

ANIMAL ANECDOTES: WEEK 2

Monkey Monday

Monkey Monday: Each Monday we will be highlighting a different species of monkey that lives at the Oakland Zoo! What makes a monkey? Monkeys are “anthropoid” primates with tails!



Vervet Monkeys

Vervet monkeys, or green monkeys, are medium-sized social monkeys with olive colored fur that helps them to camouflage in the trees. They live in West Africa and communicate through body language, using facial expressions, and vocally. They even have a tiny version of language, with a distinct call for different kinds of predators that all the other vervet monkeys understand. They also have a semi-prehensile tail, meaning that they can use it for climbing and dangling from branches, but not for grasping objects.

‘Tame’ Tuesday

Each Tuesday we will be highlighting a species that lives at Oakland Zoo which is domesticated, or “tame.” What is a domesticated animal? A species that has a relationship with people and is kept as a pet or on a farm!



Guinea Hogs

Guinea hogs, or “yard pigs” are moderately-sized pigs with a coarse black coat. They were thought to have been domesticated from a breed originating in West Africa, but new DNA evidence suggests that they were domesticated from a European breed. These pigs do not exist in the wild, and are common pets and livestock in the United States. They eat a wide variety of foods including fruits and vegetables, fungus, tubers, grains, nuts, invertebrates, small vertebrates, and carrion. Despite the myth that pigs are dirty, they are actually

surprisingly clean animals due to their tendency to use the bathroom far from where they eat and nest. At the zoo, our Guinea hogs need to get sunscreen put on because their fur is sparse!

Native Wildlife Wednesday

Each Wednesday we will be highlighting a species that lives at Oakland Zoo that can also be found in the wild in California!



Western Pond Turtles

Western pond turtles are very special, being the only native freshwater turtle remaining in California. Like many other turtle species, western pond turtles lay their eggs in a hole in the ground. During times of drought, the ground is too hard to dig into so females will sometimes moisten the ground to make the digging easier using the tools she has — she pees onto the ground! And as everybody's favorite movie snowman mentioned, turtles can indeed breathe through their butt.

(Though technically, they diffuse oxygen and carbon dioxide through their cloaca, but we probably don't need to get too far into the details here).

Tropical Thursday

Each Thursday we will be highlighting a species that lives at Oakland Zoo that would be found in a tropical area in the wild! What areas are considered tropical? Ones around the equator! These areas get more direct sunlight than other areas and are typically much warmer and wetter.



Chimpanzees

Chimpanzees are one of the five great apes along with gorillas, orangutans, bonobos, and humans. We share about 98% of our genetic makeup with chimps— more DNA, even, than chimps share with gorillas! These animals can be found in Western and Central Africa in humid forests. Chimpanzees primarily feed on fruit and young leaves, although occasionally animal prey such as insects colonies and small game (monkeys, pigs, antelope) make it onto the menu. West African chimps also use wood and stone tools as hammers to open nuts. Some

chimps have even been known to use “medicine” in the wild, ingesting bitter plants with anti-parasitic properties when they have a stomach ailment!

Felidae Friday

Each Friday we will be highlighting a species that lives at Oakland Zoo from the family Felidae, which includes all cats!



Tigers

There are six different subspecies of tigers, all living in slightly different habitats. They can all be found in Southeast Asia, though they currently inhabit less than 6% of their historical range. In fact, there are currently more tigers living in captivity in the United States than there are tigers in the wild, with only 6% of those residing in institutions accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums. Tigers are the largest members of the *Felidae* family, with males capable of reaching over a dozen feet from head to tail! And despite most of their

wild and house-cat cousins staying away from water, tigers are known to be powerful swimmers with partially webbed toes.

Savanna Saturday

Each Saturday we will be highlighting a species that lives at Oakland Zoo that would be found living in an African savanna in the wild! What is a savanna exactly? A savanna is a grassy plain in tropical and subtropical regions, with few trees.



Spotted Hyenas

The spotted hyenas are the largest of four distinct species of hyenas in the world. Also known as the “laughing hyena,” these animals have very unique vocalizations. They live in very large competitive social groups headed by a matriarch, or female leader. In general, female hyenas are known to be much larger and even more aggressive than the males. Hyenas are skilled hunters but not picky eaters, so they happily munch on the leftovers from someone else’s kill, too. Either way, their jaws are incredibly strong – enough to easily

consume the bones of their meal. In fact, if you ever get a close look at hyena scat, you will probably notice how white it is! That is from all of the calcium inside the bones that they have been crunching.

Ursidae Sunday

Each Sunday we will be highlighting a species that lives at Oakland Zoo from the family Ursidae, which includes all bears!



American Black Bears

American black bears are the only bear species that currently exists in California. There are 16 different proposed subspecies throughout North America, with two of those being in this state. Despite their name, black bears can display a surprising range of coat colors, from a whitish blonde to a light cinnamon brown to true black and anything in between. Black bears in western states tend to be more on the brown end of the spectrum, which allows them to blend into the chaparral habitat where they live.. This is the only bear species whose numbers are increasing throughout virtually its entire range. While it is a common myth that black bears hibernate, really they undergo a sort of mini-hibernation called “torpor,” like most other bear species. For 3-8 of the colder months of the year their body temperature drops a mere 5-7°F, and they can still get up every once in a while to relieve themselves, grab some food, or play a little bit.

Need more? Explore all of our animals on our website at www.oaklandzoo.org/our-animals.