

Kikuyu Black and White Colobus Monkey

Scientific Name: *Colobus guereza kikuyuensis*

Class: Mammalia

Order: Primates

Family: Cercopithecidae



Colobus monkeys have a head and body length of 20 to 28 inches, with a tail length of 24 to 40 inches. Their weight is 8 to 20 pounds though large males may reach 25 pounds. The legs are longer than the arms; the vestigial thumbs are only visible in the embryonic state. The large stomach functions like those of ungulates with food fermenting in the first two chambers. Their head is round, the face naked or sparsely haired; the muzzle is short and there are no cheek pouches. Long black fur covers the body. They have a white band across their face and a long white mantle across the shoulders to the lower back and a large white tuft at the end of the tail. Babies are white all over.

Range

Their range is Nigeria to Ethiopia and south to Tanzania.

Habitat

They inhabit tropical rain and montane forests -- tree crowns.

Gestation

6 months

Litter

1

Behavior

Proficient aerialists, colobus monkeys swing freely with their arms, extending hands and feet in front of them when landing after a jump. They use the same pathways through the canopy over and over. The size of the home range is influenced by the number of monkeys in the troop, food supply and compatibility with other troops. Territory boundaries are marked by vocalizations, and troops meeting at a boundary jump up and down excitedly for a time. A strong male acts as lead animal, threatening enemies and covering retreats. Besides man, they have leopards and large eagles as predators. When eating, they prefer young tender leaves, and the troop may stay several days on the same few trees. They can withstand cold temperatures.

Reproduction

Colobus monkeys practice polygamy. Females retreat with a male just prior to giving birth and return shortly thereafter. Infants are carried on the abdomen with the young clinging to the mother's sides. At one week the young moves freely on the mother's lap and at two weeks move about. The mother carries the youngster until the age of 8 months although the father will play with it and help in its care. He is very patient and never scolds as some other monkeys do.

Wild Diet

Leaves, flowers, fruits and some insects