
Bactrian Camel

Camelus bactrianus/domesticus

Class: *Mammalia*

Order: *Artiodactyla*

Family: *Camelidae*

Characteristics:

Bactrian camels have two large humps on their back, opposed to Dromedary camels that only have one hump. Camels have long, curved necks. Bactrian camels stand about 6 ft. tall at the shoulder and can weigh up to 2,000 lbs. They have large, broad feet that are cushioned by fat for walking on sand, snow, and rocky terrain. These camels have long, dark hair in cold weather, and molt annually. ([San Diego Zoo](#))

Behavior:

Bactrian camels are social animals that live in small groups of 2-15 individuals. Groups often consist of one male and many females (harem). In the wild, camels will gather near sources of water. Bactrian camels are often friendly and are easy to domesticate for use in transport and riding. Males can easily carry over 400 lbs. Males can be aggressive during breeding season and will defend harem against other males. Camels can run up to 40 mph in short bursts, if threatened.

Reproduction:

Camels become sexually mature around 5 years of age. Males will usually go into rut in the cool, wet season. Females will be receptive for 3-4 days. Gestation is 12-14 months. Female gives birth to a single, precocious calf that can walk shortly after birth. The calf will weigh between 75-100 lbs. depending on the size of the parents.

Diet:

Wild: Grasses, leaves and twigs of shrubs and trees, all desert plants
Zoo: Hay, herbivore biscuits, browse from trees, pinecones (locally)

Conservation:

The Bactrian camel is an IUCN Red List species listed as critically endangered since 2002. There are approximately 950 individuals in the wild. That number is expected to decrease 80% in the next 45 to 50 years due to hunting, predation, and mating with genetically different, domestic populations.

FYI:

Camels have very long eyelashes and ear hairs to protect from blowing sand. The nostrils are also capable of sealing shut to keep out sand. A thirsty camel can drink up to 200 liters (52 gallons) of water in one day.



Range & Habitat:

Found in the Gobi and Gashun Gobi deserts of China and Mongolia. Regionally extinct in Kazakhstan.



Lifespan: up to 50 years in captivity, 40 years in the wild.

Special Adaptations: Camels store body fat in their humps. It is a common misconception that water is stored in a camel's humps. Camels have adapted to live in temperatures of -40°F to +120°F.

IUCN Conservation Status:

Critically Endangered

