



*Panthera pardus ssp. orientalis*

# Amur Leopard

**Habitat:** Deciduous (woodland) forest, and conifer forests

**Distribution:** Far eastern Russia along the Russia-China border

**Diet:** Deer, hares, badgers and other small mammals

**Longevity:** 10-15 years in the wild and up to 20 years in captivity

**Status:** Critically Endangered

The Amur leopard has the most distinctive markings of any of the leopard subspecies. The fur changes from pale cream in the winter to reddish-brown in the summer. The body and sides are covered in widely spaced, large rosettes (open spots) with a thick unbroken border and darkened centres. The head is covered in many small spots, which become larger on the legs and stomach. They are solitary and hunt mostly at night, using a stalk and ambush technique. Amur leopards are strong climbers and may even take their prey up into the trees to eat.

They have large home ranges which will vary in size depending on the availability of their prey, the more prey available, the smaller the range. Amur leopards use a distinctive rasping call for communication rather than the growl of the other cats.

Amur leopards face a number of threats. They are hunted for their fur and for use in traditional medicines. Their habitat is also being destroyed causing depletion in their prey. Their small population size also puts them at risk from catastrophes such as fire, disease and inbreeding problems.

There are two Amur leopards at Colchester Zoo. This male and female pair are house separately in adjoining enclosures to mimic their solitary behaviour in the wild.

