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# New Guinea Singing Dogs

*Canis hallstromi*

**Class:** *Mammalia*

**Order:** *Carnivora*

**Family:** *Canidae*

**Characteristics:** New Guinea singing dogs are a small to medium size dog species. They have a wedge-shaped head and triangular, upright ears. These dogs have a soft, thick coat and a bushy tail. ([Living Desert Zoo](#)) The eyes of the singing dog are reflective and glow bright green in low light conditions. This is an unusual trait in canines. ([Zoo Miami](#)) On average, the New Guinea singing dogs are 17 inches tall at the shoulder and weigh about 25 pounds. Most often they are golden red or black and tan with white markings on the underside of the chin, feet, and tail ([NGSD Conservation Society](#)).

**Behavior:** New Guinea singing dogs are well known for their shy, elusive behavior. They most likely are solitary animals, not pack animals. These dogs are excellent climbers and diggers. They jump high into the air like a cat. New Guinea singing dogs get their name from the wide range of vocalizations they produce, especially their unique [howl](#). Each dog has its own unique voice and the singing dogs will [howl together](#) in a group ([San Diego Zoo](#)).

**Reproduction:** Not much is known about wild singing dog reproduction. In captivity, females will have a gestation period of 63 days and give birth to 4 pups on average. Both parents participate in raising the young. Puppies spend a lot of their day sleeping and playing. The singing dog puppies are very playful with each other and the adults ([San Diego Zoo](#)).

**Diet:** Wild: small mammals, birds, and reptiles. If it moves, they will try to eat it ([San Diego Zoo](#)).

Zoo: dog food and meat

**Conservation:** Not much is known about the status of the New Guinea singing dogs in the wild. Only a [few hundred](#) singing dogs are known to exist and most of those are in captive managed breeding programs. They had only been photographed once in the wild and were thought to be possibly extinct in the wild until another photograph, taken in 2012 emerged. ([National Geographic](#)) Although these animals are not officially evaluated, they are thought to be endangered and in need of conservation action. Threats to the singing dog population include inbreeding and habitat destruction.

**FYI:** Their taxonomy has caused a scientific hullabaloo for over 50 years. Originally classified in the 1950's as a wild dog species (*Canus hallstromi*), they were then transitioned to a domestic classification (*Canus lupus familiaris hallstromi*) and have now, finally, been reclassified as *Canis hallstromi* ([San Diego Zoo](#)).

---New Guinea singing dogs are the rarest dog species in the world!



## Range & Habitat:

Mountains and thick forests of Indonesia and Papua New Guinea. Most recently spotted in Mandala Mountains of West Papua, Indonesia.



**Lifespan:** up to 15 years in captivity, unknown in the wild.

**Special Adaptations:** Singing dogs are extremely flexible for a canid. This helps them to hunt on steep, densely vegetated terrain.

## IUCN Conservation Status:

Not Evaluated

