



Red River Hog

Potamochoerus porcus

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: Suidae (hogs, wild boars, warthogs, babirusas)
Genus: Potamochoerus (red river hog, bushhog)
Species: *porcus* (red river hog)



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

Red river hogs are found in western and central Africa. They are also known as bush pigs.

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

The red river hog inhabits thickets, forests, savannas and swamps.

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

- The red river hog can range from 3 feet to 3 ½ feet (100-150 cm) in length.
- Their body is round and supported by short, sturdy legs.
- Their tail is 1 foot to 1 ½ feet (30-45 cm) long and hairless except for the tuft of hair at the end.
- They weigh 99-264 pounds (45-120kg).
- They have a shaggy red coat with black and white contrasting markings on their head, a white eye ring and long white ear tassels.
- They have a white mane that runs the length of their spine and stands up when the animal is excited or threatened.
- They have barely visible small upper tusks and visible lower tusks which can be up to 3 inches (7 cm) long.
- The males have a long snout covered in warts and ridges -often hidden by bushy facial hair.

Diet *What does this species eat?*

In their historic range: Grasses, water plants, roots, bulbs, fruit, carrion, small animals

At the zoo: Various grains, greens, vegetables, cooked sweet potato, and fruit (but no citrus)

Predators *What eats this species?*

Leopard, lion, spotted hyena, python and humans



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

They live in groups – called sounders, that consist of 2-15 females and young, attended by a male.

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

Red river hogs breed seasonally so that the young are born between the end of the dry season in February and the midpoint of the rainy season in July. Gestation lasts 120 days. The mother constructs a nest from dead leaves and dry grass before giving birth to a litter of up to six piglets with three or four piglets being most common. The piglets weigh 23 to 32 oz at birth and are initially dark brown with yellowish trips and spots. They are weaned in about four months and develop the plain reddish adult coat by around six months. The dark facial markings do not appear until they reach adulthood at around two years of age. Red river hogs live up to 20 years.

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

- Red river hogs are **fast runners and good swimmers**.
- With their heads lowered to the ground they are able to **break through the thickets** like a wedge.
- They have **foot glands** that mark their tracks.
- They have a **good sense of smell** to locate and uncover food.
- They establish their territories by **marking trees with their long canine teeth**.

Collection Connection

The red river hogs can be found in Primate Panorama. Denver Zoo has five red river hogs that are all related. They are all siblings from three different litters:

- Liam is a male who was born on 7/25/05.
- Crvena and Garnet are twin females who were born on 3/31/06.
- Marlowe and Rhonnie are twin males who were born on 1/24/08.

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

IUCN Status: Least Concern

Red river hog populations are decreasing primarily due to habitat loss. Overall, they are a very adaptable species and are not at high risk of extinction.

Resources and Where to Learn More

Smithsonian's National Zoo <https://nationalzoo.si.edu/animals/red-river-hog>.

Ultimate Ungulates http://www.ultimateungulate.com/Artiodactyla/Potamochoerus_porcus.html.