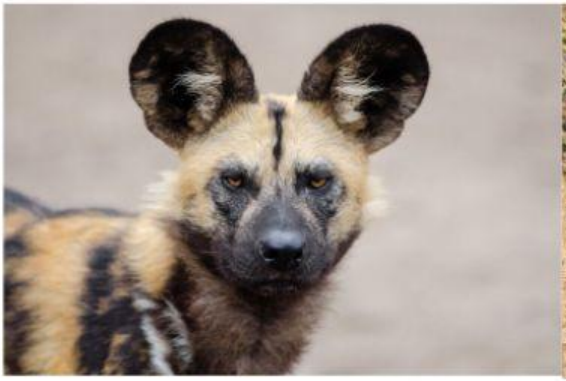
AFRICAN WILD DOGS

What's the difference between African wild dogs and the dogs that we know as pets? For one thing. African wild dogs only have four toes, while domestic dogs and wolves have five. But you wouldn't want to count for yourself, because these animals are truly wild. They live in Africa, in the south of the Sahara desert.

Wild dogs are not somebody's domestic fogs that ran away and didn't come back, although some people used to think that', explains Dr. Tico McNutt, who studies these animals at Wild Dog Research Camp in the African country of Botswana. 'These are actually Africa's wolf, and just like wolves, they do not make good pets. They need to be out in the wild doing what they are supposed to be doing – ranging many miles every day and hunting to find the food they need to survive and feed their puppies.

In fact, they travel so far that researchers use radio collars to keep track of them. The collar send out signals that tell people where the dogs are. African wild dogs are a separate species from domestic dogs: Lycaon pictus, which means painted, wolf-like animal. No two wild dogs have the same pattern to their coats, so it is easy to tell them apart. However, they are an endangered species because of the human persecution and outbreaks of disease.

Roaming through grasslands, savannas, and wooded areas, they hunt gazelles and other antelopes, baby wildebeests, warthogs, birds and rats. Incredible hunters, they can run up to 35 miles per hour (56 kilometres per hour).



LIVEWORKSHEETS

Activity 1: Answer the following questions.

1. What is the difference between an African wild dog and a pet dog?

2. Where do African wild dogs live?

3. What kind of animal is the African wild dog?

4. What do researchers use to keep track of the African wild dogs?

5. Why are they in danger?

6. What do they hunt?

7. How many kilometres per hour can they run?

LIVEWORKSHEETS