

River hippopotamus ... more than a ton of fun!

ASSOCIATION
OF ZOOS &
AQUARIUMS
WILD PIG, PECCARY,
AND HIPPO TAG



MEASUREMENTS

Length: 10-15 feet
Height: 5 feet
at shoulder
Weight: 3,000-
8,000 lbs



Rivers & lakes



Africa

IUCN
VULNERABLE
CITES II

< 150,000
in the wild

Why exhibit river hippos?

- Inspire a sense of wonder in visitors with this massive, recognizable, and charismatic species.
- Increase attendance by showing off the gracefulness of hippos with underwater viewing. Such exhibits are extremely popular with guests and must be designed to handle large crowds.
- Leave a lasting impression on guests through keeper talks and interactive behind-the-scenes tours (a potential fundraiser). Hippos are easily trained to display their tremendous mouth gape.
- Tell the story of African river systems with this keystone species. Hippos have profound effects on the health of rivers, noted in areas where they have been eliminated by poaching (for ivory and meat) or habitat destruction.

Stewardship Opportunities

Wechiau Hippo Sanctuary, Ghana
<http://www.ghanahippos.com/>

Ruko Community Wildlife Conservancy,
Northern Rangelands Trust, Kenya.
<http://www.nrt-kenya.org>

Care and Husbandry

YELLOW SSP: 26.51 (77) in 30 AZA institutions (2019)

Species coordinator: John Davis, Riverbanks Zoo
jdavis@riverbanks.org; (803) 602-0886

Social nature: Highly social. **New facilities should have the ability to hold multiple hippos (4 to 8 animals) and be willing to breed.** The historical trend of displaying small groups of 1-3 hippos will not meet management needs for this population in the future.

Mixed species: Generally not mixed; exclusion zones for smaller species are a must. Cichlids and other fish do well in pools.

Housing: Enclosures should have large pools as well as land area. River hippos are relatively tolerant of cold conditions and can withstand weather down to 40°F if given access to heated shelter.

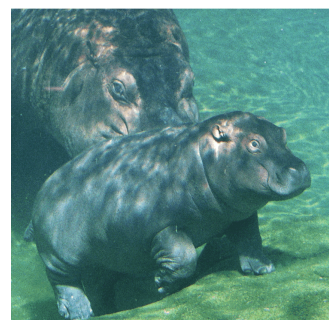
Medical notes: Generally robust; infectious diseases are rare. Obesity is a common concern. Many individuals live to 40 years.

Special requirements: Large filters and/or large diameter pool drains are essential to deal with volumes of water and feces.

Keeper resources: Heavy workload. Daily pool cleaning is needed if no filtration is present. Males will splatter walls with feces.

Please contact the TAG for full husbandry guidelines.

<http://www.azaungulates.org/>



Photos by B. Huffman and Cheyenne Mountain Zoo. Published September 2019.