MEET THEM AT PLUMPTON PARK ZOO

BLACK-BACKED JACKAL

Lupulella mesomelas (formerly Canis mesomelas)

Teacher & Student Fact Sheet · © **2026 Plumpton Park Zoological Gardens Inc.**
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Fast facts

ANIMAL GROUP	Canidae: the dog family
NATIVE REGION	Eastern and southern Africa
HABITAT	Open savanna, grassland, coastal desert
DIET	Omnivore: animals and plant foods
SIZE	18-35 inches (original zoo guide)
WEIGHT	13-26 lb (original zoo guide)
LIFESPAN	8 years in the wild (original guide)
STATUS	Least Concern



Photo: original Plumpton Park Zoo guide

Did you know?

- The dark saddle along its back gives this jackal its name.
- Black-backed jackals live in two separate regions of Africa.
- Family members may answer one another with wailing calls.
- Both parents help raise their pups.
- Older offspring may stay as helpers for the next litter.

Words to know

Canid: An animal in the dog family.
Omnivore: An animal that eats animals and plants.
Carrion: The remains of dead animals.
Den: A sheltered place where young are raised.

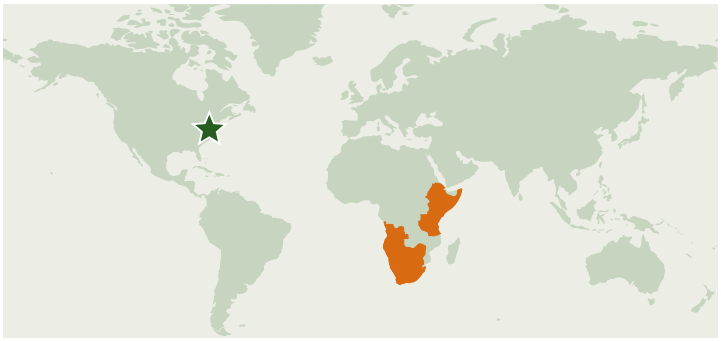
Think about it

1. Which coat pattern gives this jackal its name?
2. In which two regions of Africa does it live?
3. How can family members respond to a jackal's call?
4. What is the difference between an omnivore and a scavenger?
5. How can older offspring help raise younger pups?

Draw it

Draw a black-backed jackal. Label its pointed ears, long muzzle, legs and dark saddle.

Where it lives in the wild



Lives in the wild ★ Plumpton Park Zoo, Rising Sun, MD

STANDARDS · GRADES 3–4 **WRITTEN FOR GRADES 3–5**

Maryland and Delaware (NGSS): **4-LS1-1 · 3-LS2-1**
Pennsylvania (STEELS): **3.1.4.A · 3.1.3.B**

Draw here

Learn more: https://plumptonparkzoo.org/mammals/blackbacked-jackal/ · **Sources:** SANBI; IUCN/SSC Canid Specialist Group; Animal Diversity Web; University of the Free State; American Society of Mammalogists

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FIELD TRIP WORKSHEET · PLUMPTON PARK ZOO

BLACK-BACKED JACKAL

Before and after your visit

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Before you visit · 5 minutes

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. Predict: where in the wild does the black-backed jackal live?

Circle one (or more if it lives on more than one):

Africa | Asia | Australia | Europe | North America | South America

2. Predict: what does it eat?

☐ plants ☐ other animals ☐ both

3. Word hunt: find these words on page 1. Put a check by each one you already know.

☐ Canid ☐ Omnivore ☐ Carrion ☐ Den

Pick one word and write what it means in your own words:

_____

_____

4. My question: one thing I want to find out when I see the black-backed jackal.

_____

_____

At the zoo · look closely

Watch for one minute. What is it doing?

☐ resting ☐ eating ☐ moving ☐ watching ☐ with others

Draw or describe one body part that helps it survive, and say how it helps.

Draw here

After your visit · talk it over

1. Check your prediction. Native region: Eastern and southern Africa. Was your guess right?

☐ yes ☐ no ☐ partly

2. Diet check. The fact sheet says: Omnivore: animals and plant foods. What did you learn about how it finds or eats food?

_____

_____

3. Discuss with a partner, then write your best answer.

• How can older offspring help raise younger pups?

_____

• How can family members respond to a jackal's call?

_____

4. Exit ticket.

One thing I learned: _____

One thing I still wonder: _____

ADJUST IT

Grades K–2: talk and draw instead of writing; read the questions aloud. **Grades 6–8:** add evidence from the fact sheet and the animal page to every answer.

Learn more: https://plumptonparkzoo.org/mammals/blackbacked-jackal/ · Fact sheet page 1 has the fast facts, map and vocabulary this page refers to.

Grades 3–4 · Maryland and Delaware (NGSS): **4-LS1-1 · 3-LS2-1** · Pennsylvania (STEELS): **3.1.4.A · 3.1.3.B**

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