

HIPPOPOTAMUS



Conservation Status:
Vulnerable

Scientific Classification

Class: Mammalia

Order: Artiodactyla

Family: Hippopotamidae

Genus: *Hippopotamus*

Species: *amphibius*



FAST FACTS

Weight: 3,000 to 9,900 pounds
with males being larger than females

Length: 11 to 16 ½ feet

Height: up to 5 feet at the shoulder

Life Span: average 45 years in captivity, less in the wild

Gestation: 8 months

Number of young: 1

Range: East Africa, south of the Sahara

Habitat: Rivers, swamps and protected areas

Diet: Herbivore, prefers to eat short grasses

DID YOU KNOW?

- The eyes, ears, and nostrils of hippos are on top of their head, making it easy for them to hear, see, and breathe while most all of their body is under water.
- Hippos don't have true sweat glands. Instead, they secrete a thick, red substance from their pores known as blood sweat. This mucous layer protects the hippo's skin from sunburn, helps keep it moist and potentially acts like an antibiotic.

Ecology & Conservation

The Hippopotamus has been listed as vulnerable because of habitat loss and illegal hunting for meat and ivory (found in the canine teeth). Illegal trade in hippo ivory increased sharply after the international ban on the trade of elephant ivory in 1989.

Hippos are an important part of the ecosystem. At night hippos feed on grass and during the day they go back to the water where they defecate. This provides food for microscopic animals living in the water, which in turn is fed on by larger animals.