

# Meerkat

## Quick facts

Diet: Omnivore

Life span in the wild: 12 – 14 years

Size: 25 – 30 cm

Weight: Less than 1 kg

Group name: Mob or gang

Status: Least concern



Meerkats (*Suricata suricatta*) are very social animals and live in groups called mobs or gangs. They live in underground burrows in the Kalahari Desert and parts of South Africa. Their curved claws are used for digging and foraging for insects. They can close their ears to keep out the dust when they are burrowing.

Meerkats eat insects such as scorpions, beetles, centipedes, spiders, and worms. They also eat birds, lizards and fruit.

Meerkats search for food in groups. Some members will guard the entrance of the burrow, keeping a look out for predators such as eagles and falcons. If a meerkat spots trouble, they will bark and whistle loudly to alert the other members of the group.

Female meerkats give birth to a litter of one to five pups. They are born hairless and cannot see or hear for at least 15 days. Other members of the group will take turns baby-sitting the pups so the mother can forage for insects. When the pups are 3 weeks old they can leave the underground burrow.

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Subject: Themes - KS 2

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Sheet: Animals

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## Meerkat

Answer the following questions.

1. How much does a meerkat weigh?

\_\_\_\_\_

2. What is a group of meerkats called?

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Do meerkats live in deserts or rainforests?

\_\_\_\_\_

4. What is the average size of a meerkat?

**a** 10 - 12 cm

**c** 40 - 50 cm

**b** 25 - 30 cm

**d** 45 - 55 cm

5. How does a meerkat alert the other members of the group if it spots danger?

\_\_\_\_\_

6. Meerkats are omnivores. Can you think of another animal that eats both meat and plants?

\_\_\_\_\_

7. Name two characteristics of a mammal.

\_\_\_\_\_

8. How old are meerkat pups when they leave the underground burrow?

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