

## Species Fact Sheet



### MAMMALS

<http://www.peoriazoo.org/mammals.html>

## Slender Tailed Meerkat

*Suricata suricatta*

**Peoria Zoo Exhibit** Historic Entry Building

<http://www.peoriazoo.org/exhibits.html>

**Habitat:** Underground burrows on sandy plains that are covered in scrub grasses.

**Range:** Botswana and South Africa in the Kalahari Desert

**Activity Cycle:** Diurnal— active during the day

**Size:** Weighs approximately 2 pounds. The total body length is 10-14 inches with the tail adding about 7 inches.

**Social Structure:** Live in mobs, gangs or clans of about 20-30 individuals. Meerkats forage in a group with one “sentry” on guard watching for predators while the others search for food. Only the alpha pair in the group are supposed to breed. The alpha female has babies and the other female meerkats take care of them. If any other females have babies, they will try to sneak them in with the alpha females babies.

**Distinguishing Features:** Mostly brown throughout the body with large black eyes and sharp claws. The black rings around the eyes work like sunglasses, helping to block the sun as they look out over the desert.

**Diet:** Primarily insectivores but also eat lizards, snakes, scorpions, spiders, plants, eggs, small mammals, millipedes, centipedes and small birds.

**Life Span:** 12-14 years

### ***Did you know?***

***They are immune to the very strong venom of the scorpions of the Kalahari Desert***