

## African Pygmy Goat

*Capra aegagrus hircus*

**Class:**                    **Order:**                    **Suborder:**                    **Family:**

**Other names:** none

**Other subspecies:**

**Other Relatives:**

### Zoo Goats

Mercedes – female, B: 2/3/07, Aq: 3/19/11

Mercedes' offspring:

Nike 1.0 – male, B: 2/19/11, Aq: 3/19/11

Dash 1.0 – male, B: 2/19/11, Aq: 3/19/11

Charliegh 0.1 – female, B: 2/19/11, Aq: 3/19/11

### About our Goats

Mercedes- fullest beard, slightly larger than Charlie. Mercedes came from a farmer and is the mother of Nike, Charlie and Dash. She weighs 61 lbs.

Charliegh - female, not as long/full of a beard. Came to the zoo with siblings and mother, weighs about 47 lbs.

Nike- has wattles, no beard. Came to the zoo with siblings and mother, weighs 58 lbs.

Dash- no wattles, no beard. Came to the zoo with siblings and mother, weighs 48 lbs.

### Status

Domesticated - Least concern

### Geographic Region

Originated in Western Africa; now distributed worldwide

### Characteristics

**Size:** *Shoulder height:* 18 – 21”                    *Weight:* 53 – 75 lbs.

### Longevity: Wild

*Average lifespan:* 8-18 years

### Captivity

### Physical Description

- Purebred pygmies should have a short, stocky appearance making them suitable for their intention as a meat or milk goat.
- They have medium length fur and a thick undercoat, which allows them to tolerate even very temperate weather. Pygmy goats come in a wide variety of colors.
- The most common are silver agouti (grey/black mixture), caramel (tan with black markings), and black (with white points).
- Although pygmy goats all grow horns, many are dehorned for safety reasons.

### Dimorphism

**Males:**

**Females:**

### Diet: Herbivore

They eat hay, vegetation, and commercially available pellets. Pygmy goats are ruminants, which mean that they have a four chambered stomach to aid in optimal digestion of the rough vegetation they eat.

**Diet in the Wild:**

**Diet in the Zoo:**

### Behavior

Pygmy goats are very tolerant, pleasant-natured animals. Males have a scent gland near the crown of their heads that releases an odor that attracts females.

### Reproduction



Nike



Dash



Charliegh



Mercedes

Pygmy goats are able to breed as early as two months, it is recommended to wait until they have finished developing at 12-18 months. The female pygmy goat heat cycle is every 18-23 days and can last for three days. Females have a five month gestation period and give birth to one to four kids. Newborn kids will nurse almost immediately, begin eating grain and roughage within a week, and are weaned by three months of age.

#### **Conservation**

- **Use & Trade:**
- **Threats:**
- **Predators:**

#### **Did You Know?/Fun Facts**

- Adaptable to nearly any climate
- Can produce milk year-round
- Like jumping
- Domesticated 8,500 years ago

**Glossary:** List of definitions of the most important recurrent technical terms used in the text.

Sources: African Pygmy Goat Information. 2009, December. <http://www.minidonkeys.com/general1.htm>

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