

= Olive baboon =

The olive baboon (*Papio anubis*), also called the Anubis baboon , is a member of the family Cercopithecidae (Old World monkeys) . The species is the most wide @-@ ranging of all baboons , being found in 25 countries throughout Africa , extending from Mali eastward to Ethiopia and Tanzania . Isolated populations are also present in some mountainous regions of the Sahara . It inhabits savannahs , steppes , and forests . The common name is derived from its coat color , which is a shade of green @-@ grey at a distance . A variety of communications , vocal and non @-@ vocal , facilitate a complex social structure .

= = Physical characteristics = =

The olive baboon is named for its coat , which , at a distance , is a shade of green @-@ grey . Its alternative name comes from the Egyptian god Anubis , who was often represented by a dog head resembling the dog @-@ like muzzle of the baboon . At closer range , its coat is multicolored , due to rings of yellow @-@ brown and black on the hairs . The hair on the baboon 's face , however , is coarser and ranges from dark grey to black . This coloration is shared by both sexes , although males have a mane of longer hair that tapers down to ordinary length along the back .

Besides the mane , the male olive baboon differs from the female in terms of size and weight , and canine tooth size ; males are , on average , 70 cm (28 in) tall while standing and females measure 60 cm (24 in) in height . The olive baboon is one of the largest species of monkey ; only the chacma baboon and the mandrill attain similar sizes . The head @-@ and @-@ body length can range from 50 to 114 cm (20 to 45 in) , with a species average of around 85 cm (33 in) . At the shoulder on all fours , females average 55 cm (22 in) against males , which average 70 cm (28 in) . The typical weight range for both sexes is reportedly 10 ? 37 kg (22 ? 82 lb) , with males averaging 24 kg (53 lb) and females averaging 14 @.@ 7 kg (32 lb) . Some males may weigh as much as 50 kg (110 lb) .

Like other baboons , the olive baboon has an elongated , dog @-@ like muzzle . In fact , along with the muzzle , the animal 's tail (38 ? 58 cm or 15 ? 23 in) and four @-@ legged gait can make baboons seem very canine . The tail almost looks as if it is broken , as it is erect for the first quarter , after which it drops down sharply . The bare patch of a baboon 's rump , famously seen in cartoons and movies , is a good deal smaller in the olive baboon . The olive baboon , like most cercopithecines , has a cheek pouch with which to store food .

= = Distribution and habitat = =

The species inhabits a strip of 25 equatorial African countries , very nearly ranging from the east to west coasts of the continent . The exact boundaries of this strip are not clearly defined , as the species ' territory overlaps with that of other baboon species . In many places , this has resulted in cross @-@ breeding between species . For example , considerable hybridization has occurred between the olive baboon and the hamadryas baboon in Ethiopia . Cross @-@ breeding with the yellow baboon and the Guinea baboon has also been observed . Although this has been noted , the hybrids have not as yet been well studied .

Throughout its wide range , the olive baboon can be found in a number of different habitats . It is usually classified as savanna @-@ dwelling , living in the wide plains of the grasslands . The grasslands , especially those near open woodland , do make up a large part of its habitat , but the baboon also inhabits rainforests and deserts . Uganda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo , for instance , both support olive baboon populations in dense tropical forests .

= = Behaviour and ecology = =

= = Social structure = = =

The olive baboon lives in groups of 15 to 150 , made up of a few males , many females , and their young . Each baboon has a social ranking somewhere in the group , depending on its dominance . Female dominance is hereditary , with daughters having nearly the same rank as their mothers , and adult females forming the core of the social system . Female relatives form their own subgroups in the troop . Related females are largely friendly to each other . They tend to stay close together and groom one another , and team up in aggressive encounters within the troop . Female kin form these strong bonds because they do not emigrate from their natal groups .

Occasionally , groups may split up when they become so large that competition for resources is problematic , but even then , members of matrilineages tend to stick together . Dominant females procure more food , matings , and supporters . Among olive baboons in Tanzania , high @-@ ranking females give birth at shorter intervals to infants with a higher survival rate , and their daughters tend to mature faster than low @-@ ranking females . However , these high @-@ ranking females also appear to have a higher probability of miscarriages and some high @-@ ranking matrilineages have inexplicably low fertility . One theory suggests this occurs due to stress on the high @-@ ranking females , although this theory is controversial .

A female often forms a long @-@ lasting social relationship with a male in her troop , known as a " friendship " . These nonsexual affiliative friendships benefit both the male and female . Males benefit from these relationships because they are usually formed soon after he immigrates into a new group , and helps the male integrate into the group more easily . He could also potentially end up mating with his female friend in the future . Females gain protection from threats to themselves and their infants (if they have any) . Males occasionally " baby @-@ sit " for their female friends , so she can feed and forage freely without the burden of having to carry or watch the infant . Sexually receptive females and newly immigrated males can form such friendships . These relationships are sometimes enduring and the pair grooms and remains close to each other . They also travel , forage , sleep , and raise infants together , as well as fight together against aggressive conspecifics .

Males establish their dominance more forcefully than females . A male disperses , or leaves his natal group and joins another group , after reaching sexual maturity . Adult males are very competitive with each other and fight for access to females . Higher dominance means better access to mating and earlier access to food , so naturally a great deal of fighting over rank occurs , with younger males constantly trying to rise in position . Because females stay with their groups their entire lives , and males emigrate to others , often a new male challenges an older one for dominance . Frequently , when older baboons drop in the social hierarchy , they move to another tribe . The younger males who pushed them down often bullies and harasses them . Older males tend to have more supportive and equal relationships than those of the younger males . The former may form coalitions against the latter .

Despite being hierarchical , baboons appear to be " democratic " when it comes to deciding the direction of collective movement . Individuals are more likely to follow when multiple decision @-@ makers agree on what direction to go rather than simply following dominant individuals .

== = Reproduction and parenting == =

Females are sexually mature at seven to eight years old , and males at seven to 10 years . The beginning of a female 's ovulation is a signal to the males that she is ready to mate . During ovulation , the skin of the female 's anogenital area swells and turns a bright red / pink . The swelling makes it difficult to move and increases the female 's chance of microbial or parasitic infection . Females with more swollen anogenital areas reproduce while younger , produce more offspring per year , and those offspring have a better chance of surviving . These females also attract more males , and are more likely to cause aggressive fights between them . Olive baboons tend to mate promiscuously . A male forms a mating consortship with an estrous female , staying close to and copulating with her . Males guard their partner against any other male trying to mate with her . Unless a female is in a multiday consortship , she often copulates with more than one male each day . Multiple copulations are not necessary for reproduction , but may function to make the actual

paternity of the female 's offspring ambiguous . This lack of paternal certainty could help reduce the occurrence of infanticide . Occasionally , male olive baboons monopolize a female for her entire period of probable conception . The male protects his female from being mated by other males during consortship .

Newborns have black natal coats and bright pink skin . Females are the primary caregivers of infants , but males also play a role . In its first few days , the infant may be unable to stay attached to its mother and relies on her for physical support . However , its grasp grows stronger by its first week and it is able to cling to its mother 's fur by itself . By two weeks , the infant begins to explore its surroundings for short periods , but stays near her . The distance the infant spends away from its mother increases the older it gets . In general , higher @-@ ranking females are usually more relaxed parents than females of lower rank , which usually keep their offspring close to them . However , this difference only lasts for approximately the first eight weeks of an infant 's life . Olive baboons do not seem to practice co @-@ operative parenting , but a female may groom an infant that is not hers . Subadult and juvenile females are more likely to care for another 's young , as they have not yet produced offspring of their own . One theory for why immature females tend to seek out infants is that they can prepare for their future roles as mothers . Infant baboons born to first @-@ time mothers suffer higher mortality than those born to experienced mothers , which suggests that prior experience in caring for infants is important . Adult males in the groups also care for the infants , as they are likely to be related to them . Males groom infants , reducing the amount of parasites they may have , and calm them when they are stressed . They may also protect them from predators , such as chimpanzees . However , adult males exploit infants and use them to reduce the likelihood that other males will threaten them .

= = = Communication = = =

Olive baboons communicate with various vocalizations and facial expressions . Throughout the day , baboons of all ages emit the " basic grunt " . Adults give a range of calls . The " roargrunt " is made by adult males displaying to each other . The " cough @-@ bark " , and the " cough geck " are made when low @-@ flying birds or humans they do not know are sighted . A " wa @-@ hoo " call is made in response to predators or neighboring groups at night and during stressful situations . Other vocalizations include " broken grunting " (low @-@ volume , quick series of grunts made during relatively calm aggressive encounters) , " pant @-@ grunts " (made when aggressive encounters escalate) , " shrill barks " (loud calls given when potential threats appear suddenly) , and " screams " (continuous high @-@ pitch sounds responding to strong emotions) . The most common facial expression of the olive baboon is " lipsmacking " , which is associated with a number of behaviors . " Ear flattening " , " eyes narrowed " , " head shaking " , " jaw @-@ clapping " , lipsmacking , and " tongue protrusion " are used when baboons are greeting each other , and are sometimes made with a " rear present " . " Eyebrow raising " , " molar grinding " , " staring " , and " yawning " are used to threaten other baboons . A submissive baboon responds with displays such as the " fear grin " , the " rigid crouch " , and " tail erect " .

= = = Diet = = =

One major reason for its widespread success is that the olive baboon is omnivorous . As such it is able to find nutrition in almost any environment , and it is able to adapt with different foraging tactics . For instance , the olive baboon in grassland goes about finding food differently from one in a forest . The baboon forages on all levels of an environment , above and beneath the ground and in the canopy of forests . Most animals only look for food at one level ; an arboreal species such as a lemur does not look for food on the ground . The olive baboon searches as wide an area as it can , and it eats virtually everything it finds .

The diet typically includes a large variety of plants , and invertebrates and small mammals , as well as birds . The olive baboon eats leaves , grass , roots , bark , flowers , fruit , lichens , tubers , seeds , mushrooms , corms , and rhizomes . Corms and rhizomes are especially important in times of

drought , because grass loses a great deal of its nutritional value . In dry , arid regions , such as the northeastern deserts , small invertebrates like insects , spiders , and scorpions fill out its diet .

The olive baboon also actively hunts prey , from small rodents and hares to foxes and other primates . Its limit is usually small antelope , such as Thomson 's gazelle and also , rarely , sheep , goats , and live chickens , which may amount to 33 % of its food from hunting . Hunting is usually a group activity , with both males and females participating . Interestingly , this systematic predation was apparently developed recently . In a field study , such behavior was observed as starting with the males of one troop and spreading through all ages and sexes .

In Eritrea , the olive baboon has formed a symbiotic relationship with that country 's endangered elephant population . The baboons use the water holes dug by the elephants , while the elephants use the tree top baboons as an early warning system .

= = Conservation status = =

The olive baboon is listed as least concern by the IUCN because " this species is very widespread and abundant and although persecuted as a crop raider there are no major threats believed to be resulting in a range wide population decline " . Despite persecution , the baboon is still widespread and numerous . However , competition and disease have possibly led to fewer baboons in closed forests . It has been actively persecuted as a pest .