

Sloth

Sloths are known for being particularly slow-moving creatures; all of their movements are careful and deliberate. They are mostly nocturnal and spend up to 90% of their time hanging upside down. Sloths have fairly poor vision and hearing so they rely on a strong sense of smell and touch.



Appearance

Species of sloths are divided into two families: two-toed sloths and three-toed sloths. Both of these species share similar appearance characteristics, including thick fur, rounded heads, flat snouts and stumpy tails. As they spend so much of their time hanging from branches, they have long curved claws to help with grip. Typically, they are between 60cm and 80cm in size, weighing anything between 2kg to 10kg.

As they move so little, they often have algae growing on their fur. Their fur provides the algae with a place to grow and the green colouring from the algae provides camouflage for the sloth. What's more, with insects feeding on the algae, it makes the sloth's whole body like a mini jungle habitat of its own!

Diet

Some sloth species eat nothing but leaves, while others also eat fruit, insects and even small lizards. No other mammal digests its food as slowly as the sloth. It can take up to a whole month to digest a single leaf. In fact, the slow movements of the sloth are mainly because of their leaf-based diet, which is low in energy and creates a slow metabolism.

Habitat

Sloths are mostly found in Central and South American rainforests and they mainly live among the branches of trees. They eat, sleep and even give birth while hanging from the branches.

Interesting Facts

- The sloth moves at an average speed of approximately two to four metres per minute.
- Sloths are surprisingly good swimmers and can swim about three or four times quicker than they can move on land. They are also able to hold their breath for long periods (even more than half an hour) while under water.

"Crawling" by ndanger is licensed under [CC BY 2.0](#)