

# Binturong



**Scientific Name:**  
*Arctictus binturong*

**Range:**  
Burma to Nepal, Malay Peninsula and the islands of Sumatra, Java, and Borneo

**Habitat:**  
Dense forest canopy

**Average Size:**  
Body Length: 28-44 inches  
Body-Tail Length: 53-84 inches  
Weight: 19-31 pounds

**Lifespan:**  
About 20 years

**Diet:**  
*Wild:* prefers fruit, but also eats shoots, leaves, small mammals, fish and birds

**Zoo:** Produce, biscuits and treats like peanut butter and jelly

**Reproduction:**  
*Gestation:* 84-99 days

*Litter size:* 1 to 6 young

**Appearance:**  
The long, shaggy, black fur gives the animal a vaguely bear-like appearance, but the face is more cat-like, with large eyes, pronounced muzzle and long whiskers. The tail is long and very strong.

**Predators:**  
Mainly humans

**Population Status:**  
Vulnerable in some parts of their range, endangered in other parts.



**About the Animal**  
Binturong is the Malay word for 'Bearcat'. When westerners first saw these animals, it was assumed they were a cross between bears and cats. It was years later that scientists realized that Binturongs are neither bears nor cats but are actually more closely related to civets and mongooses. Like civets, they have a distinctive musk that

smells vaguely of warm popcorn.

Binturongs are arboreal –they spend their lives within the rainforest canopy and are one of only two mammals with truly prehensile tails. Unlike cats, Binturongs will easily climb down a tree head first, rotating its hind feet to assist in the descent. Although they prefer to spend their time in the treetops, Binturongs are excellent swimmers who will happily enjoy a swim when they get the chance.

Wild Binturongs are particularly fond of the fruit of the Strangler Fig Tree and are the only mammals capable of digesting the seed coat. When the animal defecates, the seeds are expelled from the body in a ready-made pile of fertilizer. Because the animal has digested the tough seed coat, the seeds are ready to grow.

Although there are no official population records for wild Binturongs, it is believed that habitat destruction is negatively impacting this species. It is considered threatened, and may even be considered endangered in some parts of its range.

## Mating and Reproduction:

Binturongs do not have a regular breeding season, although the females seem to exhibit embryonic diapause (AKA delayed implantation). This ability allows the female's body to time the offspring development and birth to the seasonal availability of food.

## Amazing Information:

The saliva of Binturongs appears to have strong antiseptic and healing qualities. Many caretakers report that wounds licked by a Binturong seem to heal almost overnight with little to no scarring.



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