



**Spotted Hyena**  
*Crocuta crocuta*

**Geographical Range:** Found throughout Africa, south of the Sahara Desert and eastwards through Arabia to India.

**Habitat:** Spotted hyenas prefer open country, even semi-desert, but they are rarely found in forested areas. They range from sea level up to 13,200 feet

**Exhibit Location:** The predator/prey exhibit at the Zoo displays hyenas and antelopes in close proximity. The only separation is a moat which gives both species the opportunity to see, hear and smell the others as they would in the wild.

**Physical Characteristics:** The largest member of the hyena family, and also the most aggressive, the female spotted hyena reaches an average weight of 130 pounds. Males weigh about ten pounds less. They are brownish-gray with dark spots. They have a dog-like face, round ears and sloping hindquarters. The spotted hyena has probably the most powerful jaws in the animal kingdom. Both females and males have external sex organs similar in appearance.

**Diet:** In the wild this famed scavenger normally hunts alone and usually at night. To catch large prey they will hunt in packs. Spotted hyenas kill about 95% of their prey but will also scavenge often dining on the leftovers of other predators. Their primary prey include wildebeests, gazelles, zebras, buffalo, topi and most species of ungulates (hoofed mammals). They tear the bones of their prey with their powerful jaws which permits them to break bones that even a lion could not crush. In captivity, they are fed feline diet and will receive either bones or rabbits once a week.

**Did you know?**

- Although they appear more similar to dogs, hyenas are actually more closely related to cats.
- Hyenas may reach speed of up to 40 mph and can run for long distances without tiring.
- Their keen hearing and sharp eyesight at night make them skilled hunters.
- Quite vocal, the hyena makes a strange cry which resembles a laugh, hence the name “laughing” hyena.
- Hyenas live in clans that may number as many as 80 individuals which are led by females.

**Status:** Numbers are stable at this time.