

The Hippopotamus

Touted for their size and aggressiveness, the hippopotamus is considered one of the most dangerous animals in Africa. The hippo is responsible for more human fatalities in Africa than any other large animal. It's estimated that approximately 2,900 people are killed by these mammals annually. That being said though, the females are very attentive and loving to their young. But oh my gored... just don't get between them and their calf! The IUCN lists the African hippo as Vulnerable. This is due to habitat destruction and climate change.



The Stats...

Scientific Name: Hippopotamus amphibius

Weight: Male: Up to 9,900+ lbs.

Length: Up to 17 feet

Height: Up to 4.9 feet, at the shoulder

Lifespan: Up to 50 years

- 1.) Hippopotamuses give birth in water.
- 2.) The closest relatives of hippos are cetaceans like whales, dolphins, and manatees.
- 3.) Hippos might look a little on the chubby side, but they are capable of outrunning a human. A hippo can run up to 19 mph!
- 4.) The bite strength of a hippo is up to 2,000 lbs. per square inch!
- 5.) A gathering of hippos is known as a pod, herd, dale, or bloat.
- 6.) A male hippo is called a bull and a female is called a cow. A baby is called a calf.
- 7.) A hippopotamus will spend its lifetime eating almost exclusively aquatic grass. They consume about 90 lbs. of grass a night.

Did you know...?

The name hippopotamus means river horse.

- 8.) There are 5 known hippopotamus subspecies.
- 9.) Hippos only live in Africa.
- 10.) A Hippopotamus can open its mouth almost 180 degrees!

Did you know...?

Hippos sleep fully submerged. They automatically float to the surface every 5 minutes, while still asleep, to breathe.

- 11.) They can hold their breath for up to 5 minutes.
- 12.) These beasts secrete a pinkish sweat that covers their bodies. This acts both as a sunscreen and a disease repellent.
- 13.) Hippos mate every 2 years and they do so in the water.
- 14.) The hippo is polygamous (males mate with several females) and the male can mate with up to 10 females a season.

The Questions...

1.) How many lives are lost, annually, as a result of hippos?

2.) What is the IUCN status of hippopotamuses?

3.) How much can a hippo weigh?

4.) How fast can a hippopotamus run?

5.) There are how many subspecies of hippopotamus?

6.) What is the bite strength of a hippo?

7.) They can hold their breath for how long?

8.) Hippopotamuses only live in Africa. True or False.

9.) Hippos sleep underwater. So, how do they breathe?

10.) A hippo's sweat is pink. True or False.

11.) How many pounds of aquatic grass are eaten each night?

12.) What are males, females, and babies called?

13.) The name hippopotamus means...