



GREATER KUDU

ARTIODACTYLA

Family: Bovidae

Genus: *Tragelaphus*

Species: *strepsiceros*



Range: Angola, Botswana, Central African Republic, Chad, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Somalia, South Africa, Sudan, Swaziland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe (IUCN, 2002).

Habitat: Scrub and open forest, rarely in plains; dense brush or forest

Niche: Terrestrial, herbivorous, diurnal but can become nocturnal where disturbed.

Wild diet: Kudus are browsers and eat leaves and shoots from a variety of plants. In dry seasons, they eat wild watermelons and other fruit for the liquid they provide.

Zoo diet:

Life Span: (Wild) 7 – 8 years

(Captivity) up to 23 years

Sexual dimorphism: M are larger and have long spiral horns

Location in SF Zoo: African savanna

APPEARANCE & PHYSICAL ADAPTATIONS:

Greater Kudus have a narrow body and long legs and are the second largest compared to the Giant Eland. They have a smooth, short haired coat may be red brown to blue gray with males turn darker with age; 6 to 10 whitish torso stripes; prominent white nose chevron and small cheek spots; dark garters on upper legs; black tipped tail with white underside are characteristic. Both sexes have a spiral erectile crest on neck and shoulders, while underneath a mane extends along the throat on males. The ears of the greater kudu are large and round. The spiraled horns are found only in males and have up to 3 full turns, diverging slightly as they slant back from the head. They can grow 100-140 cm / 40-56 inches long.

Weight:	M 418-787 lb. F 264 473 lbs
HBL:	6.1-8.1 ft
SH:	3.2-5.2 ft
TL:	12-22 in
Horn L:	40 - 72 in

STATUS & CONSERVATION

The greater kudu is considered a low risk, conservation dependent species by the IUCN (2002), and is not listed by CITES.

Hunting of these creatures for trophies (their horns are particularly beautiful) has endangered the last surviving pockets of this species.

COMMUNICATION AND OTHER BEHAVIOR

Males whine, gasp, cluck, grunt or hum, though a male's gruff bark is one of loudest sounds antelopes make. A Female's hum, changing to a moo when their mouth is opened; calves give *u-u-u* distress call. When calling a calf, a mother gives a "smacking" call or signals visually by lowering and raising neck several times.

Social licking between mother and calf; other females also social lick calves.

COURTSHIP AND YOUNG

Greater kudu are seasonal breeders in southern Africa. At the equator, they calve in the rainy season, which is from February to June, and mate near or after the end of the rains.

Females separate themselves from the herd just before giving birth, leaving the calf lying in concealment. Calves remain hidden for two weeks before mothers re-join the herd.

The majority of births occur from January to March, the wet season when grass is high.

Females, if well nourished, can breed in two years though most, do not reach maturity until three years of age. Male calves remain in the maternity herd for 1 and 1/2 to 2 years while the females remain in it longer.

Estrous

Gestation: 7 - 9 months

of Mammae:

of Young: 1

Sexual Maturity: F -3 yrs / M - 5 yrs

Weaning Age: 6 months

Weight at birth:

MISCELLANEOUS

- **Kudu**, or **koodoo**, is the Hottentot name for this antelope.
- **Tragos** (Gk) a he-goat; and **elaphos** (Gk) a deer, in combination referring to an antelope / **Strepho** (Gk) I twist, so **strephis**, a twisting; **keras** (Gk) the horn of an animal.
- "Kudu" comes from the southern African Bantu word "iqudu," for the animal.
- Despite their large size, kudu are accomplished jumpers, with records of heights of over 2.5 meters / 8.25 feet being cleared with ease.

Sources:

Macdonald © 1984 p 553

Behavior Guide to African Mammals ©1992 by Estes, R.D. p182-5

http://www.ultimateungulate.com/Artiodactyla/Tragelaphus_strepsiceros.html (range map)

<http://www.americazoo.com/goto/index/mammals/379.htm>

<http://www.nature-wildlife.com/kudutxt.htm>

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