

# Aye-aye

**Scientific Name:** *Daubentonia madagascariensis*

**Class:** Mammalia

**Order:** Primates

**Family:** Daubentoniidae



Aye-ayes have a head and body length of 360 to 440 millimeters and a long bushy tail. The coat is long and can be either dark brown or black in color, with white guard hairs. The face and throat are pale gray, and facial features include yellow-orange or sandy brown eyes surrounded by dark markings. Aye-ayes have large triangular ears, a short snout and a pink nose. They have delicate fingers and their long middle finger is used for eating, drinking, and grooming. They use narrow, vertical, horizontal, or oblique branches to support them in locomotion.

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## Range

Nosy-Mangabe (introduced population), Madagascar – except southwestern corner

## Habitat

They live in primary and secondary rainforest, deciduous forest, cultivated forest, and occasionally dry scrub forest and mangrove forest.

## Gestation

152 to 172 days

## Litter

Average one

## Behavior

Aye-ayes are nocturnal and spend most of the daytime hours sleeping in nests in the upper two levels of the canopy. Individuals tend to sleep singly, but may share a nest on occasion. Nests can be occupied by different individuals at different times. Activity begins half an hour before sunset and continues three hours after sunset. The males are usually active before the females. They spend the night foraging, feeding, and grooming. Aye-ayes can rest vertically or horizontally.

## Reproduction

During mating cycles female aye-ayes typically mate with more than one male. Aye-ayes have an extended mating season, extending through a five month period from October to February. Female estrous cycles range from 21 to 65 days and are characterized by changes in the vulva, which is usually small and gray, and becomes large and red during these cycles. In the wild, most young are usually born between February and September. There is a two to three year interval between births.

## Wild Diet

Fruits, nuts, plant exudates, breadfruit, banana, coconuts, ramy nuts, bamboo, nectar from the 'tree of travelers', and mangoes.

Another important component of the aye-aye's diet is insect larvae, especially cerambycid beetle larvae.