

AZA Pig Peccary & Hippo TAG SPECIES MANAGEMENT AND HUSBANDRY GUIDELINES

Species Description:

Common Name: Visayan Warty Pig

Taxonomic Name: *Sus cebifrons*

Legal Status: Endangered

Distribution: West Visayan Island group in the Central Philippines: Cebu (extinct), Negros, Guimaras (extinct), Panay, Masbate and and Ticao islands. It should be noted here that this species is extinct over 98 % of its original range.

Habitat: Lowland and montane rainforests, and monsoon rainforests. Also occur in disturbed habitats and in the proximity of cultivated foodstuffs.

Habits: There have not been any detailed studies of this species in the wild. Captive observations of these animals at San Diego indicate that they are active during most parts of the day. They root and burrow and like to take mud baths and cool themselves in pools of water. When logs are offered, the pigs enjoy climbing and jumping on them. They appear to be primarily herbivorous, eating most vegetables, preferring yams, sweet potatoes also carrots and occasionally turnips. Greens are also offered along with alfalfa and bermuda hay. A high fiber feed is given daily, approximately 1 quart per adult animal.

Physical Characteristics :

Weight:

Adults: 22 to 40 kg. Males 35 - 50 kg; females 22 -36 kg

Young: We do not have birth weights, estimate .25 kg, weights taken at 5-6 weeks average around 2.5-3.5kgs

Size:

Body Length: 690-900 mm

Shoulder Height: 300-400 mm

Back Height: at top of back above shoulder 400-500 mm

Color:

Ears are short approx. 50-80 mm. The body is light to dark gray almost black. Older animals get light gray to white hair mixed with the gray on their sides, front to back. Adult animals have longer hair along their spine and on the top of their head that is erected when excited or agitated. White patches of hair are also present on both sides of the nose just below the eyes. Males develop a long breeding mane with 250-400 mm long whitish gray whiskers which are grown in the fall and shed, along with the mane in February or March.(Males are much larger than females). Piglets under 6 months of age have longitudinal light stripes which gradually disappear.

Husbandry

Housing Requirements:

Facility perimeter/barriers-

- Materials: Rock and or concrete moats and walls, recycled plastic. Stockade fencing. All fencing and gate perimeters need to have concrete footer extending to at least a foot below the surface.
- 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 San Diego Zoo.
- Temperature tolerances: Can tolerate wide temperature fluctuations. Will rest in mud wallows and seek out other water sources to moderate temperatures. Need heat source if temperature falls below 50 degrees F. Animals of all ages require bedding and or heat source.
- Shade requirements: Shade and shelter need to be provided so the animal has the option to choose.

Indoor/holding facilities:

- Materials: Multiple (1 to 1.5m) gates operated by pulley systems which are hidden and protected should be available to isolate animals. Multiple holding pens with multiple entrances should be available to provide round-about access with few dead ends. This allows subordinate animals to easily escape from more dominate animals.
- Size: Minimum of 100 sq ft per animal add at least 25 sq ft per additional animal.

Daily Care and Maintenance:

- Water Delivery/Placement: Standard livestock tanks, automatically refilling livestock drinkers etc, situated in such a way as to minimize contamination, animals have a tendency to climb in and contaminate drinker.
- Food Delivery/Placement: Concrete feeders or a clean cement floor works well for feeding of multiple animals. Food should also be scattered in multiple dry areas on exhibit to prevent aggression and for animals to forage.
- Appearance of normal Feces: 2 to 4 inch long 1/2 to 1 inch thick brown to green in color soft putty consistency.

Hoof trim Requirements: Varies depending on individual and activity level. At this time we have not had any problems. It appears that dew claws may need attention at some point. We are monitoring. It also appears that some of the animals will be able to be desensitized to accept the nail trim free standing.

Weight Measurement: Set a crate or platform on bar scales, sit at one end of crate or platform and feed animal while in crate or on platform to obtain weights. Always weigh when transporting any animal or during any veterinary procedure.

Social Groupings: Adult male with several adult females, female and male offspring. It appears that young males will be tolerated until they reach an age where they begin to compete with the adult breeding male. Probably 1.5 to 2 years of age. Young males approaching this age should be closely monitored for conflicts with the adult male.

Behavior: The snout is used for excavation and play fighting, rolling logs and tipping things over are a favorite past time also. At night many pigs will share a bedding space and pile into a bedding area.

Reproduction:

Sexual Maturity: About three years of age.

Gestation: appears to be between 120 to 155 days, probably closer to 120 days.

Breeding behavior: Mating has occurred through out the year. Farrowing has occurred in March, April, May, June, July, August and December.
** A nestbox must be provided for females to farrow in.

Males: breeding changes, see previous breed description.

Females: exhibit teat development around 4 weeks prior to parturition. Females have three pairs of teats. The night before giving birth the female will build a large nest in her nest box of hay that has been piled in her pen near her nest box. We provided two to three flakes of a soft bermuda hay. In every case the female was observed to go through this nesting behavior.

Piglets : are highly precocious, they can be heard to vocalize at day one. Sometimes they will even come out of their nestbox at day one. Usually by day two they can be readily seen and will occasionally exit the nest box.

Litter Size: is generally one to three.

Breeding Behavior Notes: These females are quite protective of their young and will make a charge at you. Usually the charge is just a warning to stay back, after she charges she will quickly return to her young. Females have given birth in a large group (males and females) with no problems of aggression from other members of the group. The problem arises when there are other young pigs in the group, as they will attempt to nurse off the new dam. This can cause a problem with young receiving colostrum and getting enough nourishment. Fresh moms should be separated for three to five weeks from other young animals.

Keeper Preparations:

Keepers should provide a creep (space accessible only by the piglets). This allows for them to be fed a manna pellet and minced vegetables (see attached diet sheet).

Diet:

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

Medical Concerns/Problems:

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.

Training:

for external body exam and possible hoof or dew claw trim is more than likely. We are in the early stages of training for dew claw trims. These pigs are very receptive to training and seem to enjoy keeper pig interaction. If groups are large it is a good idea to separate out a few individuals for training.

Transportation and handling

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

Be certain that very dominant animals are not confined with subordinates.

When crating isolate an individual and crate when transferring from one stall to another.

Animals can be desensitized to walking into a crate.

**** Special Note:**

It is very important to separate females just prior or immediately after giving birth for a period of 4 to 6 weeks. It should also be noted here that you should never separate and isolate more than one pregnant female for farrowing in the same enclosure. When one female is dominant, even slightly, cannibalization of young can occur. Always give farrowing females their own space and all should go without incident.