

Name: _____

A Most Colorful Mammal

by Guy Belleranti

In the tropical rainforests of western Africa lives a mammal with a most colorful face and rump. This mammal is the mandrill, the world's largest monkey.

The skin on a male mandrill's face has a red stripe down the middle of the snout and blue ridges on both sides. The males also have blue to purple rumps and yellow beards. Females and young mandrills also have blue and red snouts, but they are usually much duller. Both males and females have a dark brown to olive gray coat.



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Female mandrills usually give birth to a single infant. Daughters stay with their mothers for life. Sons eventually leave.



Mandrills live in family groups called troops. A troop usually consists of 15 to 20 individuals. The troop includes a dominant adult male, perhaps a few other males and many females and young. Sometimes many troops combine with other troops making a group of up to several hundred individuals.

Mandrills are mostly terrestrial, meaning they spend a lot of time on the ground. However, they are good climbers and sleep in the trees at night for safety.

What do mandrills eat? Many things. They're omnivores, which means they eat both plants and meat. Some food favorites include fruits, nuts, grasses, shoots, leaves, bark, insects, snails, eggs, and occasionally small animals. And did you know mandrills have large cheek pouches that can hold a stomach full of food to be eaten at a later time?



The mandrill's main natural predator is the leopard. However, humans can pose an even greater threat. Much of the mandrills' habitat has been cleared for logging, farming and human settlements. In addition, mandrills continue to be illegally hunted and sold in the bushmeat trade. However, conservation organizations are working to protect this animal.

About the Author

Guy Bellerar
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1. How much might a full-grown female mandrill weigh?
- a. 15 pounds
 - b. about 30 pounds
 - c. 70 pounds
 - d. 100 pounds

2. What does a mandrill use its cheek pouches for?
- _____
- _____

3. If you
from



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females

4. Which of these foods would be most likely to be eaten by a mandrill in the wild?
- a. frog
 - b. leopard
 - c. platypus
 - d. fish
5. Which of the following is not a direct threat to mandrills mentioned in the article?
- a. habitat destruction
 - b. illegal hunting by humans
 - c. feline predators
 - d. pollution
6. Where do mandrills live?
- a. forests of western Asia
 - b. savannahs of Eastern Africa
 - c. African jungles
 - d. Asian coastal areas

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Match each vocabulary word from the article with the correct definition.

_____ 1. rainforest

a. point out

_____ 2. monkey

b. having to do with earth or soil

_____ 3. di

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_____ 4. ir

_____ 5. infant

e. less bright

_____ 6. terrestrial

f. against the law

_____ 7. occasionally

g. primates with tails

_____ 8. illegally

h. baby

- ◆ Now try this: On a sheet of lined paper, use each vocabulary word from above in a sentence.

ANSWER KEY

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 - d. **pollution**
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ANSWER KEY

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Match each vocabulary word from the article with the correct definition.

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