

# The Maned Three-Toed Sloth

The maned three-toed sloth is the largest known member of the three-toed sloth family and hails only from the Atlantic coastal rainforests of Brazil. These sloths get their name from the mane of black hair that runs from their neck and over their shoulders. They prefer evergreen forests, semi-deciduous forests, and secondary forests that are hot and typically have no dry season. With the threats of habitat destruction at the hands of agriculture and the logging industry, vehicle strike (being hit by vehicles), hunting, and trapping, these creatures are listed as Vulnerable by the IUCN. Their numbers are also decreasing.



## The Stats...

Scientific name: *Bradypus torquatus*

Weight: Up to 22 lbs.

Length: Up to 2.5 feet

Lifespan: Up to 12 years

- 1.) These sloths are Diurnal (active during the day).
- 2.) Even though they are diurnal (active during the day), they spend the night and most of the day asleep. This is due to the low quality of nutrition they get from their diet.
- 3.) The maned sloth, like all sloths, has very low muscle mass, in comparison to other mammals their size.
- 4.) Venturing to the ground is dangerous, so they only do so once a week to defecate (go to the bathroom) and to switch trees (when they can't just reach the branches of a neighboring tree).
- 5.) When faced with a Predator, they either lay motionless or can slash with their sharp claws.
- 6.) They feast exclusively on tree and liana leaves. These critters have a preference for younger tree leaves as they are softer and easier to digest. Liana leaves are tougher to process, but are still resorted to, at times.
- 7.) The majority of their breeding occurs from February – April. But they are able to breed year-round.

## *Did you know...?*

*Their ground speed clocks in at only around .15 mph.*

- 8.) Maned sloths are so adept at climbing trees that they eat, sleep, and even breed while hanging from tree branches. Thus, making them strictly Arboreal (spend their lives in trees). Sloths have even been found hanging from tree branches after death.
- 9.) Females undergo up to a 6-month Gestation (pregnancy) that yields a single baby.
- 10.) Babies weigh in at 11 ounces and begin taking solid food at around 2 weeks. They are weened by 2 – 4 months.
- 11.) The primary predators of maned sloths are jaguars, ocelots, and harpy eagles. All of which are sight hunters that rely on movement to detect their prey. So the slow movements of these sloths help keep them relatively safe.

## *Did you know...?*

*The sloth's fur is used by insects as a mobile micro-ecozone. Insects like biting and blood-sucking flies and mosquitoes, sandflies, triatomine bugs, lice, ticks, mites, moths, and cockroaches can all be found among the sloth's fur.*

- 12.) As is the case with all sloths, their fur grows backwards, from their stomach to their back. Not the other way around, like other mammals. This aids in directing rainwater down and away from the sloth.
- 13.) Their name comes from how many actual toes they have on their hind limbs.
- 14.) Like all sloths, the maned three-toed sloth is an excellent swimmer and actually moves faster while in the water.
- 15.) They move so slowly that green algae grows on their fur.

## *The Questions...*

1.) What is the IUCN status of these sloths?

2.) How much does a maned three-toed sloth weigh?

3.) Why do sloths sleep so much and move so slow?

4.) Sloths relieve themselves how often?

5.) What are 4 things sloths have been seen doing in trees?

6.) What do these sloths eat?

7.) Why are they called maned and three-toed?

8.) How long is their gestation?

9.) Can sloths swim?

10.) Sloths move so slow that algae can grow on their fur. True or False

11.) What is the average ground speed of these sloths?

12.) Name the creatures found in a sloth's fur.

13.) When faced with a predator, what do maned three-toed sloths do?