

## AZA Pig Peccary & Hippo TAG SPECIES MANAGEMENT AND HUSBANDRY GUIDELINES

### **Species Description:**

**Common Name:** Red River Hog

**Taxonomic Name:** *Potamochoerus porcus*

**Legal Status:** not listed.

**Distribution:** Forests from Senegal to northern and eastern Zaire, possibly Bioko island.

**Habitat:** Dense vegetation where there is enough moisture throughout the year to keep the ground moderately soft, most riverine habitats and montane habitats with thick cover.

**Habits:** Most active at night and rests by day in self-excavated burrows within an area of dense vegetation. Diet consists mainly of roots, berries and fruits, although reptiles, eggs and occasionally young birds are also eaten. Daily movement between feeding and resting places is 3 - 4 km.

### **Physical Characteristics :**

**Weight:**

Adults: 46 - 130 kg. Males average 65- 70 kg; females average 55 - 60 kg.

Young: 700 - 800 g.

**Size:**

Body Length: 1,000 - 1,500 mm

Shoulder Height: 585 - 965 mm.

**Color:**

Ears are long and pointed. Body is bright rufous in color, with a distinct white dorsal stripe and crest and long white whiskers and ear tufts. Piglets under six months of age have longitudinal light stripes, which gradually disappear.

# Husbandry

## Housing Requirements:

### Facility perimeter/barriers-

- Materials: Rock moats and walls, recycled plastic stockade fence and chain link in concrete footing. Height should be a minimum of 1.30 m.
- Special Considerations: Animals should not be able to chew on or lift barriers.
- Substrate recommendations: All substrates should be natural, cushion and be non-abrasive to animals feet, such as mulch, grass or sandy soil.
- Size of Exhibit: This can be subjective based on the group size and exhibit components. Animals enjoy variety within the exhibit and room to run. For specific concerns please consult with Jeff Holland, LA Zoo.
- Temperature tolerances: Can tolerate wide temperature fluctuations. Will rest in mud wallows and seek out sprinklers or other water sources to moderate temperatures. Need heat source if ambient temperature falls below 5C. Young animals require bedding.
- Shade requirements: Needed to provide relief from direct sunlight during hotter portions of the year.

### Indoor/holding facilities:

- Materials: Multiple (1-1.2m wide) gates operated by pulley systems with the controls situated in such a way that the caretaker is concealed and away from the entrance of the holding pen when trying to trap animals in holding. At least two holding pens are recommended with several entrances and exits, creating a "round-about" allowing subordinate animals to easily escape from dominant animals.
- Size: Minimum size is 150 square feet per animal, adding at least 50 square feet for each additional animal.
- Gate Recommendations: Rope or chain pulls/controls need to be out of animals' reach or protected to prevent animals from having access to them.

### Daily Care and Maintenance:

- Water Delivery/Placement: Standard livestock tanks, automatically refilling livestock drinkers, etc., situated in such a manner as to minimize contamination of water source, as animals may attempt to climb or defecate into drinkers.
- Food Delivery/Placement: Ground feeders, stock troughs. Feeders should have smooth surfaces. Multiple feeding stations are recommended to prevent food-related aggression. Areas around feeders should be kept clean to prevent excess ingestion of dirt.
- Appearance of normal Feces: Greenish-brown, pelleted to slightly clumped.

Hoof trim Requirements: Will vary depending on activity level and individual. Trim as needed during chemical immobilizations. Hooftrims have been infrequent.

**Weight Measurement:** Bar scales with platform on top, at the end of a corridor. Animals are moved to the platform using a secure push board/door or using food incentives. Weights are also taken when a specimen has been crated and/or immobilized.

**Social Groupings:** Adult dominant male with several adult females, female offspring, and young male offspring before they are no longer tolerated by the breeding male. Sibling males or males introduced when juvenile will be more tolerant of one another than older, unfamiliar boars.

**Behavior:** The snout is used as a plow to move soil and uproot vegetation. The tusks are sometimes used to mark trees. Enrichment items can be used to distract animals to lessen rooting behavior.

## **Reproduction:**

**Sexual Maturity:** About 3 years of age for females.

**Gestation:** Approximately 4 months.

**Breeding behavior:** Mating occurs from December through February. Births are between April and June.

**Parturition:** Signs of: Increased girth, enlarged udder, distended vulva, pacing and restlessness.

**Females:** Nesting behavior will increase a few days before birth. Will become less tolerant of male approaching closely.

**Birth of Young:** 1 - 8 piglets per litter. Usually about 3 - 4. Young are given considerable care by the dominant boar. Weaned after 3 - 4 months.

**Neonatal Care Preparations:** Provide sow with as much space as possible.

**Keeper Preparations:** Provide various types of nesting material in adequate quantities to accommodate nesting behavior. Pine shavings or similar materials should be avoided, as they may clump onto neonates and their mucus membranes. Installation of "creep" (area accessible only to youngest offspring) or other method to enable young to investigate and eat solid food undisturbed by adults or older siblings. Monitor behavior of adults closely after parturition; it is not uncommon for adults, especially the dam, to cannibalize their young.

## **Diet:**

See attached diet sheets. Folivore biscuits can be used to train and reinforce behaviors. Vegetables such as apples and bananas can be used to administer medications.

## **Medical Concerns/Problems:**

Ivermectin is given, as per veterinary instructions, to reduce internal parasite load. Litterguard has been given to pregnant females, as per veterinary instructions, to vaccinate against E. coli in order to have antibodies passed on to offspring through colostrum. At about five weeks of age an exam is performed and the young receive a microchip for identification purposes. Weights are obtained and general health is determined. The animal is then returned to the mother as soon as possible. The exam should be given far enough away so that the piglets cannot be heard by her.

## **Transportation and handling**

Level of handling depends on amount of conditioning and desensitization animal has been exposed to, as well as animal's temperament. Otherwise chemical immobilization is recommended.

Animals can be transported in well ventilated crates, singly and by group in a livestock trailer.

[See AZA Transport Guidelines](#)