

The Secret Lives of Llamas

Llamas are members of the camel family which are native to the Andes Mountains in South America. Lots of people know llamas for their bad habit of spitting, but there's a lot more to llamas than meets the eye...

Species: Lama glama

Height: Up to 180cm

Weight: Up to 200kg

Lifespan: 15 - 25 years



Llamas can be used as therapy animals!

It is possible to train a llama to be a therapy animal. That means that they can go into places like hospitals, schools and nursing homes to give people comfort with their calm and soothing nature.

Llamas have three stomachs!

Llamas aren't fussy eaters. Like goats, they have been known to chew their food once, regurgitate it and then chew it again! The three stomach chambers that llamas have are great for breaking down food like grass and hay. Llamas can also survive on very little water.

Llamas can talk!

Llamas make different sounds depending on their moods or what they are doing. For example, llama mothers will hum to their babies or when they are feeling happy. They are also known to scream as an alarm call if they feel in danger and sometimes also make grunting, snorting and clicking sounds.

Llamas can be used as guards!

In western parts of the USA where coyotes and wolves are found, some farmers use llamas as guards for their sheep. If a llama spots a predator trying to attack the herd, they will make alarm calls to alert the farmer and in some cases will even try to scare the predator away.

Glossary:

Native - an animal that originates from a specific area is said to be native to that area.

Regurgitate - to bring swallowed food back up.

Predator - an animal that preys on other animals.

Questions

1. Where are llamas native to?

2. What is the lifespan of llamas?

10 - 20 years

15 - 25 years

15 - 20 years

3. Why are llamas good therapy animals?

4. What do a llama's three stomachs do?

5. When might a llama hum?

6. How can llamas help farmers?

7. What is a predator?

An animal that is preyed on

An animal that doesn't eat other animals

An animal that preys on other animals

8. Why has the writer included a glossary?

9. Would you like to have a llama as a pet? Why or why not?
