

Mandrill



Photo courtesy of Tony Wisneski

Native Range Map



Kingdom: Animalia
Phylum: Chordata
Subphylum: Vertebrata
Class: Mammalia
Order: Primates
Family: Cercopithecidae
Genus: *Mandrillus*
Species: *sphinx*

Habitat

- **In the Wild:** The mandrill is found in southwestern Cameroon, western Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, and southwestern Congo. They live in tropical rain forest habitats, montane (the lower vegetation belt on mountains) and thick secondary forests and thick bush.
- **Exhibit Location:** Social Animals

Characteristics

- Length: males 32 inches, females 22 inches; Weight: males up to 120 pounds (average 55 pounds), females up to 60 pounds (average 25 pounds); Tail length: 2-3 inches
- They have long fingers and well-developed opposable thumbs.
- Mandrills have a large head, a compact body with long, powerful limbs and a stubby tail, which is held upright. Their fur is an olive green with paler underparts. The male mandrill has a brilliantly colored blue to purple naked rump. Both sexes have pads of thickened skin on the rear end that provides a weight bearing surface as they sit.
- The male *Mandrillus sphinx* has an extremely colorful face, with a red stripe down the middle of the muzzle and around the nostrils. The sides of the muzzle are ridged lengthwise and colored blue. They have red fur patches above the eyes and a yellow mane-like beard. The colorings are much duller in females and juveniles than in adult males.
- Males have canine teeth 2.5 inches long.
- **Lifespan: In the Wild:** 40 years; **In Captivity** 46 years (longest recorded)

Behaviors

- Mandrills live in groups called troops. Small troops (the basic social unit) generally consist of a dominant male, huge and vividly colored, 5-10 adult females and 10 juveniles. These troops are sometimes referred to as harems. Males have a 2-phase grunt that mobilizes the troop for traveling. Adult males without harems are solitary but often forage with their original troop. When food is readily available, small troops may come together and form super troops of 200 or more.
- *Mandrillus sphinx* forage for food on the ground during the day and sleep in trees during the night. They have their own built in carryout containers. Cheek pouches open beside the lower teeth and extend down the side of the neck. They can hold an equivalent of a stomach load of food.
- Mandrills communicate through scent marking, vocalizations, and body language. The males have cutaneous (skin) glands, including a sternal gland in the middle of the chest that they use for scent marking. They make smacking noises while being groomed. When angered, they will slap the ground violently and stare intently at an observer while scratching their forearm or thigh. A yawning gesture may be made when an activity cannot be carried out or when it is part of a threat.
- Mandrills walk on their fingers and toes, so that the palms of their hands and soles of their feet do not touch the ground.
- **Enrichments at the Zoo:** a variety of toys, novel food items, scents, and browse

Reproduction

- Sexual maturity is reached between 4-8 years of age. They breed about every 2 years. The dominant male of the troop has exclusive mating rights. Mating usually takes place between July and October and birthing between January and April. The gestation period is about 6 months.

- Females give birth to a single young. (Twins are very rare). Infants are born with a black natal coat and pink skin. They can cling to the mother's belly immediately. Infants weigh between 1 and 2 pounds. At about 2 months of age, they start to lose the baby hair and grow an adult coat.
- The bulk of the infant's care, protection, grooming and nourishment (milk) is provided by the mother, but other members of the troop will help by grooming and playing with the infant. Daughters stay with the troop, while males usually leave their natal troop at maturity.

Diet

- **In the Wild:** fruits, seeds, insects, spiders, fish, crabs, mice, frogs, lizards, birds, bird eggs, tortoises, snails, snakes, fungi, roots, worms
- **At the Zoo:** fruits, vegetables, monkey chow, and primate diet

Conservation Status

- **IUCN Status:** Vulnerable; **CITES Appendix:** I
- The US Fish and Wildlife Service has had the mandrill listed as Endangered since 1976.
- There has been a drastic decline in the mandrill population during recent years due to habitat destruction and because they are hunted for their meat. Mandrills are especially vulnerable to hunters because of their loud calls.
- International trade is prohibited by the mandrill's listing on CITES Appendix 1. However, even if international trade is controlled, there are still substantial threats to the mandrill. Due to severely limited funds for conservation in West Africa and the difficulty in monitoring the mandrill in the forest, extinction in the wild is a serious threat for the *Mandrillus sphinx*.
- Predators: humans and large carnivores, such as leopards

Did You Know?/Fun Facts

- The mandrill is the largest of all monkeys.
- When the mandrill bares its teeth, it is not threatening to attack, but rather showing submissive behavior.
- Mandrills have 3 grunting calls: contact, alarm and banding together.
- Monkeys are the only noncarnivorous mammals with forward pointing eyes giving binocular vision useful for judging distance in trees and for delicate actions like feeding and grooming.

Sources:

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