

## **OCELOTS-5th GRADE**

Ocelots have white, tan or reddish gray fur with brown spots outlined in black. Their ears are black with a white or yellow spot. These spots are called flashes. Ocelots weigh between 17-24 pounds. Males are usually larger than females.

Ocelots have 1-2 babies in a litter. These cats have small litters, long gestations and a slow rate of growth. At about one year of age they move away from their family. They are solitary animals meaning they live alone most of their adult life. Female Ocelots have a range of up to 9 square miles which is not shared with other ocelots. Males have a range of up to 35 square miles.

Like other cats, ocelots are meat eaters. Meat eaters are also called carnivores. They are most active at night (nocturnal) which is when they usually hunt. Their diet consists mainly of mice, rats, opossums and armadillos. They also eat deer, squirrel monkeys, tortoises, fish, reptiles, birds and crabs.

Ocelots are from Southern Texas as well as Central and South America. These cats live in rainforest, semi-desert and coastal marsh areas. They can survive in many different areas but don't live in open country.

In the past these cats were hunted for their beautiful coats. They were also sold as pets. At this time the biggest threat to ocelots is habitat destruction. In the wild they can live from 7-10 years of age. In captivity they have lived more than 20 years.

### **FIFTH GRADE:**

1. What physical characteristics decrease the Ocelots chances of survival?
  - a. Their beautiful coat has been highly sought after by humans.
  - b. Their smaller size lead humans to believe they can be made into good pets.  
After people realize they don't make good pets Ocelots are often abandoned.
  - c. They have small litters, long gestations, slow growth rates and high infant mortality.
  - d. All of the above

Answer: d

2. Why don't Ocelots make good house pets?

Answer: They are high-strung, unpredictable and have foul smelling urine used to mark their territory.