

# GREVY'S ZEBRA

*(Equus grevyi)*

**Kingdom:** *Animalia*

**Phylum:** *Chordata*

**Class:** *Mammalia*

**Order:** *Perissodactyla*

**Family:** *Equidae*



## **DESCRIPTION:**

One of only six surviving species in the Equidae family, Grevy's zebras were initially named in honor of Jules Grevy, president of France's Third Republic, after he received one of the magnificent creatures in 1882. Contrary to popular belief, these beautiful animals are white with black stripes. Each zebra's stripe pattern is as unique as a human's fingerprint, allowing individuals to be identified by their particular pattern. Grevy's zebras' stripes are set extremely close together. The stripes serve as a protective camouflage by helping to disguise the animal when it is standing in grasses and low bushes. Stripes also help when herds are on the move from a predator. The stripes make it hard for predators to distinguish between animals in the herd, thereby making it difficult to single one animal out for capture. Grevy's zebras average in length between eight and nine feet and in height between four and five feet tall at the shoulder. They weigh between seven hundred and nine hundred pounds and have long heads and necks. All zebras have excellent hearing and Grevy's zebras have fairly long ears that they can rotate to determine the location of a sound. They also have very good eyesight during both the day and the night and binocular vision in the front. It is believed that these incredible animals can see in color. Their sense of taste is also quite keen, allowing them to detect slight changes in the quality of their food.

## **DIET:**

Grevy's zebras feed mainly on grasses, but also consume bark, fruit and leaves during times of drought. They have incisors that they use to clip grass and numerous cheek teeth that they use to grind their food. Zebras require a great deal of food in a day. This need causes them to eat for about 60% of their normal day. Adult Grevy's can go up to five days without water; however, foals need to drink every day.

**BABIES:**

Grevy's zebras have no specific breeding season; breeding occurs throughout the year. Gestation lasts 13 months resulting in the birth of one foal that is covered in fuzzy brown stripes. The foals are able to walk within an hour of birth and begin to graze within a few weeks. Foals are independent by the time they are seven months old, but usually remain with their mothers until they are two to three years old.

**HABITAT and BEHAVIOR:**

Grevy's zebras are native to eastern Africa. They generally reside on plains and savannahs where grasses are most prevalent. Grevy's zebras don't form permanent herds like other species of horses and zebras. The only lasting associations occur between mothers and their foals. Male Grevy's zebras do set up territories, but tolerate other males in their territories. All Grevy's communicate with each other with a loud donkey like bray.

**PREDATORS:**

Grevy's zebras' natural predators are lions and spotted hyenas. Most recently, the Grevy's zebra has been listed as an endangered animal following years of declining herd numbers. The decline is due primarily to loss of habitat. Farming has become more prevalent in Africa and farmland encroaches onto the zebras' territory.

**The Jackson Zoo's Grevy's Zebras:**

The Zoo has recently become home to three female Grevy's zebras. Alongside the three ostrich that share their natural exhibit, the zebras spend their days eating the grasses that grow in their newly remodeled African Savannah Exhibit.