



WILD SAFARI

DRIVE THRU ADVENTURE

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Safety in Safari

By entering our Safari you agree to adhere to all the protocols set forth below. Guests violating any of these rules will be immediately escorted out of the park without a refund.

1. Do not feed or touch the animals
2. No smoking or littering.
3. Do not leave the vehicle or roll down the windows
4. Speed limit 5 mph
5. Remain on roadway; animals have the right of way.

Please note: there are no bathrooms located in safari. Only portable toilets before and after you enter the park.

What to expect

Our Safari Park is 4.5 miles of paved road. How long the safari lasts depends on how long you take to observe the animals. We suggest allowing at least 1 hour for the drive through experience.

This guide is designed to help you learn about and identify animals in each of the different sections. Some gates will have signs saying Checkpost with a number and the name of the section. Those will correspond with the sections outlined in this guide.

Most gates will be manned by a safari team member. It may be necessary for them to close gates if the animals are too close. They will open it as soon as it is safe to drive through again.

The zebra-striped vehicles are the safari wardens and supervisors. They are the ones caring for the animals and making sure everyone is following the rules. If you need assistance please flag one of them down.

Please note: due to traffic or the individual species, not all animals may be seen.

SAFARI ANIMALS BY SECTION

The Americas

There will be 2 silver gates that are open, please drive through them.

Animals to see:



Fallow Deer (*Dama dama*)

Conservation Status: Least Concern

- **Originally from Europe**
 - have been widely introduced to other regions of the world. Can be found in North America, South America, Australia, and South Africa.
 - generally introduced as a game species.
- Males are bucks, females are does, and young are called fawns.
- Similar in size as New Jersey's native white-tailed deer
 - White-tailed deer are born with spots that fade with age, **fallow deer keep their spots throughout their life**, though the spots are more pronounced on their summer coat.
- **Bucks have flattened shovel-shaped antlers**



- **Called “palmate” due to their resemblance to a hand.**
- Occasionally, fallow deer antlers will merge at the base, shedding as a single U-shaped antler.
- Young bucks will generally grow only a single spike as opposed to the full antler. Unlike horns, **antlers are shed once a season.**
- Antlers are used when fighting over females and as a general signifier of health.
- In some species, specifically caribou, both males and females will grow antlers.
- While growing, a layer of skin called velvet covers the antlers, allowing blood flow for growth. As the velvet sheds to reveal the fully grown calcified antler, blood vessels underneath the velvet may make it appear that the antlers are bleeding.
- To shed velvet, deer will rub their antlers on trees. This is the reason many tree trunks in section are fenced off.

Bison (*Bison bison*)

Conservation Status: Near Threatened



- Symbols of the North American Great Plains.
- **Largest American land animal**, weighing up to 2200 lb and standing 5-6½ feet tall.
- Capable of running at speeds reaching 35 mph.
- Calves are born orange, which fades to a dark brown after a few months.
- **Grow a thick coat in the winter that insulates them so well snow builds up on their back rather than melt.**
- Throughout the summer, you will see them shedding this coat.
- **Bison have horns, which are a part of the skull and never shed.**
 - An outer coating of keratin, the visible brown part, protects a bony core. Because of this, broken horns will not regrow.
 - Bison are a species in which both males and females have horns.
 - Males will fight one another using their horns and thick skulls, while females use the horns to protect their young.
- Can be referred to as either bison or buffalo, though the term bison is specific to two species, the closely related American bison and European bison.
 - Early European settlers referred to the animals as buffalo because of their similar appearance to African buffalo.
 - American bison and African buffalo are not closely related, but over time the words bison and buffalo have become synonymous when referring to the American species.
 - The etymology of both words is similar; “bison” is derived from a Greek word for ox-like while “buffalo” is derived from a French word meaning the same thing.
- **Conservation: Prior to westward expansion, bison populations numbered in the tens of millions. As settlers moved west, bison were hunted to near extinction due to a number of factors.**

- Improving technologies at the time made it far easier to hunt bison with guns as opposed to weapons used by Native Americans.
- Railroad companies hired people to hunt bison because to avoid damage to the trains.
- As the bison was crucial to the livelihood of native tribes, reducing bison populations allowed the US government to force those peoples off their tribal lands.
- Bison were exposed to a number of bovine diseases brought over by domestic cattle. By the 1880s there were only a few hundred bison left in the US.
- At this point a number of states and territories passed laws against hunting bison, and Congress tasked the Army with protecting the Yellowstone herd from poachers.
- Today, approximately 500,000 bison live on ranches, while the wild population is considered to be around 30,000. The bison is the national mammal of the United States.

Roosevelt Elk (*Cervus canadensis*)

Conservation Status: Least Concern

- **Named for Theodore Roosevelt**
- The Roosevelt elk is the largest elk subspecies in North America
- Native to the forests and mountains of the Pacific Northwest.
- Other subspecies of elk can also be found throughout much of North America.
- Males can weigh over 1000 lb, and are **identifiable by antlers which average 4 feet long.**
 - Their antlers typically have one long main beam with about 6 spikes.
 - As he walks, a bull elk's antlers clear pathways through the forest which are used by other organisms.
- For most of the year, female elk live in groups of 20-30 with their young, while males live on their own or in small groups.
- **During rut, their breeding season, bull elk will join these female groups to breed, fighting with other bulls using their antlers.**
- Males make a bugle vocalization when seeking females, with females barking in reply.
- Elk are also referred to as wapiti, particularly in Eurasia where the word elk refers to what Americans call moose.



Llama (*Lama glama*)

Conservation Status: Domesticated




- Direct relatives of camels.
- Llamas have very thick wool coats that are used by people in South America for clothing.
- Excellent climbers due to the soft pads on their feet. Hooves are not as wide as those found in their camel counterparts; instead, they are narrow and moveable to aid in walking across rocky terrain.
- **Primary pack animal in the Andes Mountains and can carry up to 100 lb on their back.**
- Commonly confused with the alpaca.
 - Lack eyelashes and are much larger and taller than their cousin the alpaca.
 - **The llama was domesticated from an animal called a guanaco**, while the alpaca was domesticated from the vicuña.
- Can be very temperamental. **When threatened or frustrated, will regurgitate stomach bile and spit at those near them.** Their spit is extremely smelly and will stain clothing.
 - They can be so aggressive when provoked that many ranchers use llamas to guard flocks of sheep against predators.

Rhea (*Rhea americana*)

Conservation Status: Near Threatened

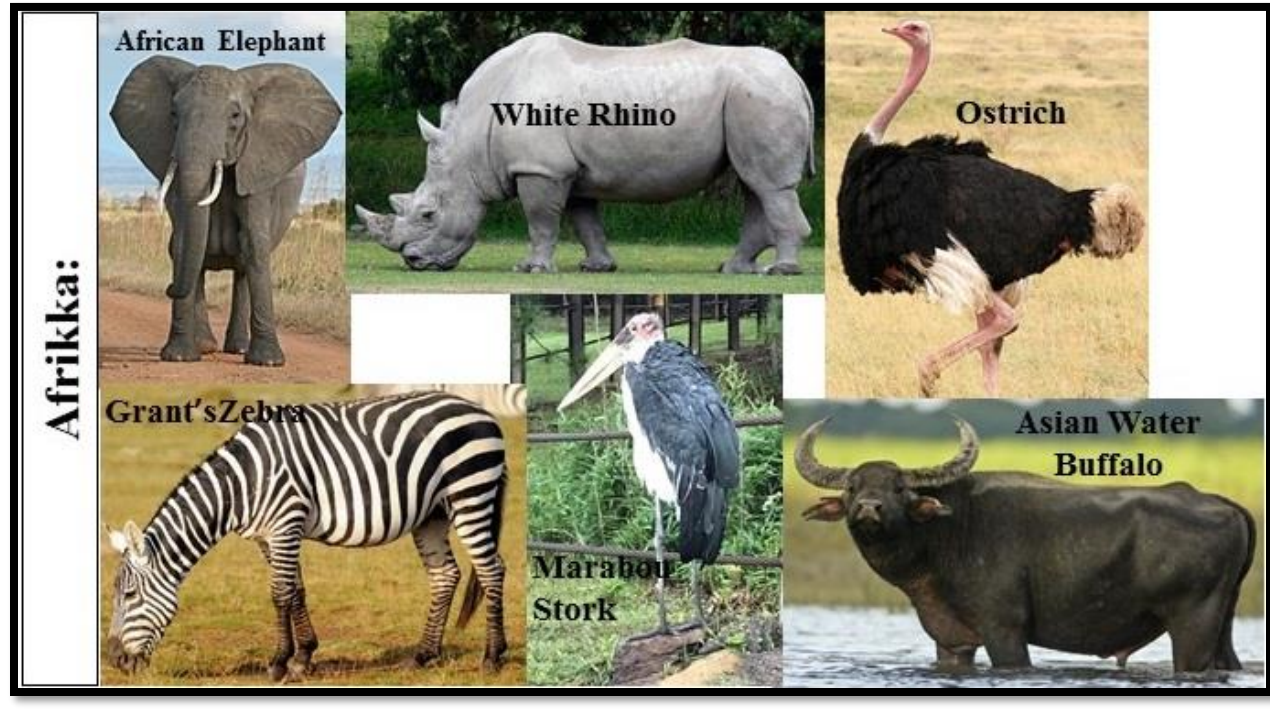


- Flightless bird from South America
- Well suited to life on the open grasslands. Prefer habitats with tall vegetation as opposed to shorter grasses.
- Stand up to 5 feet tall and weigh 40-50 lb.
- Forage for leaves, roots, seeds, and insects.
- Mating behavior is often said to look like ballet with males and females dancing and mimicking one another.
- Females lay up to 20 eggs in a nest, dug into the earth, and many females may share a nest.
- **The male incubates eggs, which lasts about 40 days. Males then rear the offspring.**
- Although they do not fly they use their wings as “rudders” to balance themselves while running at great speeds.
- When its nest is threatened, the rhea tries to lure the predator away by running off and trailing its outspread wings to draw attention.
- Males can become very aggressive during mating season.
- **These birds are considered ratites, which is a group of large flightless birds also including ostriches and emus.**

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- Rhea have 3 toes, unlike the ostrich which has 2, to facilitate foraging through vegetation for insects.
 - **Males have a ring of black feathers around their necks while females are usually grey and white.**
 - The white individuals are not albino but are leucistic, which is a recessive gene.
 - **Leucistic animals cannot produce melanin, a type of pigment, so they have blue eyes.**
 - **Albino animals cannot produce any pigment so their eyes are red.**

CHECK POST 3: Afrikka

Animals to see:



African Elephant (*Loxodonta africana*)

Conservation Status: Vulnerable

- **Largest land animal in the world, can reach up to 12 feet tall at the shoulder and weigh up to 7 tons.**
- Can drink up to 60 gallons of water a day and eat 300 lb of food.
- **Trunk, is an elongation of the upper lip and nose, is made up of over 100,000 muscles** and is prehensile (capable of grasping).
 - Trunks are used to pick up items, suck up water to spray, and to breathe while swimming completely submerged underwater.
- Both males and females have tusks that can be 8 feet long and weigh 100 lb each.
 - Most elephants have a dominant tusk the same way we have dominant hands. A right-tusked elephant will have a shorter right tusk because it is more frequently used and therefore worn down.
 - Tusks are incisors that never stop growing.



- All their other teeth are molars, and new molars will grow in from the back, pushing worn down molars out the front. For this reason, they are referred to as having “marching molars.” This does not occur for the tusks, so if one of an elephants’ tusks is removed it will not grow back.
- **Lifespan can range from 60 to 80 years, and is often related to their teeth.**
- They are only able to grow 6 sets of molars in their lifetime; after the sixth set has been worn down, the elephant will pass away from malnutrition.
- **Pregnancy is infrequent, occurring once every 2-4 years and lasting 22 months.** This is the longest gestation of any animal.
- **Elephant herds are ruled by a matriarch,** usually the oldest female.
- Males leave the herd at puberty, around 13 years old, and typically live alone or in bachelor groups.
- They have a variety of vocalizations, though our ears only pick up about a third of the sounds that elephants make.
 - Long distance elephant communication is carried out by infrasonic communication. This is communication at such a low frequency it vibrates the earth, and elephants far away pick up the vibrations through their feet.
- Key differences between Asian and African elephants other than the location:
 - While both male and female African elephants have pronounced tusks, only male Asian elephants have what are considered tusks. Females have incisors, but they don’t protrude out from under the trunk.
 - African elephants are larger than Asian elephants
 - The tip of an African elephant’s trunk has two lips as opposed to the single lip of an Asian elephant’s trunk.
 - Most notable difference is the ears. African elephants have large ears similarly shaped to the African continent. Their large ears have capillary beds directly under the thin skin. These are used for counter current heat exchange, bringing blood to the surface to cool the animal in their hot climate.

Conservation: African elephants are listed as **vulnerable**.

- Elephants face two major threats to their population
 - **Ivory trade:** A nearly global ivory ban was put in place in 1990. Illegal poaching continues to be an issue
 - **Habitat destruction:** Humans continue encroaching on what was **previously elephant habitat, human-elephant conflict becomes more frequent.** Many people living in those areas are farmers, and elephants can very easily damage their crops.
- Between 1979 and 1989, Africa’s elephant population **plummeted from 1,300,000 animals to around 600,000.**
- Currently, the population of wild African elephants is **estimated at 700,000.**
- Elephants are a **keystone species, meaning they have a disproportionately large impact on their environment.**

- Should the population decrease further, it is likely the landscape of the **African savannahs will change drastically towards becoming more heavily forested.**

White Rhinoceros (*Ceratotherium simum*)

Conservation Status: Near Threatened

- Males average **4,000 to 6,000 lb**, the white rhinoceros is the largest living species of rhino.
- They have poor eyesight but an extremely good sense of smell, which they use to detect predators.
- Rhinos wallow in the mud, like a pig, in order to protect their skin from sun and insects.
- They have **two horns made of keratin, the same material that makes up hair and fingernails**, which grow throughout a rhino's life.
 - **They are not true horns** because if they are cut they will grow back again as long as the root is intact.
 - Unlike the horns atop many animals' heads, rhino horns **do not have a bony core**. They are entirely made of tightly packed keratin.
 - It is not uncommon to see rhinos with uniquely shaped horns, as they will rub their horn on things like rocks or trees to create the sharp point.
- **A group of rhinos is called a "crash."**
- Bull rhinos will mark their territory by spraying urine.
- Cows give birth in intervals of 2-4 years, and gestation lasts around 16 months.
- White rhinos are grazers, using their wide lips to eat up many blades of grass at a time.
- **Rhinos are one of the last remaining "megaherbivores" along with elephants and hippos.** They are often believed to be related to one another due to similarities in appearance, but a rhino is more closely related to horses, donkeys, and zebra.
- The reasoning for white rhinos being referred to as "white" is not fully understood. **One common theory is that the word stems from a mistranslation of the Dutch word for "wide."** Dutch settlers referred to the animals as "wide rhinos" due to their wide square-shaped lip, and English speakers though they were calling the animals white instead. By this reasoning, the black rhino, Africa's other rhinoceros species, was referred to as such simply to differentiate it from the white rhino. There is, however, no record that the Dutch in fact referred to the animals as "wide rhinos." Another theory is that black and white rhinos were named due to being seen wallowing in differently colored soil, altering the appearance of their skin.



Conservation

- White rhinos are one of **five living species of rhinoceros** and the **only species not listed as endangered**.
 - **Three species, Javan, Sumatran, and black rhinos are critically endangered, Indian rhinos are vulnerable, and the white rhino is near threatened.**
 - Today, the white rhino is the most populous species, with an estimated wild population of **20,000**.
 - However, the population was on the **verge of extinction at the end of the 1800s due to over hunting by game hunters.**
 - The primary threat facing rhinos today is **poaching for their horn**.
 - They are **large with poor vision, making them relatively easy targets for poachers.**
 - The horn is used in **traditional Asian medicine as a treatment for numerous ailments, though there is no scientific evidence backing these claims.**
 - In some places in Asia, black market ground rhino horn can be **worth more than its weight in gold**. Some poachers will even search for rhino sightings on social media to track targets.

Grant's Zebra (*Equus burchellii boehmi*)

Conservation Status: Near Threatened

- Zebras are often thought of as horses with prettier coats, but are **more closely related to donkeys**.
- They can be **very aggressive**, which may be the reason they were never domesticated.
- Zebra herds typically consist of one stallion male with a harem of around 10 females and their foals.
 - **Several herds aggregate to form the massive herds** commonly associated with zebra.
- Females give birth to a single foal after 12 months of gestation.
 - Baby zebra are able to **stand up 20 minutes after being born** and are able to **run after an hour in order to evade predators**.
- Zebras take dust or mud baths to get clean and then shake the dirt off to get rid of loose hair and flaky skin. What's left protects them from sun, wind, and insects.
 - Unlike the oryx, zebras rely heavily on water, so they rarely travel farther than 20 miles from a water source.
- **The stripe pattern is unique for each zebra** and is similar to a human fingerprint; no two patterns are alike.
 - Though many zebras have an all-white belly, the dark color of their muzzle, inner ears, and just above the hoof indicates that the **zebra can be considered black/dark brown with white stripes**.
- The stripes serve many uses, one of which is **camouflage**. When zebras herd together, it becomes very difficult to differentiate one zebra from another, as the stripes of one zebra run into the stripes of another.
 - This is especially evident when moving and is referred to as motion dazzle. It has also been found that stripes deter biting insects, as the contrasting colors affect their vision.



Asian Water Buffalo (*Bubalus bubalis*)

Conservation Status: Domesticated

- The Asian water buffalo can almost always be found in the ponds of Afrika.
- Cows give birth every 2 years to one calf after a gestation period of about 10 months.
- **Their fetlock, the joint just above their hoof, is highly flexible,** which allows them to move through mud easily.
- Their **wild population is threatened because of cross breeding with the domesticated population.**
- Their hide, often used for leather, is tough and thick, while their milk, which has more fat than that of domestic cattle, is used in India for making a liquid butter. Domesticated Asian water buffalo are used as beasts of burden throughout much of Asia and are frequently found on farms.



Conservation - efforts are evident through reserves that keep pure wild populations alive

Ostrich (*Struthio camelus*)

Conservation Status: Least Concern

- The **largest bird in the world**, the ostrich is also flightless.
- They can be 8 feet tall and weigh up to 300 lb.
- They use the two-clawed toes on each foot to help grip the ground to reach high speeds.
- Ostriches are the **fastest running birds in the world**,
 - Reaching up to 45 mph for short distances and can maintain speeds around 32 mph for longer distances
- Ostriches are the best long distance runners in the world not just among birds but all animals.
 - A single stride can **reach 10-16 feet**.
- They are **omnivores**, mostly eating seeds, berries, and plants, but they will eat small animals such as lizards and insects.
 - Lack of teeth among birds is an evolutionary adaptation to remain lightweight for flight. Ostriches cannot fly, but they still lack teeth.
 - Most birds consume small stones to help grind food in their gizzard, but because ostriches do not fly they will consume more stones to help break down harsher food sources.
- **Males are black while females are grey**, both having white feathers on the ends of their wings.
- Their **eyes are the largest of any bird, up to 2 inches across**.
 - They protect it with two eyelids.
 - One has long lashes to protect from dirt and dust; the other is semi-transparent and closes upward to protect the eye while still allowing the bird to see.



- **Their egg is the biggest in the world and weighs roughly 3 lb**
 - It is the equivalent to two dozen chicken eggs.
 - Both parents will incubate eggs for about 45 days.
 - Born approximately the size of a grapefruit, once chicks hatch they can grow up to a foot a month for six months. Chicks can run at speeds close to 35 mph at just one month old. They are farmed globally for their eggs and meat and live 30-40 years.

Marabou Stork (*Leptoptilos crumeniferus*)

Conservation Status: Least Concern

- **Scavengers** and use their strong beak to rip apart carcasses to expose meat left behind by previous predators.
- 8½-10½ foot wingspan, among the largest of any land-dwelling bird.
- They generally live in large colonies.
 - They are so large they have been known to scare off vultures in order to steal their food.
 - Marabou storks are often found in flocks of multiple bird species numbering in the thousands.
 - Marabou storks nest in trees, but Fred, our marabou, is not flighted so he nests on the ground using sticks and mud.
- They typically lay 2-3 eggs once a year.
- Their bill continues to **grow throughout the animals' lifetime and can exceed a foot in length.**
- They use it during breeding by rattling and clacking it together to make noise. They use the same technique as a warning to predators or intruders.
- They have **no feathers on their head or neck to prevent blood clumping on their own feathers as the bird sticks its head into the carcass of its prey.** Marabou are often referred to as "undertaker birds" because of their affinity for rotting meat, naturally hunched posture, and black cloaking wings.



CHECK POST 4: Wilde Plains

Animals to see:



Blackbuck (*Antelope cervicapra*)

Conservation Status: Least Concern

- Blackbuck are **originally from India, Nepal, and Pakistan.**
- They travel in **herds of 5-50 in either mixed or bachelor herds.**
- Males defend territories, while females are nomadic.
 - One of the few antelope species in which **males and females have different coloration. Females are fawn colored with white undersides and no horns. Males are born the same fawn and white color as females, but the fawn color transitions to a darker black coat with age.**
- Additionally, **males have long twisted horns.**
- These animals are incredible athletes, reaching top speeds of 50 mph for short distances.
- They can jump up to **5 feet straight up when startled.**
- Blackbuck are among the few hoofstock species that have multiple births per year.



- Typical gestation for blackbuck is roughly 5½-6 months and breeding can occur soon after a calf is born.
- Six Flags has multiple herds of blackbuck. The first section you will find them will likely be the Wilde Plains, as they often cluster by the gate to enter that section. That herd, as well as the herd in the Serengeti Grasslands, will be a bachelor herd, comprised entirely of males. The only mixed herd of males, females, and juveniles is in the Tigris Asiana section of the park.

Common Eland (*Taurotragus oryx*)

Conservation Status: Least Concern

- ***Taurotragus* (commonly known as elands) is the largest genus of antelope.**
- The common eland has been known to be 6 feet tall at the shoulder and weigh up to 2000 lb.
- The faint stripes on their coat serve as camouflage in grasslands and scrublands.
- **Their mostly straight, tightly spiraled horns can be 2½ feet long and are found on both males and females.**
- Males are larger, often having darker coats than females. The skin hanging from male elands' throats is called a dewlap.
- **They are accomplished jumpers, able to reach heights of 8 feet when startled,** but they are the slowest running antelope, sprinting at 25 mph.
- Eland gather in large herds, especially when females are with young calves.
 - When predators approach, males will bark and trot back and forth to alert the herd to the danger.
- Dominance displays between males include a clicking noise made by the animal's front knees.
- They are versatile feeders and are often encouraged to live on land used by ranchers because they will clear areas of shrub growth to allow sheep to feed on the grass underneath. Eland are naturally destructive, capable of knocking down small to medium sized trees to access their leaves.



Ellipsis Waterbuck (*Kobus ellipsiprymnus*)

Conservation Status: Least Concern

- Waterbuck live **near bodies of water.**
- In addition to being sure-footed on land, **waterbuck will spend time in bodies of water to avoid predators** that don't like the water.



- Only the males have horns which can reach up to 3 feet.
- White markings can be seen around the eyes, nose, throat bib, and rump.
- Unlike many antelope, waterbuck are sedentary and form smaller herds of only a few dozen individuals.
- Young males will begin developing horns within the first year, at which point the dominant bull will chase the younger male from the herd.
- **Their name is derived from the elliptical shape of the white marking on their rear.**
- Excited waterbuck **secrete a viscous substance from their sweat glands to attract mates.**
 - The pungent **smell of this fluid repels predators and waterproofs the animal's body** when it runs through water.
 - According to African myth the meat of the waterbuck is not edible, but this is untrue. Though not especially tasty, waterbuck venison is safe to eat.

Beisa Oryx (*Oryx beisa beisa*)

Conservation Status: Near Threatened

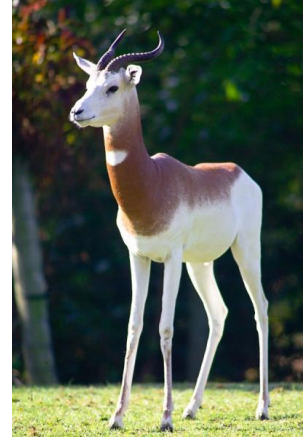
- Beisa oryx are part of a group of antelope known as Hippotragini, which means horse-like antelope.
 - Other members of this tribe found in the safari include the scimitar horned oryx, addax, and sable.
- Both males and females have horns that can reach 3-4 feet long.
- They travel in small to medium sized herds of approximately 20 animals
 - heavy rainfall can cause individuals to aggregate together for resources in herds numbering in the hundreds.
- **They are found in dry arid regions and can go without water for extended periods of time.**
- During these times they **rely on vegetation, roots, and bulbs for their water intake.**
 - Water is a byproduct of the metabolic process, and oryx are able to recycle this water back into other body systems.
 - The kidneys of beisa and their relatives are highly specialized to retain as much water as possible while eliminating macro-molecular waste.
- While traveling, the herd is usually led by a large female and the alpha male will bring up the rear, protecting the herd from predators.
- Beisa can use their long sharp horns to deter predators.
- **Oryx can tolerate periods of extreme heat by raising their body temperature to 116° F.**
 - **Raising their body temperature to meet that of their outside environment allows them to conserve water by not needing to perspire.**



Dama Gazelle (*Nanger dama*)

Conservation Status: *Critically Endangered*

- The dama gazelle is the world's **largest gazelle** because of their long slender legs.
- Similar to an African elephant's large ears, the high surface area of the legs helps to dissipate heat away from the dama's body.
- The light, toasted marshmallow colored coat is an adaptation for a desert habitat.
 - Found on a number of desert dwelling species, **a white coat reflects heat off of their bodies to keep them cool.**
- Both male and female dama have ribbed S-shaped horns.
- Like other gazelle and impala, **dama display a behavior known as pronking or stotting.**
 - They leap straight up, lifting all four feet off the ground while keeping the legs stiff.
 - One theory explaining this behavior is that it gives an individual a better vantage point to notice nearby predators.
 - Another explanation is that it is what's called an "honest signal." Pronking honestly indicates the animal's health, alerting predators that the animal is healthy and therefore a poor target for predation.



Conservation

- Dama gazelle are a **critically endangered**, with an estimated maximum **wild population of 100-200**.
- There are more dama gazelle under human care than there are in the wild.
- **Their primary threat is habitat loss.**
 - Humans cut down branches of the trees and bushes dama eat from to use as firewood, reducing the amount of food available for dama.
 - This problem is compounded by the general socioeconomic climate of their native region. Dama are native to a number of countries that have, in recent years, undergone civil unrest, further negatively impacting the dama population.

Peafowl (*Pavo cristatus*)

Conservation Status: Least Concern



- Peafowl, native to India, are loud and territorial.
 - They can fly and often do so to get to their roosts in trees.
 - The magnificent feathers that the **males grow actually grow from their back, not their tail.**
 - **Males are called peacocks, while females are referred to as peahens.**
 - Males do not fully develop their trains until about 3 years of age.
 - They molt and re-grow their train every year.
 - **Females are all brown and grey with no bright coloration.**
 - Males have the bright coloring to attract females, as bright feathers are an indicator of health.
 - Females are drab in order to stay hidden from predators during incubation periods.
 - Because they are flighted, you can often find our peacocks (we only have males) roosting in trees or occasionally crossing gates into other sections.
 - We do have a **leucistic male peacock** on the safari.
-
- *Section B begins at the cattle grid past the Odum Airstrip building and near the animal entrance to the giraffe paddock. Though guests often don't notice the transition, species found on one side of the grid are often not also found on the other.*
 - *Camp Aventura is located in the middle of Section B, so depending upon where the animals choose to locate, some of these species may be before or after camp at different times of the day.*
 - *Tours briefly reenter Section B following the Black Bear Ridge section, passing a small pond that is often used by the swans and ibis.*

Scimitar Horned Oryx (*Oryx dammah*)

Conservation Status: Extinct in the Wild



- **Their name is derived from their curved scimitar-like horns.**
- Like the dama gazelle, their **tan and cinnamon coloration serves as camouflage in the desert**, but advancing technology has made it easier for humans to hunt the species.
- Like the beisa oryx, scimitars are able to raise their body temperature, preventing moisture loss by not sweating.
- **They can survive without water for many weeks**
 - kidneys produce extremely concentrated urine.

- Females give birth to one calf after 9 months of gestation. They travel in mixed herds with between 12-70 animals.

Conservation

- The scimitar horned oryx is a species that **was extinct in the wild in 2000**.
 - One major cause for their extinction was **overhunting for their meat and coat**, particularly during times of civil unrest.
- As the population began to decline, a breeding program was initiated in the 1960s to ensure genetic diversity among individuals under human care, but the species was officially listed as extinct in the wild in 2000.
- **In 2016, 25 oryx were released in Chad as the start of a reintroduction program. That summer, the first scimitar horned oryx calf was born in the wild in 30 years.**

Reticulated Giraffe (*Giraffa camelopardalis reticula*)

Conservation Status: Vulnerable

- The giraffe is the **tallest land mammal and ruminant**.
- Males can be up to 18 feet tall and weigh up to 4000 lb.
- Females can be about 16 feet tall and 2000 lb.
- A giraffe's legs are 6 feet long.
- A group of giraffes is called a "tower" and they typically live to around 25 years old.
- Females give birth to a single calf after a 14-15 month gestation
 - Give birth standing up
 - Calves are born they drop 6 feet to the ground.
- Giraffe have a specialized gait when walking called a "parallel gait"; they move both legs on one side of their body at a time.
 - Due to the length of their legs, were they to move the right front leg and left back leg at once they would trip over their own feet.
- The horns atop their head are not true horns but ossicones.
 - Bony protuberances that remain covered in skin and hair.
 - Males also have a noticeable lump in the middle of their skull.
 - Over time, a male's skull will become covered in callus-like calcium deposits from being used to ram competing males.
- A giraffe's neck is disproportionately long, reaching **seven feet long**.
 - Multiple theories as to why their necks are so long.



1. Proposed by Darwin, is that giraffe have long necks so they do not need to compete with other browsers while feeding. The Next largest browsers can only eat browse up to around 7 feet high, while giraffe can browse up to twice that height.
 2. **Giraffe have long necks because of a behavior known as “necking”**. Males establish dominance and access to females by smacking each other with their heads and necks; the longer and heavier the neck, the more momentum and force behind the smack. In this case, males with longer necks gained access to females, thus promoting genes for long-necked individuals.
 - **The neck has 7 vertebrae, the same number as humans.**
- A giraffe’s heart is 2 feet wide and weighs about 25 lb, and their lungs can hold 12 gallons of air.
 - Heart requires double the blood pressure of a human to pump blood to their brain against gravity.
 - To drink, a giraffe spreads out its front legs, known as splaying, to get its body close enough to the ground for it to reach the water. It then lowers its head below its heart to drink water. If we were to do that all of our blood would rush to our head because of gravity and we would get dizzy and faint. However, giraffes have specialized blood vessels valves to make sure that their blood keeps going against the flow of gravity back to their heart.
 - On the savannahs of Africa, the giraffe’s favorite plant is the acacia tree, a plant with 2 inch spines. They use their prehensile 18-inch dark purple tongue to avoid those spines.

Conservation

- Giraffe are currently undergoing what is referred to as a **“silent extinction event”**.
- In the past 30 years, giraffe numbers have decreased by almost 40%.
- Due to this rapid change, in 2016 the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) bumped giraffe two places from “Least Concern” to “Vulnerable to Extinction”.
- Researchers have stated the **reason for this extinction event include habitat loss, poaching, and increased human-wildlife conflict through agricultural and mining expansion, as well as civil unrest in the countries where giraffes still exist.**
- There are currently competing proposals for the distinct number of species and subspecies of giraffe, which further complicates their conservation status. Currently, the IUCN lists giraffe as a single species with nine separate subspecies.

Red Ankole Cattle (*Bos taurus*)

Conservation Status: Domesticated

- The red Ankole cattle, unlike the bison and buffalo earlier in the tour, are true cattle.
- They are a breed and not a separate species of cattle.
 - As a species, cattle were domesticated over 10,000 years ago from an extinct wild bovine called the aurochs (pronounced like “ow rocks”).
- They are also referred to as the **Watusi cattle, named after the Tutsi people of East Africa who initially bred them.**
- In a number of African cultures a person’s herd of cattle is the most evident indicator of their wealth.
 - For this reason, they are used more for their milk than their meat.
- **They are bred for their size and horns, the latter spanning up to 6 feet.**
- **The blood vessels in their horns help them cool off by circulating blood away from the *body* and then returning it once it’s cooled.**



Conservation

- Though cattle are a domesticated species, their proliferation throughout Africa has negatively impacted many of the continent’s herbivores.
- Species must compete over grasses and browse with large herds of cattle.
- Additionally, farmers will dig boreholes to supply their cattle with water, depleting that resource from the ecosystem.

White Bearded Gnu (*Connochaetes taurinus*)

Conservation Status: Least Concern

- The gnu, the “g” is silent, is **commonly known as the blue wildebeest.**
- Males tend to have much larger and thicker horns than females.
- Every year the white bearded gnu migrates in search of fresh pastures and water.
 - Such migrations may contain as many as one million individuals.
 - Up to half a million zebra and gazelle often travel with the gnu.
 - The migration takes the form of **long columns, stretching thousands of miles and is considered one of the great natural wonders of the world.**
- Gnu muscles are extremely efficient
 - They are approximately 63% efficient at turning chemical energy into movements



- Humans ~ 23%
- Helps the gnu cover large distances without stopping for water.
- Predators such as lions and hyenas will follow the herd while crocodiles wait in the bodies of water the gnus cross or drink from. These predators wait for young, old, or unhealthy animal to stray from the herd.
- Gnu live in more densely packed groups than any mammal other than humans.
- 80% of calves are born in the first 2-3 weeks of the rainy season.
- Birthing occurs within this timeframe as an evolutionary advantage
 - The more calves there are, the less likely any specific one is to be killed by a predator.
 - Give birth midday to avoid nocturnal predators.
 - **Newborn calves can walk and run within 3-7 minutes of parturition**, enabling them to escape predators.
- White bearded Gnu sleep in rows or columns so that if they need to get up and run in the middle of the night, they have room to move.
- During the mass migrations made up of zebra and gnu, zebra tend to reach a new grazing site first to feed on the tall tough grass stems. Gnu follow close behind and eat on the now short grass for which their broad muzzle is specifically adapted.

Red Lechwe (*Kobus leche leche*)

Conservation Status: Near Threatened

- Lechwe are usually **found near aquatic areas** and are well suited to life around water.
- They have **extremely strong hind limbs, which are disproportionately longer than their forelimbs**.
- They have elongated hooves compared to many other antelope.
 - Both of these traits help them to run long distances in marshy soil.
 - After pastures have flooded and the water has receded lechwe come in and feed on new emerging grass.
- Males have horns that are ribbed and lyre shaped, which reach up to three feet long.
- Though listed as least concern, **lechwe populations have dramatically fallen off due to habitat loss, specifically due to dams and drainage systems, and hunting, their affinity for water makes them easy targets for traditional hunts as well as poaching**.
- Populations can be found in Zambia and Botswana.
- Herd structure is comparatively weak to most other antelope, even the bond between mother and calf is often described as loose.



Greater Kudu (*Tragelaphus strepsiceros*)

Conservation Status: Least Concern

- Kudu are Africa's third largest antelope, behind the two eland species.
- Live in hilly woodland areas with easy access to water and will migrate great distances to find these places.
- Both males and females have a white striped pattern extending from their backs to their stomach.
 - Serves as camouflage, breaking up their figure in tall grass and forests.
 - When kudu sense threats they will freeze in hopes of not being detected by the predator.
- Due to their size, they are not able to run very fast and rely on out maneuvering predators through thick brush.
- Males can be distinguished from females not only for their horns but also their shaggy beard on their chest.
 - **It may take up to 6 years to develop the 2½ twists of a bull's horns.**
 - Kudu horns are commonly used as **shofars, a ceremonial Jewish musical horn.**
- Though the species has a wide range, many populations are spread out due to habitat loss.



Southern Ground Hornbill (*Bucorvus leadbeateri*)

Conservation Status: Vulnerable

- The largest hornbill, southern ground hornbills are primarily **active on the ground, though they roost in trees overnight.**
- The species rarely flies, though it has a large wingspan reaching up to 2 meters.
- Their large beaks and stocky legs are adaptations to facilitate foraging and moving on the ground, respectively.
- Southern ground hornbills are characterized by their bright red face and neck, with females having a patch of violet skin on their throat.
- The species is monogamous forming permanent pair bonds, and are cooperative breeders, meaning multiple pairs work together to rear offspring.
 - Unaided single pairs are unable to successfully raise offspring.
 - The dominant female lays a clutch of 1-3 eggs in a tree cavity, which hatch after 40 days.
 - Only one chick survives beyond a few days, and it will leave the nest after 3 months.
 - Offspring may spend several years as part of the family group.
- The species is territorial, and all group members defend territories that can reach sizes of 40 square miles.
- The species is highly vocal, with calls that can be heard from over a mile away.



- Their diet is **exclusively carnivorous, eating lizards, small birds, snakes and small mammals and insects.**
 - The whole family group may be involved with the hunting of prey.
- Because they require savannahs to forage and large territories, **they are now vulnerable due to much of their habitat being cleared out for agriculture.**

Eastern Crowned Crane (*Balearica regulorum*)

Conservation Status: Endangered

- The crowned crane **gets its name from the cluster of feathers atop its head.**
- Standing around 3 feet tall, they are a tropical African bird that normally lives near bodies of water.
- Crowned cranes date back in the fossil record to the Eocene epoch, spanning 34-56 mya. Because these animals have not changed significantly since, they are considered living fossils.
- The two extant species of crowned cranes are the **only cranes that roost in trees.**
 - **This is due to a specialized elongated backward-facing toe used to grip branches.**
- They are the national bird of Uganda and feature on its coat of arms.
- When they get ready to mate, they hop around and do a dance where the male and female will mimic each other.
 - In a flock of birds, the courtship dance can become contagious and all of the birds will participate.
- **The species is currently endangered due to pollution and the drainage of their marsh habitat.**



Sacred Ibis (*Threskiornis aethiopicus*)

Conservation Status: Least Concern

- Sacred ibis live in large colonies near waterways throughout Africa
- Carnivorous birds, eating small reptiles, insects, fish, and amphibians in water. On land they feed on eggs, grasshoppers, and other insects.
- Both parents guard and incubate the nest, and both will help feed the chicks.
- They use their **slender curved bills to probe through mud and water to look for their food.**
- They live in large groups and will nest in groups of 50-2000 pairs.
- While flying, they form diagonal lines or V-formations to help decrease wind resistance. When the leading bird tires, it will go to the back of the line and the next bird will take its place.



- **In Ancient Egypt they were worshiped as a representation of the god Thoth and were a symbol of wisdom.**
 - Many were mummified and buried with pharaohs. Tomb complexes have been found with more than one million mummified ibis.

Mute Swan (*Cygnus olor*)

Conservation Status: Least Concern



- Swans are **monogamous, often reusing the same nest year after year.**
- The white swans found on our safari are **called mute swans because they are significantly less vocal** than other species of swans.
- Young are a brown/tan color which turns to a bright white color with a bright orange beak in adulthood.
- They are particularly **aggressive when defending their family.**
 - They are known to have driven away predators as large as foxes and will attack anything that they perceive as a threat, including humans and watercrafts.
- The species' native distribution is primarily Northern Eurasia and the British Isles, though they will migrate as far south as North Africa, the Middle East, India, and Korea in the winter.
- Historically, the mute swan was hunted extensively for food, and more recently populations have been affected by lead poisoning from lead fishing sinkers.
- Mute swans were introduced to North America in the 19th century, and are today viewed as an invasive species, particularly in the Northeast and Midwest.

Camp Aventura

This building in the middle of the safari is Camp Aventura. It is part of our Safari Off Road Adventure tour. It's an optional animal walk around area that is home to a small exotic animal collection. This area is also home to our overnights and other Safari Programs as well as some smaller extotic animals. We still have the animal care staff coming in and caring for these animals. You might see them working.

NO STOPPING AT THIS AREA ALLOWED. IT IS NOT PART OF THE DRIVE THRU AND IS CLOSED DUE TO THE CURRENT SITUATION.

CHECK POST 5: Serengeti Grasslands

Animals to see:



- The Serengeti is an East African ecosystem most well-known for the great migration of over 1 million wildebeest and a number of other species. It gets its name from a Maa word meaning “endless plains.”

Addax (*Addax nasomaculatus*)

Conservation Status: Critically Endangered

- The addax is a desert nomad with broad flat hooves to allow them to walk well over loose sand.
- Both males and females have horns, which reach up to 3½ feet long, though they are generally longer in males.
- **Their summer coat is a light white coat to help shed excess heat, while their winter coat is a darker grey coat to help absorb heat from the sun.**
 - The color of addax' coats is very indicative of their habitat.
 - Their light coat also helps camouflage the animals from predators by blending in with the bright reflective sand.



- They will dig depressions in the sand or lay down behind boulders to escape the heat and searing winds of their desert environment.
- As an adaptation for living in the desert, addax are able to get almost all the water they need to function from the plants they eat.
- **It's believed that antelope like addax and oryx may have given rise to the myth of the unicorn.**
 - **When viewed in profile, the horns line up in such a way as to appear that they have only a single horn.**
 - Additionally, because broken horns do not regrow, it's possible people travelling across Arabia believed they saw mystical one-horned horses.

Conservation

- These animals are **critically endangered, with an estimated wild population of under 100 individuals.**
- A 2016 survey found only 3 individuals, while other surveys have only been able to find signs of the animal but not the animals themselves.
- Approximately 700 individuals are currently in captive breeding programs to help increase global populations.
- They are large, heavily built antelope, so they are not capable of the great speeds necessary to outrun predators or hunters.
- A possible reason that they are not already extinct is that they live in such remote inhospitable areas that certain groups have escaped human detection. The addax, dama gazelle, and scimitar horned oryx are three species that have faced similar threats living in the deserts of northern Africa.

White Tailed Gnu (*Connochaetes gnou*)

Conservation Status: Least Concern

- The white tailed gnu is **also known as the black wildebeest.**
- It is the **smaller relative of the white bearded gnu.**
- Both **males and females have forward curving horns, as opposed to the white bearded's horns which curve to the side.**
- They are named for their light colored tail.
- The two wildebeest species can hybridize, which is one of the reasons they are found in separate sections of the safari.



Conservation

- Though listed as least concern today, the white tailed gnu has historically been an endangered species.
- **At the end of the 19th century, the entire population of black wildebeest could be found on just two farms in South Africa, numbering only in the hundreds.**
- **Thanks to conservation efforts, the species has been reintroduced to neighboring countries from which it had gone extinct, and today the population is estimated at 18,000.**

- Though least concern, the greatest threat to black wildebeest populations is hybridization with blue wildebeest.

Aoudad (*Ammotragus lervia*)

Conservation Status: Vulnerable



- Though also referred to as the **Barbary sheep**, these animals are more closely related to goats.
- Their curved horns can grow up to two feet long.
- They are normally found in arid environments and require little water, capable of getting water from vegetation.
- Their light brown coat helps them blend in well with their environment and is not thick or woolly due to the heat.
- **Males are easily distinguished by their larger and much thicker horns, as well as the shaggy beard on their chest.**
- Males use their horns to battle one another for dominance, especially during breeding seasons.
- Females give birth to 1-2 young after a 5½ month gestation.
- **They are adept rock climbers, native to the Atlas Mountains.**
- Alongside overhunting and habitat degradation, aoudad are vulnerable due to competition from domestic livestock. There are estimated to be 5,000-10,000 wild aoudad.
- **At Six Flags we have a bachelor herd in the Serengeti and a mixed herd with young in Tigris Asiana.**

CHECK POST 6: Kingsland

Animal to see: African lion

- *The park houses three separate lion prides which alternate in the outer exhibit daily.*
- *Though colloquially referred to as the 'king of the jungle,' lions are native to grasslands and not what we traditionally think of as jungles. The word jungle comes from the Hindi word *jangal* which means an uninhabitable place, like the arid grasslands lions call home.*

African Lion (*Panthera leo*)

Conservation Status: Vulnerable



- Lions are the **only truly social cat species, living in family groups called prides.**
 - Prides usually consist of one male with many females and their cubs, though it is not uncommon for there to be multiple males in a pride with a single dominant alpha male.
- **They are also the cat species with the greatest degree of sexual dimorphism.**
 - This means that males and females look different.
 - Along with males being larger than females, as is common for cats, males grow large manes.
- Hunting is **primarily conducted by females**, and increased hunting success is one theory as to why lions evolved to be social.
- A lion's heart is relatively small in relation to its body size when compared to other African predators like the hyena, meaning lions have poor endurance when hunting.
- Rather than exhaust their prey to catch it, lions rely on stalking their prey and quickly ambushing it using their greater numbers.
- Though hunts are predominantly conducted by females, males get to eat first, followed by females and cubs.
- The male's role in the pride is to defend it from other predators, such as leopards, wild dogs, and hyenas.
- The mane protects the lion's neck while fighting with rival males or other species.
- Male lions in the wild need to consume about 15 lb of meat a day
 - **Hunts have a success rate of only 25%, lions will typically gorge themselves and eat about 40 lb in one sitting.**
 - They have been recorded eating as much as 75 lb in one meal.
- Lions will also scavenge if the opportunity presents itself.
- **A lion's roar can be heard over 5 miles away** and can serve **to both intimidate predators and rivals as well as reunite scattered pride members.**
- Lions also communicate heavily through olfaction.
- Because of their sociality, lions often greet one another by rubbing their faces and bodies against each other.
 - This also creates a communal pride scent that can be rubbed off on trees to mark territory.

- **Male lions can sleep between 18 and 20 hours a day, while females range between 15 to 18 hours.**
- Males generally live 9-12 years while females live a little longer, usually 12-15 years.
- Female lionesses in a pride will often enter breeding season together and give birth together, even though there is no defined breeding season.
 - This enables them to share the responsibility of cub rearing.
 - Aunts will frequently care for whole groups of mixed age cubs.
- Females give birth to cubs after a gestation of only 3½ months.
- At birth cubs have brown spots which typically fade within a few months.
- When born, lions are only about the size of your fist, but at six months they may weigh up to 70 lb and by a year old, males can be 150 lb.
- A male's mane starts to show around his first birthday but will not be complete until around 3 years of age.
 - As males age, their mane tends to darken, with older males having a mostly black mane.

Conservation

- **Lions are an endangered species, currently listed as vulnerable.**
- Historically, the species was **spread throughout almost all of Africa, through southwest Asia reaching India, and even into parts of Europe.**
 - The European population went extinct 2000 years ago, and today they can only be found in sub-Saharan Africa and a single forest in India.
 - In the 1940s, lion populations were estimated at 450,000.
 - **Population has reduced by over 40% in the last 20 years, standing at less than 20,000.**
- A major threat facing lions is human conflict.
 - Indiscriminate killing is not uncommon.
 - The region in which lions are found is home to farmers with large herds of livestock, so farmers will hunt lions to prevent them from preying upon their herds.
- Though not as prevalent today, trophy hunting has affected the lion gene pool.
 - Trophy hunters would go after the largest males with the fullest manes, removing those genes from the population.
 - Today, many national parks have found that their male lions have thinner manes than their ancestors.

CHECK POST 7: Black Bear Ridge

Animals to see: Black bears

American Black Bear (*Ursus americanus*)

Conservation Status: Least Concern



- The American black bear is North America's smallest and most widely distributed bear species, ranging along the east and west coasts, into the Rockies, down into Mexico and throughout most of Canada and Alaska.
- Males generally weigh between 200-500lb, though can reach past 800lbs.
- Females are typically smaller, weighing below 400lb.
- As they are smaller than other North American bears, **black bears are adept climbers**, though their ability to climb deteriorates with age.
- Though called "black" bears, this species' coat can also be colored white, blond, light or dark brown.
- The black bear is more docile than other North American species, preferring to avoid contact with humans than aggress towards them.
 - However, black bears located near human developments often enter towns looking for food, which can lead to conflict.
- Black bears are **opportunistic omnivores, meaning they have an extremely varied diet.**
 - Depending on season and location, they will eat meat, plants, fruit, nuts, seed, fish and insects.
- While generally solitary, in areas of ample food bears will gather in groups called "sloths", with the most dominant males controlling the area with the most food.
- Living into their 20s in the wild, black bears under human care can live into their 40s.

Hibernation

- Both black and brown **bears hibernate during the winter.**
 - This is in response to limited sources of food being available during the colder season.
 - Because of this, bears which live further north tend to hibernate for longer periods of time.
- In the time leading up to hibernation, bears will gain excess body fat, which will serve as a reserve during hibernation.
- While hibernating, a bear's heart rate slows from 50 beats per minute down to 8, though their body temperature does not drop significantly.
- Though bears are inactive throughout most of the winter, they do not experience considerable loss of muscle mass or atrophy, possibly due to muscular twitching.

- Throughout hibernation, the bears do not need to eat, urinate, or defecate.
- Pregnant females will give birth while hibernating. Though they mate in the early summer, bears are capable of delaying pregnancy until the fall.
- This allows them to put off birth until midway through hibernation.
- Females will be awoken from hibernation during birth, returning to hibernation immediately after the cubs are born.
- At birth, cubs weigh under a pound and measure less than a foot
- They produce a loud, continuous humming while nursing, which is believed to help stimulate their mother's milk production.
- Born blind and deaf, cubs begin nursing immediately so that they are able to walk and leave the den at the end of their mother's hibernation.

Difference Between Black and Brown Bears



CHECK POST 8: Terra Ursus

Animals to see: European Brown Bear

The words terra and ursus are Latin for “land” and “bear” respectively, so when combined Terra Ursus means Land of Bears.

European Brown Bear (*Ursus arctos arctos*)

Conservation Status: Least Concern



- The European brown bear is a subspecies of brown bear native to much of northern Europe and Asia, with smaller fragmented populations elsewhere throughout Eurasia including Romania, Greece, Turkey, and India.
- **Due to their wide global distribution, brown bears are not considered endangered, though the fragmentation of Eurasian populations is concerning to scientists.**
- Grizzlies and European brown bears don't breed with one another because their habitats do not overlap, making them separate subspecies.
- European brown bears, on average, are smaller than grizzlies by about 100lb, weighing 550-650lb.
- Compared to black bears, brown bears are less stocky, with longer muzzles and larger shoulder humps.
- Brown bears are one of the most omnivorous animals, eating the widest variety of foods of any bears species.
- Their diet consists of less vegetative matter than black bears, and they tend to be more predatory.
- More so than black bears, brown bears avoid urbanized areas.
- Brown bears can be active at any time of day, though those closer to humans tend to function nocturnally.
- Both adult males and mothers with cubs can be highly aggressive.
- Due to having straighter, blunter claws than black bears, brown bears typically do not climb trees, though protective mothers may chase their cubs up trees in times of danger.
- Here at Six Flags, the brown bears are wired off from the roads the trucks use, due to their size. Though it appears the left and right sides of the section are separated, there is a tunnel under the road towards the end of the section connecting the two sides.

Bird Sanctuary/Conservation Area

Animals to see: white-tailed deer, red foxes, raccoons, Virginia opossum

- After the brown bear section is a **52 acres** area, designated as a **bird sanctuary and conservation area**.
- This area is **untouched by development** to allow a place in the park for **native species**.
- The area is a **wetland**, a type of habitat that can assist in **water purification and flood control**.
- Mammal species that can be found in the habitat include **white-tailed deer, red foxes, raccoons, and Virginia opossums, North America's only marsupial**.
- **Box turtles and red-eared sliders** can often be seen basking on logs in warm months, and throughout the year the sanctuary is home to many migratory bird species, often including bald eagles.



Red-eared slider



White-tailed deer



Box turtle



Virginia opossum

CHECK POST 10: Didgeridoo Pass

Animals to see: Red kangaroo, black swans, emu

The didgeridoo is an Australian wind instrument of aboriginal origin.

They are constructed out of hollowed tree trunks.

Red Kangaroo (*Macropus rufus*)

Conservation Status: Least Concern

- A full grown male red kangaroo, referred to as boomers or jacks, can stand nearly 6 feet tall with a total body length of 9 feet including the tail.
- **They are the largest kangaroo species and marsupial.**
- While called a 'red' kangaroo, only males tend to have the red-orange coat.
- Females are smaller and often have grey coats.
- A kangaroo's tail is extremely strong and thick.
- **As they hop, all of their momentum is moving forward, so the tail acts as a counterweight to help keep the animal balanced.**
- **In a single bound, a kangaroo can jump over 20 ft, and nearly 10 ft off the ground.**
- The tail also functions as an extra leg
 - When moving slowly, they will prop themselves up with their forelimbs and tail as they swing their legs forward.
- **Though not territorial, young males will fight with one another over access to females by boxing.**
 - **Generally, they will grapple with one another, though they are capable of standing up on their tail to deliver kicks.**
- Found across the Australian continent's grasslands, kangaroos have a number of adaptations for the arid climate.
- The red kangaroo is a grazer, with nearly all of its diet made up of grasses.
 - They have similar stomachs to cows and will regurgitate and chew cud.
- They are also able to go for long periods without drinking, getting water from the plants they eat.
- Females can put off pregnancy during drought. Kangaroos dig shallow holes in the shade in which to lay and cool themselves, and they will also coat their arms in saliva to facilitate evaporative cooling.



Marsupials:

- The red kangaroo is the largest living marsupial.
- **Unlike placental animals, marsupials give birth to underdeveloped offspring, which do a significant amount of growth after being born.**
- A newborn joey is born after gestating for only a month and is blind, hairless, and the size of a lima bean.

- This joey then climbs using its forearms into its mother's pouch where it will start nursing.
- It will remain inside the pouch for 6 months, at which point it is large enough to begin exploring the outside world.
- Female kangaroo are almost always pregnant. They will delay implantation of an egg until their current joey is out of the pouch, so there will not be two joeys living in the pouch at once.
- A mother is able to nurse both a newborn joey and a joey living out of the pouch at the same time, producing milk with two different compositions at the same time.

Emu (*Dromaius novaehollandiae*)

Conservation Status: Least Concern

- Emu are another member of the ratite group, which includes ostrich and rhea.
- They can reach almost 7 feet tall, sprint up to 30 mph, and take strides that are 9 feet apart.
- This is partially because they are the third largest bird in the world and also because **they are the only bird to have calf muscles.**
- They can jump up to 7 feet high when startled.
- Males and females can be hard to distinguish visually but can be told apart from the different sound they make through their inflatable neck sac. **The blue coloration on their face is similar to the blue-green color of their eggs.**
- **Their tail feathers are stiff and can be rattled by the bird to scare off predators, such as dingoes.**
- **Emu have vestigial wings, very small appendages with a clawed tip that are incapable of supporting flight.**
- Emu breed as the day becomes shorter, meaning in Australia their mating season is during our summer.
- Males do all of the incubation; during the eight weeks he may lose up to a third of his body weight.
- The first occurrence of genetically identical bird twins was discovered in the emu.
- Emu are great swimmers and don't mind taking a dip in a pond or lake.
- The name emu is not an Aboriginal word but appears to come from an old Arabic word that means "large bird."



Black Swan (*Cygnus atratus*)

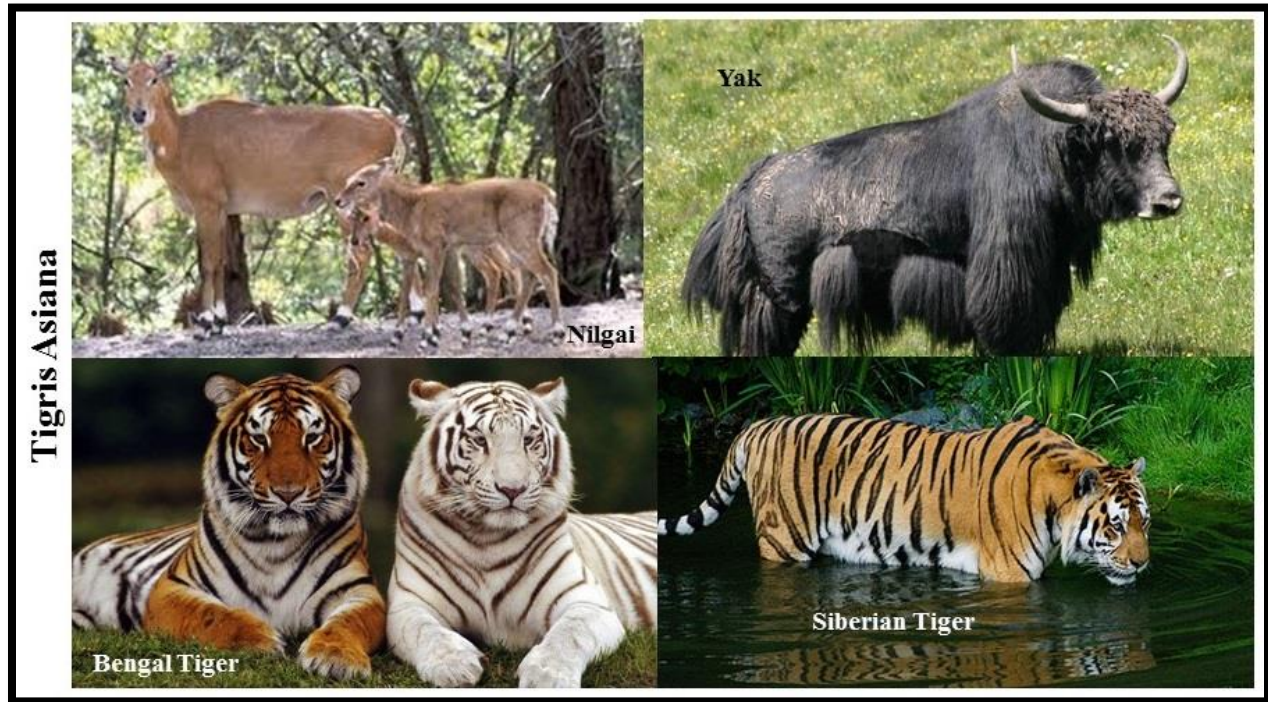
Conservation Status: Least Concern

- **These birds live their whole lives on or around water but cannot dive underwater because they are too buoyant.**
- They are a highly nomadic species found all across Australia.
- Both males and females will incubate their nest of eggs.
- They are normally found in the southern regions but will migrate north during the rainy season to raise their young.
- Black swans, like many other waterfowl, lose all their flight feathers at once when they molt after breeding, leaving them unable to fly for about a month.
- During this time, they will usually settle on large, open waters for safety.
- Male swans are called cobs, females are pens, and young are cygnets.
- **Swans have far more neck vertebrae than mammals, with 24 or 25 vertebrae.**
- **Swans, in general, have the largest eggs of any flighted bird.**



CHECK POST 11: Tigris Asiana

Animals to see:



Tiger (*Panthera tigris*)

Conservation Status: Endangered

- Tigers are the **largest living cat species**, easily identifiable by their striped coat.
- Tigers are primarily solitary, territorial animals.
 - Males will have larger home ranges, which will include the territories of multiple females.
 - Females are only receptive between 3 to 6 days at a time, which is why males will want females nearby.
 - After a 3-4 month pregnancy, females give birth to litters that range from 1 to 6, though most commonly 2 or 3.
- Though they don't use their sense of smell to hunt, tigers do communicate with one another by scent marking their territory with urine. Females in estrous will scent mark frequently to communicate their reproductive status, while males will scent mark to mark their territory.
- Unlike lions, tigers rarely settle disagreements about territory by fighting, resorting instead to posturing and threatening.



- **A tiger's roar can be heard for nearly 2 miles. Another common vocalization is called a chuff, which is a friendlier vocalization equivalent to a cat's purr.** The white spots on the backs of their ears are also used in communication and differentiation between tigers.
- Tiger prey mainly on hoofstock including deer, antelope, and boar. They are nocturnal hunters, but will hunt in daylight in the absence of humans.
- In the dark, they are able to see 6 times as well as a human.
- They are ambush predators and will rarely give chase to prey if they don't capture it within the first few bounds. They are capable, however, of sprinting up to 40 miles per hour.
- Their stripes serve as camouflage as they wait to ambush prey, easily masking tigers in high grass or areas of contrasting light and shade.
- **Tigers are confident swimmers, often chasing prey into rivers to facilitate capture.**
 - They have partially webbed toes to further aid them in the water.
- Adults can go up to two weeks without a meal, after which they can binge up to 75 lb. On average, however, they will eat between 5 lb and 15 lb a day.

Conservation

- **There are currently 6 extant tiger subspecies, all of which are endangered or critically endangered.**
- **The two primary causes for their reduced population numbers are poaching and habitat loss.**
- **Over the past 100 years, global wild tiger populations have gone from over 100,000 to under 4000, and three subspecies have gone extinct.**
 - One threat facing tigers is poaching for their bones, which are used in traditional Asian medicine.
 - They are also poached for their skin, teeth, and claws.
 - Other issues facing tigers include habitat destruction and fragmentation.
 - As tigers require large territories, the expansion of human settlement continues to encroach upon tiger habitats and breaks up adjoining territories.
 - Native to countries, like China and India, that have seen massive spikes in population and urbanization in recent decades, many of Asia's forests are being destroyed to accommodate the growing human population.

Bengal Tiger (*Panthera tigris tigris*)

Conservation Status: Endangered

- Bengal tigers live in southern Asia and are endangered with fewer than 2500 left in the wild.
- Bengal tigers are the only subspecies of tiger to have color variations.



- In addition to the typical orange with black stripes, Bengal tigers exhibit three alternative colorations, namely white with black stripes, golden tabby, and pure white.
- The most common of these variations is white tigers, animals that are white with black stripes. The white coloration is caused by a mutation affecting pigmentation, and is neither albinism nor an adaptation for snowy weather as is sometimes believed.
- Though possible in the wild, the coloration is extremely rare and wild white tigers have shorter lifespans as they are poorly camouflaged for the Indian jungle.
- Typically, white Bengals grow faster and are larger than traditionally colored Bengals.
- The other color variation found at the park is known as a golden tabby, tigers with a strawberry blonde coat and butterscotch brown stripes.
- This too is a recessive trait, similar to red hair on people.
- The fourth coloration is a stripeless white or snow white tiger. These tigers are white with barely noticeable off-white stripes. All the Bengal enclosures are on the right side of the truck, and will be the first tigers tours see.

Siberian Tiger (*Panthera tigris altaica*)

Conservation Status: Endangered

- Also known as the Amur tiger, the Siberian tiger is the **largest tiger subspecies and the largest living cat species alive today**.
- They can be 13-14 feet long and weigh over 600 lb.
- They are found further North than their cousin, the Bengal tiger, and their **larger body size is an adaptation to a colder environment**.
- A common misconception is that Siberian tigers are white since they live farther north and encounter snow more frequently, but Siberian tigers are always orange and black.



- In the 1930s the Siberian tiger population fell between 20 to 30 individuals, and while it has since improved, today there are only an estimated 360 wild Siberian tigers.

Nilgai (*Boselaphus tragocamelus*)

Conservation Status: Least Concern

- Nilgai are the **largest Asiatic** antelope and are the **most common wild animal in northern India and Eastern Pakistan**.
- The **disappearance of tigers from this region has caused a boom in Nilgai populations**.
 - They are now so common that they are causing major crop damage and have been declared a pest in some parts of India.
- The name **nilgai is Sanskrit for “blue cow” or “blue bull,” as males will darken with age**.
- Though they are becoming a pest species, the animal is rarely hunted in India due to its religious significance.
- Males have short horns which grow less than a foot. Males compete with each other by using threatening posture displays and neck wrestling, sometimes leading to both males kneeling and lunging at each other with their horns.
- **Both males and females have a coloration around the ankles similar to white gym socks**.



Yak (*Bos grunniens*)

Conservation Status: Domesticated

- The yak is a **relative of cattle native to Northern China, Russia, and Mongolia**.
- **There is a small wild population of fewer than 10,000 that is considered vulnerable to extinction but a very large domesticated population of 14 million**.
- **They are used for their milk, fur, meat, and kept as beasts of burden**.
- They have a thick coat of hair that protects them from the elements and extreme cold. They have large hooved feet.



Baboon Village

Animals to see: Olive baboons

- *The park has 1 troop of baboons.*
- *You might notice some large metal pieces in their exhibit. This is from the rollercoaster “Lightning Loops.” When it was taken down it was brought to this new home. It serves as a climbing structure for them.*
- *Most people remember baboons jumping on their cars years ago. Don’t worry, they won’t be jumping on your cars during this drive thru experience!*

Olive baboon (*Papio anubis*)

Conservation Status: Least Concern

- **Found in 25 different countries in Africa along the equator. They are considered savanna baboons but can do well in any habitat like forests, grasslands, valleys, and cliffs. This is due to their ability to find the best nutrients in their environment.**
- **Called OLIVE baboon because of their coat color. They have a square muzzle and walk on all fours.**
 - **The red rump that is a distinguishing characteristic of baboons is only present in the females. Some studies suggest the redder and more pronounced this is, the more available the female is to breed.**
 - Males are twice the size of females and weigh around 53 pounds while females weigh around 37 pounds.
 - While they are omnivores, their diet is different depending on where they live. In areas where vegetation is lush they can eat leaves and fruits. In other areas that are drier they will dig up roots and eat cacti. They will also eat eggs, birds, and something as large as a gazelle.
 - Infants are born black, skinny, and wrinkly and don’t turn the olive color until they are one year old.
 - They can live up to 30 years in their natural habitat, longer under human care.
 - The upper canines are 3 inches long which can do a lot of damage when fighting. Confrontation is avoided at all costs even when it’s for dominance.
 - Live in troops of 15-150. Females stay with their native troop their whole lives whereas males will leave once they hit sexual maturity. They will then find a new troop to join by befriending the females. After about 5 years they will move on to another group.
 - Even though they have a least concern conservation status, they are considered a crop raider in human inhabited areas.
 - Baboons are diurnal so they will be most active during the daytime.



SAVE AN ICON

In 2019 Six Flags Great Adventure released the Save an Icon initiative. The idea was to raise awareness about the African Lion and the African Elephant that you saw right here at the park. We sold collectable pins, where 100% of the profit went towards this initiative. We also took a portion of our Safari VIP tour sales and our giraffe feeding sales as well. We were able to donate \$46,000 to the Wildlife Conservation Network. We would like to thank everyone who did a Safari VIP tour, giraffe feed, or bought a pin. We couldn't have done it without you! We can now proudly say that we are partners with this awesome organization.



Find out more information about the conservation efforts of Wildlife Conservation Network by visiting their site wildnet.org.

Conservation Field Guide

Species	Classification	Wild Population	Threats	Current Status
Bison	Near Threatened	30,000 (500,00 on ranches)	Hunting, Disease	Legislation passed to preserve populations
Roosevelt Elk	Least Concern	> 500,000	N/A	Stable
Rhea	Near threatened	Unknown	Habitat loss	Population decreasing
Fallow Deer	Least Concern	> 500,000	N/A	Stable
African elephant	Vulnerable	700,000	Poaching, Habitat Loss	Conservation programs
White Rhinoceros	Near Threatened	20,000	Poaching	Reintroduction/reserve programs
Grant's Zebra	Near Threatened	> 100,000	Regional unrest	Stable
Dama Gazelle	Critically endangered	< 250	Habitat loss regional strife	Reserves, captive breeding
Southern Ground Hornbill	Vulnerable	Unknown	Habitat Loss	Population decreasing
Scimitar Horned Oryx	Extinct	< 30	Hunting, Regional unrest	25 oryx were released into the wild
Reticulated Giraffe	Vulnerable	9,000	Habitat loss	Conservation organizations are being formed
Addax	Critically Endangered	< 100	Hunting	Captive Breeding
White Tailed Gnu	Least Concern	> 20,000	N/A	Stable
Aoudad	Vulnerable	~10,000-20,000	Habitat loss	Conservation program, invasive population in Texas
African Lion	Vulnerable	<20,000	Hunting, Habitat Loss	Species Survival Plan

Conservation Field Guide

Species	Classification	Wild Population	Threats	Current Status
Red Lechwe	Near threatened	Unknown	Habitat Loss	Population decreasing
Eastern Crown Crane	Endangered	~20,00	Habitat Loss	Conservation areas
Bengal Tiger	Endangered	~2,000	Poaching, Habitat Loss	Conservation areas
Siberian Tiger	Endangered	~600	Poaching, Habitat Loss	Reintroduction areas and conservations programs

* Any animal that is not listed in the chart you may assume is classified as least concern, i.e. it is not endangered