

White-nosed Coati

Nasua narica

Mammal

Scientific Name

Nasua narica

Other Names

White-nosed coati mundi, northern coati

Range

Arizona and southwest New Mexico, through Central America and into northwestern South America, west of the Andes

Habitat

Tropical woodlands and open forests

Average Size

Body length: 2 feet

Tail length: 2 feet

Weight: 6 – 12 pounds

Description

A raccoon type animal with reddish brown fur, elongated snout and a long, striped tail. It has a black mask and white around its eyes, nose and on the inside of its ears. Legs and feet are dark brown to black.

Lifespan

In the wild: 7 – 10 years

In human care: Up to 21 years

Diet

In the wild: Fruit, invertebrates, nuts, frogs, eggs and small mammals

In the zoo: Fruit, eggs, prepared meat diet, prepared carnivore chow

Gestation

78 days

Offspring

1 – 7 in a litter, 3 – 5 is most common

Sexual Maturity

1 year of age

Predators

Birds of prey, snakes, larger carnivores and humans

Population Status

Vulnerable



Behavior

Unlike most members of the raccoon family, the white-nosed coati is diurnal (active in the daytime) and spends much of that time searching for food, both on the ground and in the trees. They are omnivorous, using their long snout to sniff in the dirt and rocky crevices for insects, fruit and even small mammals.

While males are solitary, females and young form groups of up to 30 individuals that travel through the forest together. In the mid-day heat, the group rests in the shade and spends time grooming one another.

Reproduction and Breeding

Mating season in the wild is between January and March, when fruit availability is at a maximum. The males compete to join the female family band, warning off competition by baring their teeth, rearing up on their hind legs and turning up the end of their snouts. Typically, only one male is accepted into the group and breeds with all mature females. Shortly after mating, the females in the band force the male to leave the group.

The female builds a nest up in the trees and heads to high ground to give birth away from the group. The young leave the tree when they are 4 to 5 weeks old and rejoin the band with their mother. The pups are weaned when they are about 4 months old, but they stay with their mother until she leaves the band to give birth to her next litter. The young coati will have their own offspring starting at 2 years of age.

Conservation

White-nosed coati populations are on the decline throughout their range, with year-to-year fluctuations in population size due to disease and food availability. While large-scale habitat loss is a serious issue for this species, hunting for skin, fur, and food has had the most impact in recent years. In the United States, they are occasionally caught in traps set for other species, killed by hunters ostensibly looking for other species or fall victim to predator control campaigns. The Mexican population has been severely reduced and it may even be extirpated in certain areas.



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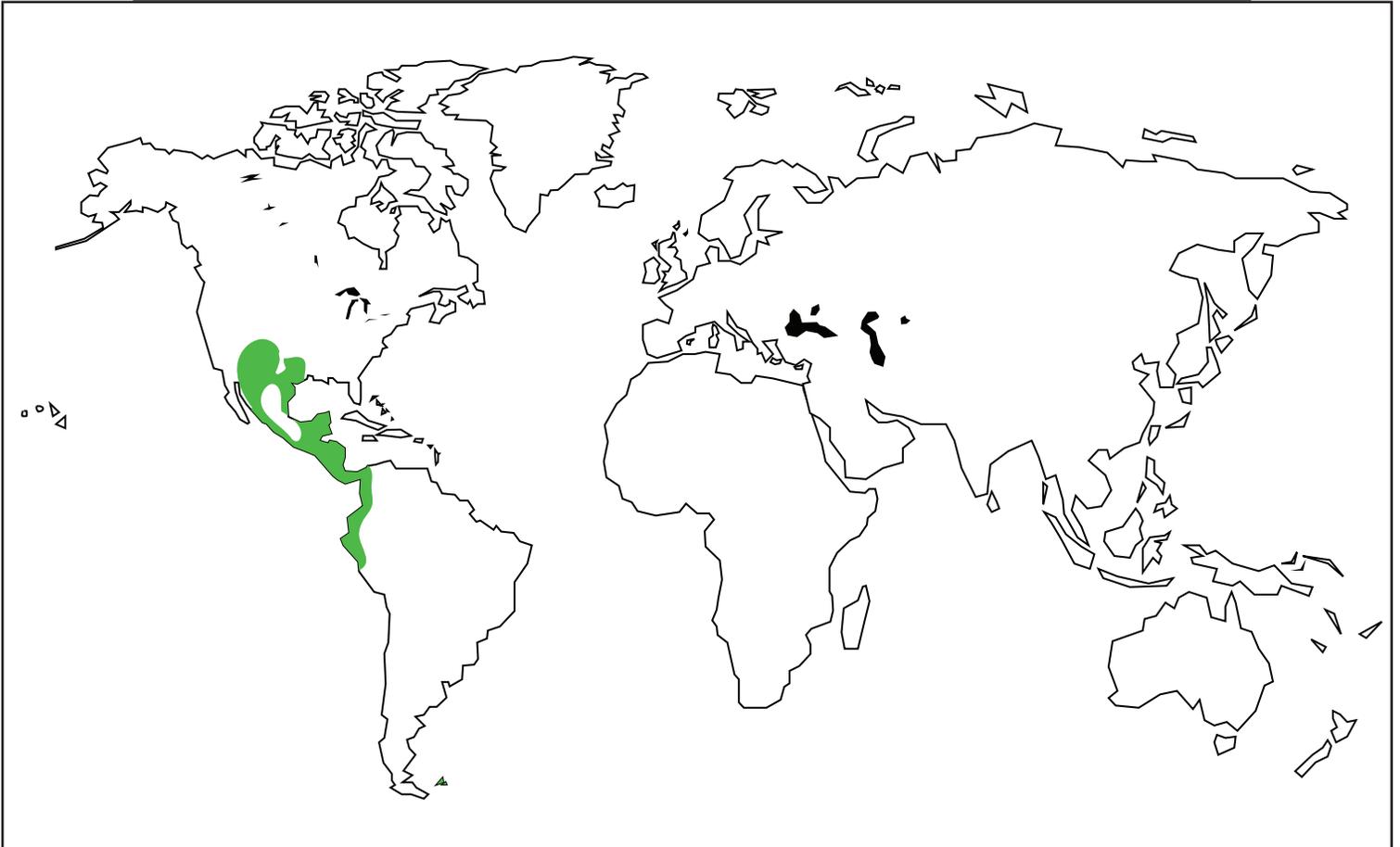
Amazing Facts

White-nosed coati are proficient swimmers.

There are four species of coati in two different genera.

The terms coati and coatimundi are interchangeable, but researchers often use the term coatimundi to refer to the solitary male.

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