



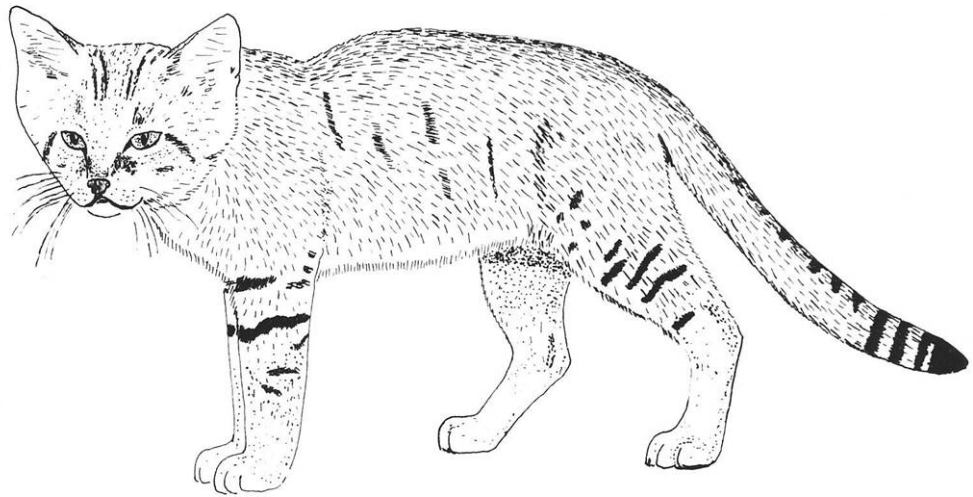
# Felis margarita

Loche, 1858

**Common names:**

- engl.: Sand Cat, Sand Dune Cat
- esp.: Gato de las arenas, Gato del Sahara
- fr.: Chat des sables
- de.: Sandkatze
- ital.: Gatto della sabbie

**Scientific synonyms:** *Felis thinobia*



## Characteristics:

### Adult:

**General appearance:** Small cat with an extremely broad face.

**Measurements:** Head-body-length: 39-55 cm, tail: 23-34 cm, hind foot: 10-13 cm.

**Body-weight:** 1.4-3.5 kg.

**Head:** Broad and rather flat, the ears set low down. Nose pad dark brown. Cheeks marked with a fulvous reddish streak.

**Eyes:** Iris greenish yellow, pupils contracting into vertical slits.

**Ears:** Very large (c. 68-74 mm) and broad. Pointed with pronounced black tips. Backside rufous tawny.

**Legs:** Rather short. Dorsal side of feet very pale or white. Soles with a mat of long, olivaceous buff hair, 20 mm or more, completely concealing the pads. Two contrasting elbow bars.

**Tail:** About half of head-body-length, slightly tapered at the tip. Distally ringed, black tip.

**Coat:** Soft and dense with abundant fine woolly underfur. Colour extremely pale sandy isabelline to grey straw ochre above with a poorly differentiated spinal band and some indistinct stripes and spots over the body. Under parts and inner sides of the limbs whitish.

**Sexual dimorphism:** No marked sexual dimorphism.

**Juvenile:** Pattern more pronounced than in adults.

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**Distribution:**

**Africa:** Algeria, Egypt, Libya(?), Morocco, Niger: Air, Tunisia.

**Asia:** Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq (?), Kazakhstan, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Yemen.

**Population:**

**Wild population:** *F.m. scheffeli* is rated endangered, although no precise data are available.

**Captive population:** 61 Sand Cats were kept in 6 collections contributing to the International Zoo Yearbook in 1990.

**Trade:**

Occasionally in the zoo trade, but relevance very low. 6 live specimens recorded by CITES Parties in 1990.

**Intraspecific variation:**

Three subspecies are generally recognized:

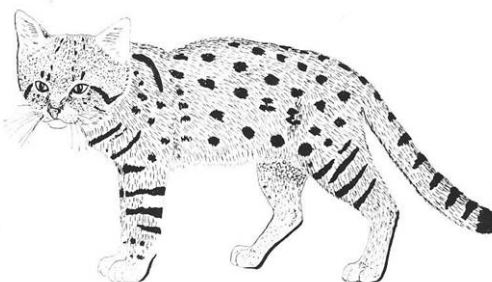
*F.m. margarita*: N Africa, Sinai and Arabian peninsula.

*F.m. scheffeli*: Pakistan.

*F.m. thinobia*: Transcaspian area of former USSR (formerly considered a separate species).

**Similar species:**

*Felis nigripes* (sheet A-112.007.001.019): Ground colour darker. Heavily spotted.



*Felis nigripes*

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