

Научно-исследовательская работа

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MANUL – A WILD CAT FROM THE RED BOOK OF ZABAIKALSKY KRAI

Выполнила:

Макушева Ксения Дмитриевна

учащаяся 6 г класса

МБОУ СОШ №9, Россия, г. Чита

Руководитель:

Кузнецова Елена Анатольевна

учитель английского и немецкого языков

МБОУ СОШ №9, Россия, г. Чита

Introduction

Zabaikalsky Krai is a unique place on the Earth. The wildlife of the Krai is diverse. This is due to its geographical features, natural conditions. The territory from the south to the east is characterized by the change of steppe, forest-steppe, forest and taiga zones. The animal world of the region is diverse but the nicest from them is the cat manul. Predators from the subfamily of small cats, the manul is a protected animal of the Trans-Baikal Territory. This species was first described by Peter Simon Pallas in 1776. So, it is known as the Pallas cat, after the scientist who first described it. The cat manul has been listed in the International Red Book since 2020.

Appearance of a manul



Manul is a predatory wild cat of small size from the class of mammals. It is similar in appearance and size to a domestic cat, but differs in its shorter, massive body and paws, as well as long, thick fur. The length of the head and trunk is from 46 to 65 cm, the length of the tail is from 21 to 31 cm, the weight is 2-5 kg. Males are slightly larger than females. The manul has a rather peculiar appearance — it has short and thick short paws, the body looks massive because of the lush fur. The fur of the manul is the fluffiest and thickest among cats, has an uneven colour, usually gray, and on some parts of the body — reddish. The tail is uniformly wide and fluffy.

Where does a manul live?

Manul inhabits a vast but fragmented territory in Asia: from Western Iran and Armenia, Central Asia and some regions of Russia to Transbaikalia, Mongolia and Tibet. The total number is estimated at 58 thousand individuals, the largest

population is believed to live on the territory of Mongolia. Manul lives in treeless, arid areas with a sharply continental climate: in the mountains, steppes and semi-deserts, where little snow falls.



In Zabaikalsky Krai, the main population of manuls settled in the steppe zone bounded by the Shilka and Argun rivers. Cats can climb mountains, quite high, at 3-4 thousand meters. They live sedentary, settle down in other animals' abandoned burrows, stone voids.

It is impossibility to tame manul. Kittens behave quite friendly to the age of one year, play with people, but as they grow older, attachment to a person is completely lost, and the beasts begin to behave as in the wild.

Manul kittens

Reproduction in manul occurs once a year and they have the ability to do this at the age of 10 months. The mating season falls on February-March. 2 to 6 manul kittens are born in April-May.



The kitten has a length of about 12 cm and weighs up to 300 grams. Manul cubs are born blind and helpless. The male does not take part in the upbringing of babies.

Behaviour

Manul leads a solitary, mostly sedentary lifestyle. It is active in the evening or morning twilight, and during the day, it sleeps in a shelter. In summer, it can also be active during the daytime. It makes its lair in the crevices of rocks — in small caves or among rocks — and in the burrows of other animals, for example, marmots or badgers. The manul shelter may be full of dried leaves and stems, bird feathers and rodent skins. There could be the remains of prey that cats brought to kittens.

Hunting

The dynamics of the animal corresponds to its appearance; manul is the clumsiest representative of the feline. Slowness does not prevent small animals from successful hunting; manul feeds rodents, birds, ground squirrels.



Manul can hunt in different ways: it can creep up to the victim unnoticed, hiding in vegetation or among rocks, then pounce on the victim from a fairly close distance or just catch, ambush or wait for the victim at the burrow.

How long do Manuls live?



According to experts, living in the wild, these animals live on average about 12 years, but in a zoo wild cat manul can live a little longer.



In the Moscow Zoo, one of these animals was able to live for 18 years, while it was the symbol of this zoo from 1987 to 2011.

Symbol



This small wild cat living in the grasslands and steppes of Zabaikalsky Krai became the mascot of the festival “Student Spring of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization countries” was presented at the opening of the international festival. The cat was about four meters tall; his paws were fixed on special mechanisms that allowed the figure to move. From 2 to 7 July 2014, Chita became the capital of the international festival.

Conclusion



The manul cat is one of the species of endangered animals on our planet. Unfortunately, every day more and more species of living creatures disappear, and the Red Book is updated with new names of animals. We must preserve these species so that they do not completely disappear. We must also take care of other animals, so that they do not suffer the same fate, and they are not on the verge of extinction.



Young manul

List of literature

- <https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Манул>
- https://animaljournal.ru/article/jivotnoe_manul
- <https://faunistics.com/manul/>
- <https://ecoportal.info/krasnaya-kniga-zabajkalskogo-kрая/> Красная книга
Забайкальского края
- <https://vsezhivoe.ru/manul/>