Honey badger (*Mellivora capensis*)

**Conservation Status:** Least Concern

The honey badger is part of the weasel family, related to skunks, otters, ferrets, and other badgers. Honey badgers are muscular and compact, with a thick skull, well-developed neck and shoulders, and strong forelegs armed with bearlike claws. The honey badger’s coloration is striking with coarse jet-black fur covering its lower body and contrasting white or gray fur covering the upper body. They have powerful jaws and loose skin that is nearly a quarter of an inch thick. They have internal ears that can be closed, allowing them to keep out the dirt.

**Fun Facts**

1. Honey badgers can trot long distances, as far as 35 km (22 miles), in a night.
2. Honey badgers are known to have a mutualistic relationship with the small bird known as the greater honeyguide (*Indicator indicator*). This bird will lead the honey badger to beehives and is able to feed after the honey badger has had its fill.

**Habitat**

This species lives in a wide variety of habitat types. They can be found in moist savannas, semideserts, and montane forests.

**Diet**

Bee larvae and honey; also rodents, birds, reptiles, amphibians, fish, insects, fruit, and carrion.

**Predators**

Humans

**Behavior**

Honey badgers are solitary, nomadic, and notoriously aggressive. They occupy a large range and move around daily to forage. In general, females have a smaller home range (126 sq km) compared to males (151 sq km). Home ranges of individuals overlap, and males may be observed meeting after foraging and exchanging grunts while sniffing each other and rolling in the earth. They regularly and liberally apply scent markings to crevices, holes, and the bases of trees. Males will become aggressive if another male attempts to intrude into their marked burrow or if their mate is threatened. Honey badgers are known to have a mutualistic relationship with the small bird known as the greater honeyguide (*Indicator indicator*). This bird will lead the honey badger to beehives and is able to feed after the honey badger has had its fill.

**Breeding**

After a gestation period of six months, honey badgers will give birth to one to four young at a time. Females give birth in a chamber or burrow that they line with grass or leaves.

**Size**

Length: 60-75 cm

Height: 23-28 cm

**Weight:**

8-16 kg

**Life Span:** Up to 24 years

**Gestation Period:** 6 months

**Average number of offspring:** 1-4