



Southern Two-Toed Sloth

Choloepus didactylus



Physical Characteristics:

I am a grayish brown animal with long coarse fur. I have a lighter color face and small round eyes. I have two long claws on the front feet and three on the back feet. My hair parts on the middle of my stomach so I can shed the rain while hanging upside down. I do not have incisors but the teeth I do have grow continually and are worn down by grinding food.

Habitat / Climate

Rainforest Tropical

Where am I from?

I live in the tropical forest treetops of northern South America. I have extremely slow metabolism and have the lowest variable body temperature of any mammal so I need the warm climate.



Other family members:

Armadillo
Anteater

Who are my relatives?

I am a mammal from the order Xenarthra and the family Megalonychidae. Armadillos and anteaters are in the same order, but they eat insects and I don't.



Breeding Potential

Litter size? 1

Number of litters per year? 1

How am I born?

My gestation period is 11.5 months. My mother gives live birth to one offspring while she is hanging upside down. I will cling to my mother for 6-8 months and soon begin to feed from the same trees that she is feeding from.

Breeding Season

F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
E	A	P	A	U	U	E	E	C	O	E
B	R	R	Y	N	L	G	P	T	V	C

How long does it take me to grow up and how long do I live?

I will reach sexual maturity at 4.5 years if I am a male and 3.5 years if I am a female. I will get to be around 2 feet in length and weigh 10 to 20 lbs. My average life span is 15 - 20 years.

What kind of family life do I have?

My mother will take care of me until I can feed on my own but my father has nothing to do with me. I am a solitary animal spending my entire life hanging upside down in trees: eating, sleeping, mating and even giving birth.

Names for:

Adult male-
Adult female-
Young-
Group:-

What do I eat and when do I eat?

I am a *herbivore*. I feed on twigs, leaves, and fruit. I only need to come to the ground to defecate and urinate once a week because my metabolism is so slow. My specially designed long coarse hair will grow algae which I may eat or receive the nutrients from through my skin. It also helps camouflage me from my predators. I may move to another tree to eat but if I can't reach it's branches from where I am then I have to crawl on the ground because I am not physically able to truly walk although I can swim extremely well. I am *nocturnal*.

Who are my predators?

I am very slow moving and that is one reason I rarely come to the ground for I would be easy prey to some of the large carnivores in the forest such as Jaguars and birds of prey. People also eat me for food.



What is the history of my relationship to man?

I am food for indigenous people and am an important propagator of tropical plants. Several species of plants will not germinate until they pass through my body.