



SPOTTED HYENA

Crocuta crocuta



The spotted hyena normally lives in a clan, which can number as many as 80 individuals. A clan is under the leadership of dominant (alpha) female. A clan marks its territory by scent-marking. Hyenas rest during the day in thick bush or tall grass, in holes dug by other animals, or in a den among rocky boulders. Where there are no natural cavities, hyenas dig out huge burrows 2-3 feet below the surface. In the late afternoon, they begin their daily search for food, sometimes running down their prey with speeds of up to 40 miles per hour.



SPECIES QUICK FACTS

SIZE

Adult hyenas have a body length of 22 to 66 inches and have a height of 28 to 37 inches at the shoulder.

WEIGHT

Adult hyenas average between 120 and 189 pounds. Females are generally larger than males.

FOOD HABITS

Hyenas normally hunt alone and usually at night but will hunt in packs to catch large prey. Spotted hyenas kill about 95 percent of their prey but will also scavenge. Primary prey include the wildebeest, gazelles, zebra, buffalo, topi, and other species of ungulates.

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.

GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION

Spotted hyenas range throughout most of Africa south of the Sahara, except for the rain forests and most of South Africa.

FUN FACT

When excited, the spotted hyena will make a giggling sound, which has given this animal the nickname of laughing hyena.