

## The Spotted Hyenas of Kruger National Park



By Bernard DUPONT from FRANCE via Wikimedia Commons

**A spotted hyena in Kruger National Park**

Kruger National Park is in South Africa. It has elephants, lions, giraffes, zebras, and hyenas, and many other types of animals, too. The animals live in the wild and are protected by the park.

Many Africans do not like hyenas because they think hyenas are evil. It's easy to understand why. Hyenas are nocturnal, which means they are active at night. They are loud and make weird noises. They make crazy sounding laughing noises and call to each other by making loud whooping sounds. These whooping noises can be heard for miles and can sound rather creepy.

---

## The Spotted Hyenas of Kruger National Park

---



By Bernard DUPONT from FRANCE via Wikimedia Commons

### Spotted hyenas work together to solve problems

Many people think that spotted hyenas are scavengers and that they don't hunt, but this is not true. A scavenger only eats animals that are already dead. Spotted hyenas are excellent hunters. They are as good as lions.

Hyenas are related to dogs, but they are much more powerful. The hyena has very strong jaws that it uses to crush bones. Hyenas eat almost every part of an animal including the bones. Lions cannot eat bones because their jaws are not strong enough to chew up the bones.

Spotted hyenas have big brains and are very smart—they are at least as smart as chimpanzees. Spotted hyenas work together when they hunt. They also find food by watching the sky for vultures. Vultures circle over dead animals and the hyenas follow the vultures to find dead animals. Hyenas also steal food from other animals, including lions. Lions steal food from the hyenas, too.

Lions and hyenas are long-time enemies. Hyenas are smarter than lions, but lions are bigger and stronger. Sometimes they fight—usually it is over food because they both hunt and eat the same animals. They also just really don't like one another.

---

## The Spotted Hyenas of Kruger National Park

---

Spotted hyenas live in groups called clans. Clans have between 10 and 40 hyenas. One female runs each clan. Female spotted hyenas are bigger and stronger than the males.

Spotted hyenas live in a den that they dig in the ground. The clan shares the den. The den can be very big and have many entrances.

Baby hyenas are called cubs. The cubs hide in the den to stay safe. A mom usually has two cubs at a time. The cubs are born with their eyes open and grow very fast. They soon join the rest of the clan in hunting.



**Spotted hyena cubs outside their den**