

## RED PANDA

updated March 2017



<b>Range</b>	Mountains of Nepal and northern Myanmar (Burma), as well as in central China
<b>Habitat</b>	Bamboo and temperate mixed (coniferous and broadleaf) forests of the Himalayas at elevations of 7,000–15,500 feet (1,500–4,700 meters)
<b>Diet (wild)</b>	Mostly bamboo, some berries, mushrooms, grasses, and bark; will also eat birds, eggs, insects, and small rodents. Classified as a carnivore, it does not get much nutrition from vegetation, requiring a significant portion of the day to be spent feeding.
<b>Diet (captive)</b>	Panda biscuits, primate biscuits mixed with apple and banana, bamboo when available
<b>Description</b>	Length: 24 inches; tail: additional 18 inches; weight: 10–12 pounds. Fur is fluffy red-brown with distinctive black and white markings on the face with long white whiskers and a ringed tail. Their jaws are powerful enough to chew tough bamboo leaves. Front claws are semi-retractable with non-retractable claws behind.
<b>Lifespan</b>	Wild: 14 years. Captivity: 18 years
<b>Reproduction</b>	After a gestation of about 134 days, the female give birth to 1–4 cubs. Cubs have thick grayish fur and stay in the nest for about 90 days, remaining close to their mother until the next mating season begins. Red pandas reach adult size at about 12 months, are able to reproduce around 18 months of age, and are fully mature at 2–3 years. Pair bonds form at the beginning of the breeding season. The male follows the scent trail of the female, which she intensifies on the day of copulation. The female builds a nest of sticks, grass, and leaves in a low, hollow tree trunk or rock crevice.
<b>Behavior</b>	Adult red pandas lead solitary lives. Crepuscular, they spend most of the day resting and sleeping in trees. They mark their territory with urine and substances secreted from their footpads, and by depositing feces in specially dug latrines at the area's boundaries. Males fiercely defend their territory. Agile climbers, red pandas use their long tail for support and counterbalance and tend to sleep with legs straddling a branch, or tightly curled up with head under a hind leg. Their bushy tail serves as a pillow or insulation by covering its face. Pairs or family parties will forage together on the ground. They eat sitting, standing, or (only a few other animals can do this) lying on their back.
<b>Our animals</b>	2 female; 2 males. Born: 006/09/2014 (1 female); 7/03/2011 (1 male); 07/02/2016 (1 female, 1 male). The red pandas born in 2016 are the offspring of the other two pandas.
<b>Cool stuff</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In 1969, the first red panda was brought from the Himalayas to the London Zoo. Identified as a carnivore by its teeth, the animal was given a diet of meat, which it steadfastly refused, until the red panda's life hung in the balance. Luckily, the zoo superintendant took the animal for a walk through the zoo gardens and when the red panda stopped at a rose bush and began to eat the buds, it was discovered that this exotic carnivore was indeed a vegetarian.</li> <li>• Red pandas have given scientists taxonomic fits. They have been classified as a relative of giant pandas and also of raccoons. They even have flat, broad, highly ridged cheek teeth that are more like deer than carnivores. Currently, red pandas are considered members of their own unique family, Ailuridae.</li> <li>• Red pandas and giant pandas are carnivores that share a vegetarian diet, similar teeth and skulls and the uncommon trait of a short, backward-pointing S-shaped penis. Most distinctively, both have a "thumb" which is actually a wrist bone remarkably reshaped into a sixth digit to grasp the bamboo both species relish.</li> </ul>

Phylum  
ChordataClass  
MammaliaOrder  
CarnivoraFamily  
AiluridaeGenus  
Ailurusspecies  
*A. fulgens*