Spotted Hyena (*Crocuta crocuta*)

**Conservation Status:** Least Concern

Spotted hyenas are the largest of the three hyena species. They are similar in appearance to dogs (though they are more closely related to cats), with a large build, high shoulders, and a sloping back with lower hindquarters. They are tan to reddish with solid black spots that tend to fade with age. They have a short mane that ends just behind the shoulders, and their tail is short with a black, brushy end. Their ears are rounded and their muzzle is heavy. Spotted hyenas have excellent night vision and hearing.

**Fun Facts**

1. The spotted hyena is the second-largest African carnivore after the lion.
2. The alpha female is the best fed in a clan.

**Habitat**

Spotted hyenas are found in savanna, grassland, woodland, and forest habitats.

**Diet**

Scavengers, but also hunt antelopes, wildebeest, and zebras for food

**Predators**

Lions, humans

**Behavior**

Spotted hyenas live together in large groups called clans that may include up to 80 individuals. Each hyena clan occupies a territory, which it defends. Females are more aggressive than males and are the dominant sex. A strict hierarchy structures the clan, with the highest-ranking male being subordinate to the lowest-ranking female. Groups will frequently hunt together, isolating a herd animal and pursuing it until death.

**Breeding**

Spotted hyenasbreed year-round. After a gestation period of about four months, females give birth to one or two cubs. Hyena cubs are suckled for 12 to 18 months, which is an unusually long time for carnivores, but they begin to eat meat from kills near the den at about five months. At roughly one year, cubs will begin to follow their mothers as they hunt and scavenge.

**Size:**

Total length: 1.1-1.4 m

Height: 79-89 cm

**Weight**

40-80 kg

**Life Span:** 25 years in captivity

**Gestation Period:** 4 months

**Average number of offspring:** 1-2