



Care For Us

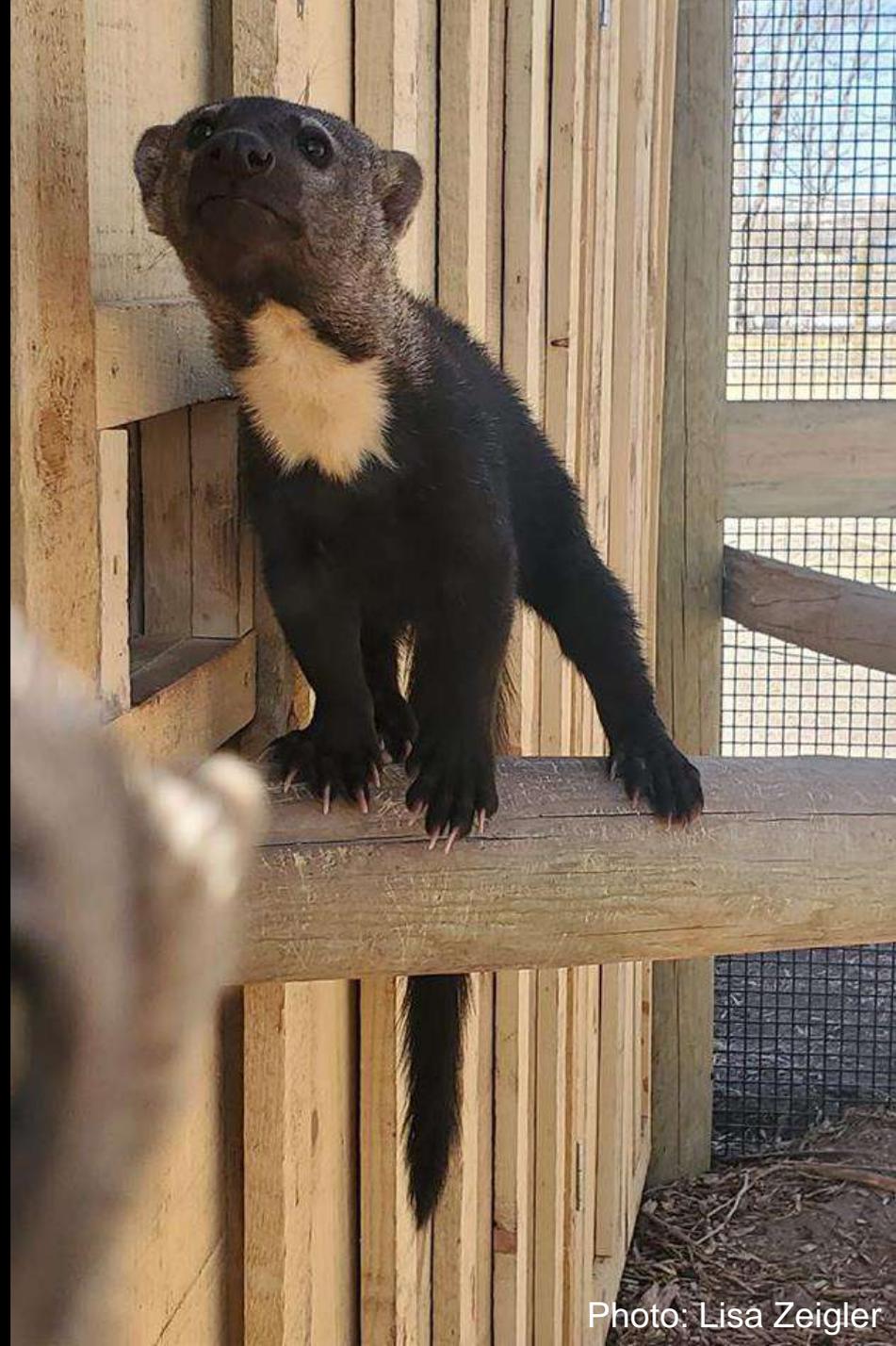
Tayra (*Eira Barbara*)

Animal Welfare

Animal welfare refers to an animal's state or feelings. An animal's welfare state can be positive, neutral or negative.

An animal's welfare has the potential to differ on a daily basis. When an animal's needs - nutritional, behavioural, health and environmental - are met, they will have a good standard of welfare.

A good life in captivity might be one where animals can consistently experience good welfare - throughout their entire life.





Understanding that animals have both sentient and cognitive abilities as well as pain perception, reinforces the need to provide appropriate husbandry for all captive animals, to ensure positive welfare.

In captivity, the welfare of an animal is dependent on the environment provided for them and the daily care and veterinary treatment they receive.

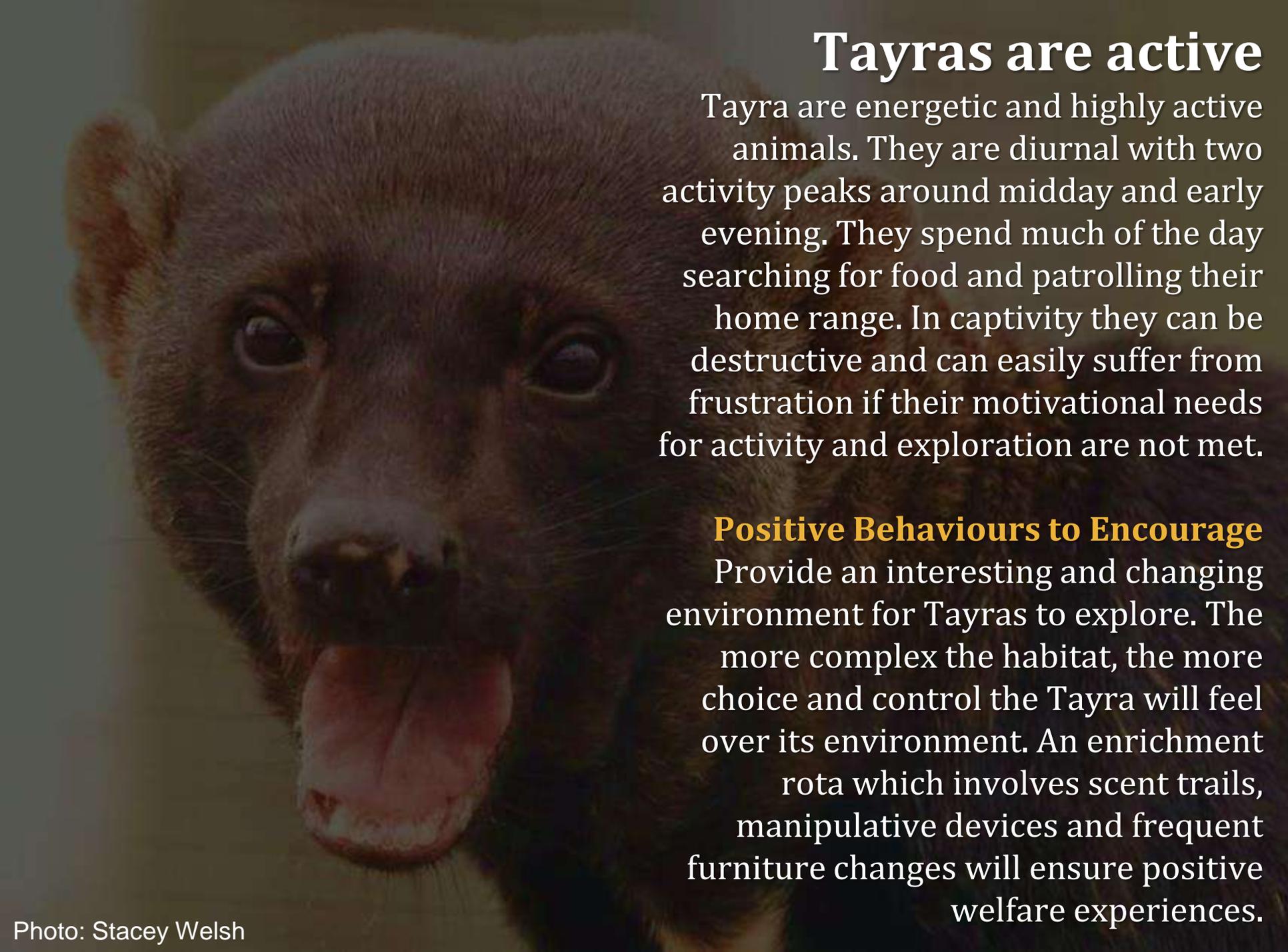
A close-up photograph of a brown Tayra (Mustelidae) perched on a light-colored branch. The animal is shown in profile, facing right, with its head slightly turned. Its fur is a rich, reddish-brown color. The background is dark and out of focus.

The Tayra is a member of the Mustelidae (weasel) family and they are incredibly inquisitive, curious animals.

Tayras are omnivores, hunting small mammals, birds, lizards and invertebrates as well as searching for fruit and honey. They are excellent climbers, active during the day and are generally solitary in the wild.

They can be found throughout Central America and much of South America in tropical and subtropical forests.

The IUCN classify Tayras as Least Concern. Their main threat is habitat loss for agriculture.



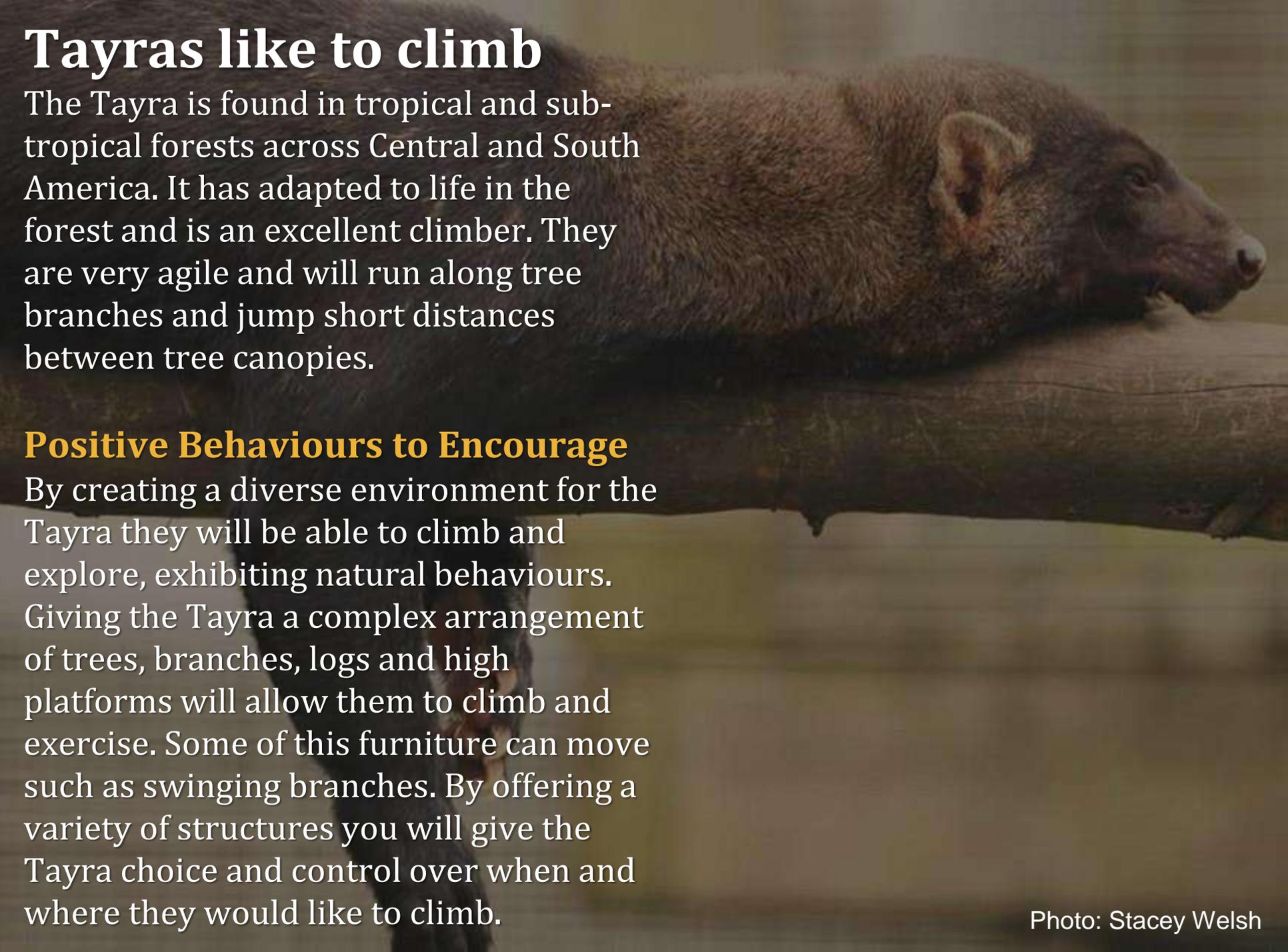
Tayras are active

Tayras are energetic and highly active animals. They are diurnal with two activity peaks around midday and early evening. They spend much of the day searching for food and patrolling their home range. In captivity they can be destructive and can easily suffer from frustration if their motivational needs for activity and exploration are not met.

Positive Behaviours to Encourage

Provide an interesting and changing environment for Tayras to explore. The more complex the habitat, the more choice and control the Tayra will feel over its environment. An enrichment rota which involves scent trails, manipulative devices and frequent furniture changes will ensure positive welfare experiences.

Tayras like to climb

A photograph of a Tayra, a species of raccoon, resting on a large, weathered log. The Tayra is shown in profile, facing right, with its dark brown fur and lighter-colored face clearly visible. The background is a soft, out-of-focus natural setting.

The Tayra is found in tropical and subtropical forests across Central and South America. It has adapted to life in the forest and is an excellent climber. They are very agile and will run along tree branches and jump short distances between tree canopies.

Positive Behaviours to Encourage

By creating a diverse environment for the Tayra they will be able to climb and explore, exhibiting natural behaviours. Giving the Tayra a complex arrangement of trees, branches, logs and high platforms will allow them to climb and exercise. Some of this furniture can move such as swinging branches. By offering a variety of structures you will give the Tayra choice and control over when and where they would like to climb.



Tayras benefit from substrates

Although the Tayra is adapted for climbing trees, they also benefit from an enclosure which has substrates on the floor such as bark chip, leaf litter and soil. This will give the Tayra an opportunity to dig if they want to, as well as protecting the pads of their feet from soreness through repetitive movement across concrete.

Positive Behaviours to Encourage

By providing various substrates, Tayra have the choice to explore on the ground if they want to. Behaviours such as investigation and foraging can be encouraged through hiding food and scents within substrate piles. These piles can also be used by the Tayra to cache food.

Tayras enjoy a variety of different foods

Tayras are omnivores (they like to eat a variety of food of both plant and animal origin) so benefit from a selection of different foods presented in many different ways. A varied diet is both nutritious and stimulating for a Tayra, including a selection of different meats such as humanely killed small mammals and birds, fruit and steamed vegetables, as well as a wide range of invertebrate species.

Positive Behaviours to Encourage

Feeding Tayras a varied diet that changes daily and weekly whilst still providing for their nutritional needs will help benefit their physical and mental well-being.



Tayras enjoy foraging

Tayras use their senses to search for food items and will investigate within substrates and in trees. Tayras are opportunistic hunters and have been known to cache food, returning to it later. Because of their continuous search for food, it is best to feed them several times a day.

Positive Behaviours to Encourage

By encouraging the Tayra to actively search for their food, they will be motivated to express natural foraging behaviours. Hiding food items in trees, piercing food on branches and smearing liquids or scattering food items within an enclosure and beneath substrate piles will allow for natural exploratory behaviours. Providing enrichment devices such as puzzle feeders for smaller food items and anchoring/hanging larger meat carcasses will ensure a Tayra benefits from being physically challenged whilst they forage.

Tayras can be social

Despite being solitary in the wild, Tayras can live in small family groups in captivity if managed correctly.

Positive Behaviours to Encourage

Providing plenty of space for Tayras to be distant from each other if living together is important to prevent aggression issues. Avoid resource guarding behaviours by providing plenty of areas where food and water can be accessed as well as multiple inside areas and ensure visual barriers are in place within the enclosure.





Tayras are diurnal

Tayras are primarily diurnal and spend much of the day being very active. They like to explore their environment but also like to rest and move out of sight where they feel safe and secure.

Positive Behaviours to Encourage

Provide opportunities for Tayras to explore the whole of their environment. High trees, branches and platforms allow them to exhibit natural behaviours. Giving them several places to rest or to move out of view will help reduce stress and unnatural behaviours.

Tayras like places to rest

When Tayras are not exploring, they benefit from having multiple places to rest. Being arboreal, these resting areas should be up high and there should be more than one to provide the Tayra with choice.

Positive Behaviours to Encourage

Provide opportunities for the Tayras to rest in various parts of the enclosure, away from public view and protected from the elements. Providing platforms up high and boxes with soft substrates such as straw can all benefit Tayras.



Photo: Christina Christensen



Photo: Christina Christensen

Tayras enjoy...

Climbing, investigating and searching for food. Giving them a complex environment and allowing them to use their senses to search for hidden food, as well as providing choice will benefit Tayras.

In captivity we should always try and replicate their natural and normal behaviours so they are happy and healthy throughout their lives.

