

MEET THE HIPPOPOTAMUS

ABOUT ME

I am the **third largest mammal on Earth**, I have a large barrel-shaped body, short legs, a short tail and an enormous head! I can grow to about **1.5m** tall, and weigh up to **4 tons**.

I spend most of my day in rivers and lakes. My eyes, nose and ears are on the top of our head, which means I can see and breathe whilst submerged in the water.

Do you know how tall you are, and how much you weigh?

DID YOU KNOW

Despite my enormous size, I am a great swimmer and can hold our breath for up to five minutes underwater. When completely submerged, my ears and nostrils fold shut to keep water out.

How long can you hold your breath for?

I live in Africa, where the sun's UV rays are incredibly strong. I have adapted an ability to produce a red, oily liquid which acts as a natural sunblock.



INTERESTING FACT

I can actually identify a friend from foe by smelling their dung – or poop!

I use middens, or outdoor areas where I will repeatedly go to the bathroom. I can then sniff the area to find out who's been there, and if I considered them a friend.

MY NAMES

My name, 'Hippopotamus', comes from the Greek word "**hippos**" meaning horse.

Do you know the meaning of your name?

MY FAMILY

Male hippos are called a **bull**. The female hippo is called a **cow**, and the baby is called a **calf**.

We usually live in groups (or "herds") of around 10 to 20 individuals, led by one large dominant male. The other members are females, their young and a few young non-breeding males.

In the wild we live for around 40 years. In captivity, we tend to live longer and may reach up to 50 years old.

How big is your family?

WHY WE ARE IMPORTANT?

Our enormous size lends itself to creating **micro-habitats** for smaller organisms. We help habitats for fish populations by repeatedly walking on common pathways from water sources to inland areas.

OUR BIGGEST THREAT

I am classified as "**threatened**" due to human activity impacting our environment.

WHAT WE LIKE TO EAT

I am a **herbivore**. This means that I eat plants! I eat, on average, **37 Kilograms** of grass each night.

An adult Hippo drinks about **200 Liters** of water per day.

How much water do you drink everyday?

BELIEVE IT OR NOT

I can run up to speeds of 48 Kilometers per hour! But only for very short distances.

How fast can you run?

I can open our mouth so wide that even a small child could stand upright inside of it.

