Malayan tapir
*Tapirus indicus*
Fact Sheet

**Status:** Endangered in parts of its range.

**Distribution:** Southern Burma and Thailand, Malay Peninsula, Sumatra, possibly Laos.

**Habitat:** Wooded or grassy areas with standing water

**Diet:** (Herbivore) Wild-aquatic vegetation, leaves, buds, twigs, fruits of low-growing terrestrial plants; At the Zoo-grasses, grain, fruit, vegetables.

**Length:** Head and body length is 70-98 in (180-250 cm) Shoulder height is 29-47 in (73-120 cm)

**Weight:** Adults range in weight from 397-800 lb (180-363 kg)

**Reproduction:** 1 young, rarely 2, is born after 383-405 days of gestation. It stays with its mother for 6-8 months. It reaches sexual maturity at 2-5 years. Female tapirs can give birth every other year. Their young are born with a dark coat marked with spots and stripes. Adult coloration is attained by time young are weaned.

**Longevity:** 11-30 years

**General Description:** The tapir’s nose and upper lips extend into a kind of short trunk with nostrils at the end. This allows the animals to breath while submerge in water. The Malayan tapir is the largest and most unusually colored of all tapirs. Its legs, head, neck and the area above its front legs are black in color, while its back, rump and belly are white. This pattern makes the Malayan tapir almost invisible in jungles at night, when vegetation becomes black and white in the moonlight.

**Behavior:** The body shape helps these generally nocturnal mammals move easily through thick underbrush. Tapirs are able to many things well: climb hills, run, slide, wade, dive, and swim. Their long nose helps them breathe while submerged. They can defend themselves by biting. Senses of sight and hearing are good. Communication is achieved with shrill whistling sounds and scent marking with urine.

**Did you know?** In some parts of their range tapirs are hunted for food and sport. Some Indian tribes will not kill tapirs for religious reasons. All four tapir species are endangered because of habitat loss due to clearing of forests for cattle and agriculture.

**Where can you find them?** Fragmented habitat in protected areas and other areas across their range As of October 2003 there were 161 captive animals in 51 zoos around the world. In the US there are 55 captive animals in 23 zoos.
Malayan Tapir
From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

The Malayan Tapir (*Tapirus indicus*), also called the Asian Tapir, is the largest of the four species of tapir and the only one native to Asia. The scientific name is somewhat misleading, as the *Tapirus indicus* is not native to India; the name refers rather to the East Indies.

General Appearance and Characteristics

The animal is easily identified by its markings, most notably the light-colored "saddle" which extends from its shoulders to its rump. The rest of its hair is black, except for the tips of its ears which, as with other tapirs, are rimmed with white. This pattern is for camouflage: the disrupted coloration makes it more difficult to recognize it as a tapir, and other animals may mistake it for a large rock rather than a form of prey when it is lying down to sleep.

Malayan Tapirs grow to between 6 and 8 feet (1.8 to 2.4 m) in length, stand 3 to 3.5 feet (90 to 107 cm) tall, and typically weigh between 550 and 700 pounds (250 to 320 kg), although they can weigh upwards of 900 pounds (410 kg) on occasion. The females are usually larger than the males. Like the other types of tapir, they have small stubby tails and long, flexible proboscises. They have four toes on each front foot and three toes on each back foot. The Malayan Tapir has rather poor eyesight but excellent hearing and sense of smell.

Lifecycle

The gestation period of the Malayan Tapir is approximately 400 days, after which a single offspring, weighing around 15 pounds (6.8 kg), is born. Young tapirs of all species have brown hair with white stripes and spots, a pattern which enables them to hide effectively in the dappled light of the forest. This baby coat fades into adult coloration between four and seven months after birth. Weaning occurs between six and eight months of age, at which time the babies are nearly full-grown, and the animals reach sexual maturity around age three. Breeding typically occurs in April, May or June, and females generally produce one calf every two years. Malayan Tapirs can live up to 30 years, both in the wild and in zoos.

Behavior

Malayan Tapirs are primarily solitary creatures, marking out large tracts of land as their territory, though these areas usually overlap with those of other
individuals. Tapirs mark out their territories by spraying urine on plants, and they often follow distinct paths which they have bulldozed through the undergrowth. Exclusively vegetarian, the animal forages for the tender shoots and leaves of more than 100 species of plants (though it prefers around 30), moving slowly through the forest and pausing often to eat and note the scents left behind by other tapirs in the area. However, when threatened or frightened, the tapir can run quickly, despite its considerable bulk, and they can also defend themselves with their strong jaws and sharp teeth. Malayan Tapirs communicate with high-pitched squeaks and whistles. They usually prefer to live near water and often bathe and swim, and they are also able to climb steep slopes. Tapirs are mainly active at night, though they are not exclusively nocturnal. They tend to eat soon after sunset or before sunrise, and they will often nap in the middle of the night. This type of behavior characterizes them as crepuscular animals.

Habitat, Predation, and Vulnerability
The Malayan Tapir was once found throughout the tropical lowland rainforests of Southeast Asia, including Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar (Burma), Thailand, and Vietnam. Due to human activity, especially deforestation for agricultural purposes as well as poaching and illegal trade, its habitat and numbers have decreased in recent years. Like all tapirs, it is in danger of extinction.