

ANIMAL ANECDOTES: WEEK 4

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!



Hamadryas Baboons

Hamadryas baboons are one of the largest species of monkeys and are naturally found in Ethiopia, Somalia, and Eritrea in Africa. They have large, hairless red rumps called “ischial callosities” that help with sitting comfort. Some believe that these ischial callosities may help prevent baboons’ legs from falling asleep, which can aid them in quickly escaping from predators! Hamadryas baboons were considered to be sacred in ancient Egypt as they were associated with the sun, and have even been found mummified and entombed.

‘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!



Domestic Rabbits

Rabbits are relatively new to the domestication game, with their wild ancestors coming under human control only about 1400 years ago. Since then, though, humans have bred domestic rabbits to have a huge variety of looks. The American Rabbit Breeders Association recognizes 49 official breeds while some other organizations say there are hundreds! And speaking of breeding, rabbits are quite skilled at producing offspring - or kits - all on their own. One study found that if left alone with no predators and unlimited food,

a single pregnant female rabbit could give rise to over a billion (yes, with a “b!”) rabbits within six years! Baby bunnies abound!

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!



Bald Eagles

Bald eagles get their name from the shock of white head feathers they get when fully mature (as juveniles, they are all brown!). And while we all consider the bald eagle a symbol of the American spirit, in colonial times they were more looked down upon. Benjamin Franklin even wrote about them being “too lazy to fish for themselves,” when in fact bald eagles are simply efficient survivors who don’t waste energy hunting if there is dead meat available. They are also one of the United States’ most inspiring success stories. Bald eagle numbers

plummeted to fewer than 1000 in the 1960s because the man-made pesticide DDT caused their eggs’ shells to become weak and crack during incubation. Thanks to policy change and nation-wide conservation efforts, though, their population has rebounded so much that now they are listed as a species of Least Concern..

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.



Poison Dart Frogs

Poison Dart Frog is not actually a single species but instead how we refer to a group of frogs with shared characteristics. These over-100 species live in tropical Central and South America and can contain an incredibly potent toxin that can cause illness or death in anything that eats them. These frogs are typically very brightly colored - a strategy that lets would-be predators know that it is a high-risk snack. The poison in a poison-dart frog is surprisingly not something they come with naturally! Instead, they have to get the chemicals

from ants and termites they eat. So under human care, poison dart frogs are not actually poisonous because they don’t eat those dangerous insects!

Felidae Friday

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



Jaguar

Jaguars are the most massive of the cats in the Americas, with the larger males easily reaching weights around 200 pounds. At first glance they look similar to their closest relative, the African leopard, but they are stockier with shorter legs and more muscular builds than their cousins. Jaguars are also a rarity among cats in that they are excellent swimmers. The bite force they generate with their powerful jaws is one of the best in the animal kingdom. This enables jaguars to hunt in a unique way, by biting through the skull of their prey (peccary and deer, for example) and piercing the animal's brain directly!

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.



African Elephants

African elephants are the most massive land animals alive on Earth today. Male bull elephants can sometimes top 13,000 pounds and stand up to 13 feet tall at the shoulder. In fact, they are so massive that they have no true natural predators. Even when elephants are younger and more vulnerable, these intelligent and cooperative animals work together to protect the offspring in their group from danger. Both males and females of this species can grow tusks, which can reach 6 feet in length and are used as additional protection. African elephant ears are massive, around 6 feet at full size.- They are also quite thin and filled with a spiderweb of blood vessels, which helps these creatures to cool down rapidly in the intense savanna sun. Conveniently, their ears are shaped like the continent of Africa!

Scaley Sunday

Each Sunday we will be highlighting a species that lives at Oakland Zoo from the class Reptilia, whose signature features are the scales covering their bodies!



Black Throated Monitors

The Black-Throated Monitor is native to the dry, grassy areas of southeastern Africa. Like other types of monitor lizard, black-throated monitors have long claws, a long and powerful tail, a long neck, and a forked tongue that is used for smelling both food and danger in their surroundings. Out of all of the lizard species on the continent, black-throated monitors are the heaviest-bodied, weighing in at 60 pounds maximum and reaching up to 6 feet in length. That is the length of an

average human when they are laying flat on their back!

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