

African Pygmy Goat (Domestic) (*Capra hircus*)

Habitat and Distribution: African pygmy goats originated in the Cameroon region of West Africa.

Size: 18-20 inches tall, 40-100 pounds

Wild Diet: Pygmy goats are herbivores and prefer to browse rather than graze.

Predators: Possibly large African carnivores

Life Span: 8-12 years

Reproduction: After a gestation period of approximately 21 weeks, twins are usually born. Pygmy goats may reach sexual maturity at only six months.

Behavior: Pygmy goats tend to make good pets because they are mild mannered and affectionate. They are herd animals and establish a hierarchy by continually testing each other. Aggressive displays rarely result in injury. They can stand on their hind legs to reach high branches that they wish to browse on. These goats have hair that grows between their hooves which gives added traction when climbing, even on smooth surfaces.

Conservation Connection: Secure

Interesting Facts: Humans domesticated pygmy goats approximately 7500 years ago. They were first exported from Africa to zoos in Sweden and Germany where they were displayed as “exotic animals.” Pygmy goats were reportedly first shipped to the U.S. in 1959. They resemble a barrel on legs, and are described as being “heavy boned”. Their straight hair is usually medium-long in length, and varies in thickness based upon the seasons and climate. Body color is grey, black, white, caramel, or any combination thereof. Both sexes do have horn, although the horns of females are usually shorter and straighter than those of the males.

