



## Serval

*Leptailurus serval*

**Geographical Range:** The serval is found in Africa, south of the Sahara Desert. Although increasingly rare, they can be found in small numbers in Northern Africa.

**Habitat:** Servals prefer the open grasslands, wooded savannahs, grassy uplands and moist areas.

**Exhibit Location:** Our serval is located in the Vanishing Animals (north) Exhibit.

**Physical Characteristics:** The serval is a long legged, tall, slender cat averaging three feet in length and weighing about 35 pounds. Females are slightly smaller. Their general colorization is off-white to gold with black spots of varying sizes, some running together to form stripes on the neck, shoulders and tail.

**Diet:** In the wild serval eat rodents, hyrax and birds. In captivity they receive commercially prepared feline diet, chopped liver, chicken gizzards and mice.

### Did you know?

- The serval is an excellent hunter, they use their large ears like a radar funnel to locate birds and flush them out of the tall grasses.
- Servals have been seen jumping as high as ten feet in the air knocking down a startled bird in one fell swoop.
- Major threats to the serval are man as they are still mercilessly hunted for food and for pelts. Their body parts continue to be used in tribal ceremonies and in some cases eaten to satisfy ancient medicinal beliefs. Habitat destruction also plays a role in their decline.

**Status:** South African servals are not considered endangered but North African servals are listed as such.