



Hippotomus amphibius

Common name: **Common Hippopotamus**Latin name: **Hippotomus amphibius**Local name: **القرتية**

ECOLOGY

Type:

Wild

Role in Ecosystem:

Hippos help maintain river channels and move soil, which creates habitats for other species.

HABITAT

Hippos live along rivers and lakes throughout sub-saharan Africa.



Food

Herbivore

Hippos feed on land plants. They are nocturnal feeders, as the temperature drops and they can leave the water to graze.



Movement and Communication

Communication:

Hippos make loud honks, which can be heard from a mile away. They also use body language to communicate with each other.

Movement:

Hippos spend the days submerged in water, due to the heat and their lack of sweat glands. They come out of the water at night in order to feed.

Since they are too heavy to swim, they instead walk on the bottom of the body of water. Adult hippos can hold their breath underwater for up to 5 minutes.

On land, hippos can run at speeds up to 45 km/hr.



Social Habits

Social

Hippos live in herds of up to 20 individuals. They are comprised of females, their young, and one dominant male.

Hippos are very territorial and males will attack other animals that wander into their area, fighting using their large teeth.



Reproduction

Viviparous

Hippos breed all-year round, but the birth rates are highest during the wet season.

Gestation period lasts up to 234 days. Hippo calves weigh between 23-50 kg, and are usually born under water and must be able to immediately push themselves to the surface to breathe. The young will stay with their mother for around 7 to 8 years.

Male hippos are sexually mature at seven-and-a-half years of age and females at nine years of age.



Attributes



Appearance:

Hippos have a large head, torso and short legs. Its thick skin is waterproof and is brown with pink on some parts. Its eyes, ears and nostrils are on the top of its head and snout, which helps the animal stay almost completely immersed under water. Hippos have long canine and incisor teeth, which can get as long as 50 cm and 40 cm respectively.

Size:

Males: 1.5 m at shoulder and up to 5 m long.

Females: 1.4 m at shoulder and up to 4.3 m long.

Weight:

Males: 1600-4500 kg Females: 1300 - 1500

Lifespan:

40 years in the wild, 50 years in captivity.

INTRODUCTION

The hippopotamus is a large, semi-aquatic mammal characterized by its large torso and head, short leg and long teeth.

Hippos live around rivers and lakes, as they spend their days in the water and come out at night to graze.

Hippos can be dangerous, but they have been hunted for centuries for their canine teeth.

In Sudan, hippos are found in the Nile and its tributaries.

LIVELIHOODS AND CULTURE

Human interaction

Hippos have been known to attack humans and boats in their vicinity to protect their territory.

Hippos have been hunted by humans since ancient times for their meat, fat, skin, and tusk-like teeth.

Cultural value

A popular children's legend pictures the hippopotamus as a great beast which comes out of the Nile, sings songs to entice goats and other livestock and then devours them.

A hippopotamus wandered into Khartoum in the early 2000s, inciting panic. It was killed by the locals, but the poet Hashim Siddig composed a poem lamenting the creature and wishing the locals had more tolerance.

Cultural expression

قرنتية ... ما غواصة روسية

قرنتية ..

لا دبابية يرمانية .

لا جاسوسة مندسوسة .. لا غواصة روسية

A poem by Hashim Siddig mourning a hippo after being excuted for merely appearing in an area inhibited by humans

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THREATS

Hippos are listed as vulnerable.

They are threatened by habitat loss, climate change and hunting.

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