Sardinian (Sicilian) Donkey

Equus africanus asinus

Class: *Mammalia*   **Order:** *Perrisodactyla*   **Family:** *Equidae*

Characteristics:

The Sicilian Donkey (aka Sardinian or miniature donkey), are similar to other donkey breeds in their proportions. Like other donkeys, they have tall ears with a bushy-tipped tail (Like a cow). They differ in that a usual African donkey is 56" tall at the shoulder while the Sicilian Donkey stands at a mere 34". Sardinian donkeys are mostly gray with a white undercarriage. Their mane is darker black. They also have a black stripe connecting the two front shoulders. The thickness of their fur can vary (Lifestock Conservancy and Oklahoma State University).

Behavior:

Livestock Conservancy and Oklahoma State University consider the Sardinian donkey docile, although it is known to be stubborn when frightened.   It is rather intelligent and can be trained to do behaviors.

Reproduction:

The gestation period lasts for 11 to 13 months, giving birth to usually one foal. Within minutes the foal is able to walk. The foal lives primarily on milk until it is weaned 4 to 6 months after its birth.

Diet:

Wild: Diverse plants, but primarily eats hay, grains and grass
Zoo: Grains, grasses and mineral lick

Conservation:

The Livestock Conservancy considers the Sicilian as recovering in the USA, but are almost extinct in the Mediterranean due to crossbreeding.

FYI:

- The wealthy romans of ancient times used to bathe in donkey milk with the thought that the milk's properties would keep them young.
- The donkey's milk is considered to be the most homologous to human milk in sugar/fat ratios.
- The smallest Sardinian donkey was recorded at 26".
- A mule is the result of breeding a male donkey with a female horse.
- A male donkey is called a Jack and a female donkey is called a Jennet.

Range & Habitat:
Found domestically around the world.

Lifespan: up to 35 years in captivity.

Special Adaptations: Small, docile, sure-footed and intelligent.

IUCN Conservation Status:
Not Evaluated