

Japanese Macaque



Scientific Name:
Macaca fuscata

Range:
Japan

Habitat:
Forests in the highlands and mountains

Average Size:
Body Length: 22 inches
Weight: 22 pounds

Lifespan:
About 30 years

Diet:
Wild: Seeds, roots, buds, fruit, invertebrates, berries, leaves, eggs, fungi, bark and cereal

Zoo: Monkey biscuits, various produce, eggs

Reproduction:
Gestation:
170 days

Litter size:
One infant

Appearance:
These quadrupedal monkeys have long, brownish gray fur on the body. The face is nearly hairless and is bright pink as adults.

Predators:
Large raptors, carnivores and humans

Population Status:
Threatened



Species Survival Plan



About the Animal

Japanese macaques, or 'snow monkeys' live as far north as 41 degrees latitude, farther north than any other primate except man.

Troops of macaques have a distinct 'pecking order' that is matrilineal (dependent upon the rank of the mother). Females will stay with their birth troop—males will leave when they reach sexual maturity.

Japanese macaques are often studied to learn more about social behavior and primate 'culture'. They are social and

intelligent creatures, capable of learning and passing on what they learned to younger generations. For example, researchers studying a wild troop of macaques placed sweet potatoes on a beach to encourage the animals to come out into the open. The animals came, and one female took her potato to the water and washed the sand off. Soon other macaques learned how to wash their food from this female. After several years, nearly all the macaques, including the very young, had learned how to wash their food. Researchers also discovered the troop preferred to wash the potatoes in salt water rather than fresh – salt enhanced the flavor.

The population of the primates is declining due to the cutting of forests across the Japanese Islands.

Mating and Reproduction

Reproduction is seasonal, with a single infant produced. The infant initially clings to the mother's belly. As it grows larger, it will begin to ride on her back.

Because macaques are very social animals, the entire troop shares the responsibility of raising young.

Amazing Information

Japanese Macaques are the only animal besides humans and raccoons to learn to wash their food before eating it.

Some macaques will actually make snowballs during the winter as a fun, social activity.



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