

LEMUR, BLACK & WHITE RUFFED

RANGE:

Madagascar.

HABITAT:

Rainforests of northern Madagascar.

SIZE:

Largest lemur species – 120 centimeters.

LIFE EXPECTANCY:

Probably about 12-15 years in the wild to 20 years in captivity.

REPRODUCTION:

Gestation 100-104 days. 1-5 young.

DIET:

Wild: Leaves and fruits.

Zoo: Primate biscuits; cooked carrots and green beans, cabbage, escarole or spinach, apples, oranges, celery, sweet potatoes; ADE vitamin powder.

BEHAVIOR:

- Nocturnal but enjoy sun bathing in the early morning.
- Have extremely loud voices. Their howling consists of a sequence of roars which increase in intensity and are followed by various gurgling sounds.
- They groom themselves in a cat-like manner with teeth that are shaped to form a comb. A spine under the tongue acts like a comb cleaner.
- Females form the core of their groups of 2 to 16.

POINTS OF INTEREST:

- The word lemur means ghost.
- Extremely thick pelage is excellent for living in rain forests; heavy downpours cannot penetrate the dense fur.
- Because the lemur enjoys sunbathing, natives of Madagascar formerly believed they were holy animals that worshipped the sun and, therefore, hardly hunted them. Civilization has destroyed this belief, and the respect for the "sun children" vanished as did more of these lemurs.
- Moist fox-like nose has keen sense of smell. Thumb and great toe are opposable. Ears hidden by hair.
- Lemurs are primates, but they are not monkeys; they are "prosimians." Lemurs are the largest group of modern prosimians. They have retained numerous primitive characteristics and also have many features parallel to the monkeys and apes.

STATUS:

Declining due to habitat destruction, hunting, and commercial exportation. CITES Appendix I.

REFERENCES:

Lemurs. Encyclopedia of Mammals. (Barnes & Noble, Inc), 1999; 320.

Primates. Encyclopedia of Animals. (Fog City Press), 1993; 108.

theZOO

L O U I S V I L L E



photo by Laura Lamb

Order:	Primates
Sub-Order:	Prosimii
Family:	Lemuridae
Genus:	Varecia
Species:	variegata
Subspecies:	variegata
Subspecies:	subra