Jupiter

The Mountain Bongo calf at the Mount Kenya Animal Orphanage has a heart-warming story.

The calf was born to Jabali in one of the breeding bomas towards the end of January. We were delighted by the news of the birth; however, we noted through the daily monitoring patrols that Jabali and her calf did not bond well and that she wasn't suckling.

The team brought the calf to the Animal Orphanage for closer monitoring and fostering. They have also played with him in the warm sunshine every morning and evening. His inquisitive nature starts to show as he runs around the Animal Orphanage with the other animals.

The calf is doing well and is in excellent health thanks to the intervention of the Mountain Bongo Program team. We

He was named Jupiter by the animal keepers but has been adopted by three well-wishers who have all fondly given him different names (Narvik, Sharjah and Benji). As of June 2024, he is now 1 and half years old.

If you would like to support or donate to this animal, you can do so at the Reception.

PLEASE SCAN FOR THE SPECIES FACT SHEET

RED LIST

CRITICALLY ENDANGERED:

IUCN REDLIST

MOUNTAIN BONGO

MOUNTAIN BONGO FACT SHEET

Distribution & Habitat

Range
Native to Kenya. Regionally Extinct in Uganda (Mt. Elgon). In Kenya, the Mountain Bongo populations are found in Aberdares and Maasai Mau, and have been recently reintroduced to Mount Kenya into the Mawingu Mountain Bongo Sanctuary

Ex-situ Populations
There are more than 700 Mountain Bongos in zoos and similar institutions across USA and Europe

Habitat
Mountain forests between 2,000 to 3,000 metres above sea level

TAXONOMY

COMMON NAMES: Eastern Bongo, Kenyan Bongo, Ndongoro

SCIENTIFIC NAME: Tragelaphus eurycerus isaaci

CONSERVATION STATUS: Critically endangered. Fewer than 100 individuals in the wild, most recent estimates put the number between 29 - 50

Reproduction & Biology

Gestation Period
270 days

Offspring per birth
1 young per birth; Twins are rare, and scarcely survive; Calves are usually left concealed in undergrowth to avoid detection by predators and mothers return to her calf to nurse at various intervals. Only after this period the calf joins the mother's herd, where it will be cared and protected by all the females.

Weaning
At 6 months

Breeding lifetime
Females breed up to 16 years of life; Females can mate within weeks after giving birth

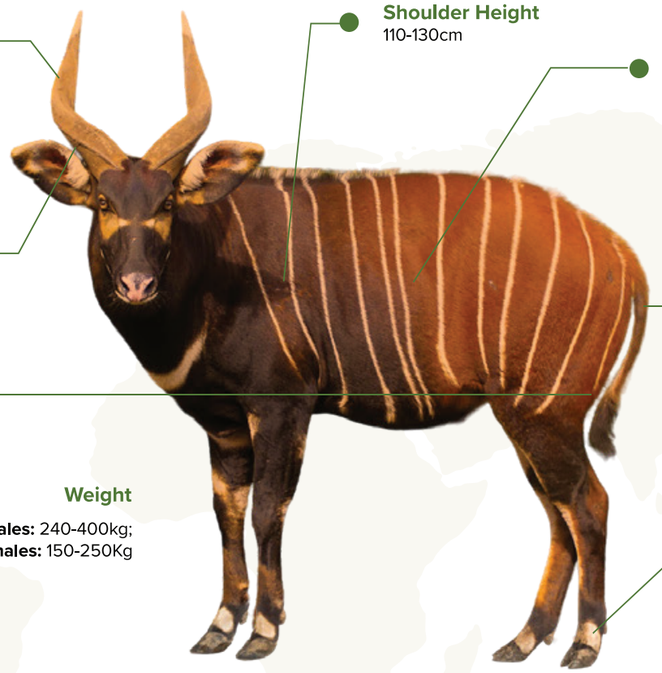
Time of growth of horns
Male: 6 months;
Females: 1year

Life span
19 years (Average)

Mating season
October to January

Age at Sexual Maturity
20-24 months

Appearance



Horns
Both male and females have horns. The horns are spiral with one turn

Shoulder Height
110-130cm

Skin/Coat
Red chestnut with 10-15 vertical white torso stripes; Males are darker

Time of growth of horns
Male: 6 months; Females: 1 year

Tail Length
45-65cm

Body Length
170-250cm

Foot size
Cloven hoofed; 7.5-10cm.

Weight
Males: 240-400kg;
Females: 150-250Kg

Behaviour

Social interactions & Group sizes
Breeding groups of up to 24** individuals have been recorded composed of mothers and their young. Males tend to be solitary with loose coalitions among them. The males do not coerce or limit the females' movement.

Defence and Flight
Mothers can be very aggressive when they are with the young. To defend themselves, bongos attach swiftly with the horns held low and forward. When in fleeing, they hold their horns against the back of their neck to move fast in the forest.

Vocalisations
Have a wide range of vocalisations including grunts, snorts, 'clicking sounds' for bulls while questing to mate, or mothers calling out calves, bleat-like alarm calls etc. Each vocalisation gives these animals signals for interaction or defence and should not be mimicked by humans as can elicit undesirable response.

Wallowing
Bongo wallow frequently in mud and afterward rub mud on trees, polishing their horns. Males in the mating period can soil their horns, leaving recognisable spoor on the forest ground.

Daily activity
Most active at dusk and early morning

Speed
Very swift to vanish in thickets when startled and may also in attack when provoked.

Feeding habits and Diet
Predominantly browsers feeding on leaves, shoots, and grasses

Senses
They rely on sight and hearing more than smell, they are one of the few antelopes that do not use scent marking.

Sleep
They sleep in turns facing different directions allowing everyone to act as a sentry. Even during feeding, they take care, making careful pauses to listen to their surroundings