



EAST AFRICAN BONGO

Phylum Chordata, Class Mammalia, Order Artiodactyla, Family Bovidae; Subfamily Tragelaphinae (or Tribe Tragelaphini)

Tragelaphus euryceros isaaci

Height: 42-50 inches at the shoulder

Weight: Males range from 520 to 650 pounds. Females range from 350 to 500 pounds.

Habitat: forested areas

Range: Bongo are found throughout African, including Sierra Leone, Liberia, Ivory Coast, Cameroon, Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, southern Sudan, Central African Republic and isolated populations in Kenya

Status: The eastern bongo is listed as endangered by the IUCN (International Union for the Conservation of Nature). The western subspecies of bongo is listed as "lower risk" for extinction.

Threats to survival: poaching and habitat loss

Diet: The bongo is a browser and eats a wide variety of plants. The animal also occasionally will eat soil and charcoal from burned trees, presumably to obtain minerals.

Special features:

- Both sexes have impressive-looking, twisted horns. The horns begin to appear when bongo calves are approximately 4 months old, and grow to lengths of 20-30 inches.
- Bongos are chestnut-colored and males tend to be darker than females. Bongos have 12-14 thin, cream-colored stripes on their sides. The stripes help camouflage the bongos. Other body markings add to the bongo's striking appearance: a large white crescent across the chest, cream-colored cheek patches, white edging along the ears, a large "chevron" on the nose and black and white bands on the legs. Bongos have manes that run from their shoulders down their backs.
- Bongos have large ears and a good sense of hearing.
- The bongo's body shape reflects its habitat: it is well-suited to searching for food in densely wooded areas. Its convex back peaking at a point in the lumbar region allows it to move around with its nose close to the ground and horns tilted over its back. This wedge-like shape makes it easier for the bongo to move through thick forests that are nearly impenetrable by humans.
- The bongo's scientific name, *Tragelaphus euryceros*, is derived from the Greek language and means "goat deer with wide-spreading horns"

Social structure & behavior: Bongos are active mainly at night. Bongos are gregarious. Group sizes ranging from 2-50 animals have been reported. Bongos seem to be non-territorial. The main predators of bongos are leopards and spotted hyenas.

Breeding & Care of young:

- Sexual maturity at approximately 20 months.
- Female's estrous cycle is 21 to 22 days, with estrus lasting three days.
- gestation is 9 months, and a female usually gives birth to one offspring. The average weight at birth is 44 pounds. It still is not known the exact age when a young bongo is weaned from his or her mother.

