

Meerkats at Fota Wildlife Park!



Welcome to Fota Wildlife Park!



- Fota Wildlife Park was established in 1983.
- Our aim is to help conserve animals across the globe through Conservation, Education and Research!
- The Wildlife Park is a charity and a not for profit organisation.
- By visiting Fota Wildlife Park, you are playing a part in helping to conserve the world's endangered wildlife!

Where in the word do you find meerkats?



- Meerkats are suricates (a small, burrowing South African carnivore) and belong to the civet and mongoose family.
- Meerkats live in southern Africa, including South Africa, Botswana, Zimbabwe and Mozambique. They live in dry, open plains, savannas and grasslands!



Fast Facts.....



Meerkats primarily eat insects, such as grubs and termites, but will also eat small vertebrates, eggs and some plant matter.



Meerkats are diurnal and spend most of their active time foraging, basking in the sun, and grooming.



In the wild, breeding generally takes place during the warm, rainy season—from August through March when food is most abundant—but may occur throughout the year. Females are pregnant for 11 weeks. They have two to five offspring in a litter.



Meerkats live in groups that can include as many as 30 individuals, although the average pack size is around ten to 15 individuals. Groups are called mobs, and each mob may consist of up to three families living together. Each family group consists of a breeding pair and their offspring.



Hawks, eagles, snakes and jackals are the main predators of meerkats in the wild!



Meerkats are estimated to survive for five to 15 years in the wild; the maximum lifespan recorded in captivity is 20.6 years.

What adaptations does a Meerkat have for survival?

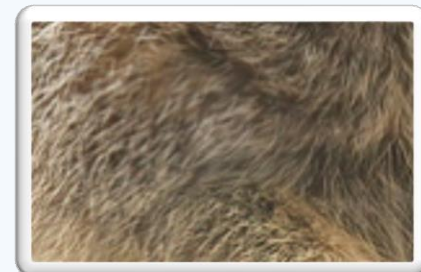


Dark patches around their eyes help by reducing the glare of the sun!



Sharp teeth to eat prey

The colour of the fur helps to camouflage them in their desert surroundings



Sharp claws are used for digging burrows, catching prey and climbing

On the lookout.....



The upright posture of a meerkat sentry is a serious job! As jackals, eagles and falcons often have meerkats on the menu, it's essential that the mob has someone on duty to warn of approaching danger! Meerkats take turns guarding the burrow and there is ALWAYS a sentry on duty. Rival mobs can often raid burrows and will kill any babies they find.

When a meerkat spots danger, it alerts all of the others with a bark or whistle. Different calls can identify the danger as coming from land or air. When the alarm is raised, meerkats will run to the nearest burrow called a BOLT HOLE.

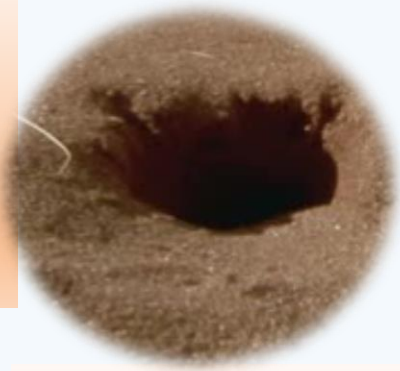
Thousands of boltholes can exist within a meerkat's territory!



Did you know?



Unlike most animals that burrow, meerkats have several burrows ready to live in! They will often move one to the next on a regular basis!



Meerkats have a special clear membrane that covers and protects their eyes when digging.



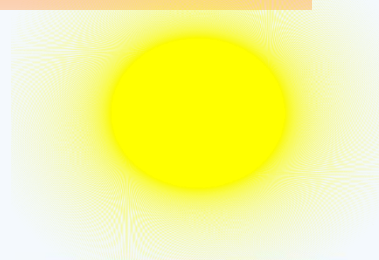
Meerkats have scent pouches below their tails. These pouches are used to scent mark their territory!



Meerkats will act as a group to kill snakes and chase off approaching predators.



Meerkats enjoy sunbathing in the early morning sun!



The world's most famous meerkat?

"Ah, you're an outcast! That's great, so are we!"

—Timon, alongside Pumbaa, to Simba!



Timon the meerkat first appeared alongside a warthog named Pumbaa in Disney's 1994 animated film *The Lion King*.

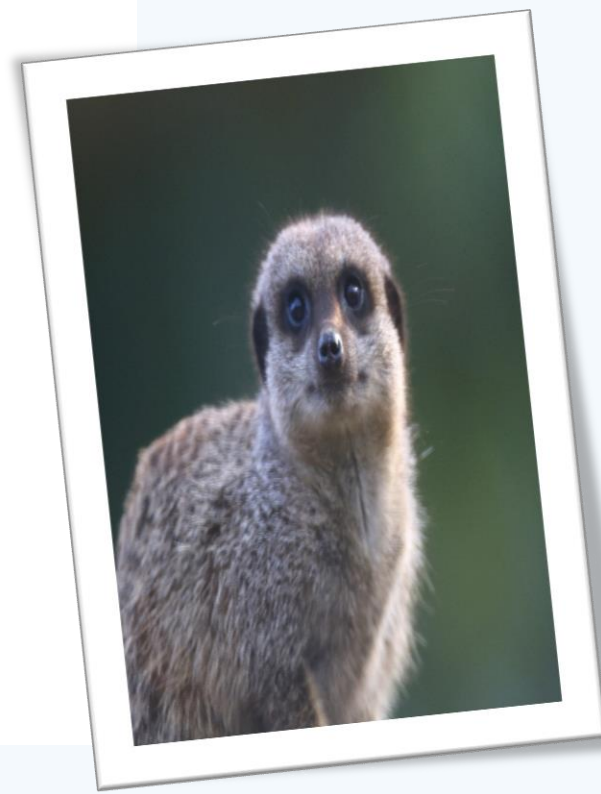
Can you spot the difference between Pictures A & B?



Meerkat Madness!

A	H	S	F	O	A	S	U	M	D	C	T	R	F	T
V	T	Z	B	F	F	I	E	E	G	A	U	S	K	G
R	K	O	K	F	R	L	A	T	K	Z	M	K	S	E
R	A	P	F	S	I	K	C	R	I	O	K	P	R	N
N	B	Q	X	P	C	A	E	I	N	M	X	I	Q	I
D	R	J	J	R	A	E	O	G	T	O	R	W	R	H
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C	N	C	W	G	S	D	E	L	G	A	E	D	B	U
Z	G	C	U	E	K	H	I	B	S	K	C	U	Q	S
I	N	S	E	C	T	S	L	U	M	R	R	B	D	C
U	W	Z	A	J	M	J	D	B	R	R	J	E	O	Y
I	T	R	M	V	B	G	P	S	O	N	M	O	O	D
B	U	S	K	O	G	J	Q	W	A	M	A	O	F	S
C	P	P	M	W	G	T	U	Q	A	F	C	L	T	R

Can you find the words below in our Meerkat madness wordsearch?



- Africa
- Eagle
- Insects
- Mongoose
- Sunshine
- Burrow
- Food
- Meerkat
- Offspring
- Termites
- Diurnal
- Fota
- Mob
- Predator

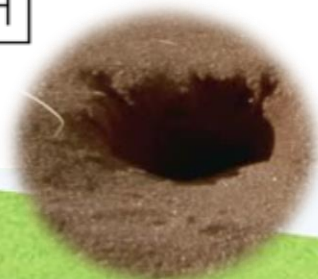
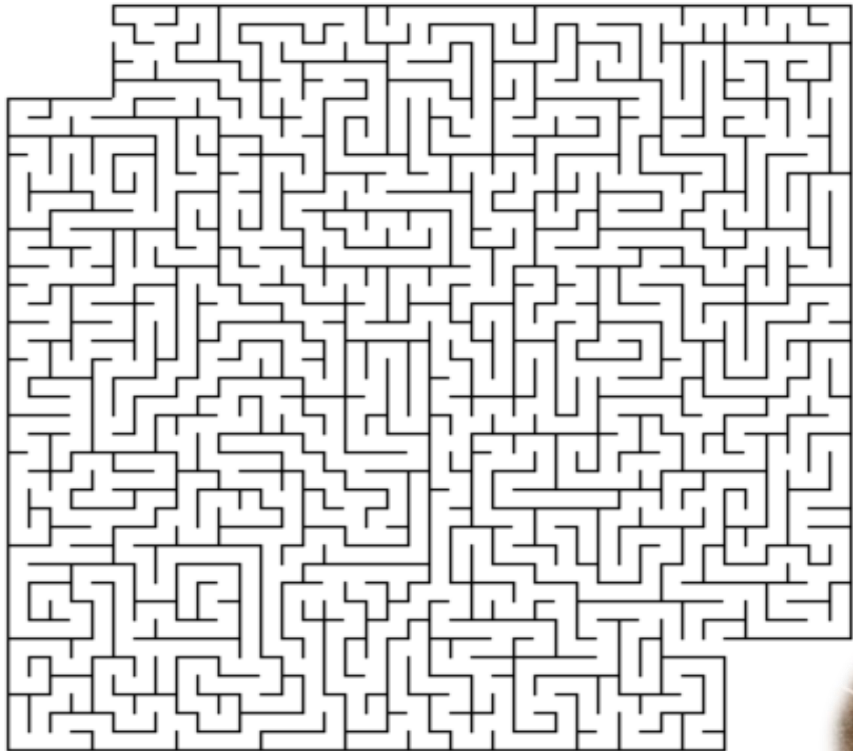
Did you Know?

Despite living in the desert unbelievably meerkats do not need extra water in their diets. They get all the moisture they need from the insects and grubs they eat.

Can you help our meerkat find his way home?



Meerkat Madness



Meet our mob.....

Fota Wildlife Park is currently home to four meerkats – two males (Bruce & Ned) and two females (Bertha & Ivy). All four meerkats share their enclosure with our Colobus Monkey Troop!



Meerkat conservation & threats.....

Meerkats are currently listed as **Least Concern** by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). It is present in several large and well-managed protected areas in Africa, including the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park.

Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park is one of the largest conservation areas in the world. Kgalagadi means “great thirst” and transfrontier means “across a border.” Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park is part of the Kalahari. It lies in the northwestern part of South Africa and the southwestern part of Botswana, across the border between the two countries.



Did you Know?

The area of Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park is 14,668 square miles (37,991 square kilometers). It is nearly twice as big as Kruger National Park!



Learning at Fota Wildlife Park.....

If you would like to learn more about wildlife.....why not book an educational tour with our education department. Each year our skilled team of educators teach in excess of 19,000 students in the areas of conservation & ecology. We welcome students of all ages all year round!

We hope to see you soon!

Contact: education@fotawildlife.ie
Or (021) 4812678 ext 206
For more details!

