

Red Ruffed Lemur

Varecia rubra



Class: *Mammalia*

Order: *Primates*

Family: *Lemuridae*

Characteristics: The red ruffed lemur gets its name from its long rust red colored fur covering most of the body. They have a patch of white fur on the nape of the neck while the face, hands, feet, belly, and tail are black ([Encyclopedia of Life](#)). Red ruffed lemurs are large in size at about 2 feet of body length and 1.5 feet of tail. Females are usually larger than the males. The red ruffed lemurs weigh 7-8 pounds. ([Animal Diversity](#))

Behavior: Lemurs remain in the trees, rarely descending to the rainforest floor. They live in family groups of 2-16 individuals that are mostly female. ([Maryland Zoo](#)) Red ruffed lemurs are awake during the day. Annually, ruffed lemurs spend an average of 28% of their time feeding, 53% resting, and 19% traveling with females resting less and feeding more than males. ([Primate Info Net](#)) The lemurs spend time socializing by grooming each other and vocalizing. They use at least 12 different **calls** to **communicate** with each other.

Reproduction: Female red ruffed lemurs build well-hidden nests high up in the trees. They usually give birth in the spring after a 102-day gestation. Red ruffed lemurs give birth to litters of up to six infants, but 2-3 is more common. When they are born, the infants cannot even grasp on to the mother. The infants will leave the nest after 1-2 weeks. The infant mortality rate in red ruffed lemurs is very high with only 35 percent surviving past 3 months of age. ([Duke Lemur Center](#))

Diet:

Wild: Mostly fruit, nectar, and pollen. Sometimes leaves and seeds
Zoo: Fruits, vegetables, greens, and leaf eater biscuits

Conservation: According to [IUCN Redlist](#), the red ruffed lemur is critically endangered. The population has been reduced by over 80 percent over the last 24 years. The two major threats to the population are illegal logging in the area and hunting. These lemurs are part of the SSP in captivity.

FYI: -Red ruffed lemurs are the largest member of the lemur family.

-Since humans arrived on Madagascar, at least 15 species of lemur have gone extinct! ([Woodland Park Zoo](#))

-The Malagasy people of Madagascar believed lemurs contained the souls of their ancestors and therefore are considered sacred ([San Diego Zoo](#)).



Range & Habitat:

They can only be found in a small portion of Northeast Madagascar. They are only found in tropical, moist, lowland forest.



Lifespan: up to 20 years in captivity, 15-20 years in the wild.

Special Adaptations: They have a specialized claw on the second toes of their hind feet for brushing through long fur.

IUCN Conservation Status:
Critically Endangered

