



## Hispaniolan Solenodon By C4A Academy



Source: <https://www.worldatlas.com/r/w960-q80/upload/62/8b/03/hispaniola-haiti-dominican-republic-map-peter-hermes-furian.jpg>

The Hispaniola SOLENODON is a small, nocturnal mammal that is found only on the island of HISPANIOLA, which is split between the countries of HAITI and the DOMINICAN REPUBLIC. It is considered to be a very unique species of mammal and is one of the world's rarest and most PRIMITIVE mammals alive today. The Solenodon is an ELUSIVE creature and is rarely seen in the wild. In fact, there have been very few DOCUMENTED sightings of the Solenodon in recent years.

Spell: HAITI ELUSIVE DOCUMENTED

What mammal are we talking about? SOLENODON

It is found on the island of \_\_\_\_\_. HISPANIOLAN

The island of Hispaniola is split between the countries of Haiti and what? DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Solenodon is one of the world's \_\_\_\_ mammals alive today. RAREST, MOST PRIMITIVE

## Where could the Solenodon be hiding?

The Solenodon has a number of physical CHARACTERISTICS that set it apart from other mammals, including its long, snout-like nose, its sharp teeth, and its PREHENSILE tail, which means that it can be used to grab and hold onto things. The Solenodon is thought to be one of the most ANCIENT species of mammals still in EXISTENCE, having EVOLVED over 70 million years ago.

Spell: CHARACTERISTICS      EVOLVED      ANCIENT  
The Solenodon is thought to be one of the most ancient species of mammal still in what? EXISTENCE

It evolved over \_\_\_\_. 70 MILLION YEARS AGO

The Solenodon has what kind of tail? PREHENSILE

What can a prehensile tail do? GRAB, HOLD ONTO THINGS

What's your favorite animal that has a tail?



<https://a-z-animals.com/media/2021/07/Hispaniolan-Solenodon.jpg>

The body of the Hispaniolan Solenodon is long and thin and is covered in SHAGGY fur that helps it to blend in with its forest SURROUNDINGS. Its long, snout-like nose is one of its most DISTINCTIVE features and is used to sniff out its food, which consists mainly of insects and small INVERTEBRATES. The Solenodon's long, thin legs are well adapted for moving quickly through the dense underbrush of its forest home.

Spell: SHAGGY                      SURROUNDINGS                      DISTINCTIVE  
The Solenodon eats insects and small what? INVERTEBRATES  
Its legs are well adapted for moving through the dense \_\_\_\_ of a forest.  
UNDERBRUSH

Describe the Solenodon's body. LONG, THIN, COVERED IN FUR  
What do you think eating an insect would be like?

Despite its small size, the Hispaniolan Solenodon is a FIERCE PREDATOR that is able to catch and kill its prey with ease. Its sharp teeth and agile movements make it well-EQUIPPED to hunt in the dark, and its nocturnal habits mean that it is able to avoid DETECTION by larger predators. The Solenodon is also a very STEALTHY creature and is able to move quickly and quietly through the forest, making it difficult for its prey to escape.

Spell: FIERCE                      EQUIPPED                      STEALTHY  
The Solenodon is a fierce what? PREDATOR  
Its nocturnal habits help it avoid what by larger predators? DETECTION  
Its stealthiness helps it move quietly through the what? FOREST  
The Solenodon is able to do what to its prey? CATCH, KILL IT WITH EASE  
What do you like to use to see in the dark?

The Solenodon has poor eyesight but has excellent senses of smell and hearing, which it uses to NAVIGATE and find its food. The Solenodon has a long, GROOVED tongue that is covered in sticky SALIVA, which helps it to catch and hold onto its insect prey. The Solenodon has a unique way of killing its prey, by injecting TOXIC saliva into the insect before eating it. The Solenodon is one of only a few species of mammals that are VENOMOUS.

Spell: GROOVED                      TOXIC                      NAVIGATE  
The Solenodon has poor what? EYESIGHT  
Its tongue is covered in sticky \_\_\_\_\_. SALIVA  
It is one of the few species of mammal that is \_\_\_\_\_. VENOMOUS  
The Hispaniolan Solenodon is a SOLITARY creature that is rarely seen by humans. It is a very shy animal that will quickly RETREAT into the shadows if it senses the presence of humans. This is partly because it is nocturnal and spends most of the day hiding in BURROWS or among the roots of

trees, but also because it is naturally RECLUSIVE and avoids contact with other creatures. It lives about 11 to 12 years.

Spell: SOLITARY SHADOWS RECLUSIVE  
The Solenodon is rarely seen by \_\_\_\_\_. HUMANS  
How long is its lifespan? 11 TO 12 YEARS  
Where does it hide? IN BURROWS, AMONG THE ROOTS OF TREES

Despite its RARITY and reclusiveness, the Hispaniolan Solenodon is an important species in the ECOSYSTEM of Hispaniola. It plays a crucial role in CONTROLLING the populations of insects and other small invertebrates, and also serves as a food source for larger predators like owls and hawks. Without the Solenodon, the balance of the ecosystem on the island could be DISRUPTED, which could have far-reaching CONSEQUENCES.

Spell: CONSEQUENCES DISRUPTED CONTROLLING  
It is an important species in the \_\_\_\_ of Hispaniola. ECOSYSTEM  
It serves as a food source for owls and \_\_\_\_\_. HAWKS  
It controls the populations of \_\_\_\_\_. INSECTS, INVERTEBRATES  
Would you like to visit Hispaniola?

Unfortunately, the Hispaniolan Solenodon is facing many threats to its SURVIVAL. The biggest threat is habitat loss, as forests are cleared for AGRICULTURE and DEVELOPMENT. This is reducing the amount of suitable habitat for the Solenodon and making it harder for it to find food and shelter. The creature is also hunted for its meat and for use in traditional MEDICINE, which is putting additional pressure on its population. In addition, the introduction of non-native species like rats and MONGOOSES has had a negative impact on the Solenodon, as these creatures compete with it for food and prey on its young.

Spell: AGRICULTURE SURVIVAL DEVELOPMENT  
The biggest threat to the Solenodon's survival is what? HABITAT LOSS  
It is hunted for its use in traditional \_\_\_\_\_. MEDICINE  
Habitat loss is making it harder to find food and what? SHELTER  
Non-native species compete with the Solenodon for food and prey on its what? YOUNG  
What non-native species prey on the Solenodon? RATS, MONGOOSES

## What is a crop that farmers grow?

The Solenodon's populations are thought to be DECLINING, and it is considered to be a THREATENED species. The Solenodon is protected by law in both Haiti and the Dominican Republic, but the ENFORCEMENT of these laws is weak, and ILLEGAL hunting of the species continues to occur.

Spell: ILLEGAL            THREATENED            ENFORCEMENT  
The Solenodon populations are thought to be what? DECLINING  
It is considered to be a threatened \_\_\_\_\_. SPECIES  
Enforcement of protective laws is \_\_\_\_ WEAK

It is important that we all do what we can to help protect the Hispaniolan Solenodon. We can raise AWARENESS of its PLIGHT and encourage others to take action to protect its habitat and support conservation efforts. This can include supporting ORGANIZATIONS working to protect the Solenodon, reducing our impact on the ENVIRONMENT, and being mindful of our use of natural RESOURCES.

Spell: ORGANIZATIONS            AWARENESS            PLIGHT  
We can reduce our impact on the \_\_\_\_\_. ENVIRONMENT  
And we can be mindful of our use of natural \_\_\_\_\_. RESOURCES

The Hispaniolan Solenodon is a truly REMARKABLE species that provides important insights into the evolution of mammals and the BIODIVERSITY of the CARIBBEAN region. By working together to protect its habitat and support conservation efforts, we can help ensure that this FASCINATING creature.

Spell: FASCINATING            HABITAT            REMARKABLE  
Solenodons live in what region? CARIBBEAN  
Solenodons provide insight into the evolution of mammals and \_\_\_\_ of the Caribbean region. BIODIVERSITY

**VAKTivity:** How The Solenodon Became Venomous (6.20 min)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=22qAEKXe8Lo>

What do you think about the Hispaniola Solenodon?

*This lesson was written with the assistance of ChatGPT.*