

GENUS FELIS.—LINN

$$\text{Incisive } \frac{6}{6}; \text{ Canine } \frac{1-1}{1-1}; \text{ Molar } \frac{4-4}{3-3} = 30.$$

There are two conical teeth, or false molars, in the upper jaw, which are wanting in the genus *Lynx*; a large carnivorous tooth with three lobes; the fourth cheek-tooth in the upper jaw nearly flat, and placed transversely; the two anterior cheek-teeth in the lower jaw false.

Head, round; ears, short and generally triangular, not tufted; in many species a white spot on their outer surfaces; no mane; tail, long; tongue roughened with prickles; anterior extremities with five toes, posterior, with four; nails curved, acute, and retractile.

Habit savage, feeding in a state of nature on living animals only, which they seize by surprise, and not by the chase, as is the habit of the dog wolf, &c.; leaping and climbing with facility; speed moderate; sense of sight good; that of smell imperfect.

There are 33 species of *Long-tailed Cats* described, inhabiting the four quarters of the world. Four species only are positively known to exist north of the tropics in America.

The generic name is derived from the latin word *Felis*—a cat.

FELIS PARDALIS.—LINN.

OCELOT, OR LEOPARD-CAT.

PLATE LXXXVI.—MALE.—Winter Pelage.

F. Magnitudine. *Lynx rufus. Cana. (s. potius flava)*, maculis ocellaribus magnis fulvis nigro-limbatis, in lateribus facias obliquas formantibus; fronte striis 2 lateribus nigricantibus caudâ corporis longitudine dimedia.

CHARACTERS.

Size of the Bay Lynx; general colour gray, marked with large fawn-coloured spots, bordered with black, forming oblique bands on the flanks; two black lines bordering the forehead laterally.



On Stone by Wm E. Hitchcock

Drawn from Nature by J. W. Audubon

Leopard or Spotted Cat

Engr. Printed & Col'd by J. T. Bowen, Phil.

SYNONYMES.

- FELIS PARDALIS. Linn., p. 62.
 " " Harlan's Fauna, p. 96.
 " " Cuv. An. King., vol. 2, p. 476.
 " " Griffith's An. King., vol. 5, p. 167.
 " " Shaw's Zoology, vol. 2d, p. 356.

DESCRIPTION.

Head, short ; neck, long and thin ; body, long and slender; tail, rather thick, and of moderate size ; hair, rather soft, and not very dense.

COLOUR.

The outer surface of the ear is black, with a white patch beneath ; chin and throat white, with a black bar immediately beneath the chin, and another under the neck. On the chest and under surface, white, with irregular black patches. There are small black spots disposed on the head, surrounded by reddish-brown, a black line runs longitudinally on the sides of the head to the neck. The whole back is marked with oval figures, and in some specimens with longitudinal black stripes edged with fawn-colour. Upper surface of the tail irregularly barred with black and white, the extremity black.

Specimens vary much in their markings, and we have not found two precisely alike.

DIMENSIONS.

Male, procured by Col. HARNEY in Texas, seven miles from San Antonio, December, 1845.

						Feet.	Inches.
From point of nose to root of tail,	-	-	-	-	-	2	11
Tail,	-	-	-	-	-	1	3
Height from nails to shoulder,	-	-	-	-	-	1	2
" of ear posteriorly,	-	-	-	-	-		1 $\frac{3}{4}$

Female.

						Feet.	Inches.
Length of head and body -	-	-	-	-	-	2	4
" tail -	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
From nose to shoulder.	-	-	-	-	-	1	1

HABITS.

Before describing the habits of this beautiful species, we must enter into the difficult task of separating it from several other spotted, leopard-like

cats, that have been confounded with it. Of these, the most similar in appearance is perhaps the *Felis mitis*, which is found in the tropical portions of North America, and in the warmer parts of South America.

The *Felis mitis* has in fact been figured, and described by SHAW, Vol. 2, p. 356, (unless we deceive ourselves), as the Ocelot, (our present species) while his figure of the *Jaguar*, (opposite p. 354), is probably drawn from the Ocelot, although, so poor a figure as to be hardly recognisable. The descriptions and figures of the Ocelot, that we find in old works on natural history, are so confusing, and unsatisfactory, that we are obliged to throw aside all reference to them in establishing any one of the feline tribe as our animal, and leave the reader to decide whether BUFFON, speaking of the Ocelot, as two feet and a-half high and about four feet in length, meant the subject of our article, which is only two feet-six inches long from nose to root of tail, the *Felis mitis*, or the *Jaguar*; and whether PENNANT referred to the same animal, which he describes, when speaking of the Ocelot, "as about four times the size of a large cat," (about the size of our specimen of the Ocelot).

The description of this species in LINNÆUS is so short, that it is almost equally applicable to either the *Jaguar*, the Ocelot, or *Felis mitis*: "*Felis cauda elongata, corpore maculis superioribus virgatis, inferioribus orbiculatis.*" Sys. Nat. Gmel. p. 78. BRISSON is also very concise in giving the character of the Ocelot; *F. rufa, in ventre ex albo flavicans, maculis nigris in dorso longis, in ventre orbiculatis variegata.*" Quadr. 169. We are on the whole inclined to consider the species described by PENNANT as the Mexican Cat, the Ocelot or Leopard-Cat of the present article, and the larger animal described by other authors, as the *Felis mitis*, as young of the *Jaguar*, or perhaps females of this last named species, and we have not yet met with the *Felis mitis* within our range, although we have seen such an animal alive in New-York, one having been brought by sea from Yucatan.

Our animal is quite well known in Texas as the Leopard-Cat, and in Mexico is called the Tiger-Cat, it is in the habit of concealing itself in hollows in trees, and also by squatting upon the larger branches. It is rather nocturnal, and preys upon the smaller quadrupeds, and on birds, eggs, &c., when they can be seized on the ground.

The activity and grace of the Leopard-Cat, are equal to the beauty of its fur, and it leaps with ease amid the branches of trees, or runs with swiftness on the ground. These Cats seldom stray far from woods, or thickets bordering on rivers, streams, or ponds, very rarely lying on the hill-sides, or out on the plains.

They run like foxes, or wild-cats, when chased by the hunters with hounds or other dogs, doubling frequently, and using all the stratagems of

the gray fox, before they take a straight course, but when hard pressed and fatigued, they always ascend a tree, instead of running to earth.

Like all the cat tribe, the Ocelot is spiteful when confined in a cage, and snarls and spits at the spectator when he draws near; but we have never seen it strike through the bars like the leopard, which sometimes inflicts severe wounds on the incautious or fool-hardy person, who, to see it better, approaches too closely its prison.

According to our information, the Ocelot only has two young at a litter, but we have not had an opportunity of ascertaining this point ourselves.

The specimen from which our figure was drawn, was procured by Gen. HARNEY, who sent it fresh killed to J. W. AUDUBON, then at San Antonio on an expedition in search of the quadrupeds of Texas, for our work. We here give an extract from his journal.

"But for the kindness of Col. HARNEY, I might never have made the drawing of this most beautiful of all the North American feline race. Col. HARNEY sent for my trunks, and while I waited the return of the sergeant's guard, who went to fetch them, I saw him daily. He introduced me to Mrs. BRADLY, where he and Capt. MYERS, afterwards my friend, boarded, and the lady of the house made it a home to me.

I was invited out to the camp, and as I talked of the animals I was most anxious to procure, all seemed desirous to aid me. Col. HARNEY, fond of field sports, as active and industrious as he was tall and magnificent-looking, waked at day light the lone prairies and swamps with shouts of encouragement to his small pack of well-chosen dogs, till they in turn burst forth in full cry on the hot trail of a magnificent specimen of this most interesting species. I had just returned from an examination of all my steel-traps; some were sprung, yet nothing but fur was left, showing that a strong wolf or lynx had been caught, but had pulled away; thus preventing perhaps, the capture of some smaller animal that I wanted; and rats, mice, skunks, or other little quadrupeds, were eaten nightly whilst fast in the steel teeth, by these prowlers. I sat down, to think of spring-guns, and long for means to prevent this robbery of my traps, when a sergeant came in, with the result of Col. HARNEY's morning's chase, the beautiful Ocelot, from which my drawing was made.

This was a new animal to me, as, though I knew of its existence, I had never seen one, so that my delight was only equalled by my desire to paint a good figure of it. Its beautiful skin makes a most favourite bullet pouch, and its variegated spots are only surpassed by the rich glossy coat and fur of the far famed 'black otter.'

In his many long hunts, Col. HARNEY must have often and often past the

lurking Wako and Camanche, who quailed at his soldierly bearing, while any other man would have had perchance a dozen arrows shot at him.

GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION.

We have heard of an occasional specimen of this cat having been obtained in the southern parts of Louisiana. NUTTALL saw it in the State of Arkansas; our specimens were procured in Texas. It is common in Mexico; its southern range has not been accurately determined.

GENERAL REMARKS.

Much confusion still exists among writers in reference to the spotted cats of Mexico and South America, which can only be removed by the careful observations of naturalists in the native regions of these closely allied species.



Audubon, John James and Bachman, John. 1851. "Felis pardalis, Ocelot, or Leopard Cat [Pl. LXXXVI, male- winter pelage]." *The quadrupeds of North America* 2, 258–262. <https://doi.org/10.5962/p.322409>.

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