

# MEERKATS AT THE MELBOURNE ZOO

Meerkats love to dig, and humans love to watch them!

Meerkats are not a threatened species, and it is unknown whether wild populations are increasing or decreasing.

## MEETING THE MEERKATS

Meeting the meerkats at Melbourne Zoo is an important way to connect with the animals of Africa, and to learn about the Zoo's conservation programs.

There are three subspecies of meerkat: red, grey and slender-tailed, the subspecies at Zoos Victoria.



## ABOUT MEERKATS

Meerkats live in southern Africa, which is dominated by the Kalahari Desert. Countries where they are found include Angola, Botswana, Namibia and South Africa.

They are small: 26–28cm (with a 22cm

Finding safety in numbers, meerkats live female in charge of each smaller family of the day foraging for food. A lookout until relieved by another meerkat. threats such as jackals, vultures, snakes, have a wide range of vocalisations, and each form of danger. The pack may band predator or rival pack with much hissing

Meerkats are omnivorous, and their diet of moths, butterflies, beetles and flies; scorpions; and other invertebrates that they excavate. They also eat lizards, small snakes, birds, eggs and mice. In dry areas they get moisture by chewing local melons, roots and tubers.



tail).

in groups of 10–30, with a unit. Meerkats spend most stands on a high viewpoint Danger can come from servals or hawks. Meerkats warning calls are specific to together to threaten a and jumping.

includes pupae and larvae termites; crickets; spiders;



*Meerkats are not cats, they are a member of the civet family, which includes the otter and mongoose.*