

Name _____



Meerkat Predators and Threats

Meerkats may look cute, but they face many dangers in the wild. These small mammals live in the deserts and grasslands of southern Africa, where threats can appear from the sky or the ground.

One of the biggest dangers to meerkats comes from birds of prey. Eagles and hawks can swoop down and catch a meerkat off guard. To stay safe, meerkats often take turns standing watch while the others forage for food. If a predator is seen, the lookout meerkat gives a loud alarm call, warning the group to run for cover.

Snakes are another common predator for meerkats. Some snakes, like the Cape cobra, are known for hunting young meerkats. The meerkat mob works together to chase away snakes by mobbing them, which means surrounding the snake and making loud noises to scare it off.

Apart from animal predators, meerkats face threats from their environment. Droughts can make it hard for them to find food and water. Human activity, such as farming and land development, can also reduce their natural habitat. Meerkats can suffer from diseases and parasites too. Fleas and ticks can be common pests, while illnesses like rabies may occasionally spread among wild meerkat populations.

To stay healthy, meerkats groom each other regularly, removing ticks and keeping their fur clean. They also depend on teamwork for safety, helping one another find food, warn of danger, and care for their young.