The Visayan warty pig is one of the world’s most endangered animals.

A Visayan warty pig is a small species of wild pig native to the Visayan Islands of the Philippines. It’s called a warty pig because the male, or boar, has three pairs of warty bumps on its face. Scientists believe these warts might act as protection from opposing male tusks when they fight over mates.

At one time, warty pigs lived on six Visayan Islands. Warty pigs require dense forested areas in order to thrive. Now, however, most of the pigs’ forest habitat is gone. What has replaced it? Farms. In fact, farms have replaced about 95 percent of the warty pigs’ former habitats. This loss of habitat has made the pigs extinct on four of the islands. They are very endangered on the other two.

Warty pigs are omnivores. An omnivore is an animal that eats both plants and other animals. They eat fruit, insects, and earthworms and use their long snouts for finding underground roots and tubers. They also eat seeds and play a critical role in dispersing the seeds of some plant species. With farms replacing their wild habitat, they often pig out on farmers’ crops. Of course, farmers don’t like this. So people hunt the pigs, which endangers them even more.

Some people call Visayan warty pigs “punk rock pigs”. No, it’s not because they like loud rock music! Instead, it’s because the boars grow stiff spiky manes during mating season.
These manes can grow up to nine inches long. The male pigs raise their manes to make themselves appear larger and more threatening to other male pigs.

Warty pig moms usually give birth to three or four piglets. They are good mothers and very protective. The piglets have stripes on them when they are very young, which fade as they grow older.

Because Visayan warty pigs are so endangered, scientists do not know much more about them. Much of what we do know is from studying them in zoos. Let’s hope the remaining wild ones can be protected so we can learn more about them.

About the Author

Guy Belleranti is an author of fiction, poetry, articles, puzzles, and humor for children and adults. He also works as a docent at the Reid Park Zoo in Tucson, Arizona. The information in this article comes from his experiences teaching children about the wild animals at the zoo.
Visayan Warty Pigs
Written and Photographed by Guy Belleranti

1. According to the article, why do scientists think Visayan warty pigs have warty bumps on their faces?
   a. The warty bumps help them identify each other.
   b. The warty bumps help them forage for food.
   c. The warty bumps help act as protection.
   d. The warty bumps do not have any purpose.

2. In the article you learned that Visayan warty pigs are endangered. What is responsible for destroying much of their habitat? Use a complete sentence.

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3. From the list below, choose the statement that is not true about Visayan warty pigs.
   a. Visayan warty pigs eat a variety of plants, seeds, worms, insects, fruit, and roots.
   b. If you see a wild warty pig mom and her piglets, you should approach slowly.
   c. Farmers often consider Visayan warty pigs to be a nuisance to their crops.
   d. Visayan warty pigs are extinct on four of the six Visayan islands in the Philippines.

4. According to what you read in the article, what are two characteristics of male warty pigs, or boars, during the mating season? Write two complete sentences.

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5. How have scientists learned most of what they know about the Visayan warty pigs? Write one complete sentence.

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Fill in the missing letters to create a vocabulary word from the article. Then write the full word on the line. Be sure you spell each word correctly.

1. o  ____  ____  i  ____  o  r  ____  ______________________________
   hint: an animal that eats plants and other animals

2.  ____  n  d  a  ____  ____  e  ____  ____  d  ______________________________
   hint: nearly extinct

3. n  ____  t  i  ____  ____  ______________________________
   hint: originally found living in a certain area

4. c  ____  i  t  ____  ____  a  l  ______________________________
   hint: very important; essential

5.  ____  r  o  ____  e  ____  ____  i  v  ____  ______________________________
   hint: keeping away from harm

6.  ____  u  ____  e  ____  ______________________________
   hint: a type of root that some animals eat

7. d  ____  s  p  ____  ____  s  ____  ______________________________
   hint: scatter around in different places

8.  ____  u  ____  ____  s  ______________________________
   hint: long, pointed teeth that grow out the sides of certain mammals' mouths
In the article, “Visayan Warty Pigs,” you learned many interesting facts about this very endangered species of wild pigs.

One of the facts you learned about Visayan warty pigs is that warty pigs have lost most of their forest habitat to farmland. On the lines below, describe three ideas that could help us protect the remaining wild warty pigs.

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1. According to the article, why do scientists think Visayan warty pigs have warty bumps on their faces?  
   - c. The warty bumps help act as protection.
   - a. The warty bumps help them identify each other.
   - b. The warty bumps help them forage for food.
   - d. The warty bumps do not have any purpose.

2. In the article you learned that Visayan warty pigs are endangered. What is responsible for destroying much of their habitat?  
   Use a complete sentence.
   
   Farming has destroyed much of the Visayan warty pigs’ habitat.

3. From the list below, choose the statement that is not true about Visayan warty pigs.  
   - b. If you see a wild warty pig mom and her piglets, you should approach slowly.
   - a. Visayan warty pigs eat a variety of plants, seeds, worms, insects, fruit, and roots.
   - c. Farmers often consider Visayan warty pigs to be a nuisance to their crops.
   - d. Visayan warty pigs are extinct on four of the six Visayan islands in the Philippines.

4. According to what you read in the article, what are two characteristics of male warty pigs, or boars, during the mating season? Write two complete sentences.
   
   Male warty pigs fight each other for mates.
   
   Male warty pigs grow a long mane to appear larger and more threatening.

5. How have scientists learned most of what they know about the Visayan warty pigs? Write one complete sentence.
   
   Scientists have learned most of what they know about warty pigs by studying them in zoos.
Fill in the missing letters to create a vocabulary word from the article. Then write the full word on the line. Be sure you spell each word correctly.

1. o m n i v o r e  omnivore
   hint: an animal that eats plants and other animals

2. e n d a n g e r e d  endangered
   hint: nearly extinct

3. n a t i v e  native
   hint: originally found living in a certain area

4. c r i t i c a l  critical
   hint: very important; essential

5. p r o t e c t i v e  protective
   hint: keeping away from harm

6. t u b e r  tuber
   hint: a type of root that some animals eat

7. d i s p e r s e  disperse
   hint: scatter around in different places

8. t u s k s  tusks
   hint: long, pointed teeth that grow out the sides of certain mammals' mouths