

1.

The Giant Panda Bear

Panda bears are very popular animals, partly because of their unusual appearance and partly because there is something mysterious and fascinating about them. However, their numbers are falling. It is thought that only around 1600 giant pandas still survive in the wild.

Appearance

Giant pandas have the same type of body shape as other bears. They have thick black and white fur, which some scientists think may be to disguise them in the snowy and rocky surroundings where they live. An adult can grow up to 1.5 metres and weigh up to 150 kilograms. They might look cute but they have razor-like claws. They also have powerful jaws for crushing and grinding bamboo!

Habitat

Giant pandas in the wild live on mountainous slopes in western China. Their habitat is densely populated with fir trees and bamboo. It is the forests in these mountains that attract the panda as bamboo is their favourite food.

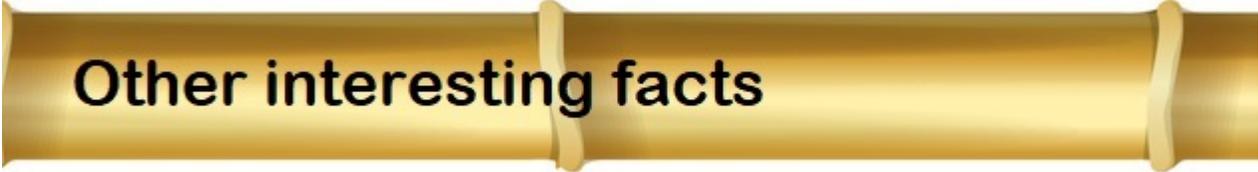
Diet

In the wild, their main diet is bamboo. To survive, they need to eat for most of the day. In fact, they eat 15 to 30 kilograms of food every day and spend 10 to 16 hours feeding. In zoos, they have a specially prepared diet of bamboo, eggs, fish and honey.



Cubs

Newborn cubs weigh around 150 grams (about the weight of an apple) and are all white at birth. The black spots develop after about a month. They begin eating bamboo at six months and weigh 31 to 36 kilograms at the end of the first year. Cubs stay with their mother for two to three years, reach maturity at five to seven years and live in the wild for about 25 years.



Other interesting facts

- Giant panda bears have to eat every day which means, unlike other bears, they cannot hibernate in the winter.
- Giant pandas' bodies are able to digest meat but they rarely eat it.
- Until recently, scientists thought that pandas spent most of their lives alone, but new studies show that small groups of pandas can share a large territory.

Why are people concerned about the giant panda?

Many people fear that giant pandas will become extinct as only a few are born in the wild each year and they do not always survive. Bamboo supplies are diminishing in panda habitats, cutting off a vital food supply. In addition, poaching and humans moving into the pandas' territory have also reduced their numbers.

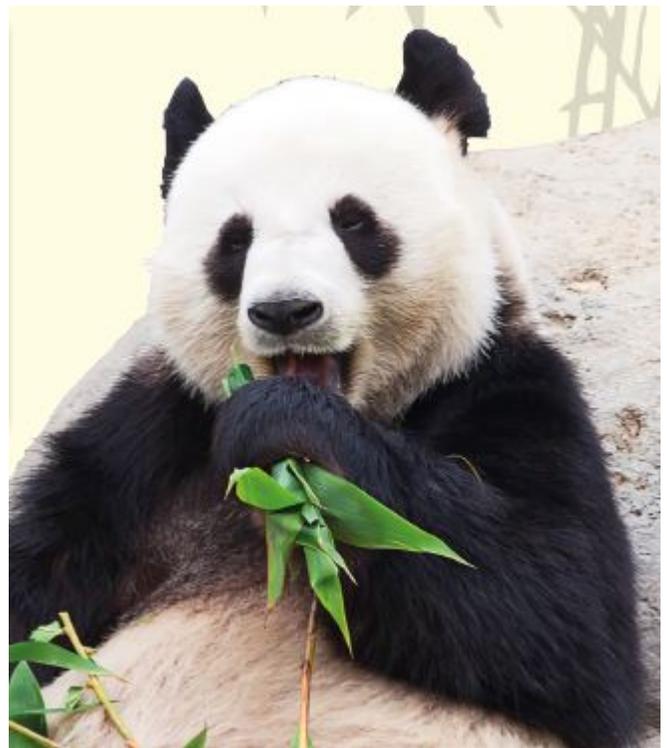
There are very few pandas in zoos, although this is changing. Where there are pandas in captivity, important programmes are in place to try to increase their numbers and find out more about these puzzling creatures.

How can people help?

There are projects where people are invited to 'adopt a panda'. The money goes towards researching, protecting and monitoring them. It also goes towards supporting them in the wild.

What about the future?

In two of China's main research centres, 19 cubs have been born. There are now over 300 pandas in captivity and the next challenge is to return them to the wild. The Chinese government has created 50 panda reserves to continue the work.



Did you know?

In China, the panda is a symbol of peace.

The Chinese word for panda is 'Xiongmao' (giant cat bear) because a panda's eyes are shaped like a cat's. Over the centuries, pandas have also been called 'spotted bear' and 'black and white bear'.

2.

1. According to the text, approximately how many giant pandas currently live in the wild?

1 mark

2. According to some scientists, how does giant pandas' fur help them to survive in the wild?

1 mark

3. Look at page 1.

Pandas can grow up to 1.5 metres and weigh up to 150 kilograms.

What else in the text tells us that giant pandas could be dangerous animals?

1 mark

4. Look at page 1.

According to the text, what do pandas spend the majority of their time doing?

1 mark

5. Number these facts about the life of the giant panda cub from 1-5 in the order in which they happen.

The first one has been done for you.

A cub eats bamboo for the first time.

A cub leaves its mother.

A cub develops black spots.

A cub weighs 31 to 36 kilograms.

A cub weighs about the same as an apple.

1 mark

6. Look at page 1.

According to the text, give **one** way that giant pandas are...

(a) similar to other bears.

1 mark

(b) different from other bears.

1 mark

7. Look at the section headed: ***Other interesting facts.***

Complete the sentence below.

Recent studies show that...

Tick **one**.

giant pandas always spend most of their lives alone.

most giant pandas live in captivity.

giant pandas only live in the wild in China.

some giant pandas live in the same area.

1 mark

8. Look at the section headed: ***Why are people concerned about the giant panda?***

Find and **copy one** word which shows that there are lots of things we do not yet know about giant pandas.

1 mark

9. ...cutting off a **vital** food supply.

What does the word *vital* mean in this sentence?

Tick **one**.

essential

available

useful

healthy

1 mark

10. According to the text, why are giant pandas under threat of extinction?

Give **two** reasons.

1. _____

2. _____

2 marks

11. According to the text, how are people trying to help giant pandas survive?

1 mark

12. Look at the section headed: ***What about the future?***

Find and **copy one** word that shows that helping the giant panda is not easy.

1 mark

13. Look at page 2.

What is **one** name that pandas have been called in the past because of their fur?

1 mark

14. Which statement is the **best** summary for the whole of page 2?

Tick **one**.

How the giant panda first got its name.

How charities raise money for giant pandas.

How people are working to save giant pandas.

How giant pandas' territory is changing.

1 mark

15. Using information from the text, tick one box in each row to show whether each statement is a **fact** or an **opinion**.

	Fact	Opinion
Giant pandas are fascinating animals.		
Giant pandas' main food in the wild is bamboo.		
Giant panda cubs weigh about 150g when born.		

1 mark