

A Highway for Jaguars

Required Annotations	Student-Created Annotations	Summary / Questions / Reflection
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Comprehension	con=together; bi=two; inter=between	Comments
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The jaguar is a powerful animal, which is why it has become a symbol for everything from sports cars to Jacksonville, Florida's football team. But the big spotted cat is in trouble.

Jaguars once thrived in parts of North, Central, and South America. However, their numbers have plummeted over the past century from from roughly 400,000 to 15,000. The decline is a result of people destroying the animals' habitat and hunting the cats for their luxurious spotted fur coats. Panthera, a conservation organization based in New York City, is working hard to keep jaguars off the endangered species list. The Mexican government recently partnered with Panthera to help the species recover across Mexico, but the jaguar needs even more help if it's going to thrive again.

Jaguars are solitary big cats. Adult males can grow to be 6 feet long and weigh up to 250 pounds, making them the third-largest cats after lions and tigers. They also have the most powerful jaws of any feline on the planet. Because jaguars are such powerful predators, they're considered a threat by many people. Ranchers who fear for their livestock will kill jaguars. In a cruel twist, the big cats often hunt livestock because humans have overhunted their natural prey.

At the same time, farms are spreading across Central and South America. These new farms **fragment** the places jaguars normally hunt, making it harder for the animals to roam throughout their home ranges, which can cover up to 50 square miles.

More than half of jaguars' historic habitat across the Americas is gone. It once stretched all the way from the southwestern U.S. through Central America and down into Argentina. Today jaguars live in a patchwork of parks and protected areas. Their range has shrunk in both Central and South America.

In an effort to help jaguars make a comeback, Panthera and other conservation groups are working to establish corridors in which the animals can move freely. The new corridors don't just link **pristine** wild places together. They also connect jaguars' ideal habitat with any place where animals can travel safely. The corridors could intersect a cattle ranch or a plantation, or they could even **bisect** someone's backyard. Sometimes the corridors even **connect** across national borders.

The article says "In a cruel twist, the big cats often hunt livestock because humans have overhunted their natural prey." How is this a "cruel twist"? This is also known as "irony." What do you think a good definition of irony might be in that case?