



SCIMITAR-HORNED ORYX

Oryx dammah



The scimitar-horned oryx is adapted to the arid environment of the Sahara desert. This species is extremely gregarious, and there is a distinct reluctance in individuals to remain solitary. During the wet season, herds migrate north into the Sahara, returning south as the dry season approaches. They have numerous physiological adaptations to desert life that allow them to go without drinking water for weeks (or possibly even months). For example, specialized kidneys prevent excess loss of water through the urine, and perspiration is kept to a minimum. The main predators of this species are lions, leopards, hyenas, and African wild dogs.



SPECIES QUICK FACTS

SIZE

An adult scimitar-horned oryx averages between 3.5 and 4 feet in height at the shoulder.

WEIGHT

Scimitar-horned oryx range in size from 400-450 pounds.

FOOD HABITS

Scimitar-horned oryx feed on fruit, grasses, leaves, and buds.

HABITAT

The scimitar-horned oryx lives in grassy steppes, semi-desert areas, and deserts. It is highly adapted to live in arid environments.

GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION

The scimitar-horned oryx is found only in the countries of Niger and Chad in north-central Africa.

FUN FACT

Because of their magnificent horns, the scimitar-horned oryx has been hunted to the edge of extinction. Although they once roamed throughout the Sahara desert, they are now restricted to a few small, isolated pockets of individuals.