

LUANGWA VALLEY MAMMAL NOTES

The following notes were recorded between 1965 and 1967 in the Luangwa Valley, from the Chiwale area (locus 1032-B-2) south to the Mtipwazi (1331-C-1), but mainly within a 30 mile radius of Mfuwe (1331-B-2). I am grateful to those who have contributed the information acknowledged in parentheses. Otherwise the records are my own.

Petrodromus tetradactylus Four-toed elephant shrew
Habits: Mainly nocturnal and only to a much lesser extent diurnal.

Canis adustus Side-striped jackal
Distribution: Apparently less scarce than previously thought, but certainly not numerous and probably secretive. Recent personal sight records are Luwi River, 1231-D-4 (one, 23rd Aug. 1965); Chibindi, Munyamadzi Corridor, 1232-C-1 (one, 20th Sept. 1965); Mushilashi River, 1231-D-3 (one, 3rd July 1966); Mfuwe, 1331-B-2 (one, sometimes two, often seen from 30th Oct. 1966 to August, 1967). Also one near Chipuka, 1232-A-3, 26th June 1966 (P. B. M. Smith). All were seen in daylight hours, except that the Mfuwe pair has been reported by several observers both by day and night. P. S. M. Berry has drawn my attention to an old report by J. L. Birch of 17 at a dead elephant in the Munyamadzi corridor: otherwise it seems to be unrecorded from carcasses in the area.

Lycan pictus Wild dog
Breeding: Copulation was observed by me once in June, but this was the only mature female to be seen in the pack at this time, and, as elsewhere, most whelping is usually from May to July. This bitch carried a dead immature puku (*Kobus vardoni*) in her mouth before, during and after mating, but made no attempt to eat it.

Mellivora capensis Honey badger
Distribution and habits: Quite common. For example, in the four months from mid-June 1966 I saw two singles and three pairs, all different animals. On two occasions, June 1966 and June 1967, one was seen sniffing at and chasing another, possibly courtship behaviour. On the first occasion both had the tail raised, on the second only the chaser. All these were seen between 5 p.m. and darkness, or at night, but in the Kafue National Park near Ngoma I saw one at 10.15 a.m. on 14th December, 1964. L.V. localities are 1231-D-4, 1331-B-2, 1231-B-3, and 1232-C-1.

Aonyx capensis Small-clawed otter
Distribution: One was seen by P. S. M. Berry near the source of the Msanzara stream, 1431-B-1, 27th April, 1966.

Herpestes ichneumon Large grey mongoose
Distribution: One was distinctly seen near Mfuwe in October, 1966 by Miss J. Heywood-Jones.

Panthera leo Lion
Diet: Recent records include two young elephant (*Loxodonta africana*) probably killed by lions (P. S. M. Berry, R. J. Dowsett); and perhaps a sub-adult *Hippopotamus amphibius* (J. M. C. Uys). The elephant examined by me was about two years old; Berry's, from his description, about a year old.

Acinonyx jubatus

Distribution: Though certainly scarce the species is perhaps not as rare as has previously been thought. Recent records are Mfuwe, one, perhaps two, May-June 1966 (R. J. Dowsett, J. M. C. Uys *et al.*); a group of three seen from about twelve miles north to about twelve miles south of Mfuwe several times during May to July 1967 (D. S. G. Macleod, D. Skinner *et al.*); two near the Kawondo/Luangwa confluence in August, 1966, 1232-A-4 (P. L. Hankin); one south of Katete stream, 1232-C-3 in May, 1967 (P. B. M. Smith).

Diceros bicornis

Distribution: There are a few as far north as the Kaunga stream about 10°35'S. (report by Game Guard Memba Zulu in December, 1965). Otherwise the species is apparently of regular occurrence from about 11°30'S.

Equus burchelli

Breeding: Foals may be born at any time, but mainly in the dry season between March and August.

Phacochoerus aethiopicus

Diet: One has been observed by J. M. C. Uys and myself drinking blood from a freshly killed elephant.

Breeding: The first young appear during the latter half of August and the peak of births is apparently in September.

Sylvicapra grimmia

Distribution: Very sparse on the west bank of the Luangwa, much less so on the east bank. During 1965 and 1966 I saw 18 different singles or pairs in the valley floor, 8 on the west bank and 10 on the east. They are often in pure mopane, but more usually near thicket or old cultivation.

Ourebia ourebi

Distribution: Recent records are: Lukusuzi River, 1232-C-1, a pair in 1965; Chifungwe plain, several in 1966; Chisombo, 1331-B-2, three different animals in 1966 (all my own records); Yolane dambo, east bank, 1331-B-1, a female in 1966 (J. M. C. Uys); near Milyoti camp, 1331-B-2, a female in 1966 (J. M. C. Uys); Luambe Game Reserve, 1232-C-2, two in 1966; Nsefu Game Reserve, 1232-C-3 two in 1966; Lukusuzi Game Reserve, 1232-D-1, one in 1966 (all P. S. M. Berry); Mbuzi, 1232-A-4, two in 1966 (E. Moonga).

Redunca arundinum

Distribution: Common in dambos away from the riverine area of the Luangwa River. In the dry season occasionally on, or within a few miles of, the Luangwa, where I made four such records, involving 8 animals, in 1965 and 1966. Quite numerous on the middle reaches of the Mupamadzi River in 1966, in the same habitat as puku and often alongside that species.

Kobus ellipsiprymnus

Breeding: Although young may be seen at any time of the year, the great majority are first seen in March, having probably been born about January.

Kobus vardoni

Breeding: As with the last species most young are first seen in March, and are probably born in January.

Cheetah

Black rhinoceros

Zebra

Wart hog

Common duiker

Oribi

Reedbuck

Waterbuck

Puku

Alcelaphus lichtensteini Lichtenstein's hartebeest

Breeding: Calves are born mainly July-August, certainly not October-November as previously believed (Ansell, 1960, P. Z. S.: 264). Locally common, especially in dambos and *Brachystegia*. Occasionally seen on the Luangwa River itself.

Connochaetes taurinus Wildebeest

Distribution: Another report from the south east boundary of the Lukusuzi Game Reserve was received in 1966 (Game Guards, per P. S. M. Berry).

Breeding: In Luangwa Valley the great majority of young are born from late October to November.

Hystrix africae-australis Porcupine

Breeding: Juveniles $\frac{1}{2}$ adult size were seen in April and in May (twice); and copulation was observed once in June.

*Heliosciurus rufobrachium** Sun squirrel

Distribution and habitat: Small numbers occur throughout the riverine woodland, occasionally venturing into mature mopane, to at least as far north as the Lufla confluence (1132-D-1). — R. J. DOWSETT

THE CALL OF THE THREE-BANDED COURSER *RHINOPTILUS CINCTUS*

Benson & Irwin (1967, *Zambia Museum Papers*, 1: 30) remark that the published description of the call of *Rhinoptilus cinctus* (Heuglin) is possibly in error, and might in fact be the call of the nightjar *Caprimulgus nubicus* Lichtenstein. Based on C. W. Benson's experience in Ethiopia, the call of *R. cinctus* is reported by both McLachlan & Liversidge (1957, *Roberts' Birds of S. Afr.*) and Mackworth-Praed & Grant (1952, *Birds of eastern and north-eastern Africa*, 1) as an accelerating and fading "wick-er-wick-er-wick-er-wick-wick-wick".

Over the past three years I have seen many *R. cinctus* in the Luangwa Valley — a few by day, many by night. I have caught and ringed a number on roads at night. The species calls quite readily when disturbed at night. The call is either "chuck-a-chuck", not unlike the chuckle of the Double-banded Sandgrouse *Pterocles bicinctus* Temminck, but harder; or a faster, more plover-like "chuck-a-chuck-a-chuck-a-chuck". During neither version does the call noticeably change in volume or speed.

Mr. C. W. Benson has kindly commented on the draft of this note. — R. J. DOWSETT

THE CALL AND DISTRIBUTION OF THE BLACK-BACKED BARBET, *LYBIUS MINOR*

Mackworth-Praed & Grant (1962, *Birds of the southern third of Africa*, 1) describe the call of the nominate race of *Lybius minor* (Cuvier) as a "clicking" note. Brooke (1965, *Puku* 3: 61) describes an early morning call believed to be of this species, race *macclounii*, as a "series of two to five 'tyuk' sometimes introduced by a churr". On 9th and 10th September, 1967, I watched a bird of the race *macclounii* at very close range at Julius (about 12°55'S., 31°24'E.) in the Luangwa Valley, Zambia. This bird occasionally uttered a quiet hard "car" as it

*[Subspecies *mutabilis*, previously regarded as a form of *H. gambianus*. Rosevear, however, considered that it belonged to the somewhat larger species *H. rufobrachium* (*Mammalia*, 27 (2): 184)—Ed.]

hopped about in a *Canthium* bush, quite unperturbed by my presence some ten feet away.

The occurrence of this species at Julius was quite unexpected, as it is on the valley floor about half a mile from the foot of the Muchinga escarpment, at only 2,500 feet. There is no evergreen forest in the area. The bird was in a small isolated thicket on the edge of a perennial stream, bordered on one side by *Brachystegia* woodland and on the other by a few acres of dry grassland and scrub which soon gave way to *Brachystegia*. *L. minor* is presumably no more than a dry season vagrant to the floor of the Luangwa Valley.

Mr. R. K. Brooke has kindly commented on the draft of this note. — R. J. DOWSETT

RECENT ORNITHOLOGICAL RECORDS FROM THE SOUTHERN PROVINCE

The following observations were made between July, 1965 and August, 1967. Sequence and nomenclature follow Benson & White (1957, *Check list of the birds of Northern Rhodesia*).

Ciconia nigra Black Stork

An occupied nest was discovered in a gorge of the Mulola River in south western Gwembe District, 17°56'S., 26°50'E. The young were heard calling on 27th June, but the actual site of the nest was not found until 30th June. It was on a ledge of weathered sandstone about twenty feet above the water level in the gorge, and was protected and obscured from above by an overhang of rock. The gorge averages about 30 ft. high at this point. The nest was a fairly massive structure of loosely woven sticks and twigs, rather untidy, and lined with coarse grass, some of which was still green, much of it having been pulled up in clumps rather than blade by blade. There were three chicks, and shell remains of one egg. The chicks were completely downy and quite feeble. Obviously they had been hatched only a matter of days previously. The down was off-white in colour, the long legs were salmon-pink, and the bill was short and yellow. The eyes were open.

The nest was again visited on 10th and 14th July, but was only observed from a distance, as the close approach made on the first visit had proved somewhat hazardous. One of the parent birds was present at the nest each time it was visited. It is of interest that once, on being disturbed, the departing bird uttered a throaty croak, barely audible at ten yards, as Roberts (1957, *McLachlan and Liversidge, Roberts birds of South Africa*: 36) stated that the voice had not been recorded for this species. It appears that one of the parents may be present at the nest at all times, even after incubation, to judge by the amount of faecal matter on the rock face surrounding it. The nest was sited so that it was never exposed to the direct rays of the sun.

This is apparently only the second confirmed breeding record for the species in Zambia. The nest and young are shown in Plate 3.

Anas sparsa Black Duck

A sight record was made of a party of six at Kabwe Dam, northern Choma District, 16°19'S., 26°41'E., in November. Although observed for some time there was no indication that the birds, all adult, were either paired or a family party. The area is not ecologically typical of the habitat recorded for this species by Benson & White (*op. cit.*: 10).