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4 interesting facts about meerkats

Standing at just 30 cm (12 i.) tall, meerkats, also known as suricats, rely on group collaboration to survive in the Kalahari desert. They live in groups of 20-50 extended family members in large underground tunnels. These family groups, called gangs or mobs, are led by an alpha couple, with the female being the most dominant. Most of the group members are either children or siblings of the alpha couple. The dominant couple (and subordinate couple) will produce two to four puppies a year. Other group members will babysit the puppies, even feed them milk. Because the survival of the puppies is essential to maintaining their social unity, meerkats have been known to risk their lives trying to protect the young. One of the most important roles a meerkat plays is that guard, or guard. A meerkat will stand on its hind legs, backed up by the tail, and act as a lookout post, while the rest of the mob is outside looking for food and romping in the sun. The lookout scans the area for predators, including hawks, eagles, snakes and jackals. If a predator is spotted, the guard lets out a distinctive bark. At the sound of the warning bark, all sprints to the nearest tunnel entrance. The guard is the first to come out of the cave to check if the coast is clear. Meerkats are specially adapted to live in the harsh desert environment. Dark spots around their eyes help them to be effective lookouts by reducing the glare of the sun, like a baseball player who paints dark lines under his eyes. Their eyes also allow them to take in a wide angle view of the stage. This helps prevent predators from gaining an advantage by sneaking up. Meerkats also possess special adaptations to help them dig. Their eyes have a clear protective membrane that protects them from dirt while digging. Their ears also close tightly to keep the dirt out. Meerkats have light brown fur with a grey and brown hue to it with stripes on the back. Their dark-skinned stomachs are covered with only a thin coat of fur, so the meerkats warm themselves by lying face up in the sun. Eating both plants and animals, meerkats are omnivorous. Their diet consists mostly of insects, which they sniff using their improved sense of smell. They also eat small rodents, fruits, birds, eggs, lizards, and even poisonous scorpions. They can catch a scorpion and pull out its deadly sting in the blink of an eye. Because they have very little fat to store energy, meerkats feed and hunt every day. Conservation status The meerkat is not currently under threat and is considered to be at a lower risk of being threatened by the IUCN. That said, they must in no way be ignored. they play an important role in maintaining ecological harmony in the desert. They provide food to predators like jackals and eagles, and they curb pest infestations by eating insects. What you can do to help you can help meerkats by awareness of their crucial role in kalahari's ecological balance. You can also support the Meerkat Magic Conservation Project, which uses funds raised through eco-tourism to subsidize landowners and farmers. In this way, development and agriculture have declined, allowing for increased conservation of mesekat habitat. You can also symbolically adopt a meerkat from WWF. Meerkat Distribution Meerkats rely on group collaboration for survival in Africa's Kalahari Desert. Meerkat Resources More Meerkat Stuff from Animal Fact Guide Blog posts about Meerkat Meerkat meerkats are huge excavators and can dig up their own body weight in the ground in just a few seconds. Meerkats are extremely social, and often groom or play with each other. They tend to live in groups (gangs or mobs) of about 20 people, although much larger groups are not uncommon. Meerkat groups use several different caves, moving between them regularly. The caves have a variety of tunnels and different 'spaces', and allow meerkats to stay cool during hot periods. Meerkats have highly developed senses of smell, hearing and vision. The black ribbons around the eyes help protect them from the glare of the African sun. They also have specific vocalizations to communicate different information such as type approaching predators. When groups are out foraging, individuals will take turns acting as guard posts. A guard will stand on his/her hind legs and scan the area for potential danger and will make an alarm call if a predator is spotted, alerting group members and allowing for a quick escape. Meerkats are huge excavators and can dig their own body weight into the ground in just a few seconds. Meerkats enjoy sunbathing! In the morning, when they emerge from their caves, they will often spend time simply standing up and warming themselves by the sun's rays. Meerkat groups have a highly developed social structure, with individuals playing various important roles in society. For example, babysitters will stay with young puppies while the rest of the gang is out foraging, and older meerkats will take responsibility for mentoring the youngsters, teaching them to forage and be aware of danger. Researchers from the University of Cambridge studying meerkat groups in the Kalahari desert have acknowledged that meerkats have traditions that have gone down generation to generation. Researchers have found that some meerkat groups are particularly lazy and will routinely rise later, while others will get up and leave their caves much earlier. Laziness and liveliness are therefore culturally biased in meerkats. Surikaters' highly cooperative social behavior has seen many companies use meerkats as examples of workplace workshops to encourage more team spirit and collaboration. The 'All for One – The Meerkat Way' project is used by over a thousand industry-leading companies. Meerkat Facts Meerkats are cute little creatures that belong to the desmerfamily family. They live in dry and semi-arid areas of South Africa. Eagles, hawks and falcons hunt meerkats, but they are not endangered. Meerkats are small in size. They can reach 12 inches in height and weigh up to 2 pounds. Meerkats live in groups called mobs, which consist of 2-3 families of meerkats. A mob shares a single cave. They are very social animals and they like to play or groom each other. Besides fun time, each member of the mob has his own duty, which benefits the entire group. When they hunt, some members look out for the predators, while others work on the hunting strategy. In case of danger, meerkats warn other members of the mob using specific sounds. Meerkats are territorial animals. Average size of their area is 4 square miles. They dig holes throughout the area and use them as shelters in case of danger. Meerkats hunt and eat insects, scorpions, small lizards, snakes, eggs. They also eat roots and onions. They are immune to the venom of scorpions and snakes. As they live in dry areas, they get all the water they need from the food they eat. Meerkats have excellent vision, sense of smell and hearing. They stand on their hind legs while they examine their surroundings. Woman can even care for their babies in standing position. Meerkats mate during the rainy season and have few litters every year. She gives birth to two or five puppies. They are hairless, blind and their ears are closed. Puppies stay in the grave with their mother few weeks until they get ready to eat solid food. Adult meerkats take care of their puppies in shifts. Adult meerkats teach young people what to eat. Young meerkats are afraid of predators, and they will hide in barrow even if they see a plane. Meerkats live up to 10 years in the wild and up to 13 years in captivity. Related Links: Facts Animal Facts Facts Meerkat Facts Back to Animals for Kids Meerkat is a small mammal that is part of the desmerfamily family. Meerkats were made famous with tv show Meerkat Manor from Animal Planet, which followed several Meerkat families in the Kalahari desert. The scientific name for Meerkat is suricata suricatta. Where do Meerkats live? Meerkats live in the African Kalahari desert in the countries of South Africa and Botswana. They dig large networks of underground tunnels where they stay during the night. These tunnels have multiple openings to escape a predator. Do Meerkats live in a group? Yes, they live in large family groups called clans, mobs or gangs. The number of meerkats in a clan can vary in size. They typically have about 20 members, but sometimes grow to as many as 50 members. The Clan works together to help each other. One or two meerkats will keep an eye on predators other scavenge for food. If the lookouts spot a predator, they will provide a warning bark and the rest of the family will quickly escape into the underground cave. In each clan there is an alpha pair of meerkats that lead the group. The alpha pair typically reserves the right to mate and produce offspring. If others in the clan reproduce, then alpha pairs will usually kill the young and can kick the mother out of the clan. The Mob's Territory Every meerkat mob will have an area that they mark with their scent. It's usually about four square miles. They will not allow another group or mob of meerkats into their territory and will fight them if necessary. They move around within the area every day to forage for food in different places. What do Meerkats eat? Meerkats are omnivorous, which means they eat both plants and animals. They mostly eat insects, but they will also eat lizards, snakes, eggs and fruit. They can even eat some toxic prey like scorpions as they are immune to their venom. Since they don't have a lot of body fat, meerkats have to eat every day to keep their energy up. Then why are they standing up? Generally sentry, or lookout, will stand up right on its hind legs using its tail to balance. This is so that it can get as high as possible to look for predators. Fun facts about Meerkat's Predators of meerkat include snakes, jackals, and birds of prey. The caves that they dig are good for protection, but they also help them to keep cool from the hot desert sun. Their tan and brown fur helps them to blend into the desert and hide from predators such as eagles. If the group feels threatened by a predator, they will sometimes try bullying or attack it in a group. Although they usually run, they can be tough warriors when needed. Timon from the Disney film The Lion King was a meerkat. The whole family, including father and siblings will help take care of newborn meerkats. They are considered a form of desmeranimal. For more on mammals: Mammals African Wild Dog American Bison Bacteriarian Camel Blue Whale Dolphins Elephants Giant Panda Giraffes Gorilla Hippos Horses Meerkat Polar Bears Prairie Dog Red Kangaroo Red Wolf Rhino Spotted Hyena Back to Mammals Back to Animals for Kids

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