

## NOTES ON MAMMALS ENCOUNTERED IN THE TSITSIKAMA NATIONAL PARKS

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*Abstract* – Data and observations on mammals collected since the proclamation of the Tsitsikama National Parks in 1964, are presented.

Although the Swedish naturalist J. F. Victorin (1970) and other early collectors and explorers have referred to elephants, hippos, buffaloes and many other big game species occurring in the area between Knysna and Humansdorp, only data and observations collected subsequent to the establishment of the Tsitsikama National Parks in 1964 will be presented. De Graaff and Nel (1970) referred to the smaller mammals occurring in the Parks while de Graaff (1974) listed the occurrence of rodents.

The material observations were collected as a routine duty of field staff in the Parks but in a few cases traps were set by visiting professionals. The numbers referred to below the notes of some of the species are the museum accession numbers of the Tsitsikama Coastal National Park housed at Storms River Mouth. Nomenclature follows that of the Smithsonian Institute (Meester and Setzer 1971) as far as possible, otherwise Roberts (1951) is accepted.

### ORDER PRIMATES

#### Family Cercopithecidae

*Papio ursinus ursinus* (Kerr, 1792)

Chacma Baboon

Widespread and abundant, troops at Bloukrans Pass, Storms River Mouth, Paul Sauer Bridge and at Nature's Valley. The troop at Storms River Mouth occasionally ventures down to the intertidal zone where they have been observed eating intertidal invertebrates. They are caught in adjacent areas to the Park by the Department of Forestry where they cause considerable damage to the pine (*Pinus* spp.) plantations.

*Cercopithecus pygerythrus pygerythrus* (F. Cuvier, 1821)

Vervet

Frequently seen at Groot River near Nature's Valley and at the De Plaat forest near Paul Sauer Bridge although they are found throughout the area in the indigenous forests. The troops usually number between 15–25 individuals.

## ORDER CARNIVORA

### Family Mustelidae

*Mellivora capensis capensis* (Schreber, 1776)

Honey Badger

Only one has been observed near Lottering River in 1969. A skeleton was, however, found during 1967 while the Otter Trail was being constructed and it is likely that others exist in this area. TNP/B/1967/10

*Poecilogale albinucha albinucha* (Gray, 1864)

Snake Mongoose

A very rare find, collected at the De Plaat forest. The distribution of this species seems uncertain and this record probably extends its known distribution. (Skin and skull collected). TNP/B/1974/28

*Aonyx capensis capensis* (Schinz, 1821)

Clawless Otter

Found all along the Park's coast usually in the vicinity of estuaries. Often seen in the late afternoons during the winter months when the sea is rough. Most commonly seen at Storms River Mouth and at Groot River estuary.

*Ictonyx striatus striatus* (Perry, 1810)

Cape Polecat

One specimen collected after it had been run over on the National Road near Witelsbos. Not usually seen due to its nocturnal habits. Only the skin was preserved. TNP/B/1975/2

### Family Viverridae

*Genetta genetta* (Thunberg, 1811)

Small Spotted Genet

Commonly seen at Storms River Mouth and since the prohibition of dogs in the Park, has become quite tame. Three have been trapped and tagged for further studies.

*Herpestes pulverulentus pulverulentus*  
(Wagner, 1839)

Cape Grey Mongoose

Widespread in the Parks and regularly seen.

### Family Felidae

*Panthera pardus melanotica* (Günther, 1885)

Leopard

Records of sightings at Paul Sauer Bridge, Storms River Mouth, Robbehoek and Bloukrans Pass. The populations must consist of at least eleven individuals as a mother with three kittens were reported being seen in the Bloukrans Pass. The specimen on display in the open-air museum (Tsitsikama Coastal National Park), was shot in the Langkloof.

TNP/B/1968/14

*Felis caracal caracal* (Schreber, 1776)

Caracal

Have been observed on several occasions by rangers and the public. Two kittens were caught at Storms River in 1966 by local labourers and reared by the author.

#### ORDER HYRACOIDEA

Family Procaviidae

*Procavia capensis capensis* (Pallas, 1766)

Cape Dassie

Extremely abundant in rocky outcrops and since the prohibition of dogs in the Park have become very tame at Storms River Mouth. The breeding season usually starts during the latter part of November and continues into December.

#### ORDER CETACEA

Sub-order Odontoceti

Family Physeteridae

*Kogia breviceps* (Blainville, 1838)

Pygmy Sperm Whale

One specimen collected along the coast during 1969 by the Port Elizabeth Museum. It was a male 2,6 m in length.

*Kogia simus* (Owen, 1866)

Dwarf Sperm Whale

This identification is doubtful. On Saturday 1974.05.31 the author was informed of a stranded dolphin at Mooibaai. It was noted that it was still alive and the beast was hurriedly given a few violent pumps to clear its lungs. The dolphin was dragged back into the water. After swimming around in the bay for a short while it headed for deeper water and was not seen again. J. A. Fourie and T. Dearlove confirmed the tentative identification. This could, however, also have been a *K. breviceps*.

Family Delphinidae

*Delphinus delphis* Linnaeus, 1758

Common Dolphin

Occurring in enormous schools frequently as large as several thousand individuals. These schools are usually found in deeper water.

*Stenella euphrosyne* (Gray, 1846)

Euphrosyne Dolphin

Another pelagic dolphin found in huge schools and not readily distinguishable from the abovementioned species. Saayman, Bower and Taylor (1972) refers to it as *Stenella caeruleoalba*.

*Tursiops aduncus* (Ehrenberg, 1833)

Bottle-nose Dolphin

Occurring in smaller schools totalling several hundred individuals. Seen frequently throughout the year close to the coast. Best (1971) has suggested using "Gadamn" as this species' common name but, "Bottle-nose" is more commonly used.

*Sotalia lentiginosa* (Owen, 1866)

Humpback Dolphin

Seen throughout the year close inshore in small groups. Saayman *et al.* (1972) describes this species as *Sousa* sp. Best (1971) has suggested that the common name "Speckled dolphin" be accepted for this species.

Family Ziphiidae

*Mesoplodon hectori* (Gray, 1871)

Hector's Beaked Whale

During March 1967 two specimens were collected at Lottering River Mouth. Their skulls are housed in the Port Elizabeth Museum (1511/15 and 1511/16).

*Mesoplodon densirostris*  
(Blainville, 1817)

Blainville's Beaked Whale

The most recent stranding (1975.06.26) found at the western end of the caravan park at Storms River Mouth. It was a female weighing 184,4 kg and had a total length of 2,61 m. All the skeletal material is available.

TNP/B/75/3

Sub-order Mysticeti

Family Balaenidae

*Eubalaena glacialis* (Müller, 1776)

Southern Right Whale

These whales spend their summers closer to the antarctic and are only seen during the winter months migrating to and from the warmer regions. They select protected bays in which to calve and Storms River bay has been regularly visited for this purpose. Usually seen alone but often in pairs and occasionally a pair with a calf. Best (1971) also suggests "Back right whale".

ORDER PINNIPEDIA

Family Otariidae

Subfamily Arctocephalinae

*Arctocephalus pusillus* (Schreber, 1776)

South African Fur Seal

Often seen out at sea but occasionally enters river mouths and has

been observed by the author catching fish in the Storms River estuary. One or two mortalities occur annually along the Tsitsikama Coastal National Park.

Family Phocidae

Subfamily Monachinae

*Lobodon carcinophagus*

(Hombron and Jacquinot, 1842)

Crabeater Seal

Collected at Nature's Valley beach on 1974.04.15. A rare seal for the South Coast and only a few records have been published (Nel 1971). The skin is on display at Skukuza. TNP/B/1974/1.

ORDER CHIROPTERA

Sub-order Megachiroptera

Family Pteropodidae

*Rousettus aegyptiacus* (E. Geoffroy, 1810)

Egyptian Fruit Bat

Found in large cave in Storms River estuary. Colony probably consisting of more than 3 000 individuals. Other caves visited along the coast and at Groot River showed no signs of this bat. Reported by B. Whitcher to occur in the Bloukrans River area (*pers. comm.*).

TNP/B/1972/2.

Sub-order Microchiroptera

Family Rhinolophidae

*Rhinolophus capensis* Lichtenstein, 1823

Cape Horseshoe Bat

Found in most of the caves situated along the coast. TNP/B/1974/26

Family Vespertilionidae

Subfamily Miniopterinae

*Miniopterus schreibersi*

(Kuhl, 1819)

Schreiber's Long-fingered Bat

Commonly found in the caves caused by faults in the Table Mountain Sandstone layers. TNP/B/1974/22

ORDER ARTIODACTYLA

Family Suidae

*Potamochoerus porcus* (Linnaeus, 1758)

Bush Pig

Occurs throughout the coastal and forest area. Regularly seen at night and judging from its diggings must be fairly abundant. TNP/B/1974/10

Family Bovidae  
Subfamily Bovinae  
Tribe Tragelaphini

*Tragelaphus scriptus* Pallas, 1766

Bushbuck

Never seen in groups, usually alone, but on occasions a pair have been seen consisting of either a ram and a doe or of a doe and a lamb.

TNP/B/1967/11

*Taurotragus oryx* (Pallas, 1766)

Eland

It was re-introduced by the Department of Forestry to the Lottering Forest Reserve during 1973 and has subsequently been seen in the immediate vicinity of both the Coastal as well as the Forest National Parks.

Subfamily Cephalophinae

*Cephalophus monticola* (Thunberg, 1789)

Blue Duiker

Recently more observations have been recorded. A nucleus herd of four (two does and two rams) was initiated during 1974. These were presented by the Director of the Queens Park Zoo, East London. Unfortunately the two rams died shortly after arrival. Post-mortems revealed white muscle as the cause of death.

Subfamily Antilopinae

Tribe Neotragini

*Raphicerus melanotis* (Thunberg, 1811)

Grysbok

A common antelope in the Parks usually seen at night. Prefers the macchia to the dense forest.

## ORDER RODENTIA

Sub-order Hystricomorpha

Family Hystricidae

*Hystrix africae-australis* Peters, 1852

Cape Porcupine

Seems to be quite common in the Coastal National Park and quills are often found on the Otter Trail between Storms River and Groot River. They are not frequently seen, due to their nocturnal habits.

Family Muridae

*Praomys (Mastomys) natalensis*

Multimammate Mouse

Collected above caravan park on Loerie Trail, Otter Trail and in the restcamp at Storms River Mouth. Seems to be very common.

TNP/B/1974/14

*Rhabdomys pumilio* (Sparrman, 1784)

Cape Striped Mouse

Probably the most common mammal in these Parks. Found all over and collected at both Storms River and Groot River. TNP/B/1974/18

Family Cricetidae

*Otomys irroratus irroratus* Brants, 1827

Vlei Otomys

It is a very common rodent with numerous runs all over the Parks. TNP/B/1968/9

Sub-order Bathyergomorpha

Family Bathyergidae

*Georychus capensis capensis* (Pallas, 1778)

Cape Mole-rat

Fairly common at Storms River Mouth.

TNP/B/1969/6

#### ORDER CHRYSOCHLORIDEA

Family Chrysochloridae

*Amblysomus iris corriae*

Zulu Golden Mole

Thomas Schwann, 1905

Common in the Parks where the soil allows them to burrow.

TNP/B/1974/30

#### ORDER INSECTIVORA

Family Crociduridae

*Myosorex cafer* (Sundevall, 1847)

Natal Forest Shrew

From the trapped specimens it would appear that these animals are very numerous. TNP/B/1974/16

*Crocidura flavescens flavescens*  
(I. Geoffroy, 1827)

Red Musk Shrew

This shrew is common along the fringes of the coastal forest. Collected at Storms River Mouth. TNP/B/1974/15

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