

AYE-AYE

DOMAIN
Eukaryota

KINGDOM
Animalia

PHYLUM
Chordata

CLASS
Mammalia

ORDER
Primates

FAMILY
Daubentoniidae

GENUS
Daubentonia

SPECIES
D. madagascariensis

WHERE DO THEY HANG OUT?

Aye-ayes are found only in the tropical rainforests and deciduous forests of Madagascar, one of the world's most unique biodiversity hotspots.



A LOOK THAT'S HARD TO FORGET!



Aye-ayes have thick, dark fur with white-tipped guard hairs that can be raised to make them look twice their size. Adults grow about 15in long, with a bushy tail that exceeds their body length, and they weigh around 5-6lbs. Large, orange eyes reflect light, giving them excellent night vision and an eerie look. Their most distinctive feature is their long, skeletal middle finger, used to tap on trees and locate hidden insects.

WHAT'S ON THE MENU?

Aye-ayes are omnivores that eat fruits, nuts, fungi, and insect larvae. They use a unique "tap foraging" method, tapping on trees with their long middle finger to find hidden larvae. Once located, they gnaw through the bark with rodent-like teeth and use the same finger to fish the larvae out—much like a woodpecker, but they are the only primate to do so!



Extinct
EX

EW

Threatened
CR

EN

VU

NT

Least Concern
LC

NIGHTTIME WANDERERS

Aye-ayes are strictly nocturnal, emerging from their nests at night to hunt for food. They are solitary animals, with each individual maintaining a large territory that can cover several miles. They build spherical nests high in the trees, using leaves and branches, where they sleep during the day. Though solitary, aye-ayes may overlap in territory with others and occasionally cross paths while foraging.

AYE-AYE FAMILIES

Aye-ayes have no specific breeding season, and females can give birth at any time of the year. After a gestation period of about 172 days, the female gives birth to a single infant, which she cares for in her nest. The young aye-aye stays with its mother for up to two years, learning how to forage and survive in the trees. Aye-ayes can live up to 24 years in captivity.



THREATS TO THEIR SURVIVAL



Habitat loss



Hunting



Myths & Folklore

Aye-ayes are considered endangered due to habitat loss from deforestation, as their forest homes are being cleared for agriculture, logging, and development. In addition to habitat destruction, the aye-aye faces threats from local superstition. In some parts of Madagascar, aye-ayes are considered harbingers of bad luck and even death, and they are often killed on sight due to these beliefs.



Did you know?

5 FUN FACTS ABOUT AYE-AYES



They construct multiple nests out of leaves and branches, which they rotate among when they need to rest or hide during the day. Different animals use the same nest on different days!



Researchers believe that aye-aye comes from the Malagasy phrase "I don't know", because locals were afraid to speak the name. Very much like Harry Potter's "He-who-must-not-be-named", don't you think?



The aye-aye has a pseudo-thumb, an extra digit that helps it grip branches while it uses its other fingers for foraging.



Aye-ayes are solitary and territorial, roaming through large areas alone except during mating season.



Male territories are huge and may overlap with other males. Female territories are smaller and will overlap with at least one male, but not other females.