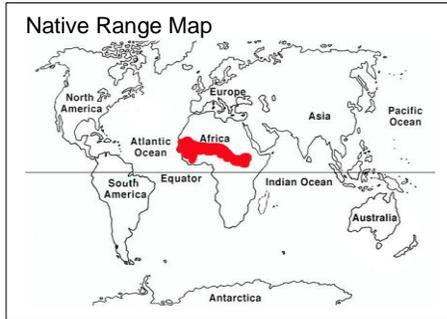


## Patas Monkey



Kingdom: Animalia  
Phylum: Chordata  
Subphylum: Vertebrata  
Class: Mammalia  
Order: Primata  
Family: Cercopithecidae  
Genus: *Erythrocebus*  
Species: *patas*



Photo courtesy of Ryan Hawk/Woodland Park Zoo

### Habitat

- **In the Wild:** Patas monkeys are native to the savannahs and open bush of equatorial Africa, from the Sahara to the north and to the equatorial rain forests to the south. An artificially introduced population was brought to Puerto Rico in the 1960s.
- **Exhibit Location:** Social Animals, Primate Park

### Characteristics

- Length: Males 23-34 inches, excluding the tail; Females: 19 inches, excluding the tail  
Weight: Males average 27 pounds; Females average 14 pounds
- Patas monkeys have slender bodies and long limbs adapted for moving on the ground and for speed.
- These monkeys are red-brown on the back and gray-white on the front. They have a black brow ridge and nose, white moustache, and a white area around the mouth.
- Males have a bright blue scrotum.
- Patas monkeys are quadrupedal (having 4 legs), but occasionally stand upright.
- **Lifespan: In the Wild** average 4-5 years (21.6 years is the oldest recorded); **In Captivity** over 20 years

### Behaviors

- Patas monkeys live in groups called troops. There are 2 distinct types of troop organization: 1) One male living with up to 75 females. 2) One male living with between 2 and 15 males. Occasionally, mixed sex groups with more than one male are found.
- Females usually stay with the group into which they are born for their whole lives. Males tend to change groups.
- The females seem to establish a hierarchy of dominance. The male spends most of his time at the edge of the group, watching for predators or for males from other groups. If he sees a predator, he immediately gives a warning call and creates a distraction as the females and young escape. He doesn't spend much time interacting with the females.
- The females groom each other. Usually the lower status females groom the higher status females. The highest status females will groom the male.
- It appears that females determine the group's movements, because they are more familiar with the group's territory.
- They forage for food, traveling as far as 4 miles a day, and have home ranges as large as 10,000 acres.
- Males born into the group usually leave by the time they reach puberty, around 3 years of age. Sometimes 2 brothers will leave together. The males will usually stay alone or in all male groups until they reach the age of 5 years.
- They communicate through visual cues, and rarely vocalize, but do have alarm calls that vary depending on the source of danger.

- They spend most of their time on the ground, but usually sleep in trees. Rather than sleeping in a group, they normally sleep in separate trees. This may be a way of protecting the troop from nocturnal attacks.
- They are most active in the morning and afternoon, resting mid-day. They sleep at night.
- **Enrichments at the Zoo:** scents, cardboard boxes, puzzle feeders, novel items and food

### **Reproduction**

- Females reach sexual maturity at 2 ½ years old. Males reach maturity at 4 years old.
- In the wild, they have a clearly defined mating season. The females in a troop will mate with the male who accompanies their group, or with other males that follow the group during mating season. Conception normally occurs during the summer rainy season, and birth of a single infant normally occurs in the winter dry season. In captivity, they do not maintain this schedule.
- The average gestation period is 167 days.
- The infants are fully independent by the time they are a year old.
- Infants are completely black when born. Between the ages of 3 and 6 months, their coats fade to the reddish brown of the adult. They begin to eat solid food when they're about 7 weeks old, and begin to play when they're 8 weeks old.

### **Diet**

- **In the Wild:** grasses, berries, seeds, fruit, insects, lizards, young birds, eggs, fish, pods, seeds, gall, leaves, gum and flowers of acacia trees
- **At the Zoo:** monkey biscuits, canned primate diet, fruit, nuts, vegetables

### **Conservation Status**

- **IUCN status:** Least Concern; **CITES Appendix II**
- Because of a lack of natural predators, the population in Puerto Rico is rapidly expanding. They are considered a pest in Puerto Rico because of their size, strength, and lack of fear for humans. The Department of Natural Resources has been trapping the monkeys in an attempt to control the population.
- They are also hunted for meat, traditional medicine, the pet trade, and because they raid crops. The conversion of the bush and savannahs to farmland has reduced their available habitat. However, deforestation has converted once humid areas into dryer habitats suitable for the patas monkeys.
- Predators: cheetahs, leopards, hyenas, dogs, humans

### **Did You Know?/Fun Facts**

- The zoo's patas monkeys were acquired from the Tampa's Lowry Park Zoo in Florida. The male and 2 females were wild caught in Puerto Rico, where the patas monkey has been introduced. The male is estimated at 4 years old; the females between 3-5 years old. Their offspring were born in 2008 and 2009.
- Patas monkeys are the fastest primate, with a maximum speed of over 30 miles per hour. They run in an easy loping gait, different from any other monkey.
- Females' facial hair lightens during pregnancy, returning to its normal color several months after delivery.
- NASCAR driver Tony Stewart had a pet patas monkey named Mojo, but when the monkey matured and became aggressive, he realized it was not a good idea to keep a wild animal as a pet. Mojo now lives in the Louisville Zoo where he is adapting to life with other patas monkeys.

### **Children's Books-**

- Gelman, Rita Golden. *Monkeys and Apes of the World*. Reading level ages 9-12.
- Fink Martin, Patricia A. *Monkeys of Asia and Africa*. Reading level ages 9-12.
- Redmond, Ian. *Eyewitness Books: Gorilla, Monkey, and Ape*. Reading level ages 9-12.

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