



YELLOW-BACKED DUIKER

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Family: Bovidae

Genus: Cephalophus

Species: silvicultor



Range: Africa, south of the Sahara.

Habitat: a wide variety of rain forest and open bush area.

Niche: diurnal to nocturnal frugivore

Wild diet: Bark, shoots, buds, seeds, fruits, fungi, herbs and some small animals

Zoo diet:

Life Span: (Wild)

(Captive) 10 to 15 years

Sexual dimorphism: None other than F is slightly larger (c. 4% longer)

Location in SF Zoo: African Savanna and Eagle Lake trail between café and grizzly bears

APPEARANCE & PHYSICAL ADAPTATIONS:

The Yellow-backed Duiker is the largest duiker with a massive body and slender legs with hind legs longer than fore legs. Both sexes have faintly ridged, wedge-shaped horns which grow 8.5-21 cm / 3.4-8.4 inches long and curve down slightly at the tips. The coat is short and glossy, dark velvety brown to black in color and the sides of the face are very light grayish. Vividly contrasting with this dark background is a distinctive white to orange wedge of erectile hair on their back. Young are born dark brown, with spots on their sides and a reddish tinge on the under parts. The muzzle is light grey in color, and the lips are white. The eyes and ears are small and the tail is short, with a small black tuft. The suborbital glands below the eyes are very conspicuous.

Weight:	100-175 lb.
HBL:	3.8-4.8 ft.
SH:	2.1-2.8 ft.
TL:	4.4-8 in.

STATUS & CONSERVATION

The yellow-backed duiker is classified as a low risk, near threatened species by the IUCN (1996). Fragmentation of habitat may be problematic.

COMMUNICATION AND OTHER BEHAVIOR

Generally nocturnal, these duikers lie up singly during the day in "forms" - regularly used beds found under fallen tree trunks, in root forms at the bases of trees, and in dense tangles. They have also been observed resting on top of termite mounds. Broken horns in females suggest that they actively defend their territories, which they are thought to share with a single male in a semi-detached pair-relationship. The yellow-backed duiker marks its territory with its maxillary glands.

Adults communicate by means of shrill bleats and resonant grunts. When alarmed, they erect their bright dorsal crest and whistle a shrill alert, then flee into the underbrush. Living in thick forest, these small antelopes rely on scents to communicate by rubbing scent glands under their eyes on branches to mark their territory, on mates during courtship, and on young to familiarize them with the scent. Males will rub the glands on each other aggressively in competition.

COURTSHIP AND YOUNG

Males tend to fight with tusks and canines rather than horns. After birth, the newborn lies hidden for over a week, after which it begins to venture out and nibble vegetation. Yellow patch on rump does not appear until after the first month and is fully developed after 10 months.

Estrous

Gestation: 7 months

of Mammae:

of Young: 1, rarely 2

Sexual Maturity: F 9-12 months / M 12-18 months.

Weaning Age: 5 months

Weight at birth:

MISCELLANEOUS

Duiker ("DIKE-er") is Afrikaans for "diver", a reference to their habit of ducking into dense undergrowth when alarmed. *Kephale* (Gk) the head; *lophus* (Gk) a crest, referring to the tuft on the head between the horns. *Silva* is (L) woods, forest; *cultor* is (L) farmer, inhabitant; hence *silvicultor* (L) one who lives in the woods.

There are 17 duiker species of which the yellow-backed duiker is the largest. For this reason, it is also called the giant duiker.

Considered by some to be the most primitive of Bovidae, while others consider them a branch of neotragine antelope and frugivorism is a secondary adaptation.

Sources:

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http://www.ultimateungulate.com/Artiodactyla/Cephalophus_silvicultor.html

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<http://cincinnati.zoo.org/Exhibits/AnimalExhibits/FlamingoCove/ybackduiker/ybduiker.html>

[Behavior Guide to African Mammals](#) © 1991 by Estes, R. D., p 26 - 7

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