

Gemsbok ... a Kalahari keystone!

ASSOCIATION
OF ZOOS &
AQUARIUMS
ANTELOPE AND
GIRAFFE TAG



MEASUREMENTS

Length: 6 feet

Height: 4 feet
at shoulder

Weight: 400-525 lbs



Desert



Southern Africa

IUCN
LEAST
CONCERN

>370,000 in
the wild

Why exhibit gemsbok?

- Go against the “standard savanna” grain with this iconic species from the deserts of southern Africa, along with species like springbok, greater kudu, giraffe, mountain zebra, ostrich, and vultures.
- Grab the attention of guests with this antelope’s bold markings and rapier-like horns, and interpret the varied messages in gemsbok semaphore.
- Hot weather? No problem! Gemsbok are supremely adapted to blazing hot conditions.
- Enhance refreshment stands by sharing the gemsbok’s unique ways of finding water - including feeding on dewy grasses in the early morning, digging for roots (their holes can be over a yard deep!), and seeking out fruits, like the “gemsbok cucumber.”
- Surprise guests with the remarkable transformation of baby gemsbok from cute, well-camouflaged kids to imposing, striking adults.

Stewardship Opportunities

In situ initiatives involving this species are currently being identified and reviewed by the TAG.

Care and Husbandry

YELLOW SSP: 26.62.2 (90) in 6 AZA (+2 non-AZA) institutions (2019)

Species coordinator: Lissa McCaffree, San Diego Zoo Safari Park
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Social nature: Typically housed as a harem herd; multiple males will fight in the presence of females. Male offspring are typically pushed out of natal herd at 8-10 months; young females should be separated from sire by 12 months to prevent inbreeding.

Mixed species: Has been housed with large and small hoofstock (giraffe, plains zebra, antelope) and various birds. Adequate space helps moderate conflicts. May hybridize with other oryx and addax.

Housing: Generally weather tolerant; prefers hot, dry areas. Supplemental heat needed in sustained cold temperatures. If housing this species behind chainlink, be aware of horns poking through.

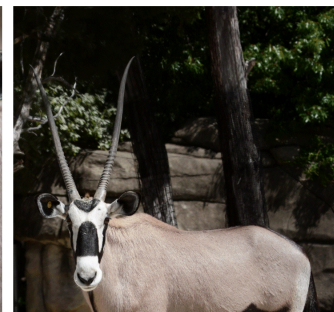
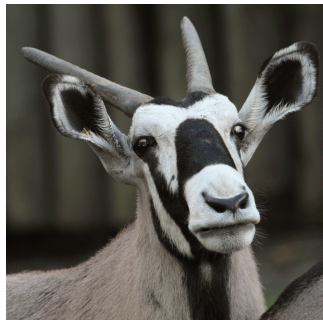
Medical notes: Generally robust. Hoof maintenance may be required in wetter regions. Avoid stress during very high temperatures.

Special requirements: Males of comparable size and age will fight.

Keeper resources: Typical cleaning. Browse is useful for both occupational enrichment (sparring) and dietary enhancement.

Please contact the TAG for full husbandry guidelines.

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



Photos by B. Huffman. Published May 2019.