

Animal species of this issue

Water buffalo (*Bubalus bubalis*)



Kingdom: Animalia & Phylum: Chordata & Class: Mammalia & Order: Artiodactyla & Family: Bovidae & Subfamily: Bovinae & Tribe: Bovini & Genus: *Bubalus* & Species: *B. bubalis*

The **water buffalo** or **domestic Asian water buffalo** (*Bubalus bubalis*) is a large bovine animal, frequently used as livestock in southern Asia, and also widely in South America, southern Europe, north Africa, and elsewhere.

Buffalo are used as draft, meat, and dairy animals. Their dung is used as a fertilizer and as a fuel when dried. In Chonburi, Thailand, and in South western region of Karnataka, India, there are annual water buffalo races known as Kambala. A few have also found use as pack animals carrying loads even for Special Forces.

Adult Water Buffalo range in size from 400 to 900 kg for the domestic breeds, while the wild animals are nearly 3 m long and 2 m tall, weighing up to 1,200 kg; females are about two-thirds this size.

River buffalo are usually black and have long curled horns, whereas swamp buffalo can be black or white, or both, with gently curved horns. The largest recorded horns are just under 2 meters long.

Animal species of this issue

The Greater Cane Rat (*Thryonomys swinderianus*)



Kingdom: Animalia & Phylum: Chordata & Class: Mammalia & Order: Rodentia & Family: Thryonomyidae & Genus: *Thryonomys* & Species: *T.swinderianus*

The **Greater Cane Rat** (*Thryonomys swinderianus*) is one of two species of cane rats, a small family of African hystricognath rodents. It inhabits Africa, south of the Saharan Desert. The cane rat lives by reedbeds and riverbanks.

Cane rats can grow about two feet long in the longest individuals and weighs a little less than 19 lb (8.6 kg). It has rounded ears, short nose, and coarse bristly hair. Its forefeet are smaller than its hindfeet and supports its weight on only three toes. Cane rats live in small groups led by a single male. They are nocturnal and make nests from grasses or burrow underground. The oldest cane rat can live more than four years.

In the country of Ghana and other regions of West Africa, the Greater Cane Rat is usually called a **grasscutter** or **cutting grass**. In both West Africa and Southern Africa, it is considered a delicacy. As a consequence, "grasscutters" are beginning to be raised in cages for sale, and so are sometimes referred to as micro livestock.

Animal species in this issue

Donkey (*Equus asinus*)



Kingdom: Animalia & Phylum: Chordata & Class: Mammalia & Order: Perissodactyla & Family: Equidae & Genus: *Equus* & Subgenus: *Asinus* & Species: *E. africanus* & Subspecies: ***E. africanus asinus***

Donkeys or Asses were first domesticated around 3000 BC, approximately the same time as the horse, and have spread around the world. They continue to fill important roles in many places today and domesticated species are increasing in numbers, but the African wild ass and another relative, the Onager, are endangered. As "beasts of burden" and companions, asses and donkeys have worked together with humans for centuries.

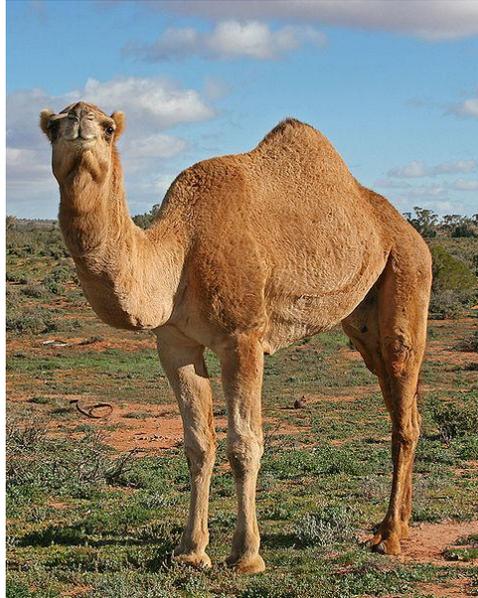
Donkeys vary considerably in size, depending on breed and management. Most domestic donkeys range from 0.9 to over 1.4 m tall.

Donkeys have developed very loud vocalizations, which help keep in contact with other donkeys over the wide spaces of the desert. The best-known call is referred to a "bray," which can be heard for over three kilometers. Donkeys have larger ears than horses. Their longer ears may pick up more distant sounds, and may help cool the donkey's blood. Donkeys in the wild can defend themselves with a powerful kick of their hind legs as well as by biting and striking with their front feet.

Donkeys' tough digestive system is somewhat less prone to colic than that of horses, can break down near-inedible vegetation and extract moisture from food very efficiently. As a rule, donkeys need smaller amounts of feed than horses of comparable height and weight. Because they are easy keepers, if overfed, donkeys are also quite susceptible to developing a condition called laminitis.

Animal species in this issue

One-humped came (*Camelus dromedaries*)



Kingdom: Animalia, Phylum: Chordata, Class: Mammalia, Oder: Artiodactyla. Family:Camelidae, Genus: *Camelus*

Camel is an even-toed ungulate within the genus ***Camelus***, bearing distinctive fatty deposits known as humps on its back. There are two species of camels: the dromedary or Arabian camel has a single hump, and the Bactrian camel has two humps. They are native to the dry desert areas of West Asia, and Central and East Asia, respectively. Both species are domesticated to provide milk and meat, and as beasts of burden.

The average life expectancy of a camel is 40 to 50 years. A fully grown adult camel stands 1.85 m at the shoulder and 2.15 m at the hump. The hump rises about 30 inches (76.20 cm) out of its body. Camels can run at up to 65 km/h (40 mph) in short bursts and sustain speeds of up to 40 km/h (25 mph).

Fossil evidence indicates that the ancestors of modern camels evolved in North America during the Palaeogene period, and later spread to most parts of Asia. Humans first domesticated camels before 2000 BC.

Camels are able to withstand changes in body temperature and water content that would kill most other animals. Their temperature ranges from 34 °C at night and up to 41 °C during the day, and only above this threshold will they begin to sweat.

Animal species in this issue

Ostrich (*Struthio camelus*)



Kingdom: Animalia & Class: Aves & Superorder: Paleognathae & Order: Struthioniformes & Family: Struthionidae & Genus: *Struthio* & Species: *S.camelus*

The **Ostrich**, *Struthio camelus*, is a large flightless bird native to Africa. It is the only living species of its family, Struthionidae and its genus, *Struthio*. Ostriches share the order Struthioniformes with the kiwis, Emus, and other ratites. It is distinctive in its appearance, with a long neck and legs and the ability to run at maximum speeds of about 72 km per hour, the top land speed of any bird). The Ostrich is the largest living species of bird and lays the largest egg of any living bird.

The Ostrich is farmed around the world, particularly for its feathers, which are decorative and are also used for feather dusters. Its skin is used for leather and its meat marketed commercially.

Ostriches usually weigh from 63 to 130 kilograms. The long neck and legs keeps their head 1.8 to 2.75 metres above the ground, and their eyes are said to be the largest of any land vertebrate □ 50 millimetres in diameter, they can therefore perceive predators at a great distance. The eyes are shaded from sun light falling from above.

The strong legs of the Ostrich, like those of other birds, are scaled and unfeathered. The bird has just two toes on each foot (most birds have four), with the nail on the larger, inner toe resembling a hoof. The outer toe lacks a nail. The reduced number of toes is an adaptation that appears to aid in running.