

Red Ruffed Lemur

Scientific Name: *Varecia rubra*

Class: Mammalia

Order: Primates

Family: Lemuridae



Head and body length is about 20 inches; Tail length is about 24 inches; Weight is just under 8 pounds. Most of the dorsal body coat is a deep, rusty red. There is a white patch on the neck, and small patches of white may appear on the heels, digits and muzzle. The extremities, tail, insides of the limbs, forehead, and crown (excluding the ears) are black. Some variations to this coloration may exist. Females have 3 pairs of mammae.

Range

Northeastern Madagascar

Habitat

Rain forest

Gestation

90 to 102 days

Litter

Usually two, sometimes one or three

Behavior

These lemurs are an arboreal forest dweller. Progression is by walking or running on larger branches, and leaping from tree to tree. Locomotion is more labored and cautious than with other Lemur species. They are crepuscular, being most active from 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm, when their peculiar calls are commonly heard. Vocalizations include an intense roar of alarm, and a powerful, plaintive call for territorial expression. Group sizes can range from 2 to 16. All group members use a common home range, and aggression has been noted between groups. Females form the core of the group, and defend the territory. The weakest social bonds are between males.

Grouping patterns change seasonally. Females group in larger numbers during the wet summer, and are more dispersed during the drier winter.

Reproduction

Mating season begins in May, with most mating being in June and July. The young are usually born in September and October. Infants are at first left in the nest, rather than being carried about by their mothers. Later they are carried in the mother's mouth, and begin to follow the mother by about 3 weeks of age. They are fully mobile at about 7 weeks. Weaning is at around 135 days. Females may become pregnant at 20 months.

Wild Diet

Fruit, vegetable matter, leaves, sap and nectar