MEET THEM AT PLUMPTON PARK ZOO

BLACK-BACKED JACKAL

Lupulella mesomelas (formerly Canis mesomelas)

GRADES K–2

Teacher & Student Fact Sheet · © **2026 Plumpton Park Zoological Gardens Inc.**
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Teachers: read this page aloud, one part at a time (about 5 minutes). Children follow along and say the bold words.



A jackal by its den at our zoo.

Its body

A jackal is in the dog family.
It has pointed ears.
Its back has a dark **saddle**.
That gives it its name.

Its home (habitat)

It lives in Africa.
It lives on grassy land.
You can see one at our zoo.



■ Lives in parts of this area ★ Plumpton Park Zoo, Rising Sun, MD

Its food

It eats animals and plants.

Its babies (life cycle)

A baby jackal is a **pup**.
Both parents care for pups.
Older pups may stay to help.
They bring food to the **den**.

Fun facts

Family members call to each other.

Words to know

den: a safe place where pups grow
pup: a baby jackal
saddle: a patch of dark fur on its back

Talk about it

1. Who helps take care of the pups?
2. Why is it called black-backed?
3. How do family members talk to each other?

Learn more: plumptonparkzoo.org/mammals/blackbacked-jackal/ · **Sources:** SANBI; IUCN/SSC Canid Specialist Group; Animal Diversity Web; University of the Free State; American Society of Mammalogists
Supports Maryland and Delaware (NGSS) and Pennsylvania (STEELS) standards: K-LS1-1 (3.1.K.A) · 1-LS1-2 (3.1.1.B)
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BLACK-BACKED JACKAL

Before and after your visit

GRADES K–2

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Name _____ **Date** _____

Before you visit · 5 minutes

What do you think? Circle **YES** or **NO**.

1. A jackal is in the dog family. **YES** **NO**
2. Only the mother cares for pups. **YES** **NO**
3. A jackal has a dark back. **YES** **NO**
4. A jackal eats only grass. **YES** **NO**

At the zoo · with a partner

Check each one you see.

- ☐ pointed ears
- ☐ dark saddle
- ☐ nose
- ☐ bushy tail
- ☐ long legs
- ☐ den

What is it doing? Circle one.

walking · resting · watching

After your visit · 10 minutes

Draw a jackal family at their den.

Draw here

A jackal has _____

I learned that _____

ADJUST IT Kindergarten: read everything aloud; children talk and draw, and an adult writes their words. **Grade 2:** children read page 1 on their own. **Grades 3–5:** use the regular black-backed jackal sheet on Teacher Resources. **Second source:** read about this animal in your class database or a library book too, then ask what both said and what was new. **No zoo trip?** Check off what you can find in the photo on page 1. **Answers:** 1 yes, 2 no, 3 yes, 4 no.

Learn more: plumptonparkzoo.org/mammals/blackbacked-jackal/ · Page 1 of this sheet has the words and picture this page refers to.
Science, grades K–1: Maryland and Delaware (NGSS): K-LS1-1 · 1-LS1-2 · Pennsylvania (STEELS): 3.1.K.A · 3.1.1.B
Reading and writing, grade 1: Maryland and Delaware: RI.1.1 · RI.1.7 · RI.1.9 · W.1.8 · Pennsylvania: CC.1.2.1.B · CC.1.2.1.G · CC.1.2.1.I · CC.1.4.1.W
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