

New jaguar settling in at the Zoo

✘ A big cat youngster has been settling into her new home at Edinburgh Zoo after she arrived from Krefeld Zoo in Germany. Only one and a half years old, the shy female is named Rica.

Jaguars are the largest cats of America and can mainly be found in the rain forests of the Amazon Basin. Powerful and athletic cats, they are natural predators and their characteristic 'jaguar spots' allow them perfect camouflage to stalk down their prey. When fully grown jaguars are extremely strong and make excellent swimmers, climbers and hunters.

Rica is still a youngster, but in time it is hoped she will ✘ form a breeding pair with seven year old Mowgli, Edinburgh Zoo's well-known black jaguar.

Alison Maclean, carnivore keeper at Edinburgh Zoo, said:

"Rica is still settling into her new home here at Edinburgh Zoo. She has been a little shy and so far has tended to be more active at night. However we've been noticing that Rica does have quite a playful character, so I'm sure we'll see more of that as she matures and becomes more confident.

"When she's older and into season we'll introduce her to Mowgli. Both are extremely physically strong, so it'll be a case of watching for signs quite carefully when we introduce them...but that won't be for a little while longer. Mowgli does have a playful side too – so hopefully they'll hit it off."

Visitors to Edinburgh Zoo can catch a glimpse of Rica at Big Cats at Edinburgh Zoo.

Photos by Michael Gilbert