



## Ringtail (*Bassariscus astutus*)

**Order:** Carnivora **Family:** Procyonidae

**SIZE:** Weight, 2-2 ½ lbs. May reach 30 inches in length including tail.

**DESCRIPTION:** A small, slender animal with a small head with pointed muzzle. Yellowish-gray above with whitish-buff below. Long, bushy tail with black and white bands, ending with black tip. Large eyes encircled with white fur, and large ears. Partially retractable claws.

**LOCOMOTION:** Skilled climber that easily darts up and down trees. Can leap like a squirrel. Uses tail for balancing.

**COMMUNICATION:** Young ringtails squeak. Adults bark, scream, snarl, whistle and chitter. Under stress, they will give an undulating howl.

**HABITS:** Found in rocky cliffs, forested areas, deserts and canyons near water. Strictly nocturnal. Fairly common but rarely seen. When threatened, the ringtail secretes a foul-smelling fluid from its anal glands.

**DIET:** Any small mammals they can capture, as well as birds, lizards, frogs, insects, snakes, cactus fruits and other plants. Pounces on its prey, then delivers a fatal bite to the neck. Usually begins by eating the head of its victim.

**RANGE:** Western United States and Mexico.

**FAMILY LIFE:** Two to four young are born in spring or early summer, after a gestation period of around 53 days. At birth, young are white and fuzzy with a stubby tail, but soon acquire adult coloration and longer tails. They hunt independently at about 4 months and disperse in late fall.

**NESTING:** Hollow logs lined with grass, leaves and moss. Small caves and between rocks. Have been known to use old mine tunnels and take up residence in attics.

**ENEMIES:** Man, bobcats, great horned owls and other large predators.

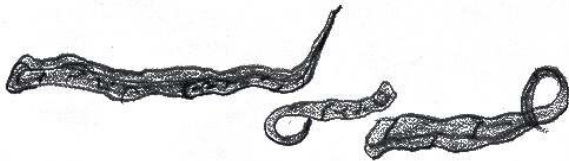
**DID YOU KNOW THAT...?**

- Ringtails were placed in frontier mines to control rodents, earning their name "Miner's Cat."
- They are able to rotate their hind feet at least 180 degrees, which helps them to go up and down very steep surfaces.

## Track

About 1 inch by 1 inch.

Hind track will partly cover front track.



## Scat

Scat is approximately 3 inches long



## Range

Most of Arizona.