Lechwe ... a sure way to make a splash!

**Why exhibit southern lechwe?**
- Maximize space use in exhibits that have large water features with these semi-aquatic antelope!
- Interpret the lechwe’s many adaptations to flooded habitats, including elongated hooves, oily pelage, and powerful hindquarters.
- Highlight the vast wetland habitats of south-central Africa, home to lechwe as well as river hippos, waterfowl, cranes and storks, crocodiles, and the last large population of African wild dogs.
- Share the unusual mating system of lechwe, known as lekking. Males hold tiny clustered territories (each just 30 feet in diameter) and compete for prime real estate to woo females!
- **TAG Recommendation:** Institutions interested in southern lechwe should first consider the higher conservation priority Nile lechwe.

**Care and Husbandry**

**Candidate Program:** 8.23 (31) in 1 AZA (+2 non-AZA) institutions (2019)

**Species coordinator:** Mel Hall, Disney’s Animal Kingdom  
[Melissa.A.Hall@disney.com](mailto:Melissa.A.Hall@disney.com)

**Social nature:** Highly gregarious. Can be maintained in multiple-male mixed groups, although management during the breeding season is needed to ensure known parentage of offspring.

**Mixed species:** Generally mild-mannered. Successfully housed with a variety of other hoofstock, as well as pelicans and other birds. High risk of aggression and hybridization with other Kobus antelope.

**Housing:** Provide supplemental heat below 45°F. Soft natural substrate and water features are recommended to minimize foot issues and promote natural behaviour. Refuges and hides help reduce stress.

**Medical notes:** Prone to overheating and capture myopathy during immobilizations due to tendency to run after darting.

**Special requirements:** Facilities are encouraged to handrear female calves to reduce nervous tendencies and improve management.

**Keeper resources:** Can be fractious. Keepers need to be mindful of flight distances and should establish a consistent routine.

*Please contact the TAG for full husbandry guidelines.*  
[http://www.azaungulates.org/](http://www.azaungulates.org/)

**Stewardship Opportunities**

Support the conservation of the Nile lechwe, an endangered and declining relative of the southern lechwe, through WCS in South Sudan  
[www.wcs.org/where-we-work/africa/southern-sudan.aspx](http://www.wcs.org/where-we-work/africa/southern-sudan.aspx)

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**Measurements**

- **Length:** 4.5-6 feet  
- **Height:** 3-4 feet at shoulder  
- **Weight:** 110-300 lbs

**IUCN Least Concern**

**CITES II**

~213,000 in the wild

**Wetlands**

**Southern Africa**

Photos by D. Blackburn (main image), M. Covey, B. Huffman, & P. Rose. Published June 2019.