MEET THEM AT PLUMPTON PARK ZOO

SERVAL

Leptailurus serval

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

ANIMAL GROUP	Mammal — wild cat
NATIVE REGION	Africa, mainly central and southern
HABITAT	Savanna, tall grass and reed beds near water
DIET	Carnivore: mostly small rodents
SIZE	23–39 in long, males larger
WEIGHT	15–40 lb
LIFESPAN	About 10 years wild; about 22 in human care
STATUS	Least Concern
OUR SERVALS	Jasira and Santiago



Photo: Plumpton Park Zoo

Did you know?

- Servals have the largest ears of any cat for the size of their head.
- They have the longest legs of any cat for their body size.
- A serval can leap more than 9 feet straight up to catch a bird.
- About half of a serval's pounces end in a catch, one of the best rates of any wild cat.
- Mother servals raise their kittens alone.

Words to know

Savanna: a grassland with scattered trees and bushes.
Solitary: living alone instead of in a group.
Pounce: to jump suddenly onto prey.
Predator: an animal that hunts other animals for food.

Where it lives in the wild



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

Think about it

1. How do a serval's big ears help it find food?
2. How high can a serval jump to catch a bird?
3. What animal makes up most of a serval's diet?
4. Do servals live alone or in groups?
5. Why are wild servals losing places to live?

Draw it

Draw a serval leaping for a bird. Label its ears, long legs, spots and short tail.

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

Maryland and Delaware (NGSS): **4-LS1-1 · 3-LS4-3**
Pennsylvania (STEELS): **3.1.4.A · 3.1.3.G**

Draw here

Learn more: https://plumptonparkzoo.org/mammals/serval/ · **Sources:** Animal Diversity Web; IUCN SSC Cat Specialist Group.
Supports Maryland and Delaware (NGSS) and Pennsylvania (STEELS) standards: 4-LS1-1 (3.1.4.A) · 3-LS4-3 (3.1.3.G)
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SERVAL

Before and after your visit

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Before you visit · 5 minutes

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. Predict: where in the wild does the serval 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.

☐ Savanna ☐ Solitary ☐ Pounce ☐ Predator

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 serval.

_____

_____

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: Africa, mainly central and southern. Was your guess right?

☐ yes ☐ no ☐ partly

2. Diet check. The fact sheet says: Carnivore: mostly small rodents. What did you learn about how it finds or eats food?

_____

_____

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

• How high can a serval jump to catch a bird?

_____

_____

• What animal makes up most of a serval's diet?

_____

_____

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/serval/ · 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-LS4-3** · Pennsylvania (STEELS): **3.1.4.A · 3.1.3.G**

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