



WEAR IT WILD

GIANT PANDA

Hi, I am the giant panda, universally admired for my distinctive eyes and seemingly gentle demeanour. I'm also one of the rarest and most endangered bears in the world.

Read on to discover more interesting facts about me.



Where I live

I inhabit temperate montane forests in south-western China. Although, two-thirds of all wild pandas now live in nature reserves, we are still, however, endangered.

wwf.org.uk/wildlife/giant_panda/



CHARACTERISTICS

- I have a larger head and shorter legs than most bears. I have a distinctive black and white coat, most of my body and belly are white, contrasting sharply with my black ears, black limbs and shoulders, and black patches over my eyes.
- I have large muscular jaws, while my teeth are wider and flatter than those of other bears, allowing me to grind bamboo.
- I weigh 75-125kg.
- I'm not very active as most of my time is spent eating and sleeping, but I can climb using my muscly forearms. From 3-5 months of age baby pandas walk alongside their mums but can occasionally be seen piggy backing too!

DID YOU KNOW

I have a 'thumb', it's actually a modified wrist bone that enables me to grasp bamboo stalks.

MY FAMILY

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



VIDEO

Watch footage of me:

- youtube.com/watch?v=GRcihHbqo10
- youtube.com/watch?v=R_8JAU9n2SU
- youtube.com/watch?v=jQ2YHAM_tFQ
- arkive.org/giant-panda/ailuropoda-melanoleuca/video-06.html
- arkive.org/giant-panda/ailuropoda-melanoleuca/video-08a.html
- arkive.org/giant-panda/ailuropoda-melanoleuca/video-12c.html

FEEDING

- My diet is extremely specialised, compared to other bears.
- I mainly eat bamboo, which makes up 99% of my diet but I'm really an omnivore and can sometimes eat meat other predators leave!
- I have the digestive system of a carnivore and I'm only able to digest a small proportion of the bamboo I eat, so I have to consume a great deal of food – about 38kg of bamboo shoots per day.

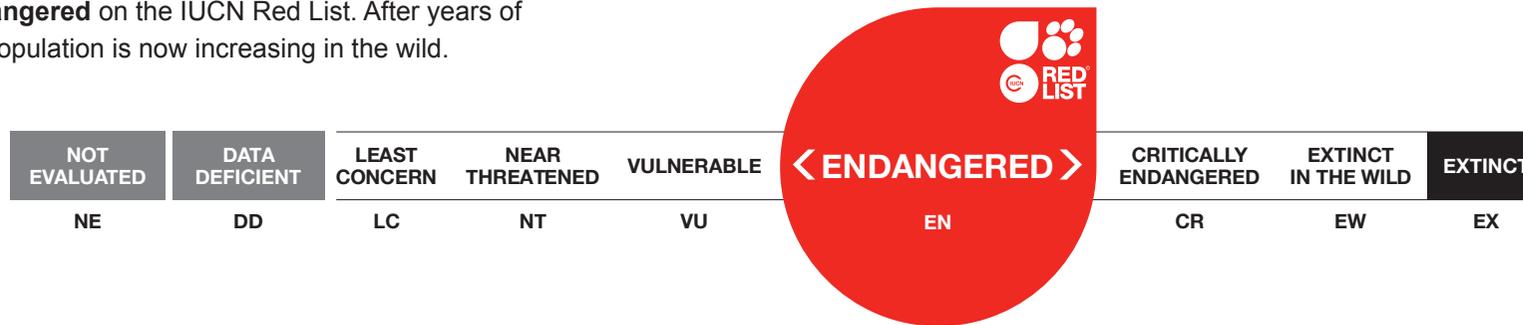


DID YOU KNOW

Although I am a good swimmer and excellent tree climber, I spend most of my time feeding – about 14 hours a day!

CLASSIFICATION

I am classified as **Endangered** on the IUCN Red List. After years of decline, however, my population is now increasing in the wild.



STATUS



Habitat loss is the greatest cause of the decline of my population. Large areas of China's natural forest have been cleared for agriculture, timber and firewood, to meet the needs of the large and growing human population.

Roads and railways are increasingly cutting through the forest, which isolates panda populations and prevents us from breeding and finding new sources of food.

My habitat is also affected by livestock grazing and people collecting medicinal herbs and harvesting bamboo – my main source of food.

There are around 1,860 pandas remaining in the wild and conservation efforts seek to grow this number.

Although poaching has been a problem in the past, the introduction of high penalties for poaching has reduced it to levels which are no longer believed to pose a significant threat to giant pandas.