

# Baird's tapir ... gardeners of the rainforest!

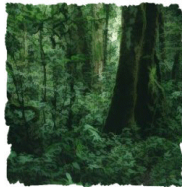


## MEASUREMENTS

**Length:** 6.5-7.5 feet

**Height:** 4 feet  
at shoulder

**Weight:** 550-750 lbs



Rainforest



Central America

IUCN  
ENDANGERED  
CITES I

~3,000 in  
the wild

## Why exhibit Baird's tapirs?

- Highlight the intertwined relationship between animals and their habitats. Loss of rainforest reduces tapir populations - which reduces forest regeneration via seed dispersal in tapir dung.
- Add a memorable cornerstone species to Neotropical exhibits: tapirs are the largest land mammals in Central and South America. Their ability to mix well with other species provides multiple exhibit opportunities.
- Interpret the many ways in which tapirs use their distinctive trunk-like nose: as a foraging tool, a snorkel, and a directional smelling apparatus.
- Give visitors a glimpse into the past: modern tapirs closely resemble fossils from 20-30 million years ago.
- Induce "oohs" and "aaws" from visitors with tapir babies, which resemble playful watermelons with bold white spots and stripes.

## Stewardship Opportunities

Support Tapir Specialist Group field projects!  
Contact SSP coordinator for details.

## Care and Husbandry

**YELLOW SSP:** 24.21 (45) in 15 AZA (+3 non-AZA) institutions (2019).

**Species coordinator:** Carolina Holguin Gonzalez, Africam Safari Park  
[cholguin@afRICAMSafari.com](mailto:cholguin@afRICAMSafari.com)

**Social nature:** Solitary, but often housed in breeding pairs with their most recent (immature) offspring.

**Mixed species:** A typically mild-mannered species that has been housed with New World primates, capybara, guanaco, brocket deer, maned wolves, rheas, and a range of waterfowl.

**Housing:** Temperatures up to 95°F are well-tolerated. Heated indoor areas are needed in cold climates; outdoor access can be given above 35°F. At least 25% of outdoor enclosure should be shaded.

**Medical notes:** Generally healthy. Common health problems include eye and skin issues, rectal prolapse, and dental ailments. Provision of substrate is helpful in minimizing foot issues.

**Special requirements:** Pools are strongly recommended for enrichment and health (pools reduce the risk of rectal prolapse).

**Keeper resources:** Typical workload. Can react aggressively if startled. Tactile reinforcement is well-received during training.

For full husbandry guidelines, see the Tapir ACM or contact the TAG.

<http://www.azaungulates.org/>

