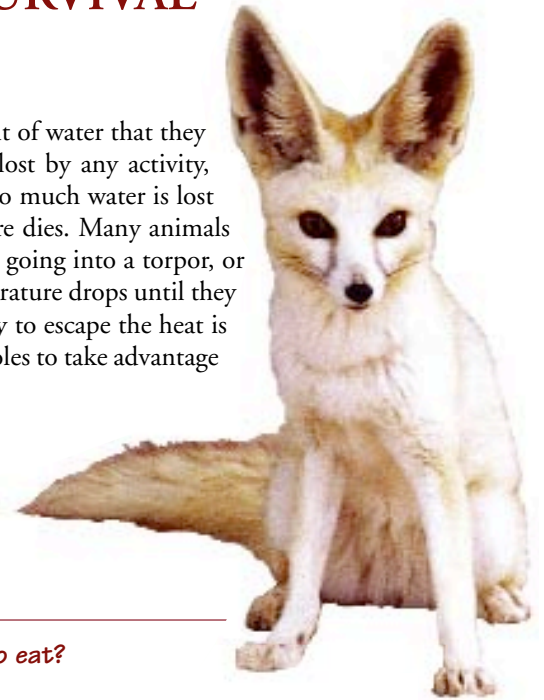


For desert mammals life is a battle for moisture. They must balance the amount of water that they need to survive with the amount of water lost from their bodies. Water is lost by any activity, particularly moving around in the heat. Even breathing causes loss of water. If too much water is lost an animal's body fluids, such as blood, become too concentrated and the creature dies. Many animals adapt by taking time out from the heat. They can do this in two ways. One is by going into a torpor, or state of sleepiness. In cool sheltered homes underneath the sand, their body temperature drops until they become comatose and can sleep for many hours without waking. The second way to escape the heat is to use night hours for activity. At dusk, creatures come out of their burrows and holes to take advantage of cool temperatures and to feed.



The rare Ruppell's sand fox stays underground during the day. It comes out at night to feed on a diet of small mammals and birds.

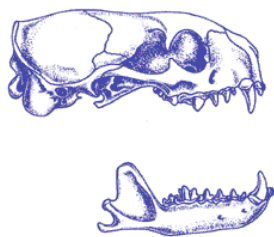


What do these groups of animals like to eat?

Carnivores are meat eaters. Their bodies are specially adapted for hunting live prey. They have well-developed brains, and claws at the end of their toes. They have powerful teeth and a flesh tooth at the front of their jaw for tearing meat.

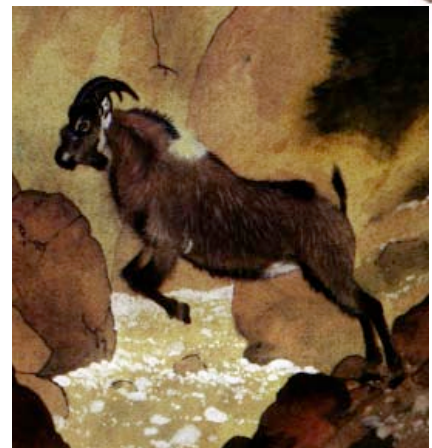


Indian grey mongoose



Skull of a mongoose

Tahr



Herbivores eat plants. Their teeth are arranged so they can pull at leaves and grasses. The back teeth then chew their food.

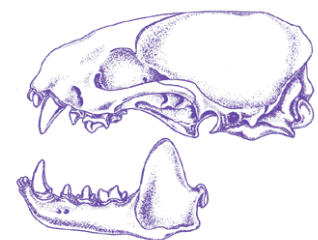


Skull of a tahr

Honey badger



Some animals like many different kinds of foods. They are **omnivores**. Because meat is part of their diet they have the same large front teeth as the carnivores.



Skull of the Honey badger