

Common Name: Miniature Donkey
Scientific Name: *Equus africanus asinus*



UCN Red list Status: None

AZA Conservation Program: None

Class: Mammalia

Order: Perissodactyla

Family: Equinae

Genus: Equus

Habitat: The donkey is domesticated throughout the world, with some wild populations found in the desert plains that are sparsely covered with low shrub. Donkeys, the smallest member of the horse family, are descendants of the African wild ass. The Sicilian breed was developed in Sicily.

Threats in the Wild: The African wild donkey is *critically endangered* in the wild due to ongoing over-hunting, hybridizing with domestic species, and human induced habitat loss and degradation.

Physical Characteristics: An adult Sicilian donkey can attain a length of 7 feet, has a tail 1.5 ft long, stands almost 5 ft tall (2.5 ft at the shoulder), and can weigh up to 500 pounds. The donkey has thick hair, with a short erect mane. Its coat is a dark bay color, with light points on its muzzle, ears, lower legs, and its back. It has a compact body, long large ears, a small head, and narrow feet with strong high hooves. The donkey has callosities on the inside of its front legs only.

Reproduction: Females usually bear a single foal after a 12-month gestation period. Their milk is high in proteins and carbohydrates, and low in fats. It is very useful for infants, the sick, and the elderly.

Longevity: 25–30 years on average

Diet: Donkeys are entirely herbivorous, and feed mostly on grasses. They can subsist on poorer forage than a horse. They usually drink water daily, but can go without it for long periods.

Miscellaneous: Donkeys are slower moving than horses, but are very sure-footed. They are used for travel in rocky mountainous terrain. If they fight, they kick with their front and back legs and bite. They are able to survive on a minimum amount of food and water. They work well in hot, difficult situations.

Signs of Stress: Kicking, aggression, sudden change in behavior.

Fact Sheet – Mammalia – Miniature Donkey
Last Updated: April 2020

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Handling: Always use a halter and lead. Do not let them graze or pick foliage from trees and bushes while walking around the zoo. Have one docent stand at the hindquarters when walking around the zoo to prevent patrons from getting into the kick zone.

Exhibited: Children's Enchanted Forest

Docent Animal Specifics: Both donkeys are female. Sunshine was born in 2003 and Jill in 1996.