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Impala



Other name: Aepyceros melampus, Rooibok

Historically Impala were mainly found in die Northern, Northeastern and Eastern parts of the country.

Habitat

Impala prefer savannah woodland and Acacia thorn veld, preferably near water.

Behavior

They form herds of 6 or more than 50, depending on the time of year.

During winter mating time (March to May) one territorial ram gathers a herd of ewes (this is called a harem). During rutting and mating times, rams will be uttering loud snorts and grunts. Impala is mainly active during the day but can be active during periods of feeding at night.

Difference between male (ram) and female (ewe)

Rams are bigger than ewes and have horns, while ewes do not grow horns

Mass, Rams: 47 to 68 kilograms (average of 54kg)

Ewes: 32 to 52 kilograms (average of 41kg)



Breeding

A single calf is usually born in October to February after a gestation period of 190 to 200 days. Lambs are kept in crèches where a few impala ewes keep watch.

Impala has a lifespan of about 12 years.

Diet

Impala are browsers (pods, seeds and leaves of certain tree species) and grazers (especially sweet grass species) and are water dependent.

Fun Facts

Impala can jump 3 meters high and farther than 12 meters.

Springbok



Other names: Antidorcas marsupialis, Springbok

Springbok are widely distributed throughout South Africa. Springbok is also the National Animal of South Africa.

Habitat

Springbok have shown that they readily adapt to most habitats, but traditionally they prefer the inland Plateau, Karoo and Kalahari region.

Behavior

They are highly gregarious and move in large herds. Territorial rams will try to keep herds of ewes in breeding season and defend them against other rams until the ewes move away from on ram's territory to graze in another ram's territory.

They are mainly active by day but in some areas also at night.

Difference between Male (ram) and female (ewe)

Horns of rams are much larger and thicker, especially towards the base. The horns of the rams have more of a curve inwards than those of the ewes. Rams are heavier and more robustly build.

Mass of rams: up to 41kg

Mass of female: up to 37kg



Breeding

Lambs are mainly born in summer and the rainy season, from November to February. Some parts of the Cape can get lambs in July, depending on the availability of food and climate. Newly born lambs are hidden for a few days under tall grass or scrubs. Gestation period is about 24 weeks (168days).

Springbok have a lifespan of up to 10 years.

Diet

They are not water dependent, but will readily drink when available. They are mainly grazers preferring short grass; they will also eat shrubs, leaves and seedpods (especially Camel thorn trees) as well as wild fruit and young shoots.

Fun Facts

They can bound and leap (repeatedly) into the air with stiff extended legs, with the rams raising the hair of the dorsal crest extending from the back to the tail. These bounds may reach 2 to 3 meters. It is also known as "pronking".

They also "pronk", when rams are in rut or when defending their territories.

Kudu



Other name: Tragelaphus strepsiceros, Koedoe

Kudus are found throughout South Africa.

Habitat

They can be found in a very wide habitat range including hilly areas, slopes of mountains, woodlands, bush thickets, riverine areas, bush veld and savannah areas.

Behavior

Small herds of 3 to 20, usually cows with their young. Adult bulls are solitary or in bachelor groups. Adult bulls that have won the right to mate will join herds of females and their young in mating season. Kudus are very shy antelope and tend.

Difference between male (bulls) and female (cows)

Adult bulls have large horns and are much heavier and larger than the hornless cows

Mass of bulls: 190 to 270kg

Mass of cows: 120 to 210kg



Breeding

Usually a single calf is born in summer, from November to January after a gestation period of 7 months.

Diet

Kudus are predominantly browsers. Leaves and fresh growth of plants and shrubs, seed pods, but may nibble on new growth of grass.

Fun Facts

They can easily jump over three meter fences. Kudu also have very large ears, hence their acute hearing.

Oryx



Other names: Oryx gazelle, Gemsbok

Traditionally found in the Northern Cape, Kalahari, North West and Western Cape

Habitat

Oryx prefer dry areas, open savannah and desert grassland.

Behavior

They are gregarious and occur in medium to large breeding herds (mixed bulls, cows and calves). There are also herds consisting of just bulls (bachelor herds) as well as territorial bulls.

They are mainly active by day.

Difference between male (bull) and female (cow)

Both bulls and cows have horns. The bulls have horns that are more symmetrical and thicker at the base. The cows often have longer horns. Bulls are heavier and are stockier build than the cows.

Mass of bulls: up to 240kg

Mass of cows: up to 210kg



Breeding

Usually one calf is born after which the calf is hidden in tall grass or shrubs from the herd for up to 6 weeks.

The cow visits often to let the calf suckle. The gestation period is 264 days.

Oryx have a lifespan of 15 to 19 years.

Diet

They are mainly grazers (grass eaters) but also eat pods of especially the Camel thorn, small shrubs and bushes. They also dig up roots and bulbs to eat, from which they get moisture and thus do not need water often.

Fun Fact

The Oryx's horns can reach 120cm and a low metabolism allow these antelopes to survive for much of the year without water.

Eland



Other names: Taurotragus Oryx, Eland

The Eland is die worlds larges antelope.

Habitat

Eland are found in grassland, mountain, sub-desert, acacia savannah and woodland areas.

Behavior

Usually older, dominant males are solitary, while other adult males form small groups of three or four.

Females gather in much larger groups. A male may spend a few hours or even weeks with a female group before becoming solitary again.

Difference between male (bull) and female (cow)

Both male and females have horns. Males can get up to 1,6 meters tall at shoulders and female just 20cm shorter.

Mass of Bull: 400 to 492kg

Mass of female: 300 to 445kg



Breeding

After 9 months, a single calf is born at any time of the year. Eland have a life expectancy of 15 to 25 years.

Diet

They feed on shrubs and bushes. The Eland use their horns to bring twigs and branches into reach. They are also known to consume tuberous roots.

Fun Facts

Eland is popular as a source of milk. The milk is richer than cow's milk. It does not need to be stored in a fridge and can last for up to 8 months when properly prepared.

Waterbuck



Other names: Kobus ellipsiprymus, Waterbok

Waterbuck were always found naturally in the Northern parts of the country (Limpopo and Mpumalanga).

Habitat

Waterbuck prefer open dry country with savanna grassland and even hilly areas as long as it is close to water.

Behavior

They are grazers and form herds of up to 20 or more. These herds are breeding herds and consist of a territorial dominant bull, cows and calves. After 1 year, bulls are kicked out and they form bachelor herds.

They mainly graze during the day.

Difference between male (bulls) and female (cows)

Bulls are larger and have horns, while cows do not have horns.

Mass of bulls: 250 to 270kg

Mass of female: 210 to 240kg



Breeding

One calf is born in summer after a gestation of 280 days. The calf is hidden in long grass or under growth and will join the heard at about 4 weeks. They have a lifespan of 12 to 15 years.

Diet

Waterbuck are dependent on water. Therefore, do not live further than 2 to 3 km from permanent water. They graze on long grass and will eat water plants and their roots. Waterbuck are also known to browse on fruit and seeds.

Fun Facts

The round white circle on the rump is a prominent feature. They have strong scent glands that produce a turpentine-like scent that can even be smelled by humans.

Steenbok



Other names: *Raphicerus campestris*, Steenbok

Steenbok are widely distributed throughout the country except in certain parts of Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal.

Habitat

They prefer open habitat like bush veld, savannah and grass veld with bush and shrubs to hide in.

Behavior

They are solitary, except in mating season or ewes with a lamb. They settle in territories. Steenbok are mainly active at day but sometimes at night for a short while.

Difference between male (ram) and female (ewe)

Rams have horns and ewes do not.

Mass of ram: 9 to 13kg

Mass of ewe: 11 to 13kg



Breeding

Although breeding is mainly in summer, it could be any time of the year. The ewe hides the lamb for a few weeks up to a few months, she will return daily to clean lamb, and to let it suckle. Gestation period is 158 to 173 days. Steenbok have a life span of 6 to 8 years.

Diet

They are not water dependent. Steenbok are mainly browsers and eat leaves, shoots, seeds and wild fruits. They seldom eat grass. They dig up roots with their front hoofs. Feeding takes place early mornings and late afternoons.

Fun Facts

Steenbok scrape a hole in the ground where they bury their dung. They defecate and urinate in the small hollow and then rake sand over it with their front hooves.

Duiker



Other names: Sylvicapra grimmia, Duiker

Duikers are widely distributed in South Africa but absent from the desert regions.

Habitat

They do not occur in forests but will hide in them if threatened. They avoid open grassland where there is no shelter. Duikers are found throughout Africa, South of the Sahara.

Behavior

The Duikers get its name from the Afrikaans word "duik" which means to dive, relating to the animal ducking away into bushes when danger threatens. They are mainly active in late afternoon and into the night and early morning.

The males and females are territorial, chasing away only others of the same sex. Males and females share territories but only come

together for mating. Duikers are the most successful bovid species in Africa.

Difference between male (ram) and female (ewe)

Only males have short horns but females are bigger.

Mass of male: 15 to 18kg

Mass of female: 16 to 21kg



Breeding

Female give birth to one lamb, after a gestation time of 6 months, any time of the year, possibly with a peak in births in summer times. Mating systems varies from monogamous pairs to a ram with more than one ewe.

Diet

They brows a wide range of broad-leaved forbs, trees and bushes. They also eat fruit, pods seeds, roots, bark, flowers and fungi.

Fun fact

The Duiker is one of very few antelope to have been known to eat insects. They eat caterpillars and even nestling birds.

Hartebees



Other names: Alcelaphus buselaphus, Hartebeest

Hartebeest occurred mainly in the region of the present day Kruger National Park, where it became extinct. A new population has been established by relocating animals from Malawi.

Habitat

They prefer an open habitat with adequate drinking water.

Habits

Hartebeest are gregarious antelope with herds of about ten. A territorial bull will expel young bulls at the age of 10 to 12 months.

Difference between male (bull) and female (cow)

The bull's horns are thicker at the base.

Mass of male: average of 200kg

Mass of female: average of 180kg



Breeding

After a gestation period of 240 days, females calve during August and September, depending on region. The herds calve at the same time, which is an anti-predator mechanism. Calves weigh about 15kg at birth. They have a lifespan of potentially 20 years.

Diet

This is a grazer dependent on perennial grasses. They prefer new growth and graze early mornings and late afternoons.

Fun fact

Hartebeest are extremely swift runners and can reach speeds of up to 65km/h and have the stamina to maintain this over long distance.

Blesbok



Other names: Damaliscus pygargus, Blesbok

They originally occurred in the central part of South Africa, Highveld plains and other grass veld plains in cooler climate.

Habitat

Their habitat is Highveld, open grassland with water.

Habits

Blesbok are gregarious animals that form hers of females with young and young rams – also bachelor hers and then territorial rams. Blesbok are mainly active by day (diurnal).

Difference between male (ram) and female (ewe)

Males are stockier and more robustly built than females. Although both sexes have horns, rams' horns are thicker and larger than the ewes'.

Mass of bull: 66-73kg

Mass of cow: 58-64kg



Breeding

One lamb is born after a gestation period of 8 months, any time from November to January.

They have a lifespan of 11 years.

Diet

They are water dependent. Blesbok are exclusively grazers. They especially like short grass.

Fun facts

Blesbok can be confused with the Bontebok. Bontebok has a clear white rump and the Blesbok does not.

Blue wildebeest



Other names: Connochaetes taurinus, Blou wildebees

Blue wildebeest are found more often in the Northwestern parts of South Africa and large numbers in the Kruger National Park.

Habitat

Blue wildebeest live in open bushveld but are able to adapt very well in dry areas like the Kgalagadi Trans frontier Park.

Behaviors

Blue wildebeest are highly gregarious antelope. Territorial bulls defend the cows around their territory; however, cows tend to move through various territories. They move seasonally after grazing and water. These antelope are most active during the cooler parts of the day, seeking shade in the heat of the day.

Difference between male (bull) and female (cow)

Bulls are bigger than the cows. The horns of the bulls are on average larger and more robust than the female's horns.

Mass of bull: 230-270kg

Mass of female: 160-200kg



Breeding

Calves are born during middle November to December, although it varies from area to area. Gestation period is 250 days. The blue wildebeest have a lifespan of 17 to 20 years.

Diet

Blue wildebeest are primarily grazers, showing a preference to short green grass.

Fun facts

The heaviest Blue wildebeest weighed, was a bull found in the Kruger National Park with a mass of 307,5kg.

Nyala



Other names: Nyala angasii or Tragelaphus angasii

Habitat

This rather large antelope inhabits dense woodlands and thickets along permanent water. It is very secretive and more easily seen at night. Nyala is non-territorial, but both sexes have overlapping home ranges. The home ranges of cows are twice the size than that of bulls.

Behavior

An interesting fact is that the juvenile males look like females. It is thought that this camouflages the young males and protects them from the jealous eyes of the dominant bulls. The young males are therefore allowed to grow up peacefully under the protection of the herd.

Appearance

The handsome slate-brown shaggy coat is marked with white vertical stripes and spots on the flanks. Bulls appear more charcoal-grey in color. The bulls have long inward curved horns (650 mm) and a white chevron face.

They have a ridge of long hairs along the under parts, from behind the chin to between the hind legs, they also have a mane of thick, black hair from the head along the spine to the rump.

Bulls weigh 115 Kg and measures 1.05 m at shoulders. Cows are much smaller and do not have horns, and weigh 59 Kg and stand 900mm at shoulders. Cows are chestnut-coated with even more prominent white stripes on the flanks.



Breeding

They breed throughout the year, but mating peaks in autumn and spring. Single calves are born after a gestation period of 220 days. Twins are not uncommon. Cows first conceive between 14 to 18

months. Average interval between births is 297 days. Mating opportunities for bulls are decided through dominance behavior.

Diet

This antelope feeds by both grazing and browsing and will readily feed on leaves, fruit and flowers. This variety in their diet is one of the factors ensuring their successful survival.

Fun Facts

Nyala gives off a striking alarm call. The sharp, high-pitched sound is almost like a barking dog.

Hartmann's Zebra



Other names: *Equus zebra hartmanne*, Sebra/ bergkwagga

Zebra are widely distributed throughout South Africa.

Habitat

Zebra prefer open grassy plains and savanna. They prefer grazing with short grass and occur in areas with water, as they are very dependent on water.

Behavior

Zebra are highly sociable animals. They live in small family groups/herds with one stallion. Sometimes bachelor groups are formed, but stallions do tend to stay alone at times. They are highly gregarious and mix with wildebeest, Impala, Giraffe and other herbivores. They defend themselves by biting and kicking.

Difference between male (Stallion) and female (mares)

Males are more robustly build, stockier and heavier.

Mass of male: 270-340kg

Mass of female: 270-325kg



Breeding

Gestation period is about 375 days or just more than 12 months. A single foal with a mass of 30-35kg is generally born in the summer months. They have a lifespan of about 20 years.

Diet

Zebras are grazers but occasionally browse on herbs.

Fun facts

No Zebra is striped like another. Each Zebras stripe pattern is unique. Zebras are related to Rhinoceroses.

Giraffe



Other names: Giraffa camelopardalis, Kameelperd

Giraffe in South Africa can be found in National Parks throughout, in provincial nature reserves and private game reserves.

Habitat

Giraffe prefer open woodlands and shrub savannah with enough trees that has palatable leaves, especially acacias, which is a favorite food source.

Behavior.

Giraffes congregate in herds of up to 20 animals and usually one territorial bull is present. They are often found with Zebra, Blue wildebeest and Impala. They are active by day and night.

Difference between male (bulls) and female (cows)

Bulls are larger and usually darker. The bony growth resembling short horns on their heads are actually hair growth. "Horns" on bulls are more symmetrical and much thicker than cows. Bulls usually have no tufts or hardly any compared to cows that have tufts of hair on their "horns".

Mass of bulls: up to 1400kg

Mass of cows: up to 1000kg

Height: Bulls can grow up to more than 5 meters and cows grow to about four - 4,5 meters.



Breeding

A single calf is born throughout the year. The gestation period is 15 months. Giraffe can live up to about 28 years.

Diet

They consume shrubs and leaves especially from acacia trees. Giraffes are not water dependent but will drink if water is available.

Fun facts

They can run steadily at speeds of up to 55 km/h for quite a distance. Giraffes can deliver a very powerful and fast kick with front and back feet.

Black – Backed Jackal



Other names: Canis mesomelas, Rooi Jakkals/Swartrug jakkals.

Black-backed jackal is distributed throughout South Africa.

Habitat

They occur in most habitats from desert to mountains and coastal areas. They prefer drier areas and tend to avoid marshy areas and wetlands.

Habits

They live in pairs that form long-term bonds and establish territories, but more often than not scavenge and hunt alone. They are extremely cunning and very adaptable.

Day or night

Although they can be active at day, they usually rest up in holes or under bushes. They are mostly active at night. Often they can be spotted during dusk and dawn.



Difference between male and female

Males are larger than females

Male: 6-11kg

Female: 5-10kg

Breeding

The average litter are between 1 and 6, but sometimes (although very seldom) up to 9 or 10 cubs, are born from July to November depending on rain, area and region.

There is a gestation period of 2 months. Black back jackal can have a life span of about 12 years.

Diet

They are hunters and scavengers with a very acute sense of smell. Their diet consists of a wide range of food including small antelope, hares, reptiles, insects, birds and eggs. Some types of wild fruit and berries are also eaten. Black back jackal are not water dependent.

Fun fact

The haunting call of the Black backed jackal is typical night sounds of wilderness areas.

Bat-eared Fox



Other name: Otocyon Megalotis, Bak oor jakkals

There are two primary populations; one in South Africa and the other one in East Africa.

Habitat

Open woodland, grassy plains.

Habits

Nocturnal animals, Bat-eared foxes live in pairs and both parents rear the cubs. They are mostly monogamous and breed every year.

Size

Body length of 50 - 60 cm

Tail: 30 - 35cm

Stands 35 - 40cm

Weight: 3 - 4.5 kg

Breeding

After a gestation of 2 months, the female gives birth of 2-3 young. They have a live span of 12 years.



Diet

They are insectivorous. Insects, particularly termites and grasshoppers are preferred. A small percentage of their diet includes lizards, small bird, eggs, small mammals and fruit.

Fun fact

Bat-eared foxes mate for life, and sometimes two females will mate with one male and share a communal den.

Porcupine



Other names: *Hystrix africaeaustralis*, Ystervark

The live in North Africa, South Africa and East Africa

Habitat

Porcupines can be found from sea level to 2000m above sea level in most areas with vegetation. They prefer rocky hills and outcrops, as they must have shelter during the day.

Behavior

Porcupines travel alone or in small family groups. Sleeping in the day, they feed at night. When cornered, porcupines can be aggressive, running side-ways or backwards to embed their sharp quills in an attacker. Specially modified quills known as rattle quills add to the noise made when shaken.

Male and female both weigh from 10 – 24kg



Breeding

The gestation period last around 94 days. The young are born in litters of up to three young. Average litter size is with a mass between 300 -440grams. They are born with soft quills so ease the birth process but quickly harden in the air.

They are long-lived for rodents, surviving 12 to 15 years

Diet

Their diet consists mostly of vegetation, digging out roots, tubes and bulbs. Porcupines are also fond of fallen fruits and will grow on bark.

They have been reported to eat carrion. In some areas, they practice gnawing on bones.

Fun fact

Porcupines will often accumulate large piles of bones in their dens.

Cape hare/ Brown hare



Other names: *Lepus capensis*, Vlak haas

There are 12 sub-species of the Cape Hare found throughout Africa

Habitat

They are widely spread and abundant in more arid regions of South Africa. They prefer open grassland.

Habits

Several males may follow solitary animals, but estrus females for a short period.

Breeding

Non-seasonal breeder, births peak during rainy season. It gives birth to 1 – 3 leverets after a gestation of 42 days. Young are fully furred and weigh 100 grams at birth.

Diet

Depending on availability of grass or shrubs, it either graze or brows. Hares re-ingest soft cecotropes pellets directly from the anus during their resting periods in the day, and excrete hard pellets during nocturnal feeding

Mass varies from 1,5 – 2,5kg with the female being slightly larger.

Fun fact

Females for only 10 min suckle leverets each night.

Spring Hare



Other names: *Pedetes capensis*, Springhaas

Springhare is a rodent and not a hare.

Habitat

With the exclusion of deserts and forested areas, the Spring Hare has a wide distribution in South Africa, with a predilection for flat arid and semi-arid country.

Habits

With their long hind legs they can run fast to escape from predators.

Breeding

The Spring Hare gives birth after a gestation period of 77 days. Females can give birth to single young up to three times in a year. Young are well furred at birth and are born in burrows.

Young are dependent on their mother's milk up to about seven weeks of age and at a weight of 1.3 kg. Sexual maturity is attained at eight months.

Appearance

The head and body of the Spring Hare measures 400mm with a tail of 440 mm. It weighs up to 3 kg and is the only large jumping, bipedal rodent in this region. With its short front and large hind legs, it appears and behaves like a dwarf Kangaroo. They have long ears and a rabbit like head. Upper body parts are yellow-brown, cinnamon or Rufus-brown in color. They have a prominent dark tail tip.

Diet

The Spring Hare feeds on grass roots, rhizomes, corms, stems, seeds and leaves and seek out green grasses, which are high in protein and water. Spring Hares forage on all fours, but sit on their hind feet and tail while eating, to manipulate the food with their forefeet.

Fun facts

They possess an advanced sense of sight, hearing and smell. Their large feet assist in detecting vibration.

Caracal



Other names: Felis caracal, Rooi kat

Appearance

Caracal is a large, cat with tufted black ears, creamy underbelly with faded orange spots, and long legs. The face has exquisite markings. The Caracal moves with grace and a sense of confident power.

Habitat

Found in dry savannah and woodland areas, scrubland and rugged terrain in mountainous regions, where it is known to live as high up as 3000 meters. Like other Cats found in dry, arid or semi-desert locations, the Caracal can survive for long periods without water.

Habits

The Caracal is a mostly nocturnal, secretive, solitary and an aggressive animal. Due to being hunted as a problem animal by farmers, Caracal became even more elusive and thus a sighting of one is very difficult.



Breeding

A female may often mate with up to three males. The litter size varies between 1-6 kittens, which are born after a gestation period of approximately 78 days.

The kittens have a daily weight gain of approximately 21g per day and although they reach maturity at about 16-18 months of age, they are often independent from about 12 months.

Diet

In hunting, the Caracal is mainly nocturnal, but will also use the twilight hours to search out its prey. Diurnal activity has also been observed, specifically in the hunting of birds. For its size the Caracal is strong and fast, and as well as taking smaller prey such as Jerboas, Sand Rat, Ground Squirrel and Rock Hyrax, it can also bring down the larger Reedbuck and Duiker.

This Cat is able, from a sitting position, to launch 4-5 meters in the air by using its strong hindquarters and limbs. They do this to pluck flying bird prey from the air.

Size

Weight of Female: 11 kg

Weight of Male: 15 kg

Length of Female: 109 cm

Length of Male: 117 cm

Fun fact

They are known to have a vertical leap of over 10 feet!

Hedgehog



Other names: Atelerix frontalis, Krimpvarkie

Appearance

Hedgehogs are small insectivores. They have pointed faces and short, sharp spines covering the flanks and back as protection against predators. Their head and body length is 200mm with a short rudimentary tail of 20mm.

Mas: 310 g (Adult)

Length: 18 cm (Adult)

Habitat

Hedgehogs inhabit open grasslands or open wooded country. They inhabit a wide variety of habitats, but apparently avoid wet habitats.

Behavior

Hedgehogs are generally nocturnal and solitary.



Breeding

Breeding season is from October to April. Their offspring are reared in the shelter of nests or holes lined with dry leaves and debris. Gestation period lasts from five to six weeks and litters vary from one to nine. Young are hairless and blind at birth and their ears are closed. Beneath the skin of newly born young, the rudimentary spines are already visible. Pigmented spines appear after one day and infant spines are replaced with mature spines between four to six weeks after birth. Young are weaned at about five weeks.

Diet

Hedgehogs feed on insects such as beetles, termites, grasshoppers and slugs. They may also prey on young rodents, small birds' eggs and chicks, frogs and lizards. Even fungi and vegetable matter are occasionally included in their diet. They are not water dependent.

Fun Facts

Hedgehogs can hibernate, but not all do. They rely on hearing and smell because they have very poor eyesight.

Cape Ground Squirrel



Other names: Marmotini [Xerus inauris], Waaiersterts meerkat

They are distributed throughout the Kalahari, Free State, Northern Cape, North West and Southern Cape Provinces towards the Beaufort-West/Graaff-Reinet district.

Habitat

They inhabit intermittent shrubby grassy plains. Habitat can vary from coarse sand to the harder, fine clay soils of pans and riverbeds.

Appearance

The Cape Ground Squirrel is a rodent endemic to South Africa. It measures 450 mm in length and weighs up to 1 kg. Upper parts are cinnamon colored with a lateral white stripe on either side of the body. White under parts and the distinctive bushy fan-like tail have black based, white tipped hairs. The coat is coarse with little under fur. Winter coat is usually longer than the summer coat.



Breeding

Only females older than one year are allowed to breed. Females give birth to two to six young per litter, each baby weighing 20 grams. Young are naked at birth. Caring for the young seems to be a community duty, since various females in a colony share this task.

The dominant females, who are normally accompanied by their young of the previous two years, tolerate only one adult male as main breeding partner. Dispersal of offspring to colonies in adjacent territories only takes place after two years. New colonies are then formed.

Diet

Predominantly herbivorous, and feeds mainly on roots and bulbs excavated with claws and front teeth. These hard food items are

gnawed in typical rodent fashion with the sharp incisors. Always feed on the juiciest plants available. They occasionally take termites during summer.

Fun fact

A young / baby of a South African ground squirrel is called a 'pup, kit or kitten'. The females are called 'doe' and males 'buck'. A South African ground squirrel group is called a 'dray or scurry'.

Suricate



Other names: Suricata, Gaaitjies meerkat/ Stokstertjies

Habitat

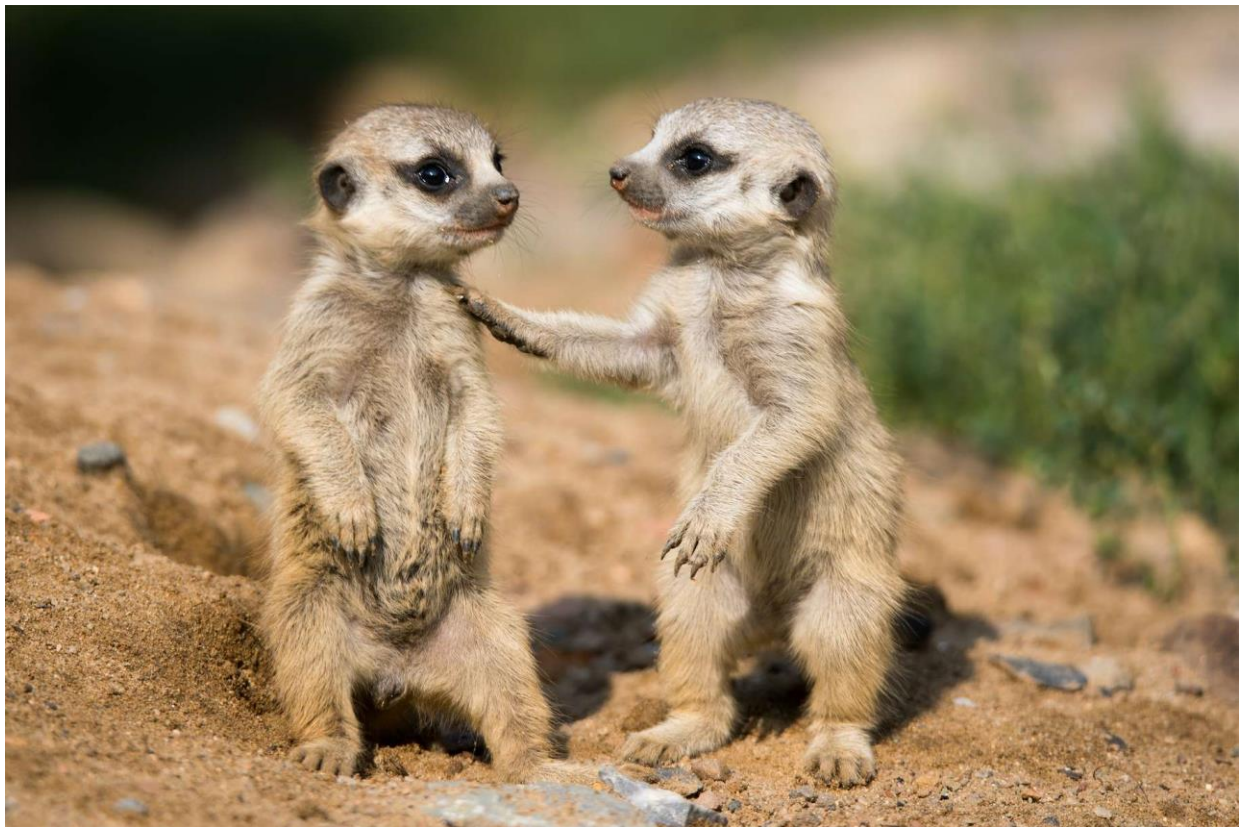
In South Africa, the Suricate has a westerly distribution, ranging from the North-West Province, southwards to the Free State through the Karoo almost to Cape Town, and westwards to the Atlantic seaboard.

Social Behavior

Suricates are territorial. Average group size is ten members, comprised of equal numbers of males and females. They are also diurnal, and take refuge in burrows at night or when threatened.

Appearance

The Suricate is most frequently seen balanced on its rear legs and tail, while surveying its surroundings. The buff-brown to silvery body has rows of reddish-brown spots along the back. The eyes are distinctively dark-ringed. The head and body measures 250-310 mm and tail 200-240 mm. An adult weighs about 620-960 grams. They have dark-tipped, shorthaired, tapered tails. Hindquarters are stockier than the forequarters. The head is broad and rounded, with a sharp-pointed muzzle.



Breeding

Breeding females can produce between one and three litters per year, but breeding intervals are rainfall dependent.

Births peak between January and March. The entire group participates in the care and maintenance of young. While the pack is out foraging for food, one helper remains at the den to tend to the young.

Diet

Suricates feed on insects, small rodents, geckos and snakes, which they catch with lightning swiftness. Pregnant and lactating females forage more intensively than other members of the group, to meet the increased energy budget associated with pregnancy or lactation.

Fun Fact

Biologists have discovered "meerkats" are immune to some snakes' venom as they belong to the mongoose family.

Slender Mongoose



Other names: *Galerella sanguinea*, Swartkwasmuis hond

The Slender Mongoose is found in the central and northeastern regions of South Africa and through Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe and up into East and West Africa.

Habitat

The Slender Mongoose inhabits open woodland savannah, within which they favor more heavily wooded areas. Dens are established in disused dens, rock crevices and hollow trees.

Habits

Solitary, but a collective territory may be defended by coalitions of up to four males. This territory may encompass the ranges of several females. Related and unrelated males are included in these coalitions. Adult females do not share territories. Both the male and female offspring disperse to find their own space.

Appearance

Slender Mongoose females has a mass of 575 gr. and are smaller than males at 715 gr. Color varies from light brown to dark red-brown depending on the area within its distribution range. Their bellies are lighter in color. The long tails are distinctively black-tipped, which is characteristic of this species.



Breeding

A year-round breeder, but births occur more often in the rainy season. They have a gestation period of eight to nine weeks and deliver one or two litters per year, each consisting of between one and three young.

Diet

The Slender Mongoose feeds primarily on small rodents, reptiles and at times on birds - and is known to take invertebrates.

Fun facts

Slender mongoose is fearless fighters and will kill most species of snake. They will climb trees unlike any of the other mongoose.

Yellow mongoose.



Other names: *Cynictis penicillata*, witkwasmuishond/geelmuishond

Habitat

They can be found in the central and western region of Southern Africa. They are also particularly common in agricultural areas of the Western Cape and Free State. Absent from the Namib desert coastal strip, neither does it occur in the high-rainfall southern coastal areas of the Eastern Cape, most of KwaZulu-Natal, Mpumalanga and the Northern Province's low veld area.

Habits

Some nocturnal movement has been recorded during full moon, but this species is fundamentally diurnal.

Appearance

The Yellow Mongoose has a length of 400-600 mm; with a tail of 180-250 mm. Mass is about 450-900, g. has a triangular shaped face with a pointed snout. When running the tail is held horizontal to the ground.

Throughout the southern and central range, the coat is a reddish-yellow to a tawny-yellow color, and the brushy tail has a very distinctive white tip.



Breeding

Litters of two to five are born from October to January in the south portion of its range. In the northern areas, birthing extends through to March. Births have exceptionally been recorded each month of the year, even though birthing peaks clearly exist.

Diet

Feeds mainly on insects and other invertebrates, but it will also readily hunt amphibians, rodents and reptiles.

Fun Fact

It is believed that the Yellow Mongoose is an asymptomatic carrier of rabies, i.e. it carries rabies but is not affected by the virus.

Striped Polecat



Other names: Ictonyx striatus, Stink muishond

Distributed widely and is common throughout South Africa and in neighboring countries, to as far north as Central Africa.

Habitat

The striped polecat inhabits a wide variety of habitats, except dense, evergreen forests.

Appearance

Head and body length is about 350 mm as an adult, with a 200 mm tail. Weighs between 640 and 1000 gr. The pelage of the upper parts of the body is black and white striped, with long hair. Top of the head and rest of the body is black. There are three white spots on the head, one situated in the center of the head and one above each eye. They have bushy tails.



Breeding

Breeding season is over spring and early summer, only one litter consisting of one to three altricial young is born per season. Gestation period is 36 days. Copulation can last 60-100 minutes. Sub adults are able to kill small rodents at nine weeks, and young are fully grown by 20 weeks of age. Except when mating, both adult males and females occur singly. Female and young of the year remain together until her young are almost fully-grown.

Diet

Feeds mainly on rodents, but almost any small animal prey such as snakes, lizards, scorpions, spiders, centipedes and insects may be eaten. While foraging the polecat also pushes its snout into soft soil or plant litter to locate invertebrates.

Size

Weight (Female) 596 - 880 g

Weight (Male) 681 - 1460 g

Length (Female) 63 cm

Length (Male) 63 cm

Fun fact

They have 5 toes on the fore- and hind feet.

Aardvark



Name: Aardvark [*Orycteropus afer*]

Appearance

They have a body length of 110 cm and a shoulder height of 60 cm, and the tail is 60-70 cm long. The skin is pinkish-gray or grayish-brown with coarse, yellowish hair. The hide is very thick in order to protect it from insects. The small, stocky body of the Aardvark has a high arch in its back.

The powerful legs are covered with dark fur and the forefeet have four digits and the hind feet have five digits, and all are equipped

with long claw-like nails. The thick claws on the forefeet are used as digging tools.

The armadillo also uses its claws to walk on. The head is long and slender and ends with a tubular, pig-like snout, which is covered in white hairs that are 25-50 mm. The ears are large, and they taper to a point at the tips.

Diet

The diet of the Armadillo consists of termites and other insects. They feed at night and follow a pathway among the termite nests. They feed by sweeping the ground with their noses and walking in a zigzag fashion. They travel up to as far as 16km in search of food a night.

They eat by taking apart termite hills with their powerful claws. With its protractile tongue (300 mm), which is covered with thick, sticky saliva it traps the insects and then digests them. They also favor melons. As a consequence of this specialized diet the cheek teeth are reduced to flat-crowned, peg-like structures adapted to crush the hard outer shells of insects.

Breeding

There is no mating season for the armadillo. Gestation lasts for 7 months and 1 offspring is produced. The young armadillo is born pink and hairless. They remain in the burrow for about two weeks before they accompany their mother outside.

The young begin to eat solids at 3 months of age and are weaned in 7 months. They reach sexual maturity at around 2 years of age.

Behavior

The solitary Armadillo is primarily nocturnal, though they occasionally sun themselves at the mouth of its burrow. During the day, they sleep curled up in a tight ball. They are diggers who burrow, the

forefeet are used as excavating tools, which loosen and push back the dirt while the hind feet push the dirt backwards and to the sides.

The Aardvark creates a burrow for several reasons, to find food, shelter, and to provide a safe place in which to rear the young. The burrows are up to 13 m long and have several different chambers and several entrances, and once abandoned they are often used by other animals such as Warthogs and Jackals.

Aardvarks have excellent hearing but poor eyesight. Surprisingly enough the Aardvark is a good swimmer. When frightened the Aardvark grunts and bleats.

Where Aardvark Are Found

The Aardvark is found in sub-Saharan Africa in Savanna, grasslands, and open forests where the ground is soft and sufficient food and water is found. The Aardvark are not found in very dry and rocky places such as deserts. Aardvarks also tend to avoid forests.

Fun Fact

Aardvarks are digitigrades, meaning they walk on their toes, and not on the soles of their feet.

Aardwolf



Name

Aardwolf [*Proteles cristata*] The name Aardwolf means 'earth wolf' in Afrikaans and stems from its supposed dog-like features and its dietary habits of eating termites which it digs for in the ground and in the termite mounds.

Appearance

The Aardwolf has a yellowish brown coat with several vertical black stripes, a bushy, black tipped tail with a long, coarse, dark haired stripe on its back, which rises when the Aardwolf feels threatened or scared.

The Aardwolf stands at 40-50 cm from the shoulder with a tail length of 20-25 cm, has a length of 65-80cm from nose to tail, and weighs between 8 to 12 kg. It resembles a small striped Hyena.

Diet

This unusual species of Hyena is a termite eater. So highly adapted to eating termites, the aardwolf's teeth, except for its canines, have dwindled to mere pegs incapable of even chewing meat. Its fangs are still well developed, and it uses them to defend its territory from other Aardwolves.

The Aardwolf's diet consists mainly of two species of termites, one of which goes dormant during the cooler winter, so the Aardwolf then switch to the other species for nourishment.

This limited diet means the Aardwolf has a very restricted range and can only live where these two species of termites are abundant. On an average night an Aardwolf can consume anywhere from 200 000 to 300 000 termites.

By using their acute hearing, the Aardwolf is able to detect termites in the ground and then using their broad, sticky tongue they lap them up. The Aardwolf also is known to eat other animals such as mice, small birds, eggs, and carrion.

Breeding

Since the male and female Aardwolf are solitary, shy and elusive not much is known about their social behavior, but it is believed that mating occurs throughout the year. Gestation lasts for 90-100 days and 2 to 4 cubs are produced. When the cubs are weaned, both parents feed them regurgitated termites.

Behavior

Aardwolves are nocturnal, solitary foragers, only coming together to mate and rear young. They are sometimes seen in pairs or small groups. The Aardwolf has never developed a clan system like the spotted and striped hyenas because of their strict diet of termites.

Since food cannot be shared or brought back to the den, aardwolves must travel and forage by themselves.

Their dens are normally enlarged springhare burrows, but they also frequent disused Armadillo or Porcupine burrows. Aardwolves are avid diggers and in the absence of holes, they will construct their own.

Where Aardwolf Are Found

Aardwolf occurs throughout eastern and southern Africa, except in the south along the coast. These secretive and entirely harmless carnivores appear to have a wide habitat tolerance with a preference for semi-arid, open plains, savannas, and grasslands where it lives in burrows in the ground.

There are two geographically separate populations of Aardwolves, one centered in South Africa and the other extending from central Tanzania northward to southern Egypt. Aardwolves are mostly found in the grasslands and scrubs of Botswana, Karoo, and the Northern Cape Province.

Fun Facts

Aardwolves are related to hyenas. They eat mostly termites

Baboon chacma



Name

Chacma Baboon or Cape Baboon (*Papio ursinus*)

Appearance

The Chacma Baboon is a large primate with a dog-like face and large, prominent canines. A mature male measure 1.5 m from head to tail, weighs up to 33 kg, whereas the more slender female measures 1.1 m, and has a mass of about 15 kg.

Diet

Omnivorous, under natural conditions they feed on wild fruits, seeds and insects, even scorpions, and on occasion even the flesh of small mammals and birds. Because troops are inclined to raid commercial crops, baboons are not popular with maize and fruit farmers.

Breeding

Baboons do not have a definite breeding season and are sexually active throughout the year. Gestation period is around 140 days, after which a single young is born. Leopard and Cheetah prey upon chacma baboons.

Behavior

Baboons can be very aggressive. It is a known fact that they would viciously counter-attack their predators when threatened. Troops are 50 to 100 strong, and have a well-developed and complex social structure.

Where Chacma Baboon Are Found

Chacma Baboon inhabits woodlands, semi-deserts, and sub-alpine meadows along the Drakensberg. The Chacma baboon is replaced in the north by its close relative, the yellow baboon. Chacma Baboon are widely distributed throughout Southern Africa and in countries beyond.

Fun facts

Chacma baboons are the largest species within the monkey family.

Bats



With their forelimbs adapted as wings, they are the only mammals capable of true and sustained flight. Bats are more maneuverable than most birds, flying with their very long spread-out digits covered with a thin membrane or patagium.

Bats are one type of animal that acts as a natural reservoir of many pathogens, such as rabies; and since they are highly mobile, social, and long-lived, they can readily spread disease among themselves. These traits become potentially dangerous to humans.

We can find a few species of bats in the region of Bonza

- Cape serotine Bat
- Common slit-faced Bat
- Darling's horseshoe Bat
- Dent's horseshoe Bat
- Egyptian free-tailed Bat
- Flat-headed free-tailed Bat
- Horseshoe Bat
- Long-fingered Bat

Dormouse spectacled



They are widely distributed throughout Africa, from the southern edge of the Sahara Desert to Cape Province, South Africa

Habitat

Although they commonly nest in Acacia trees, their nests can also be found in tree hollows, rock crevices, on tree branches, in shrubs and even in abandoned bird nests and beehives

Physical Description

Woodland dormice are one of the larger African dormice species, ranging from 70 to 165 mm in head and body length and from 50 to 135 mm in tail length. They are squirrel-like in appearance, with dorsal pelage that ranges from light to dark gray and ventral pelage that is buffy white. They have short, soft wooly hair and a long bushy tail. A ring

of darker fur often encircles their black eyes, and their ears range in length from 10 to 20 mm. They have short curved claws and their hind feet range in length from 15 to 20 mm. Woodland dormice range in mass from 23 to 34 g and are often confused with savannah dormice, which are detectably smaller.

Reproduction

In breeding season, males are territorial and aggressive towards one another, suggesting polygyny. Once they emerge from their hibernacula, many species of dormice call out to alert potential mates of their presence.

Females have 1 to 2 litters per year. Gestation last for approximately 24 days, resulting in 3 to 4 pups per litter. Pups weigh approximately 3.5 g at birth.

Newborns are altricial and independence from the mother most likely between 4 and 6 weeks of age. Mothers provide protection, grooming, and nourishment until pups reach independence. Pups are cared for in nests lined with moss, which are often found in tree hollows, rock crevices, on tree branches, in shrubs and even in abandoned bird nests and beehives.

Lifespan/Longevity

Woodland dormice live for approximately 5.5 years in the wild and may live 5 to 6 years in captivity.

Fun fact

They are known for their long periods of hibernation.

Elephant- shrew rock



Other Names: Eastern Rock Elephant Shrew or Eastern Rock Sengi
[*Elephantulus myurus*]

Appearance

The total body of the Eastern Rock Elephant Shrew measures 260 mm and the tail is longer than the head and body length and it weighs about 60 grams. Eyes are distinctly ringed with a white band.

Diet

The Rock Elephant Shrew feeds on small insects like ants and termites. During the day, this species is dependent on shade and shelter, from which it maneuvers to secure prey.

Breeding

They have a long gestation period for such a small mammal, which lasts eight weeks. At birth, the young are fully haired and the eyes are open. Young can walk soon after birth. Females give birth to

mostly two sets of twins during the wet summer months (September to March).

Young are sexually mature at five to six weeks of age, and females can produce several litters during their lifespan.

Behavior

The Eastern Rock Elephant Shrew is predominantly a diurnal species, occasionally crepuscular or even nocturnal during bright moonlit nights. It is solitary in habits, but occasionally seen in pairs, presumably during mating and is extremely agile, fast and sure-footed in the uneven terrain of their habitats.

When alarmed they communicate by loud foot drumming and emitting a series of high-pitched squeaks which tail off to a sound that is barely audible.

During vocalization with the mouth wide open, the head is held high and the elongated snout is curved back over the muzzle. Secretions from scent glands also form part of their communication system. Such scent glands are situated in the corners of the mouth, behind the ears and at the base of the tail

Where Eastern Rock Elephant Shrew Are Found

The Elephant Shrew is quite common in most areas and not threatened, although populations are often isolated due to habitat restrictions.

Elephant shrew round eared



The round-eared elephant shrew (*Macroscelides proboscideus*) or round-eared sengi (called the Karoo round-eared elephant shrew to distinguish it from its sister species; formerly misleadingly named the "short-eared elephant shrew"), is a species of elephant shrew (sengi) in the family Macroscelididae.

Elephant shrew smith's rock



Smith's rock elephant shrew (*Elephantulus rupestris*) is so named as it frequents koppies and rocky habitats, ideal for seeking refuge in semi-desert regions. They propel themselves by bouncing off the ground using their larger hind legs, a feature used to travel distances quite quickly to escape predators. A territorial creature, individuals of the same sex can show aggressive behavior towards each other, a trait that is common between males and females. Foot drumming and scent marking are common communicative characteristics of Smith's rock elephant shrew.

Red musk Shrew



The greater red musk shrew (*Crocidura flavescens*) is a species of mammal in the family Soricidae. It is found in Lesotho, Mozambique, South Africa, and Eswatini. Its natural habitats are moist savanna, temperate grassland, and rural gardens. Like most shrew species, *C. flavescens* is nocturnal. The greater red musk shrew is considered asocial and territorial, with males using scent marking to establish their territory. Males appear to be more aggressive than females, and their aggression increases with greater population density.

Red veld rat



Description

The red rock rat is a rat-sized murine rodent. Adults have a head-body length of 12 to 17 cm, with a long; 13 to 20 cm, tail, and weigh from 40 to 114 g. Males are not significantly larger than females. The fur on the upper body and flanks is mostly reddish-brown, but mixed with dark brown or black hairs, producing an overall color that varies from orange-yellow or cinnamon to medium brown. The under parts are white or very pale grey, with a clear dividing line from the fur elsewhere on the body. The head is robust, with a heavy snout. Females have three pairs of teats.

Although red rock rats can be distinguished from most other species of the genus *Aethomys* by their size or bodily proportions, they appear essentially identical to Tete veld rats, and can only be reliably distinguished from them by genetic analysis or examination of the shape of their spermatozoa

Vlei Rat



Description

The Southern African Vlei Rat is a large-sized rat with dense and continuously replaced shaggy fur. The head is large, the ears small, and the tail short. The dorsal parts are generally gray, brown, or black. The ventral parts are some shade of paler or darker grey. All of its digits are clawed, and the hind claws are longer than the fore claws. The head-and-body length is about 160 mm and the tail about 100 mm. Both males and females have a similar mean mass of 143.7g

Cape fox



Name

Cape Fox, Silver-backed Fox [*Vulpes chama*]

Appearance

The only true fox and the smallest found in South Africa. The Cape Fox is silver-grey in color with large pointed ears. They have a dark coloring around the mouth. Adults measure 350 mm at the shoulders and have a weight of 2.5-3 kg. Remarkably agile, especially since the bushy tail serves as a counterbalance when dodging and weaving.

Diet

The Cape Fox preys on insects, mice and other small animals. They occasionally ingest wild fruit and carrion in farming areas.

Breeding

The Cape Fox is a seasonal breeder, giving birth in the early summer to between one and five young, after a gestation period of 51-52 days.



Behavior

The Cape Fox is mainly nocturnal. Its social system is not well understood but it would appear to be monogamous, like other canids.

Where they are found

Inhabits mainly open country, from open grassland plains with scattered thickets to semi-desert scrub, and extending into fynbos. Associated strongly with the fringes of water pans.

Widespread in South Africa.

Gerbil

In the Northern Cape, a number of gerbil species can be found. They are small rodents belonging to the subfamily Gerbillinae.

1. Gerbil bushveld



2. Gerbil Hairy-footed



3. Gerbil Highveld



4. Gerbil short tail



Honey Badger



Other name: Honey Badger [*Mellivora capensis*], Ratel

Description

One of Africa's most ferocious animals, Honey Badgers have been known to attack Lions and Buffalo when threatened. They will also attack humans when in real danger. They have a powerful bite and loose skin, which enables them to wriggle out of any grasp.

Honey Badgers feed on a wide variety of foods including eggs, fruit, honey, reptiles, insects, larvae and grubs. They have a relationship with the Honeyguide, a bird that leads them to beehives for a return of the spoils.

Vital Statistics

Weight (Female)

12 kg

Weight (Male)

12 kg

Breeding

Usually two young are born between October and January after a gestation period of \pm 6 months

Spoor Description

Five toes on the fore- and hind-feet; the claws on front feet are elongated and powerfully built, reaching a length of 35 mm. Those on the back feet are much shorter and more lightly built. The front claws are built like curved knives, broader on their top edges, sharp, and knife-like below.

The claws on the back feet lack the knife-edge and are broad and hollowed out underneath. The intermediate pads are fused, and a proximal pad on each of the fore- and hind-feet is characteristic of its spoor. On very firm mud, the proximal pads may not be very distinct

Fun fact

The honey badger may even have a resistance to snake venom and is sometimes able to sleep off a bite.

Genet, small spot



Other name: Common Genet [*Genetta genetta*], Muskeljaatkat

Appearance

The Small-Spotted Genet is slightly smaller than the Large-Spotted Genet, and the markings are black and white that is more distinct and without a rusty tinge. The tail is white tipped, as opposed to the black tipped tail of the Large-Spotted Genet. Overall body color is more a dirty white covered with black spots and forming lines from the head to the tail.

Along the spine is a crest of erectile long black hairs. It has distinct white patches on the face below the eyes, which is less prominent around the mouth and on the forehead. They have retractile claws. Tails are long and ringed black and white.

Diet

The Small-Spotted Genet has a diet, which consists mainly of small mammals and insects. Bats, birds, reptiles, amphibians, millipedes, centipedes and scorpions have been recorded as their food source. It would appear to eat less fruit than the Large Spotted Genet.

Breeding

Two litters are produced per year, respectively of two to three young. The gestation period is between 70-77 days. The ears and eyes of young only open after 5-18 days. Canines erupt within the first month. Young take solid foods only after a few weeks, but continue suckling for several months.



Behavior

Almost entirely solitary, pairs are seldom seen, probably only during the mating season. Habitat preference tends towards drier woodlands, although it is also found in riverine habitats. It often lies up in trees

during the day, but is more commonly found in holes in the ground and in rocky refuges. It is less arboreal than the Large-Spotted Genet.

Where Small-Spotted Genet Are Found

Although the Small-Spotted Genet appears to have a wide range through most of Southern Africa, within that it has an occurrence coinciding predominantly with the drier districts or areas of Southern Africa. It is absent from the west coast of Namibia as well as the west and southwest coast of South Africa.

Scrub Hare



Other name Scrub Hare [*Lepus saxatilis*], Kolhaas

Appearance

The Scrub Hare is larger in the southwestern parts of the range (2.7-4.5 kg) than further north (1.5-3.2 kg). The upper parts are a grizzled-grey and the under parts white. They have long ears, which are grey in color, and together with the black- and-white tail, these become most visible whilst fleeing.

Diet

The Scrub Hare feeds mainly on short, green grasses, but during times of hardship scrub hares will also take leaves, stems and rhizomes of dried grass.

Breeding

Births peak from September to February, but they may give birth throughout the year to between one and three leverets per litter. Triplets are more likely during good rainy seasons. They will breed during most adverse drought conditions.

Behavior

They are solitary. A few males may accompany females during estrus. Preferred habitat is scrub, tall grasslands and savannah.

Where Scrub Hare Are Found

Scrub Hare are distributed widely in South Africa but absent from forests, coastal desert areas and the drier northwestern parts of the Northern Cape.

Fun Facts

They have known to reach speeds of 70km/h, which proves that the hare is, indeed, faster than the tortoise.

Hyrax, rock



Name

Rock Dassie - now known as Rock Hyrax (*Procavia capensis*)

What is a Dassie?

The Dassie - now known as the Rock Hyrax is a medium-sized terrestrial mammal native to Africa and the Middle East. It is the African elephant's closest living relative, in spite of the size difference. This close evolutionary relationship is deduced from similarities in the structure of the feet and teeth.

Diet

The Rock Hyrax feeds on vegetation matter. It is a mixed feeder, but prefers grass when available during rainy seasons. However, during dry periods, it will consume any plant material available. Plants

considered highly toxic and aromatic, mosses and liver can be utilized by dassies during periods of drought stress.

Breeding

Young are born during early summer after a gestation period of seven months. Some females can conceive before they are a year old. Litters normally vary from two to three young. One dominant male monopolizes up to 17 females in a harem group. Solitary mature males live on the periphery of such harems.

Behavior

Rock Hyrax like basking in the sun on large rocks, particularly during mornings and late afternoons. Eagles, Caracal and Leopard, heavily prey upon Rock Hyrax.

Fun Fact

They can eat bark if needed.

Mole rat common



Names: African mole rat, or Hottentot mole rat

Appearance

Typically the body of a mature specimen of the common mole rat may be as short as 10.5 to as long as 16.5 cm. The fur is thick and evenly colored, usually grey or brown. In some specimens, there is white spot on the head. The shape of the body is cylindrical with short appendages. Common mole rats have un-grooved chisel-like incisors that are used for digging as well as for feeding and fighting.

Reproduction

Common mole-rats form colonies, essentially family groups with the largest female and male being the only reproductive pair. Mating begins in September and October. The birth of offspring is restricted to the southern hemisphere summer, during which there may be one

or two litters of up to five pups. The gestation period is about 81 days. The average age at reproductive maturity is about 450 days.

Behavior

Common mole rats live in family units of up to 14 individuals. Members are specialized for functions such as reproduction and for cooperative care of the young. Younger mole rats would likely be workers and older mole rats could be casual workers. These workers, for the most part, burrow and forage, with casual workers not working as much as younger workers do. The oldest mole rats are breeders.

Tunneling

Mole rats have cylindrical bodies with short limbs adapted to activities inside their tunnels. Their loose skins and dense fur assist in negotiating small spaces. They can practically somersault within their loose skins. Their hairy cheeks can close behind the incisors to keep dirt and soil from the throat while they dig. In digging, they loosen soil with the incisors, then use their feet to pass the loosened soil back beneath the body. When the mole rat has accumulated a suitable batch of loose earth, it reverses to push the soil out of the tunnel.

Smith's red rock rabbit



Distribution and habitat

The Smith's red rock hare is native to Africa; it is believed to no longer be present in Namibia. It occurs on rocky slopes and tops of rocky outcrops, in stony countries where grass, rocks, and bush are intermingled. It inhabits ravines with boulders, hillsides, slabs of stones, and rock creaks that provide cover from predators.

Behavior and ecology

While a nocturnal species, Smith's red rock hare occasionally comes out during early morning or late afternoon in places where it is not hunted. It is alert at most times, and usually hides prior to being seen. It can also exhibit rapid, startling maneuvers, which are depicted when chased by dogs. The Smith's red rock is observed to vocalize a series of loud, startling screams when running away at

night, possibly to scare away predators or to warn other members of the species of potential threat. The juvenile can produce *chirring* sounds when caught in hand, and the adult can produce a *barking* sound when disturbed before sunrise.

It usually forages on grasses (such as sprouting grass), shrubs, and herbs. The Smith's red rock hare breeds from September to February. The female makes a nest out of debris lined with its fur. The nest is about 15 cm wide, 10 cm length, and 4 to 8 cm deep. The female has a gestation period of about one month, and litters 1 or two young, each weighing 40 to 50 g. The young are altricial at birth, and leave the nest at three years of age, when they weigh about 180 to 200 g. Although observed to be secluded, the Smith's red rock hare associate closely with dassies.

Wildcat, African



Name: African Wild Cat [*Felis silvestris* spp. - a number of sub-species across Africa] Vaalboskat

Introduction

Six thousand years ago, Egyptians domesticated the African Wild Cat to control mice and rats raiding granaries. From these tamed animals, the domestic cat was bred. Although it is an agile tree climber, this cat spends most of its time on the ground.

Diet

Preferred prey of the African Wild Cat are mice and rats, but when these are scarce or the opportunity arises, they also feed on birds and arthropods, as well as hares, rabbits and even baby antelopes.

Breeding

Mating occurs between July and January, with a gestation period of 65 days. Young are born between September and March. Average litter size is three.

Behavior

Since this small member of the cat family has not yet been studied intensively, very little is known about its behavior. Apart from the difference in ear coloration and the longer legs, this species could easily be mistaken for a domestic cat, to which it is so closely related that interbreeding is possible. This cat is solitary in habits outside the breeding season, and mature animals are more than likely territorial.

Where African Wild Cat Are Found

The pure genetic stock of the African wild Cat is today only found in remote areas. Elsewhere interbreeding with domestic cats has taken place.

Breeding

2 - 5 young are born anytime of the year after a gestation period of about 2 months.

Fun fact

They are the closest living relatives of the domestic cat.

Small spotted cat



Name: Swartpootwildekat, miershooptier

Introduction

This species is very secretive in nature, which makes it difficult to census. The Black-Footed Cat is nevertheless considered rare. Except for the very short period during which mating occurs, black-footed cats prefer a solitary existence.

Diet

The Black-Footed Cat preys mainly on rodents and shrews, small birds, large soft-bodied insects, snakes, geckos, spiders and scorpions. The 'sit and wait' tactic, slow stalking and a fast trot to surprise prey, are the three hunting styles of this feline predator. In order to catch birds in flight, they can jump two meters far and 1, 4 meters high.

Breeding

At least two litters are raised per female in one year. Gestation period is 63-68 days, after which two kittens are born and weaned within two months. The kittens are often moved to another hideaway within a week of being born.

Where Black-Footed Cat Are Found

The Black-Footed Cat lives in open, dry habitat where it blends in with grass and bushes, this small carnivore is also known as the small spotted cat.

Mouse

In Bonza, a number species mouse can be found.

1. House mouse



2. Large eared mouse



3. Multimammate mouse



4. Namaqua rock mouse



5. Pouched Mouse



6. Pygmy mouse



7. Striped mouse



Cape Pangolin



Name: Temminck's Pangolin, Cape Pangolin, miervreter

What is a Pangolin?

A Pangolin is a mammal covered in protective scales, measuring over 1 m in length and weighs up to 18 Kg. The body is protected by armor of brown scales, which uniquely identifies this specie amongst all mammals. Except for the forehead, there are no scales on the head or belly, nor on the inner surfaces of the legs.

The claws are well developed for digging. The front legs are also shorter than the hind legs. The broad-based tail tapers to a rounded tip.

Diet

They feed predominantly ants. They are highly selective feeders in that only 19 species of ants and termites are taken. It locates prey by smell, even under the soil surface. When prey is located, tunnels are opened up with the well-equipped front paws. The 250 mm long, rod-shaped tongue is covered with sticky saliva. This is used as a tool to collect prey by inserting it into the termite tunnels. When withdrawn it is covered with trapped prey which is gathered into the mouth.

Such feeding exercises are executed about 90 times per night and each feeding lasts about one minute. As it lacks teeth, the sand ingested with each withdrawal assists to masticate the food items in the muscular mouth.

Breeding

A Pangolin couple pairs briefly for 1-2 days during March. A female gives birth to a single young after a gestation period of 135 days. Birthing occurs during July or August.

Young are suckled in the den, where it is left behind when the female goes out to forage. Young are frequently moved to a new den after about the first month.

Behavior

Pangolins are well equipped for self-defense. The Pangolin usually rolls up into a ball when threatened. Pangolins can lash out with their razor-sharp scales. They also have scent glands similar to those of the skunk, which they can use to spray enemies.

Habitat

Habitat preference is mainly for savannah woodlands, but it is also found on floodplain grasslands, rocky slopes and sandveld. They are not found in deserts and forests.

Interesting facts

Pangolins are endangered because their skin makes attractive leather for boots, similar to snakeskin or armadillo boots. In addition, Pangolins are eaten in some parts of the world. Only seven living species of mammal are included in the Pholidota, the Pangolins or scaly anteaters.

Bonza Game farm

Finsch Mine has converted the unutilized portions of land into the Bonza Game Farm. On Bonza species of game, indigenous to this and adjacent areas, have been introduced and are conserved. A balanced variety of species and herd sizes are maintained, watering points installed, fences upgraded and facilities where developed.

Bonza Game Farm is 1410 hectares. The area consists from shrubveld and grassland. Water is obtained from a borehole.

Vegetation on Bonza

The veld type has a very rich flora and up to 304 species have been recorded including the following shrubs:

- Wild Olive
- Bastard spike thorn
- Suurkarree
- Kuni quarri
- Ystervakbos
- Common quarri
- Blue quarri
- Driedoring
- Karoo rhigozum
- Brandy bush (Wild current)

The grass component is sour and is dominated by:

- Lehmann's love grass (*Eragrostis Lehmannia*)
- *Aristida diffusa* var *burkei*
- *Fingerhuthia Africana*
- Smits finger grass (*Digitaria smutsii*)

The smuts finger grass gives the hills the characteristic white color during summer.