

BANDED MONGOOSE

updated March 2017



Range	East, southeast and south central Africa and northern savannas of West Africa
Habitat	Savanna, open forests, and grasslands especially near water, but also in dry, thorny bush land, but not deserts
Diet (wild)	Feed primarily on invertebrates, small reptiles, and bird eggs. Millipedes and beetles make up most of their diet; they also eat ants, crickets, termites, grasshoppers, caterpillars and earwigs. Other prey includes frogs, lizards, small snakes, ground birds, and the eggs of birds and reptiles.
Diet (captivity)	Carnivore diet mixed with pelleted insectivore diet; two mice/individual/day; crickets, mealworms and/or earthworms; produce. They are fed twice daily
Description	Length: 12–16 inches; weight: 3.3–5 pounds. Large head, small ears, short muscular limbs and a long tail almost as long as the rest of the body. Distinguished from other species by a series of black bands across the back, between the mid-back and the base of the tail. The feet and the tip of the tail are also usually dark, and the rest of the coat matches the lighter color of the fur between the black bands on the back. Have long strong claws for digging in the soil.
Lifespan	Wild: unknown. Captivity: up to 12 years
Reproduction	Gestation is 60–70 days. Females give birth in synchrony, producing large communal litters of 2–6 pups per female, which remain in the den for 3–4 weeks. “Babysitters” help watch young so mothers can join group foraging forays. Females are guarded by a dominant male and a subordinate male. Males are usually not aggressive with each other but will become aggressive when females are in estrus.
Behavior	Although most mongoose species live solitary lives, banded mongooses live in colonies of up to 40 individuals (with the average group about 20 individuals) with a complex social structure. They sleep together in underground dens (often abandoned termite mounds) and change dens frequently. When no refuge is available and hard-pressed by predators, the group will form a compact arrangement in which they lie on each other with heads facing outwards and upwards. Female are usually not aggressive but do live in hierarchies based on age. The older females have earlier estrous periods and larger litters. When groups get too large, some females are forced out of the group by either older females or males. The females may form new groups with subordinate males. Relations between groups are highly aggressive and mongooses are sometimes killed and injured during intergroup encounters. Nevertheless, breeding females will often mate with males from a rival group during fights.
Our animals	4 females, 3 males. Various ages. Came to PPZ from the Fort Wayne Children’s Zoo
Cool stuff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In some locations, banded mongooses have been found in close relationship with baboons. They may enjoy greater security as a large group on the lookout for predators. Banded mongooses have also been observed removing ticks and other parasites from warthogs. The mongooses get food; the warthogs get cleaned. • The alpha female rules the pack, emerging first every morning and deciding on the group’s foraging route. Banded mongooses forage in groups but each member searches for food alone. Low grunts are produced every few seconds for communication. They forage in the morning, rest for several hours in the shade, and then forage again in the late afternoon. Mongooses will frequent the dung of large herbivores since they attract beetles. • When pups emerge from the den, they spend 3–5 days approaching different helpers, after which individual pups form stable associations with a single adult helper (their “escort”) and remain associated with that animal until independence (approximately 9–13 weeks). Packs forage as a cohesive unit so all escorts are exposed to begging by the whole litter. Pups receive their food almost exclusively from their escorts.

Phylum
ChordataClass
MammaliaOrder
CarnivoraFamily
HerpestidaeGenus
Mungosspecies
M. mungo