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National Wildlife Federation

Ranger Rick



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GOT STRIPES?



Periodical of the Year
(Grades K-5)



WHERE GREVY'S ZEBRAS LIVE

Horses of a

BY ELIZABETH SCHLEICHERT; PHOTOS BY SUZI ESZTERHAS/SUZIESZTERHAS.COM

DIFFERENT Stripe



FOAL PLAY?

At left, a Grevy's mom holds her foal (baby) close. Mom often rubs her chin over the baby's back—most likely as a way to show affection.

As you can see at right, even a foal has stripes, but they're paler than its mother's.



Discover how tough life can be for these endangered zebras.

You'd know a zebra anywhere, right? Who else has such dazzling stripes? The zebras on these pages are *Grevy's* (GREH-veez) zebras. Their stripes are thin and close together, unlike the stripes of other zebras (see "Who's Who" on page 11).

In fact, Grevy's are different in a number of ways. For starters, their ears are larger and rounder than those of other zebras. Secondly, as zebras go, Grevy's are giants. Most zebras are pony-sized, but a Grevy's stands as high as its cousin,

the familiar saddle horse. (Zebras are wild horses, as you may know.) Finally, Grevy's are rare—few of them are left in the wild. (You'll discover why in just a minute.)

Like all zebras, Grevy's live in Africa (see map above left). But unlike other zebras, Grevy's roam over an area that is especially dry. Years may go by with hardly any rain. So it's often tough for the zebras to find enough grass to graze on and enough water to drink.



ON THE MOVE
A small herd of moms with their foals heads off to find fresh grass and new water-holes (left).

The zebras have to be on constant alert for hungry lions like the one below left that's stalking its prey.

until they find something to drink.

While roaming the near-desertlike land, the Grevy's may hang out in small herds. Why? Because there's safety in numbers. And out here on the open grasslands, the zebras are easy marks for hungry lions. It helps that the Grevy's have sharp senses. In a herd, all those eyes, ears, and noses keep everyone safer.

It helps, too, that, when threatened with attack, a Grevy's is a clever getaway artist: Its large lungs and mighty muscles help it race off at speeds of 40 miles an hour.

SURVIVAL TRICKS

In their search for food and water, the Grevy's may wander far and wide, covering 10 miles or more a day. As the zebras graze, they use their sharp front teeth to cut off the tips of the grass. Grevy's can

survive just fine on the coarse grasses and tough herbs that grow here—as long as they get enough of them.

Finding water to drink during long, dry spells can be especially difficult.

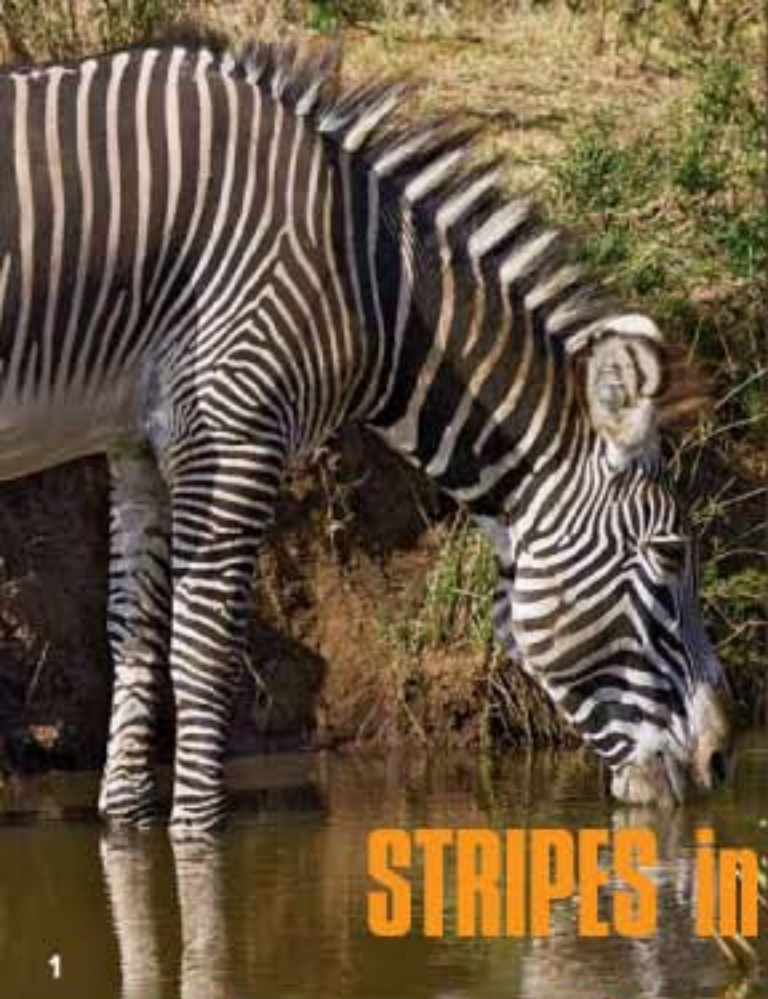
Many adult Grevy's can go for as long as five days without water. But nursing moms need to drink every day or so.

The terrific sense of smell of a Grevy's comes in handy when tracking down water.

Sometimes when a river bed is totally dried up, the zebra can sniff out water there below ground—and then dig down to get at it. But other times, the thirsty zebras just have to keep moving and moving



CARINE SCHRURS/NATUREPL.COM



STRIPES in TROUBLE

About 30 years ago, there were as many as 15,000 Grevy's zebras in Africa. But then more and more people moved onto the zebras' grasslands. They were mostly poor herders who depended on their livestock—cattle, goats, and sheep—for a living. Before long, the livestock ate nearly all the grass in places.

That meant there was little left for the zebras.

Also, the herders and their animals often gathered around the watering holes where the zebras came to drink. The crowds scared the zebras off, so they had to travel farther and farther to find water. Many, especially the foals, became too weak to travel such distances—and died. So, these days there are fewer than 2,500 Grevy's left.

PITCHING IN

But here's the good news: Many people are working hard to save the zebras. For instance, some herders are keeping livestock out of certain grazing areas. The grass in these spots is slowly growing back, which means more food for the zebras and other wildlife.

And people are now pumping more water up from deep underground. Some of the

water gets pumped into troughs for the zebras (photo 1). Some is just for the herders (2)—and still more goes for their livestock (3).

Also, some herders are teaching the local children why Grevy's are worth saving (4).

So, let's hope that these horses of a different stripe will be streaking across the grasslands for years to come! 🦓



WHO'S WHO?

There are three main species of zebras. You can tell them apart by the pattern of stripes on their rumps.

- 1 Grevy's Zebra
- 2 Mountain Zebra
- 3 Plains Zebra

ART BY PATRICIA WYNNE



FAST FACTS

- **What's in a name?** The Grevy's zebra is named for a former president of France, Jules Grévy, who was given one of these animals.
- **On the move:** Unlike with other kinds of zebras (and horses), a Grevy's doesn't necessarily stay with the same herd. The zebra may join one herd for a little while, then move on to another.
- **Danger!** Lions are the biggest threat to Grevy's zebras, but leopards and hyenas sometimes attack them, too.
- **What good are stripes?** Nobody knows for sure. They may help zebras recognize each other, as no two have the exact same pattern of stripes. This is true for all kinds of zebras.