



Ring-tailed lemurs

(*Lemur catta*)

Description & Behavior:

Adult ring-tailed lemurs (*Lemur catta*) are about the size of a house cat. They weigh 2.5 to 3.0 kg, or approximately six pounds. Their head and body are, on average, about seventeen inches long while the tail alone is about twenty-four inches long. The tail has thirteen or fourteen distinctive, alternating black and white bands.

Ring-tailed lemurs live in large multi-male, multi-female troops that range in size from 6-24 individuals. Females are always dominant over all males but within troops. They compete for dominance over other female Ring-tailed lemurs. Female offspring remain with their natal troop, but males migrate once they reach sexual maturity.



They are exclusively diurnal animals, meaning they are active during the day. They feed in the forest canopy but often travel along the ground. Up to forty percent of their total time is spent on the ground rather than in trees. At LCF, ring-tailed lemurs spend well over half of their total time on the ground. In the wild, troops of ring-tailed lemurs may spend up to seventy percent of travel time on the forest floor.

Even though they are on the ground more often than other lemur species, most feeding and sleeping takes place in the trees.

Diet:

Ring-tailed lemurs have a diverse diet that includes leaves, shoots, flowers, and seasonally available fruit. At LCF, they are offered a mixture of fruit, vegetables, and a manufactured primate biscuit. They have been observed eating a wide variety of

browse found in LCF's forests including pine pollen, oak leaves, gall berries, high bush blueberries, and the occasional insect.

Habitat:

Ring-tailed lemurs are endemic to the south and southwest of Madagascar. Troops of ring-tailed lemurs have adapted to a variety of living conditions. Their three basic habitats are continuous canopy forest, brush and scrub forest, and mixed forest, where the first two merge. AT LCF, ring-tailed lemurs demonstrate a remarkable adaptability.



They are comfortable in the forests tall pines, immense oaks, and secondary canopy. They can often be seen sunning in the crowns of the slash pines in early morning but prefer the large, horizontal branches of the live oaks for their afternoon rest.

Reproduction:

Females usually give birth to one offspring a year, after a gestation period of 134-138 days. In Madagascar, births take place between the months of August and November. In Florida, the breeding season is from November to February and offspring are born sometime between May and July.

Twins are common when food is plentiful. When first born the babies cling closely to the mother's abdomen. After about two weeks, they ride on her back.

Threats:

The greatest threat to Ring-tailed lemurs is human activity like hunting and habitat loss. The gallery forest habitat where they live is desirable for farmland, are overgrazed by livestock, or harvested for charcoal production. Ring-tailed lemurs are hunted for food and, more frequently, hunted and captured to keep as pets.

Conservation Status

Ring-tailed lemurs are considered Endangered. Read more about conservation issues facing lemurs on our website www.lemurreserve.org