



SeaWorld/Busch Gardens

Primates

Background Information

Primate family ties.

The primate group is quite large, consisting of tree shrews, lemurs, monkeys, apes, and even humans (see Family Tree). Because primates are so diverse, the group breaks apart into two suborders: lemur-like and human-like. With the exception of humans, a few monkey species and Asian apes, most primates live in tropical climates.

Easy to spot differences.

There are several main differences between apes and monkeys and many characteristics are easy to identify. Apes do not have a tail and are generally larger than most other primates. They also have a more upright body posture. Apes rely more on vision than on smell and have a short, broad nose rather than a longer snout, as monkeys do. Apes have a larger brain relative to the body size than other primates.



Chimpanzees belong to the family Pongidae which includes the other great apes, the gorilla, bonobo and orang-utan.

Great apes are distinguished from lesser apes by their terrestrial behavior, rather than arboreal dwelling. Great apes also build nests and do not have pads on their hind legs to sit on like lesser apes.

Monkeys have two subgroups: old world and new world monkeys. Old World monkeys are generally from Africa and Asia while New World monkeys are from the Americas. These old world species, such as baboons, have primitive primate features such as a small brain case and a prominent nose. New World monkeys, like marmosets, have round nostrils facing to the side. Old World primates are usually larger than New World's and are partly terrestrial.

Family tree

