

Ground Squirrel

Cape Grey Mongoose

• The biggest trophy in South Africa.....



Cape Grey Mongoose

Kleingrysmuisshond
Galerella pulverulenta

Description Belongs to the same genus and is replaced by the Slender Mongoose to the north. From a distance it looks grey, but from closer it is actually black with white or yellowish-brown speckles. Animals from the north-west are more brown than the paler ones of the south. The hair on the head is short and lies flat, the ears slightly covered. The hair at the base of the tail is long and becomes shorter towards the tip. The underparts are without the speckles and the legs are darker than the upper parts.

Sexual dimorphism Males are slightly larger than females.

Habitat Utilises a variety of habitats; from fynbos and forests to very dry or mountainous areas, even parts with sparse vegetation.

Habits Diurnal with a decrease of activity during the warmer time of day. Usually solitary, sometimes in pairs. Young stay in the breeding burrows till weaned, then start moving around independently. They are mainly terrestrial, but can hunt in trees. Uses stacks of rocks, holes in termite heaps, as well as other holes for shelter, if sufficient vegetation is not available. Are not afraid of humans and prefer walking in footpaths.

Voice Unknown.

Breeding Young are usually born from August to December.

Also known as Small Grey Mongoose.

Waaierstertgrondeekhorning *Xerus inaurus*

Description The colour of the body is a light cinnamon with characteristic white stripes along the flanks. The lower parts of the legs, the belly, the sides of the neck and the areas around the eyes are white. The tail has long hair, is ringed with black and white, and has a white tip. When the animal stands on its hind legs the tail is spread like an open fan to give shade to its back and head. The ears are simple openings in the sides of the head. It is very difficult to distinguish between the Ground Squirrel and the Mountain Ground Squirrel in the field. The latter prefers a habitat on rocky hillsides, which is normally avoided by the Ground Squirrel.

Sexual dimorphism Males are slightly larger than females.

Habitat Open dry plains with hard calcareous soil and thinly spread bushes.

Habits Ground Squirrels are diurnal and live in colonies of up to 30 animals. They dig their own burrows about 80 cm underneath the ground, with many tunnels, corridors and entrances. Rooms in the burrows are lined with grass on which they rest. Such a burrow is occupied by a few females with their young. The dominant female will chase away all strangers from the immediate vicinity of the entrance. Males move from one group to another and stay only for a few weeks. The animals emerge from their burrows only after sunrise and return before sunset.

Voice A high-pitched whistle or scream for an alarm call, and an aggressive growl.

Breeding 1 to 3 young are born any time of the year after a gestation period of 6 to 7 weeks.