



# Kirk's Dik-Dik

*Madoqua kirki*

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

Class: Mammalia (all mammals)  
Order: Cetartiodactyla (whales, dolphins and even-toed ungulates)  
Family: Bovidae (cattle, antelope, gazelle, goats, sheep and others)  
Genus: *Madoqua* (dik-diks)  
Species: *kirki* (Kirk's dik-dik)



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

This dik-dik is found Sub-Saharan east Africa, Namibia and Angola.

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

Kirk's dik-dik is found in dry terrain with dense, high brush and kopjes (rocky outcrops in grasslands) and hard, stony soil.

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

- Kirk's dik-dik are very small antelope and are considered dwarf antelope. They are 23-24 inches (58.4-60.9 cm) high, weighing 11-12 pounds (4.98-5.44 kg).
- Their coloration is grizzled gray to gray-brown above, with whitish under parts. The flanks and legs are tan.
- They have large dark eyes with a white ring. They have an elongated proboscis-like nose.
- Only males have the small straight horns. These may grow to 4.5 inches.

## Diet *What does this species eat?*

*In their historic range:* They eat shoots and fruits from any edible plant or shrub. Standing on their hind legs enables them to reach higher food sources. They do not graze.

*At the zoo:* Spock is fed grain diet, alpha and browse.

## Predators *What eats this species?*

Because of their size dik diks can be prey of many animals such as lions, hyenas, African wild dogs, jackals, monitor lizards, large birds of prey and pythons.



# Kirk's Dik-Dik

*Madoqua kirkii*

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

Kirk's dik-dik are solitary or travel in groups made up of a monogamous pair and their offspring. They are extremely reclusive and are seldom seen for more than a few seconds. Males and females are territorial and this species has prominent pre-orbital glands located in front of the eye, which discharges a black, sticky secretion. This secretion is deposited on twigs. Additionally the perimeter of the territory is demarcated with dunging areas. By marking their territory, they establish a range and discourage intruders.

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

Gestation period is five to six months with a single birth. Birthing peaks occur from November – December and April – May. After birth, the fawn lies concealed away from the mother for two to three weeks. They nurse for six to eight weeks. Although they grow up with their parents, the young leave from the home territory at seven to eight months of age. Females may bear up to two young per year. Females become sexually mature at six to eight months, males at eight to nine months. Life span in Africa is only 3-4 years. In managed care settings like zoos, dik-dik live about 10 years.

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

- Dik-diks have an **elongated snout** or proboscis. This snout helps them keep cool.
- A **prominent pre-orbital glands** located in front of the eye discharges a black, sticky secretion. This secretion is deposited on twigs to mark territory.
- Dik-diks are more **active during the night** to avoid the extreme heat of the day. They get all the moisture they need to survive from the food they eat.
- Their **alarm call** is a loud, breathy “zik-zik,” hence their name “dik-dik”.

## Collection Connection

- Denver Zoo has one dik-dik named Spock. He was born 12/3/2008. This species is solitary with the exception of mating pairs with offspring, so Spock appreciates having a home to himself. Spock spends the nights inside in a private bedroom. He trains with staff on behaviors that help staff take care of him, for example, Spock gets on the scale to be weighed.
- Kirk's dik-diks 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*

Kirk's dik-dik have a limited range, but are well adapted to extremely dry environments. Over-hunting by humans is the greatest threat to this small species.

## Resources and Where to Learn More

African Wildlife Foundation <https://www.awf.org/wildlife-conservation/dik-dik>

Animal Diversity Web [https://animaldiversity.org/accounts/Madoqua\\_kirkii/](https://animaldiversity.org/accounts/Madoqua_kirkii/)

IUCN SSC Antelope Specialist Group 2016. *Madoqua kirkii*. *The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species* 2016: e.T12670A50190709. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2305/IUCN.UK.2016-1.RLTS.T12670A50190709.en>.