



## Be Kind Belize Monkey Fact Sheet

 Monkeys are part of the primate family. Humans are too.

 There are two species of primate in Belize, the black howler monkey (*Alouatta pigra*) and the Yucatan spider monkey (*Ateles geoffroyi yucatanensis*)

 Both types of monkey live mostly in trees and are rarely seen coming down from the trees onto the ground.

 Both the black howler monkey and spider monkey have special tails that act as an extra, 5<sup>th</sup> limb so they can grasp and hold onto things. On the tip of their tails is a pad, which is almost as sensitive as a human fingertip. This means that the tail is very sensitive to anything it touches. It even has its own unique finger print.

 Black Howler Monkeys and Yucatan Spider Monkeys are considered endangered. The main threats to monkeys in Belize are habitat destruction, hunting and the illegal pet trade.

 It is illegal in Belize to hunt monkeys or keep them as pets

 Because monkeys are so similar to people, some people think that they are cute pets. In fact, they make very bad pets for just that reason. Because they are so similar to humans it is very easy to catch diseases and parasites from them. Of course, we can also give them our own diseases. It is important to know that when monkeys are about 2 years old they go through puberty, just like teenage humans. This is when they can become aggressive and very dangerous. And of course, because they are so smart, they get bored very easily and are extremely destructive.

 Black howler monkeys and Yucatan spider monkeys are some of the largest monkeys in the Americas.

### Black Howler Monkey Facts

 Black howler monkeys live in small groups with about six monkeys in each group.

 They mainly eat leaves but if they can find it, they will eat fruit too.

 They usually move around on all four limbs and not on two like humans.

 They have a specially adapted bone in their throat which allows them to make the very loud calls for which they are they are known.

 Black howler monkeys can live naturally in the wild until they are around 16 years old.

 Female black howler monkeys cannot reproduce until they are about 5 years old. They are pregnant for 6 months before they give birth. Their babies depend on them for everything for the first 10 months of their lives. They only reproduce every 2-3 years, so once the populations start to decline it is very hard for them to get their numbers back.



*Special thanks to Brittany Dean from Monkey Bay Wildlife Sanctuary & Nikki Buxton from Belize Bird Rescue*

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## Yucatan Spider Monkey Facts

 Spider monkeys live in large groups with about 20 monkeys in each group. During the day, they will split up into smaller groups to look for food. These groups are split into males and females. The females like to spend time in the day with other female monkeys and the same with the males. In the evening they all get back together to sleep. What is really interesting is that only two other types of primate do this – humans and chimpanzees.

 Spider monkeys mainly eat fruit. When they can't find fruit, they will eat leaves, flowers, buds and insects.

 Spider monkeys travel by swinging from limb to limb in trees. Because of this their hands have become very unusual as they have no thumbs. If they walk in the trees, they use all four limbs. Though they rarely come to the ground, if they do, they walk upright on two legs, just like people

 Spider monkeys have approximately 10 different calls which they use for communicating with other group members.

 Spider monkeys are one of the smartest of all monkeys.

 Spider monkeys can only survive in a forest that has not been disturbed by humans. When a forest is destroyed, it can take many years before the monkeys will return.

 Female spider monkeys cannot reproduce until they are around 7 years old. They are pregnant for 8 months before they give birth. The babies depend on their mother for everything until they are about 1½ years old. Spider monkeys only have babies every 3 to 4 years, so once their populations start to decline it is very hard for them to get their numbers back.

 Spider monkeys live until they are about 27 years old.



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