

De Brazza's Monkey

Cercopithicus neglectus

Long-tailed and thickly furred, De Brazza's monkeys have dull, olive-colored bodies with white rumps and a white stripe down each leg. Their arms, legs, and tails are black; they have orange foreheads, white muzzles, and white beards.

What They Eat

De Brazza's monkeys eat ripe fruit and seeds from trees, flowers, fungi, leaves, insects, and spiders.

Where They Live

Their preference for low-lying, flooded forests has earned De Brazza's monkeys the nickname "swamp monkey" although they sometimes live in drier forests along streams and lakes.

What They Do

De Brazza's monkeys spend their days foraging for fruit and socializing with others in their family group. Their digestive tracts, which are a lot like humans, make it hard for them to find nourishment in tough forest materials such as leaves and bark. Wary of other primates but sociable among their own kind, De Brazza's monkeys forage in the forest using long limbs and tail to move from tree to tree. When threatened, they camouflage themselves by curling into a ball with their white parts hidden.

De Brazza's monkeys live in small groups, with a single male and one or more females and young. During the day, they move through the forest using all four limbs to grasp branches and their big tails help with balance. They are generally quiet, but occasionally make croaks or alarm growls.

Females give birth to a single infant about five to six months after mating. The young monkey stays with its mother, clinging to her fur and drinking milk until about a year old.

How They're Doing

In some localized areas De Brazza's monkeys are disappearing as people destroy forest to make wood or farmland. On a broader scale, because they are so well camouflaged, we don't know whether populations are declining, stable, or on the increase.

De Brazza's monkeys do not appear to be in danger. However, in some places development is taking over their habitat, and occasionally hunters or farmers protecting their crops kill them.

How The Minnesota Zoo Is Conserving

The Zoo has provided funds to support wildlife patrolling and monitoring on Bioko Island, Equatorial Guinea. Bioko Island is a small island twenty miles off the coast of Cameroon in West Africa. It is home to the capital city, 150,000 people, and some of the most endangered animals on Earth.

In the 1980's, the capital city of Malabo at the northern end of Bioko became home to a commercial bushmeat market, selling monkeys, duikers, sea turtles, monitor lizards, and other large animals. Since then, wildlife has largely disappeared from the northern half of the island. At the island's southern end, the Gran Caldera - a hollowed out volcanic crater - shields many animals from hunters with its steep gorges. As bushmeat supplies decrease, prices increase - and hunters are making riskier and longer treks into the southern forests.

This project, run by the Bioko Biodiversity Protection Program, coordinates seven wildlife patrolling and monitoring teams in an effort to protect the island's remaining wildlife and keep

commercial bushmeat hunters out of protected areas. In 2008, the Minnesota Zoo provided funding through the Ulysses S. Seal Conservation Grant Program to help keep these patrols running.

Interesting Facts

- De Brazza's monkeys store food in cheek pouches while they forage, then eat later when they are in a safe place.
- This species of monkey chases off others that enter their territory – except for colobus monkeys. The two species' digestive tracts are different, so they eat different foods and can coexist peacefully.
- De Brazza's monkeys can swim.
- De Brazza's monkeys are named for Pierre Savorgnan de Brazza, a famous Frenchman who explored Africa in the late 1800s.
- When threatened, De Brazza's monkeys curl up into a ball with only their camouflaged backs exposed. They stay very still until danger has passed – which can be up to eight hours!
- Leopards, crested eagles, pythons, and people eat De Brazza's monkeys.
- De Brazza's monkeys weigh 9-17 pounds and are 16-25 inches in length – with a 3.5 - 5 foot tail!
- De Brazza's may live up to 22 years in the wild, and up to 30 years in zoos.