

SICILIAN BURRO

updated March 2017



Range	Domesticated; originally from North Africa, Middle East and Asia
Habitat	Wild asses originated in hilly, undulating deserts and are well-adapted for life in the desert
Diet (wild)	Grasses, hedges and shrubs
Diet (captivity)	Hay and grain
Description	Height: 30–60 inches at the shoulder; weight: 200–500 pounds. Coats are generally gray and fade to white underneath. Darker dorsal stripes with transverse stripe across shoulders with bands sometimes on legs. Mane is long, thin and upright. Tail is tufted. There is generally very little sexual dimorphism in donkeys.
Lifespan	Wild; 25–30 years. Captivity: 40 years
Reproduction	The female gives birth to a single foal after a gestation period of 12 months. Females reach sexual maturity at two years old. Young are weaned at about five months old. Breeding season occurs in the wet season and young are birthed as vegetation reaches its peak.
Behavior	In the wild, males defend large territories. Burros graze from dawn until early morning, rest during the heat of the day, and then graze again until nightfall. Herds are highly flexible, breaking up and reforming on an almost daily basis. Burros have the narrowest feet within the horse (Equid) family. This allows them to be sure-footed on rocky and high terrain (horses have shorter, wider feet designed for speed.) Due to its sure-footedness, burros are used as a pack animals and are capable of carrying over 200 pounds for days with little food. They are also able to go quite some time without water.
Our animals	2 females. Born: 1995. PPZ exhibits Sicilian burros, a domestic breed found on the island of Sicily
Cool stuff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The African wild ass was domesticated about 6,000 years ago. • Equid species are referred to as horses, asses, burros, ponies and donkeys. Mules are an infertile hybrid between a male donkey and a female horse; hinnies are a cross between a male horse and a female donkey. • In ancient Egypt, female donkeys were kept as dairy animals. Donkey milk is higher in sugar and protein than cow's milk. The milk was also used for cosmetic and medicinal purposes. • The first donkeys came to the New World with Christopher Columbus in 1495. Donkeys were introduced to the United States with Mexican explorers. Many of the wild donkeys in the southwestern United States are descendants of escaped or abandoned burros brought by Mexican explorers during the Gold Rush. • Donkeys are observant and cautious animals. They will refuse to do anything that seems dangerous to them. This behavior has earned donkeys their reputation for being stubborn, but actually, domestic donkeys are very obedient animals and will not refuse any reasonable order. When a donkey is startled by something, it usually will not run blindly in fear. Its natural instinct is to freeze or run a few steps, then look to see what frightened it. This is unlike the behavior of horses, which tend to panic and "bolt" when frightened. • Donkeys are used as companions for weaned foals and for nervous, injured, or recovering animals. They have a calming, soothing effect and help to reduce the stress of traumatic situations. • Domestic donkeys interact well with other livestock animals such as horses, cows, goats, sheep, and llamas. <p>Donkeys are passive by nature but will aggressively protect their young, and can be trained to protect sheep and goats as well. Donkeys will not hesitate to attack and trample large dogs or even humans if they perceive the animal to be a threat.</p>

Phylum
ChordataClass
MammaliaOrder
PerissodactylaFamily
EquidaeGenus
Equusspecies
E. asinus