Argentina: Diverse regional habitats and their animals











Northeast Argentina, Misiones Province

The Northeast region of Argentina has subtropical rainforests with a wide variety of animals. There are many endangered species within Iguazu National Park including the giant river otter, the hyacinth macaw and the jaguar. One can find 400 species of birds, 71 mammals and 70 types of reptiles. The following slides will show several animals native to this habitat.



Jaguar

The jaguar is one of the four 'big cats', along with the lion, the tiger and the leopard. The jaguar is a powerful and dangerous hunter. You can find these animals in the jungle of Iguazu. The jaguar is very endangered due to its need for a very large area of habitat to find its prey.



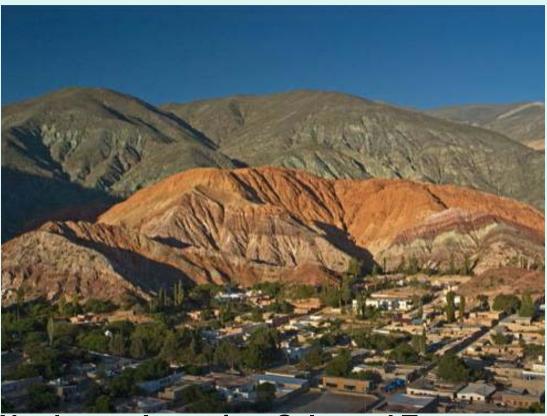
Hyacinth Macaw

In the forests of Iguazu you can find the Hyacinth Macaw, the largest of all the macaws in the world. The macaw is an endangered animal, because of animal smugglers who sell the macaw on the black market for a lot of money.



Argentine black and white tegu

The large black and white tegu is native to Northern Argentina but is rarely seen by visitors to Iguazu falls. The carnivorous tegu closely resembles a monitor lizard and can grow to 1.5 meters long



Northwest Argentina, Salta and Tucuman Province

Northwestern Argentina is home to different animals. These include the llama, guanaco, vicuña, among the most recognizable species of South America. Also in this region are the fox, Andean Mountain Cat, and the largest flying bird in the New World, the Andean condor. The mountains are the dominant physical feature of this region.



Guanaco

The guanaco is one of 4 species of camelids native to Argentina. They are the largest wild mammal in South America and are only preyed upon by pumas. They are a social animal that lives in small herds. They can survive for long periods without water, getting necessary moisture from the plants they eat.



Vicuña

Vicuñas are the smallest member of the camelid family. Like their larger cousin the guanaco they live in small herds usually led by one dominant male and his harem. Vicuñas have become quite rare as they are highly prized for their extremely soft wool. Vicuña do not due well in captivity as they are highly nervous and tend to die when overly stressed.



Andean condor

The Andean condor is one of the largest birds in the world still able to fly, weighing in at 33 pounds. They tend to live in high mountain areas where they can glide on the winds for easier flying. These condors are vultures with bald heads and are extremely threatened. The females only have one offspring every other year and it is only due to captive breeding programs that they continue to exist in the wild.



Pampas

The Pampas of Argentina are a large grassland. They are flat, fertile plains that covers an area of 300,000 sq. miles. The humid Pampas ecosystem is one of the richest grazing areas in the world. Because of its temperate climate and rich, deep soil, most of the Pampas has been cultivated and turned into croplands. Many species of animals thrive in the grassy eco-system, although over grazing and fertilizers have severely affected the area.



Suri

Greater Rheas, also called suri, stand about 5 feet tall (1.5 meters) and are about half the height of an ostrich. They weigh about 50 pounds (20 to 25 kg). The rhea is a member of the flightless birds, such as the ostrich and emu. They are omnivorous, eating leaves and insects, small fish or amphibians. The Argentinian rheas are threatened as their feathers are often turned into dusters and they are used for their meat, eggs and leather.



Pampas cat

Pampas cats look like heavy set domestic cats, and the fur can vary from thick and soft in colder areas to thin and straw-like in warmer climates. Pampas cats prey upon small rodents such as native guinea pigs, rats, ground dwelling birds, domestic poultry and other small mammals.



Maned Wolf

Some think the maned wolf looks like a mix between a wolf and a fox. Maned wolves are about 3 feet tall shoulder height and weigh 50 pounds. Its body is covered with golden-red fur, and has black legs and a black mane. They are nocturnal and eat both fruits and small mammals or chickens. They are threatened due to loss of habitat and are sometimes killed by ranchers.



Patagonia

Patagonia is a large diverse region of Argentina that includes, mountains, glacier fields, high steppes and the coastline. The predominate species people think about in patagonia is the marine animals but as it is a very diverse region and wildlife of all types abounds.



Southern crested caracara

The southern crested caracara is a large hawk-like bird of prey although it is a bit sluggish as a flyer. For that reason it is often seen scavenging for food at road kills and will steal chicks out of nests as well as the eggs. It is found throughout Argentina but is more highly concentrated in the Northern parts of the country.



Southern right whale

The Southern Right Whale has a rotund body with a large head which makes up one-third of its total body length; it has short wide flippers. Unusual for a baleen whale the Southern Right does not have a dorsal fin or a grooved throat. Since it was given international protection in 1935, populations have rebuilt but there are still only thought to be between 3,000–4,000 individuals surviving today.



Magellanic penguin

The Magellanic penguin is around 70cm long, and has an average weight of about 4kg. The head and upper parts are black apart from two broad white stripes beneath the throat: one running up behind the cheeks and above the eye to join the pinkish gape, the second running adjacent to the white underparts with which they merge above the legs. They eat fish and crustaceans. There are roughly 900,000 of these penguins in Argentina.



Cuyo, Argentina

The Cuyo region of Argentina is best known for its vineyards and high Andean peaks. The tallest peak in the region is Aconcagua, which is world renowned by mountaineers. Most of the animals found here are found in other regions of Argentina, chiefly the animals of Patagonia and the Northwest.



Vizcachas

Vizcachas are a rodent closely related to the chinchilla and look very similar to a rabbit. The two Argentine varieties of this species live in both the Pampas and in the Andes in the Cuyo region. They eat a wide variety of plant matter, pretty much anything it can find in its harsh rocky environment. The mountain viscacha is active at dawn and dusk and is prized for its soft fur and rabbit-like meat.



Rufous Horneo

This is the national bird of Argentina. The horneo is also referred to as an ovenbird. It builds large clay nests that resemble a crude oven. The horneo eat insects and other arthropods it gathers as it walks about. These birds have adapted themselves to human habitations and in fact seem to thrive. The chief predators are birds of prey, large lizards and cats.

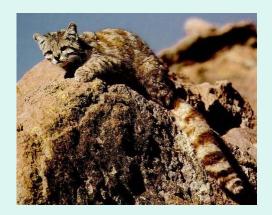


Argentine land tortoise

This tortoise is listed as threatened due to loss of habitat. It lives in the semi arid parts of the Cuyo region in Argentina. Its diet consists of vegetable matter. During the cold winter the tortoise will dig deep burrows to hibernate in.

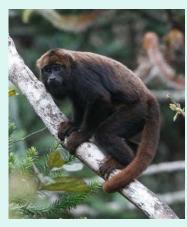












This has been just an introduction of a few of the species of animals found in Argentina. For every animal described here there are hundreds of species not listed. For instance, the golden dorado or the capybara pictured above. Many animals in Argentina are on the threatened or endangered list due to habitat loss. Farming and growing urban areas have all led to wildlife being pushed into smaller and smaller areas. It is all of our jobs to help save the wild areas we have left.