

## MAMMALS in ETHIOPIA

Observations of mammals during a trip with Avifauna, travelling company associated with the Swedish Ornithological Society, to Ethiopia Nov 3 – Nov 22 2007.

**Stefan Lithner**

Order of presentation: genera presented according to Kingdon 2001, species in each genus in alphabetic order.

\* = endemic; 11 species, + 4 subspecies.

**1. Black-and-white Colobus (Monkey) *Colobus guereza***

Total number 75 spec. during 10 obs.days.

**2. Hamadryas Baboon *Papio hamadryas***

30 spec. Bogol Manyo 11/11, 8 spec. Awash 17/11, 10 spec. Awash => Melka Gebdo 18/11.

**3. Olive Baboon *Papio anubis***

Common; observed during 10 days.

**4. Gelada Baboon\* *Theropithecus gelada***

125 spec. Gemassa Gedel 19/11, 30 spec. Debre Berhan => Jemma 20/11, 3 and. 12 spec. Jemma Escarpment 20-21/11.

In comparison to any other mammal in the world, this species has got the largest canines. Despite this it is almost exclusively a vegetarian, but do occasionally eat one or another insect. They are often quite unshy. Limited hunting occur, mainly to obtain mane of males, to use as adornment on headgears by local warriors. The social system of geladas is by some authorities considered to be the most complex among animals, next to humans. Groups may contain up to 400 individuals. Studies on communication among geladas have identified 27 contact utterings.

**5. Grivet's Monkey *Cercopithecus (pygerythrus) aethiops***

7 spec. Jemma River 21/11.

**(5x6) Vervet x Grivet Monkey *Cercopithecus pygerythrus* x *C (p) arenarius***

One *Cercopithecus* was observed in Awash National Park 18/11, showing broad white "Newgate fringe" and moustach and an extremely long tail, like *C.(p) aethiops*, but at the same time black hands, distinctly and well marked outermost inch of tail and obvious brown crown which best coincide with *C. pygerythrus arenarius*. Hybrides between several of these closely related taxa are known where they meet.

This hybrid however is not mentioned in Kingdon 1993.

**6. Vervet Monkey *Cercopithecus pygerythrus***

Common, a total of 70 spec. observed during 11 days.

**7. Egyptian Rousette *Rousettus egyptiacus***

Heard at Negelle 9-12/11.

**8. Gambian Epauletted Fruit Bat** *Epomophorus gambianus*

One seen in Jemma Valley at night approaching 22/11.

[**Fruit Bat gen.** ]

Heard: Negelle 9-12/11, Lake Awash 16 – 18/11 and Jemma Valley 20 – 22/11. Seen at Lake Aiwasha 17/11 and Jemma Valley 21/11 (One in addition to above mentioned).

**9. Moorland Shrew\*** *Crochidura lucina*

The only shrew occurring at this altitude in this area

One seen on Seneti Plateau (bale Mts) 13/11.

**Hares** *Lepus*

The genus *Lepus* is confusing and controversial, and during later years has been reevaluated and still is subject to reevaluation.

Traditionally **Starck's Hare** *L. starcki*, **Cape Hare** *L. capensis* and **Scrub Hare** *L. saxatilis* (syn. *crawshayi*) have been regarded as the three species of hares in Afrika. More recent studies have resulted in splits for some of the subspecies formerly belonging to the two latter mentioned taxa, and subsequently more frequently have been regarded as full species.

**10. Starck's Hare** \* (syn. Ethiopian Highland Hare) *Lepus starcki*

8 spec. on Seneti Plateau 13/11.

**11. Scrub Hare** *Lepus saxatilis* (syn. *crawshayi*)

Two seen at Lake Abiata 3/11.

**12. Abyssinian Hare** *Lepus habessinicus*

(Kingdon 1997, Lagomorph Specialist Group 1996, IUCN Red List of Threatened Species 2006)

Previously regarded as a subspecies of *L. capensis*

3 – 5 spec. Wora Belle 12/11.

**13. Ethiopian Hare** *Lepus fagani*

(Wilson & Reeder, 1993, Duff & Lawson 2004, IUCN Red List of Threatened Species 2006)

Threat category: Data Deficient (DD) Previously alternately regarded as subspecies belonging to

*L. capensis* and *L. saxatilis*.

Awash 16/11: 2 spec. and 17/11 (spotlighting): 8 spec.

Observed features compared to information available on Internet indicates this species. Rangers working at Awash National Park state that this species is the *Lepus* at this site.

**14. Unstriped Ground Squirrel** *Xerus rutilus*

A total of 25 spec. observed during 7 days.

**15. Striped Ground Squirrel** *Xerus erythropus*

1 + 2 spec. Nechisar 4-5/11, 4 spec. Nechisar – Yabelo 6/11.

**16. Gambian Sun Squirrel** *Heliosciurus gambianus*

4 spec. Wendo Genet 4/11, 1 spec. Lake Awasa 15/11.

**17. Giant Mole Rat\*** (Syn. Big-headed Mole-Rat) *Tachyoryctes macrocephalus*

2 spec. Seneti Plateau 13/11, 3 spec. V Dinsho 14/11.

**18. East African Mole Rat** *Tachyoryctes splendens*

1 + 1 spec. Dinsho (Bale Mts) 14/11.

**19. Crested Porcupine** *Hystrix cristata*

1 spec. Nechisar 5/11.

[**Unidentified Gerbil** possibly Philip's Gerbil *Tatera phillipsi* (Not confirmed)  
1 + 1 spec. during spotlighting in Awash National Park 17/11]

**20. Black-clawed Brush-furred Rat\*** *Lophuromys melanonyx*  
At least 10 spec. at Dinsho (Bale Mts) 13/11.

**21. Ethiopian White-footed Mouse\*** *Myomys albipes*  
5 spec. seen on Seneti Plateau (bale Mts) 13/11

**22. Wurch Mouse\*** (Syn. Stripe-backed Mouse) *Muriculus imberbis*  
1 spec. seen on Seneti Plateau (bale Mts) 13/11  
The word wurch is a local name for the habitat on the supalpine heather-zone in this area.  
This animal is known to live in holes and is reported to associate with Grass Rats (*Arvicanthis*)

**23. Typical Vlei Rat** (syn. Typical Groove-toothed Rat) *Otomys typus*  
Locally numerous on Seneti Plateau (bale Mts) 13/11.

**24. Blick's Grass Mouse\*** *Arvicanthis blicki*  
Numerous at least around turnoff to Telecom station on Seneti Plateau (Bale Mts) 13/11.

**25. Neumann's Grass-rat** *Arvicanthis neumanni* (Redirected from Somali Grass Rat)  
1 spec. outside Bogol Manyo 10/11.

**26. African Grass Rat** *Arvicanthis niloticus*  
3 spec. Yabelo 7/11 and 1 spec. Awash 17/11.

**27. Common (Golden) Jackal** *Canis aureus*  
2 spec. Awash (*Ilala Sala*) 16-17/11.

**28. Black-backed Jackal** *Canis mesomelas*  
2 spec. Nechisar 5/11, 1 spec. SO Negelle 10/11, 1+3 spec. Awash 16-17/11.

**29. Ethiopian Wolf\*** *Canis simensis*  
5 spec. on Seneti Plateau 13/11, 6-7 spec. west of Dinsho 14/11.  
This species has recently been DNA analysed and found to be very closely related to grey wolf *Canis lupus*.  
It is Africa's fewest numbered larger carnivore. The population is estimated to be the most  
500 specimens, possibly fewer. Population has been reduced by hunting, fox scabies and rabies.  
The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species 2006 place it in threat category: "Critically Endangered".

**30. Slender(-tailed) Mongoose** *Herpestes sanguineus*  
1 spec. Awash 17/11, 1 spec. Melka Gebdo 19/11.

[**White-tailed Mongoose** *Ichneumia albicauda*  
1 spec. killed by car Dinsho => Awasa 15/11.]

**31. Spotted Hyena** *Crocuta crocuta*  
1 spec. (heard) west of Yabelo 8/11, 1 spec. (heard) Negelle 12/11, 1 spec. (heard) Harena Forest 13/11, 1 spec.  
Seen Dinsho 13/11, 1 spec. (heard) Awash 17/11, 1 spec. (heard) Jemma Valley 20-21/11. Additionally 4 spec.  
killed by car Awasa => Awash 16-18/11.

[**Aardwolf** *Proteles cristatus*  
1 spec. killed by car NE of Negelle 12/11.]

[**Common Genet** *Genetta genetta*  
1 spec. killed by car S of Yabelo 7/11.]

**[Ethiopian Genet *Genetta (genetta) abyssinica***

1 spec. killed by car Awasa => Awash 16/11.]

**[African Civet *Civettictis civetta***

1 spec. killed by car Bogol Manyo 10/11.]

**32. Serval *Felis serval***

1 spec. SE of Negelle 11/11, 2 spec. (one black) W of Dinsho 14/11.

**33. Ethiopian Rock Hyrax *Procavia capensis habessinica***

A total number of 120 spec. during 10 days. This species occur in many different colour-phases.

**34. Yellow-spotted (Bush) Hyrax *Heterohyrax brucei***

1 spec. Nechisar 6/11.

**35. Grant's Steppe Zebra (Common Zebra, Plains Zebra Burchell's Zebra) *Equus burchelli boehmi***

About 250 spec. Nechisar 5/11.

Grant's Zebra varies considerably. A number of types have been described as subspecies and given scientific names. Four major types (subspecies) are regarded as fairly well defined, Grant's- or Böhm's- Zebra (*E. burchelli boehmi*), Selousi Zebra (*E. burchelli selousi*), Quagga (*E. burchelli/quagga quagga*)\*<sup>1</sup> and Buechell's Zebra (*E. b. Burchelli*)\*<sup>2</sup>. Also a number of intermediate or variable populations have been given scientific names, of which Crawshay's Zebra (*E. burchelli crawshayi*) and Chapman's Zebra (Damara Zebra) (*E. burchelli antiquorum*) are probably the most well known.

The species scientific name is still disputed. Kingdon 2001 is using *E. quagga*, while Duff & Lawson 2004 are using the name *Equus burchelli*. Also its common name (and Swedish) is discussed. The name Steppe Zebra (and stäppzebra) is becoming increasingly more frequent.

\*<sup>1</sup> Extinct since 1872. This taxon is by Kingdon 2001 treated as a subspecies of Steppe Zebra, however using the species name *quagga*, (thus: *E. quagga quagga*), while Duff & Lawson is treating the taxon as a full species (*Equus quagga*), but use *E. burchelli* for the Steppe Zebra..

\*<sup>2</sup> Extinct in wild 1910, extinct in captivity 1918 (Berlin Zoo). Efforts to reconstruct this taxon is in progress in South Africa.

**36. Grevy's Zebra *Equus grevyi***

2 spec. Alledeghi Plain 17/11.

**37. Hippopotamus *Hippopotamus amphibius***

2 spec. Nechisar 5/11.

**38. Warthog *Phacochoerus africanus***

Observed during 7 days; most frequently around Dinsho 13-15/11.

**39 A. Abyssinian Bushbuck\* *Tragelaphus scriptus powelli***

1 young ♂ Nechisar 5/11, 1♀ Awash – Melka Gebdo 18/11.

**39 B. Menelik's+ Bushbuck\* *Tragelaphus scriptus meneliki***

10-15 spec. around Dinsho 13-14/11

Menelik's Bushbuck inhabits primarily the highland forests of Ethiopia (up to 4000 m), while Abyssinian (Powell's) Bushbuck occur on lower altitude. As an adaptation Menelik's Bushbuck has a longer fur. It is more frequently seen in pairs or families than other bushbucks. It is also diurnal to a greater extent than other bushbucks, particularly in Bale Mountains National Park where hunting is prohibited. The male is almost black and the female chestnut brown

+ Menelik (Menilek or Minlik) was born 1844 in Ankober, capital of Ethiopia, son of the successor of the throne Haile Malakot and a black slave. Shortly after a decisive victory on the battlefield March 9. 1889 Menelik let himself to be coronated as Menelik I "King of Kings" ("negusä nägäst"). Menelik had no heir, and thus appointed a nephew (son of daughter) Lidsch (~ squire) Ijasu (Jessu) as successor to the throne. In the autumn of 1909 Menelik's mental capacity declined dramatically. In February 1911 he died under mysterious circumstances.

The well known Emperor Haile Selassie was born in 1892. His father, was Prins Mekonin Welde Mikael, son of Emperor Melnik I's cousin.

**40. Lesser Kudu** *Tragelaphus imberbis*

2+2♂♂ Negelle – Bogol Manyo 10-11/11, 2+1 spec. Awash 17-18/11.

**41. Mountain Nyala\*** *Tragelaphus buxtoni*

7, 30 resp. 15 spec. were observed around Dinsho 12 -15/11.

This handsome antelope's closest relative is found in south eastern Africa. It was the last large antelope to be described (collected 1908). Today only scattered remnants of its preferred highland-forest habitat as well as the former population of this species remains. The population in Bale Mountains today is estimated to be between 4000 and 5000 specimen.

**42. Greater Kudu** *Tragelaphus strepsiceros*

1♀ Nechisar 6/11.

**43. Grey (Common) Duiker** *Sylvicapra grimmia*

1, 2 resp. 5 spec. were encountered around Dinsho 12-14/11.

**44. Oribi** *Ourebia ourebi*

2 spec. Lake Abiata 3/11.

**45. Klipspringer** *Oreotragus oreotragus*

4 spec. Nechisar 5/11, 1 spec. southern Seneti Plateau 13/11.

Just like no 46 and 47 this species appear almost exclusively in pairs.

**46. Günther's Dikdik** *Madoqua guentheri*

A total number of about 150 spec. observed during 7 days in the south (Nechisar – Bogol Manyo) 5-11/11).

**47. Salt's Dikdik** *Madoqua saltiana cordeauxi*

15+10 spec. observed in Awash 17-18/11.

**48. Mountain Reedbuck** *Redunca fulvorufula*

3 spec. Nechisar 5/11.

**49. Abyssinian Bohor Reedbuck\*** *Redunca redunca bohor*

75 resp. 20 ex west of Dinsho 14-15/11.

**50. Soemmering's Gazelle** *Gazella soemmeringi butteri*

1 resp. 20 spec. observed in Awash (*Ilala Sala*) 16+18/11 and 25 spec. on Alledeghi Plain 17/11.

**51. Grant's Gazelle** *Gazella granti*

12 spec. Lake Abiata 3/11, 50 spec. Nechisar 5/11, 2 spec. S Yabelo 7/11.

**52. Gerenuk** *Litocranius walleri*

2+1 spec. Negelle – Bogol Manyo 10-11/11, 7 spec. Awash 17/11.

**53. Swayne's Hartebeest\*** *Alcelaphus buselaphus swaynei*

24 spec. Nechisar 5/11.

This taxon normally occur in groups consisting of between 4 and 15 spec., occasionally up to 30. The tens of thousands of this animal General Swayne described in the early 1890-ies were shortly afterwards hit by cattle plague, reducing the population to an estimated population of about 880 specimen by the early 1900s. Today this powerful antelope occurs only on the southern plains of the Danakil's National Park and around the lakes in Rift Valley. The largest population (~ 500 spec.) exist under severe pressure in its habitat. This threat of extinction of this handsome antelope lead to the formaiton of Nechisar National Park.

**54. Beisa Oryx** *Oryx gazella beisa*  
14, 20 resp. 25 spec. Awash 16-18/11.

## **AMPHIBIANS**

**1. African (Nile) Crocodile** *Crocodylus niloticus*  
About 20 spec. Nechisar 5/11, 2-3 spec. Awash 16-18/11, 15spec. west of Metahara 18/11.

**2. Black Mamba** *Dendroaspis polylepis*  
1 spec. Negelle => Bogol Manyo 10/11.

**3. Common Egg-eater** *Dasypeltis scabra*  
1 spec. Bobella Forest 9/11

**4. White-throated Savannah Monitor** *Varanusalbigularis*  
3 spec. Negelle – Harena 12/11.

**5. Water (Nile) Monitor** *Varanus niloticus*  
1 spec. Nechisar – Yabelo 6/11, 1 spec. Lake Awasa 15/11, [1 spec. run over by car Awasa => Awash 16/11], 1 spec. Awash 18/11, 2 spec. Jemma Valley 21/11.

**6. Ground Agama Lizard** *Agama aculeata*  
Probably this lizard observed at a large number of sites.

**7. Rupells agama** *Agama ruppelli*  
2 spec. Jemma Valley 21/11

**8. Five-lined Skink** *Mabuya quinquetaeniata*  
1 spec. Jemma Valley 21/11

**9. Common (House) Gecko** *Hemidactylus brookei*  
1 spec. Negelle 9/11.

**10. Leopard Tortoise** *Geochelone pardalis*  
1 spec. Bogol Manyo => Negelle 11/11, 1 spec. Awash => Melka Gebdo 18/11.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

This report has been compiled with support from Daniel Bengtsson; Södertälje Sweden, also one of the tour leaders. All larger mammals down to the size of a hare confirmed by Håkan Pohlstrand, Strängnäs Sweden. , Erik Renman; Vallentuna Sweden has contributed with information on mammals, and Joakim Johansson; Örebro Sweden has contributed in identifying amphibians and a reptile.