

# DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

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## EIGHT SPECIES OF BIG CATS ADDED TO INTERIOR'S LIST OF ENDANGERED FOREIGN WILDLIFE

Secretary of the Interior Rogers C. B. Morton today announced he has signed a final order placing eight species of wild cats on the list of endangered foreign wildlife. The action prohibits the further importation of these animals and their parts or products into the United States.

The cats--cheetah, leopard, tiger, snow leopard, jaguar, ocelot, margay and tiger cat--were proposed for the endangered foreign species list February 3, 1972, by notice in the Federal Register. Interested persons were invited to submit their views, data or arguments regarding the proposal to the Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. All comments submitted were considered and it was determined that the animals should be listed now to give them protection without further delay.

The responses from foreign governments and from within the U.S. were overwhelmingly in favor of listing all eight species. Some correspondents agreed with the need to protect the cats from commercial exploitation but urged that hunters be allowed to bring back their individual trophies. In fact, it is the illegal poaching of cats for sale in the fur salons of Europe and the United States, rather than controlled hunting, that has caused the drastic reduction of cat populations. Secretary Morton's final order is worded so as to close the U.S. market to poachers and not to cut off the economic benefit accruing to African and South American countries from legitimate hunting safaris.

Under the economic "hardship clause" in the Endangered Species Conservation Act of 1969 the Fish and Wildlife Service may issue special permits for the next 12 months to importers who had valid contracts in being before a given species was placed under the protection of the Act.

Sportsmen who had firm safari reservations before February 3, 1972, can avail themselves of this provision in order to bring their trophies into the United States, if the animal was taken in accordance with the laws of its country of origin.

The new endangered species legislation now before Congress will provide, if passed, a more permanent permit system for the sportsmen. The hardship clause does not apply to cat subspecies previously on the endangered list.

Under existing law, the Secretary of the Interior can issue special permits for the importation of these cats for scientific, educational, zoological or propagation purposes.

The order became effective upon publication in the Federal Register.

The cats will be officially listed as follows:

Common name	Scientific name	Where found
Cheetah -----	<u>Acinonyx jubatus</u> -----	Africa, Asia Minor, India
Leopard -----	<u>Panthera pardus</u> -----	Africa, Asia Minor, India, Southeast Asia, Korea
Tiger -----	<u>Panthera tigris</u> -----	Central Asia, China and Korea, to India, Indonesia and Malaysia
Snow leopard ---	<u>Panthera uncia</u> -----	Central Asia
Jaguar -----	<u>Panthera onca</u> -----	Central and South America
Ocelot -----	<u>Felis pardalis</u> -----	Central and South America
Margay -----	<u>Felis wiedii</u> -----	Central and South America
Tiger cat -----	<u>Felis tigrina</u> -----	Costa Rica to northern South America

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