



RED-BELLIED LEMUR

PRIMATES

Family: Lemnridae

Genus: *Eulemur*

Species: *rubriventer*



Range: eastern rainforest zone of Madagascar

Habitat: dense evergreen vegetation, with a canopy of 82 to 115 ft

Niche: cathemal, arboreal, primarily frugivorous

Wild diet: fruit, flowers and leaves with some invertebrates especially millipedes

Zoo diet:

Life Span: (Wild) 20 - 25 years
(Captivity)

Sexual dimorphism: sexually dichromatic - males are reddish-brown all over, females have creamy white bellies

Location in SF Zoo: Lemur Forest

APPEARANCE & PHYSICAL ADAPTATIONS:

The red-bellied lemur is medium sized with a long dense chestnut brown coat. It is distinguished by patches of white skin below its eyes, giving rise to a "teardrop" effect, particularly conspicuous in the male. They do not have ear tufts but have thickened fur around their ears. Ventrally, the male is lighter and redder in hue, while his tail, muzzle and head are black. The male has scent glands on the top of his head. The female's dorsal area and tail resemble the male, whereas the ventral fur is creamy white in color.

They have a horizontal posture, which is suited to its predominantly quadrupedal mode of transportation throughout all levels of the forest. Fingertips are broad and padded to provide sure grip on branches. Semi-opposable thumbs are present along with a grooming claw on the second toe of the hind foot. The long fox-like snout indicates a great reliance on smell for gathering food and information. They have a grooming comb.

Weight: 3.5 to 5.3 lb
HRL: 13.4 to 15.7 in
TL: 16.9 – 20.8 in (~ 20% > HRL)

STATUS & CONSERVATION

This lemur species is designated as vulnerable according to the IUCN Red List. It is listed as endangered by USDI and are on appendix 1 of CITES. Their decline is due to rapid loss of their rainforest habitat from slash-and-burn agriculture in Madagascar. *Eulemer ribriventer* is considered the rarest of the *Eulemer* species.

COMMUNICATION AND OTHER BEHAVIOR

Some vocal communication and also chemical communication. Males use their prominent forehead scent gland to help mark territories. Facial expressions and body postures are some of the visual signals while tactile communication, through grooming, mating, play, and aggression, also occurs.

Red-bellied lemurs form small family groups of two to six typically consisting of the mated pair and their offspring. They are one of the few lemur species to form monogamous pair bonds.

Females are dominant over males and lead the group in foraging. Females have preferential access to food and chose their own mates. Red-bellied lemurs do not appear to be territorial. Grooming is an important way of maintaining social cohesion within the group. Lemurs use their lower incisors as a comb to groom troop members.

Red-bellied lemurs employ a sentinel to keep watch for predators. If a bird of prey or some other predator is detected, the sentinel will utter several low grunts. The other members of the group will either freeze for periods up to 15 minutes or they will take cover.

COURTSHIP AND YOUNG

Mating is extremely seasonal, occurring from May through July. Single young are born in September and October, which coincides with maximum fruit availability. For the first 2 weeks of life, mother nurses and carries the infant. After that, the males frequently carry their young. For the first four weeks, young are carried on their parent's belly and afterwards it rides on their back. Young are equally cared for by both parents from 2 weeks to 5 weeks of age. After 35 days, the female stops carrying her young but the male may continue until about 100 days.

Estrous: seasonally polyestrous	
Gestation: 127 days	Sexual Maturity: 2 years
# of Mammae: 1 pair	Weaning Age: 135 days
# of Young: 1 (twins are not rare however)	Weight at birth: 60-70 g

MISCELLANEOUS

The red-bellied lemur lives sympatrically with four other *Eulemur* species: in the extreme north of its range, the white-headed lemur *E. albifrons*; at mid-range, the common brown lemur *E. fulvus*; and in its southern range, the Red-fronted Brown Lemur *E. rufus* and the Gray-headed Lemur *E. cinereiceps*.

Red-bellied lemurs drool on the toxic millipedes before they eat them, which may help to neutralize the toxins. Red-bellied lemurs, as well as other lemur species, may also eat soil.

Sources:

Walker's Mammals of the World 6th edition © 1999, R. Nowak p. 517 - 521

Mammals of Madagascar © 2007, Nick Garbutt p.153 – 154

<http://lemur.duke.edu/red-bellied-lemur-fact-sheet/>

http://animaldiversity.ummz.umich.edu/accounts/Eulemur_rubriventer/

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