

Ringtail
Bassariscus astutus



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The Ringtail is a cat-sized carnivore resembling a small fox with a long raccoon-like tail. Its bushy tail is flattened and nearly as long as the head and body, with alternating black and white rings. These animals are almost wholly nocturnal and spend the majority of the day sleeping in their dens. They leave their dens at night to feed. Ringtails eat a wide variety of foods. Birds, rodents, carrion, reptiles and amphibians, and insects such as grasshoppers and crickets form the bulk of their diet, although they also eat native fruits and berries as well. The breeding season of the Ringtail is in mid-spring. Most litters consist of two to four babies, which are born covered with short, pale hair, unable to see and hear. By the age of four months, young Ringtails have acquired their adult coloring.

Ringtails live in many different habitats, but they prefer rocky areas such as rock piles, stone fences, canyon walls, and talus slopes. Ringtails are expert climbers, capable of climbing vertical walls to find the most protected crevices, crannies, and hollows in which to build their dens. In woodland areas, where they are less common, they den in hollow trees and logs. They have also been observed living in buildings and neighboring open edges and fields.

From the Texas Parks & Wildlife Fact Sheets.