

ALTINA WILDLIFE PARK

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FACTSHEET



SPOTTED HYENA

Scientific Name:
Crocuta crocuta

Habitat: Spotted Hyena are found in Africa in countries such as Chad, Sudan, Angola, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. They prefer grasslands inhabited by their herbivorous (plant-eating) prey, such as antelope and wildebeest. They also occupy woodlands and semi-deserts and prefer to sleep in dens.

Description: Spotted Hyena can weigh up to 70kg but average between 45-55kg with the females being slightly larger than the males. Their shoulder height measures between 80 and 90cms. Their coats are rough and short and are sandy, tan, reddish or greyish brown in colour with black spots, which gradually lightens with age. They have dark faces, short black bushy tails and have a very strong build, thick neck and powerful jaws. The sloping back, caused by front legs that are longer than the hind legs, allows for long-distance pursuit of prey. The neck and back are also covered with a short mane of hair that can be raised to make the Hyena seem larger.

Status: Lower Risk/Conservation Dependent.

Interesting facts:

- **Diet:** Spotted Hyena are carnivores and although they scavenge off other predators such as lion, wild dogs, leopards etc they are in fact superb hunters. They prey on animals several times their size, including gazelles, antelopes, wildebeests, zebras and even the young of giraffe, hippos, and rhino, as well as reptiles & domestic livestock.
- **Group Structure:** Hyenas live in clans of as many as 80 members, ruled by a dominant (alpha/matriach) female. Daughters inherit their mothers' status. Males are submissive to all females and to the dominant female's offspring.
- **Reproduction:** Breeding occurs once a year with the alpha female having a gestation period of 120 days and then giving birth to 1 or 2 cubs that are totally black in colour.
- The Spotted Hyena female has genital organs that resemble that of the male thus making these animals hard to sex at first glance.
- **Lifespan:** 25 years in the wild and up to 40 years in captivity.