

Miniature Donkey

Scientific Name: *Equus africanus asinus*

Class: Mammalia

Order: Perissodactyla

Family: Equidae



Head and body length about 79 inches; tail length about 17 inches; shoulder height about 49 inches; weight about 550 pounds, on the average. They can be as short as 31" at the shoulder, and as tall as 59". The upper parts are generally gray or brownish, may become more reddish in the summer, and shade into white under parts. There is often a dark dorsal stripe, sometimes a transverse shoulder stripe, and sometimes there are bands on the legs. The mane is long, thin and upright, and the tail is tufted. The hooves are long, and the narrowest of any equid. The hoof is designed for surefootedness rather than speed. They have been clocked at up to 31 miles per hour. *Equus asinus* was domesticated about 6,000 years ago, probably in either Egypt or

Mesopotamia. Its movements are slower than those of other equids, but it has been used for riding, and as a beast of burden. Because it is surefooted, it is useful as a pack animal. It is capable of carrying over 200 pounds for days with little food. It can go for long periods without water, and can survive in hot and difficult conditions.

Range

Worldwide

Habitat

Broken, undulating, stony desert country.

Gestation

1 year +

Litter

Normally 1

Behavior

They generally graze from dawn until late morning, rest during the hottest part of the day, then graze again in the late afternoon. They occur in groups of variable composition, averaging 4 to 5 individuals, and have a mean annual home range of 12 square miles. Some individuals, usually males, live alone, but most are found in unstable groups. There is no indication of permanent bonds between adults.

Reproduction

Breeding in the wild is restricted to the wet season, although some feral populations in North America breed throughout the year. Females reach sexual maturity in their second year, and in domesticity they may produce one young annually for some 20 years.

Wild Diet

Grasses and sedges, forbs, browse

Zoo Diet

Grass, grain