



# Banded Mongoose

*Mungos mungo*

## Classification *What groups does this organism belong to based on characteristics shared with other organisms?*

Class: Mammalia (all mammals)  
Order: Carnivora (carnivores)  
Family: Herpestidae (mongoose and meerkats)  
Genus: Mungos (Gambian mongoose and banded mongoose)  
Species: *mungo* (banded mongoose)



## Distribution *Where in the world does this species live?*

Banded mongooses live in Africa and might be found anywhere from Gambia to northeast Ethiopia and south to the border of South Africa.

## Habitat *What kinds of areas does this species live in?*

Banded mongoose can be found in a variety of habitats, including savannas, forest, shrubland and grasslands.

## Physical Description *How would this animal's body shape and size be described?*

- Typically, a banded mongoose weighs from three-and-a-half to five pounds (1.59-2.27 kg).
- They have brownish-gray fur with dark brown stripes on the back of its body, which ranges from 12 to 16 inches (30.4-38.1 cm) long.
- The face is long with small rounded ears. It has short legs.
- This species has an 8 inch (20.3 cm) bushy tail that tapers to a black tip.

## Diet *What does this species eat?*

*In their historic range:* Mongooses are opportunistic feeders and eat mostly insects and a variety of other invertebrates. Small mammals, reptiles and birds are occasionally in their diet. They will also eat eggs and sometimes fruits.

*At the zoo:* They are fed a variety of fruits and vegetables, ground meat, crickets, wax worms, earthworms and mealworms.

## Predators *What eats this species?*

Jackals, leopards, lions, cheetah, large snakes, African wild dogs, birds of prey.



# Banded Mongoose

*Mungos mungo*

## Social Organization *How does this animal interact with others of its species?*

Banded mongooses are diurnal. They travel in packs of 15-20 individuals, generally led by the dominant female with the dominant male close behind. They communicate within the pack by a series of low calls. High-pitched calls are made when a predator approaches. They vigorously defend their territory.

## Life Cycle *How does this species mate, raise young, grow and develop?*

Banded mongooses breed within their packs. Females are ready to breed at 9-12 months old and males may be sexually mature at about 4 months old. However, several larger dominant males “mate-guard” females who are ready to breed so younger males have limited access. But females will go to considerable lengths to escape and mate with other males in the group. Males and females will mate with multiple partners. Each pack produces about 4 litters a year but, in areas where there are more pronounced seasonal weather changes, they breed only during the rainy season, when food is more abundant. Generally after a two-month gestation period, two to eight young are born. They are blind, with very little fur. Their eyes will open in about ten days. One or two adults guard the young in the den, while the rest of the adults forage for food. Lactating females of the pack nurse the young - not necessarily their own. Males gather food for the young to eat. Life span in Africa is about 10 years although pup mortality is very high. In managed care settings like zoos, banded mongoose live about 15 years.

## Adaptations *What physical and behavioral characteristics enable this animal to survive and thrive?*

- When breaking into tough food items like eggs and invertebrates, banded mongoose use their **sharp teeth** or will sometimes **throw objects** to break them open.
- Banded mongooses **will gather and move together** as a group toward a predator to scare it away – this is called “bunching”. They will also **vocalize aggressively**. They also have been seen as a group chasing a predator or lunging at it, to force it to drop a captured mongoose.
- Banded mongoose are **diurnal** and **prefer to den in old termite mounds**. They create usually a central sleeping chamber with up to 9 entry points. When not breeding, they move dens every 2-3 days.
- The **pattern and coloration** of the banded mongoose’s fur helps them blend into their surroundings and evade predators.
- They have an **excellent smell, vision and hearing**.

## Collection Connection

- Denver Zoo has a small group of banded mongoose. Each animal has a special shave spot or haircut that helps staff quickly identify them. The group usually sleeps in a pile and loves blankets.
- The banded mongoose can be found at Predator Ridge near the entrance of the zoo.

## Conservation Status *Is this animal at risk for extinction and why?*

*IUCN Status: Least Concern*

Banded mongoose are widespread and thriving.



# Banded Mongoose

*Mungos mungo*

## Resources and Where to Learn More

Gilchrist, J.S. & Do Linh San, E. 2016. *Mungos mungo*. *The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species* 2016:

e.T41621A45208886. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2305/IUCN.UK.2016-1.RLTS.T41621A45208886.en>

Kruger National Park [http://www.krugerpark.co.za/africa\\_banded\\_mongoose.html](http://www.krugerpark.co.za/africa_banded_mongoose.html)

Cant, M.A., Social control of reproduction in banded mongooses, *ANIMAL BEHAVIOUR*, 2000, **59**, 147–158