

RING-TAILED LEMUR

updated March 2017



Range	Madagascar, southwestern end of the island
Habitat	Rocky, scrubby areas, gallery forest, along a river or stream
Diet (wild)	They feed from many different species of plants and trees, but are partial to Kily trees; occasionally eat insects
Diet (captivity)	Monkey chow daily with produce four times a week
Description	Length: 15–18 inches; tail: additional 22–24 inches; weight: 4–6 pounds. Most distinctive feature is the long and bushy tail, which usually has 13 rings and is not prehensile. Small but long hind limbs and grasping hands and feet, with a toilet claw in the second toe for cleaning. Like all prosimians, they have a dental comb or tooth scraper in the form of elongated front teeth in the upper jaw. Newborns have blue eyes that turn golden brown as they grow up.
Lifespan	Wild: 18–27 years. Captivity: 24–27 years
Reproduction	Usually one offspring, but sometimes twins, are born in August. The mother carries her baby in her mouth until it can hold on to her fur by itself. When small, the baby clings to its mother's belly, riding on her back about two weeks later. The baby takes its first steps away from mother at about one month but it is not independent until about six months. All adult females participate in the rearing of offspring; sometimes males help as well. Ring-tailed lemurs reach sexual maturity by age three. Females prefer to breed within their group. During estrus, the female will present her hindquarters to the preferred male.
Behavior	Ring-tailed lemurs live in troops of 5–20 individuals. Females are extremely dominant and one female usually dominates the troop of adult males and females. Ring-taileds are territorial but tolerate some overlap from other groups. Females remain in the troop in which they are born, while males usually leave. Males actively maintain their territory with scent marking and calls. Territorial disputes are usually settled by yelling and screaming and rarely involve physical fighting. Grooming is important both for hygiene and to reinforce social bonds within the group. There are many vocal calls used for communication, as well as face-making. These diurnal animals spend much of their time foraging for food. As ring-tailed lemurs move around eating fruits and leaves, they play an important role in seed dispersal, helping rejuvenate the forest.
Our animals	4 females. Born: 07/1988, 03/1992, 03/1993, 07/1995. All captive born
Cool stuff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SSP at PPZ • Although females are 100 percent dominant over males, males are active socially. During the birthing season, males sometimes commit infanticide. • During breeding season, males ring-tailed lemurs have “stink fights,” using additional scent glands on their wrists and chests that other lemurs do not have. Males rub the entire tail along the wrists, coating it with the strong-smelling secretions. They then face off, waving their tails held high over themselves with the smelliest tail winning. Unfortunately (or perhaps fortunately), human scent receptors are not strong enough to smell these fights. • Sunbathing occurs during the early morning hours before feeding. Ring-tailed lemurs can be seen sitting up with their front legs resting on their hind legs, exposing their stomachs to the sun.

Phylum
ChordataClass
MammaliaOrder
PrimatesFamily
LemuridaeGenus
Lemurspecies
L. catta