**ANIMAL GROUP OVERVIEW**

Mongoose

**Conservation Status:** Least concern

The mongoose family consists of 37 species worldwide, of which 30 live in Africa. Mongooses are generally terrestrial mammals, but some are semiaquatic and others reside in treetops. Mongooses have narrow feet and nonretractile claws that are adapted for digging. They have roundish weasel-like bodies that are generally a variation of dark brown, tawny, to grizzled gray in color. A number of species sport striped coats or ringed tails. Their heads are small and narrow, their snouts pointed, and their ears are usually low-set and can be folded while they burrow.

**Fun Facts:**

1. Mummified mongooses and images of species have been discovered in ancient Egyptian tombs.
2. In the 1800s, mongooses were introduced to several islands in Hawaii and the West Indies in an attempt to control the rodent populations on sugarcane plantations. Today, due to this effort, mongooses threaten the survival of various native species, particularly birds.

**Habitat**

Mongoose species are found in a variety of habitats.

**Diet**

Mongooses are nondiscriminatory predators. Species generally fall within two foraging models: some are well suited for feeding on rodents, birds, reptiles, and frogs. The other species will mostly feed on insects and other invertebrates. Mongoose will commonly supplement their diet with fruits, nuts, and seeds.

**Predators**

Jackals, snakes, hawks.

**Behavior**

Mongooses are sometimes seen living alone, but they generally live in groups. Within groups, they create a hierarchy with a single dominant pair. Mostly, mongooses live in burrows and spend their waking hours actively hunting and foraging. Famously, some species of mongoose will boldly attack venomous snakes including cobras.

**Breeding**

Mating occurs year-round. It is common for pairs to mate with each other year after year. The gestation period varies depending on the species. Females will give birth to their young in a burrow or den.

**Size**

Length: 24 - 60 cm

**Weight**

5 kg-340 g

**Life Span:** 6-20 years