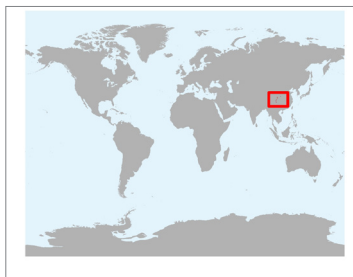




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Geographical range

Amazing Species: Giant Panda

The **Giant Panda**, *Ailuropoda melanoleuca*, is listed as 'Endangered' on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™. Universally admired for its appealing markings and gentle demeanour, this iconic species is a flagship for conservation. Formerly widespread across southern and eastern China, Giant Pandas are now restricted to six mountain ranges at the western edge of their former range.

Habitat restriction and degradation represents the greatest threat to this species. Its range contracted as forests were cleared for agriculture, timber and firewood, leaving small, isolated populations. Giant Pandas are now highly vulnerable to periodic die-backs of bamboo, as they can no longer migrate to find alternative sources of food. Hunting for the fur trade contributed to their historical decline, but this is no longer a significant issue.

Concerted efforts have been made to conserve this species, including the creation of more than 60 panda reserves. The captive breeding programme now includes nearly 300 individuals, reaching the target population size for sustainability. Future plans include the release of captive animals to strengthen wild populations.

www.iucnredlist.org
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