serval	Big	Small
Cougar	Big	Small	Snow leopard	Big	Small
Domestic cat	Big	Small	Tiger	Big	Small



Word Power

Using the words defined below, fill in the blank in each of the following sentences with the word that fits best. All of the words have been used in the article.

1. One animal that is known to be _____ is the squirrel.
2. I need to find a material that is _____ so that I can bend it into a curve.
3. Bears are _____ animals, spending a lot of time alone.
4. Bats and owls are _____ animals.
5. Most mothers and fathers spend time _____ with their new baby.

Arboreal: Living in trees.

Balance: The ability to keep one's body steady without falling.

Bonding: Forming a close relationship with someone.

Flexible: Capable of bending easily without breaking.

Forests: Thick growths of trees covering large pieces of land.

Nocturnal: Active at night.

Secretive: Tending to act in secret.

Solitary: Living or being alone.

Quiz

1. There are only 10,000 clouded leopards living in the wild.
True False
2. Wild clouded leopards live in forests in southeast Africa.
True False
3. On the clouded leopard, the _____ are black and dark grey, and they look like clouds.
4. Clouded leopards like to climb, play, and hunt in _____.
5. Clouded leopards are nocturnal, meaning they hunt and move around mostly at _____.