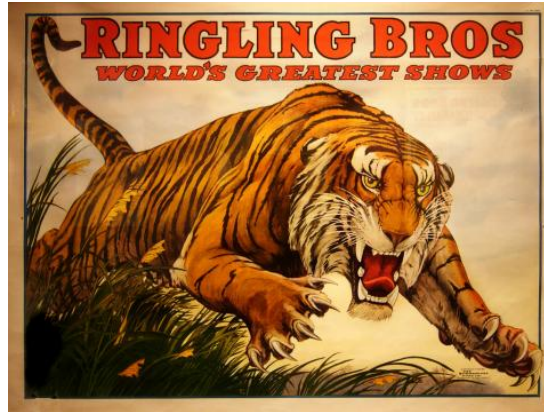




Tigers were very popular during the heyday of the traveling circus, and they still are. Whether at the zoo, the circus or a stand-alone show, tigers - an endangered species - are a main attraction. (Follow the link to view [National Geographic videos](#).)

They can live almost anywhere, in any climate - as long as they have food, water, shade and space to move around.

In the wild, tigers like to hunt at night. With their strong forelegs - and incredibly sharp claws - they can capture prey with a single swipe. Their strong jaws and sharp teeth are something to behold - as are their beautiful eyes.

Still a part of the circus, tigers are a feature of the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey show. We learn these facts from the [Ringling website](#):

1. *Tigers are solitary animals and come together primarily for mating. Tigresses give birth to litters of 2 or 3 cubs after a gestation period of 3 to 4 months. The cubs become independent after about 2 years.*
2. *Tigers have lost most of their natural habitat. Much has been converted into farms, and they no longer have the land they need to roam in search of food or to raise their young.*
3. *Tigers are an endangered species. They are protected by international law and national laws all over the world. In the United States, the acquisition and use of tigers is tightly controlled. The tigers you see in The Greatest Show On Earth® were bred in captivity.*
4. *Tigers are the largest living felids. A tiger typically grows to be 40 inches tall at the shoulder, 9 feet long and 500 pounds in weight.*
5. *Tigers are divided into eight subspecies, but only five are living today. The largest of these is the Siberian tiger, with the record holder weighing in at 845 pounds!*
6. *Tigers can live in almost any habitat, from tropical rain forests to snow-covered regions.*
7. *Tigers have a life expectancy of about 15 years in the wild. They often live a full 33 percent longer in captivity: up to 20 years.*

Different types, which still survive but are rare, include the white tiger and the golden tabby/strawberry tiger. This circus poster, now maintained by the Library of Congress, shows why tigers were - and remain - so popular.

Click on the image for a much-better view.

Credits:

Image online, courtesy Library of Congress.

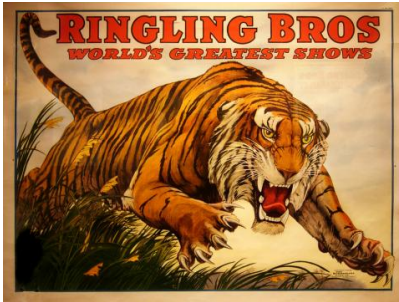
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