



GIANT PANDA

The giant panda is universally admired for its distinctive eyes and seemingly gentle demeanour.

Read on to discover more interesting facts about them.



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WHERE THEY LIVE

Giant pandas inhabit temperate montane forests in south-western China. There are around 1,860 giant pandas in the wild. They are classified as vulnerable on the IUCN Red List having recently been downlisted from endangered following decades of conservation work that's now seeing a rise in their wild population numbers.

wwf.org.uk/wildlife/giant_panda/



CHARACTERISTICS

- They have a larger head and shorter legs than most bears. They have a distinctive black and white coat, most of their body and belly are white, contrasting sharply with their black ears, black limbs and shoulders, and black patches over the eyes.
- They have large muscular jaws, while their teeth are wider and flatter than those of other bears, allowing them to grind bamboo.
- Weight: 85 -125kg.
- Most of their time is spent eating and sleeping, but they can climb using muscly forearms. From 3-5 months of age, young pandas walk alongside their mothers but can occasionally be seen piggy backing too!

FAMILY

The female giant panda usually gives birth to one, sometimes two cubs between August and September, although usually only one cub survives. As a cub, they are helpless after birth for the first few weeks of their life and their mother cares for them in a den located in the base of a hollow tree or in a cave. They remain dependent on their mother until around 18 months old. As an adult, they lead a solitary lifestyle, rarely meeting other pandas unless it's the mating season.



VIDEO

Watch footage:

- youtube.com/watch?v=GRcihHbqo10
- youtube.com/watch?v=R_8JAU9n2SU
- youtube.com/watch?v=jQ2YHAm_tFQ

DID YOU KNOW

Giant pandas have a 'thumb', it's actually a modified wrist bone that enables them to grasp bamboo stalks.