



**RED RUFFED
LEMUR**
PRIMATES
Family: Lemuridae
Genus: *Varecia*
Species: *rubra*



Range: deciduous tropical forests in northeastern Madagascar, at elevations up to 3,300 feet

Habitat: rain forest

Niche: diurnal, arboreal, herbivorous

Wild diet: Fruits, leaves, nectar and seeds.

Zoo diet:

Life Span: (Wild) 15 - 20 years
(Captivity) 19

Sexual dimorphism:

Location in SF Zoo: Lipman Lemur Forest

APPEARANCE & PHYSICAL ADAPTATIONS:

Ruffed lemurs are the largest of the lemurs -- about the size of a large house cat. The body is nearly two feet long from head to rump, with a tail equally as long.

Coats consist of rusty red fur with a white patch on the back of the neck. Stomach, tail, forehead and inside of limbs are black.

Weight: 8 - 10 lbs

HRL: 19-20 in

TL: 23.6 in

STATUS & CONSERVATION

The red ruffed lemur is considered critically endangered, and is protected under Appendix I of the Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species, (CITES). Scientists estimate that only 1,000 to 10,000 red ruffed lemurs remain in the wild. Habitat destruction, hunting and live capture for the pet and animal trades place severe pressures on these populations and are the leading causes of endangerment. Because the Red-ruffed lemur has a small geographic range and low numbers of wild specimens, it is one of the most endangered of the Malagasy lemurs. Although some lemurs live in a protected Masoala Nature Reserve area of Madagascar, most occur outside this reserve.

Over 300 individuals are currently held by at least 70 institutions worldwide.

COMMUNICATION AND OTHER BEHAVIOR

Lemurs live in social groups consisting of two to 16 animals. They stay within a common home range, aggressively defending it from other groups of Red-ruffed lemurs. As the dominant individuals, females form the core of the group, and are the defenders of their territory. Red ruffed lemurs warn each other with a complex system of at least 12 different vocalizations. These alarm calls can be low grunts, gurgling sounds or a cackle-like roar. Red ruffed lemurs can even recognize the alarm calls of their co-subspecies, the black and white ruffed lemurs.

COURTSHIP AND YOUNG

Red ruffed lemurs reach sexual maturity at about 2 years of age, and have young at about the age of 3. In the wild, breeding season occurs from May through July, yet the female is in estrus for only a few days and fertile only one day during this time. Ruffed lemurs are the only primates that produce litters of young. The most common litter size is three. Young are born in September or October at the beginning of the wet season, when food is plentiful. Unlike most primates, the female red ruffed lemur may build several nests for her young, padding them with her own body hair. Infants don't cling to their mother but carries them in her mouth. Newborns have fur, and are wide-eyed at birth; however, they are not mobile at birth. The mother may park them in one of her satellite nests while foraging. At 7 weeks, youngsters can follow their parents through the treetops.

Estrous:

Gestation: 90-102 days

of Mammae: 3 pair

of Young: 3-6

Sexual Maturity: 20 months

Weaning Age: 4 months

Weight at birth:

MISCELLANEOUS

The Malagasy names for red ruffed lemurs are varimena or varignena!

They are named for the "ruff" of long hair that runs from the ears along the cheeks to beneath the chin.

There are two species of ruffed lemur (Genus: *Varecia*): the black and white ruffed lemur and the larger red ruffed. These two species are generally similar but differ significantly in their coloration and where they are found. Some scientists consider them subspecies.

Sources:

Present version: 1/08

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