

Ringtailed Lemurs



Scientific Name:

Lemur catta

Range:

Southwestern Madagascar

Habitat:

Open forests

Average Size:

Body Length: 15-18 inches
Body-Tail Length: 37-43 inches
Weight: 5-8 lbs

Lifespan:

About 30 years

Diet:

Wild: plants, leaves, flowers, fruit, sap and bark – occasionally insects.

Zoo: Monkey biscuits, various produce

Reproduction:

Gestation: 4 to 4 ½ months

Litter size: 1 or 2

Appearance:

This average size lemur is easily recognized by its long tail covered with alternating rings of black and white. The body fur is gray or browns with lighter markings on the leg and stomach. The face is white with black mark around the eyes and black noses.

Predators:

Unknown – likely predators: humans, dogs, raptors and fossas

Population Status:

Endangered



About the Animal

Ringtail Lemurs are the most easily recognized and best-studied of the lemurs presently held in captivity. With their white marked faces and long, black-ringed tails, they have charmed and captivated many a zoo visitor.

Ringtail Lemurs are perhaps most famous for the 'stink fights' males engage in during mating season. Two males will face each other and draw their tails across the scent glands located on the wrist. After 'loading up' the tails, the males proceed to wave them in air while staring at the opponent in a hostile

fashion. Eventually, one of the males will give up and run away.

Like all lemurs, Ringtails are endangered – however, there are so many held in captivity, that the SSP only allows a few pairs each year to breed, thus reserving housing space for other lemur species.

Mating and Reproduction

Mating season occurs from mid-April to June, with births happening between August and September. Females usually give birth to 1 or 2 offspring at a time. Infant loss is high – around 40% off infants die in the first year. Young are weaned at about 5 months of age.

Females provide most of the care for offspring, initially carrying the infants on the belly. As the infant grows, it moves to the mother's back.

Amazing Information

Female lemurs often switch infants and babysit for other females. They even form 'play groups' and nurse infants not their own!



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