

A short note on the analysis of the scats of Water Mongoose *Atilax paludinosus* and Rusty-spotted Genet *Genetta maculata* from Kasanka National Park, north-east Zambia

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Small samples of scats of a viverrid and an herpestid were collected from the Kasanka National Park (Central Province, Zambia). Little has been recorded on the diet of carnivores from this area. The area is dominated by rivers, lakes, swamp and seasonally inundated floodplains.

Water Mongoose *Atilax paludinosus*

Forty scats (Fig. 1) were collected at four locations within Kasanka: Wasa Camp, Luwombwa Camp, Mulembo Waterfall, and the confluence of the Musola and Kasanka Rivers. The Water Mongoose is a common species in the park.

Rodents were the only mammals identified in the scats and although many could not be identified to species level, Cane Rat *Thryonomys swinderianus* remains were present in four scats, as were multimammate mice (*Mastomys*). Amphibians in the form of frog bones were found in 24 of the scats and reptiles in eight samples. Fish scales and bones were present in three scats. At the time of collection, towards the end of the dry season, oxbow lakes and floodplain pools were rapidly drying up, and presumably allowed easier access to fish for this mongoose. Insects featured in 33 scats of which Orthoptera (28) and Coleoptera (22) were by far the most important. Freshwater gastropod (snail) shell fragments were present in nine scats.

Total number of scats = 40		
CONTENTS	Absolute occurrence	Relative occurrence
Mammals	29	72,50%
Unidentified mammal hair	7	17,50%
<i>Atilax</i> hair	2	5,00%
Rodents	21	52,50%
Unidentified hair + bones	13	32,50%
<i>Thryonomys</i> hair + bones	4	10,00%
<i>Otomys</i> sp.hair, tooth	1	2,50%
<i>Praomys</i> sp.hair + bones	4	10,00%
<i>Mus minutoides</i> teeth	1	2,50%
Birds	1	2,50%
Feathers - weaver size	1	2,50%
Reptiles	8	20,00%
<i>Mabuya</i> scales + bones	4	10,00%
Snake scales	5	12,00%
Amphibians	24	60,00%
Frog bones	24	60,00%
Fish	3	7,50%
Small fish scales + bones	3	7,50%
Invertebrates	33	82,50%
Insects	33	82,50%
Beetle fragments	22	55,00%
Grasshopper + Cricket fragments	28	70,00%
Termites	2	5,00%
Molluscs	9	22,50%
Freshwater snails	9	22,50%
Plant material	11	27,50%
Grass	11	27,50%

Fig.1. *Atilax paludinosus* scat analysis - Kasanka National Park - Zambia

Total number of scats = 18		
CONTENTS	Absolute occurrence	Relative occurrence
Mammals	18	100,0%
Rodents	18	100,0%
Unidentified hair + bones	8	44,4%
<i>Praomys (Mastomys)</i> sp. hair, bones, teeth	6	33,3%
<i>Praomys (Mastomys) denniae</i> , incl. teeth	2	11,1%
<i>Grammomys dolichurus</i> hair, bones, teeth	1	5,6%
<i>Otomys</i> sp. hair	1	5,6%
<i>Mus minutoides</i> teeth	1	5,6%
Insectivores	2	11,1%
<i>Crocidura</i> sp. hair + jaw	1	5,6%
Unidentified shrew	1	5,6%
Reptiles	1	5,6%
<i>Mabuya</i> scales	1	5,6%
Amphibians	6	33,3%
Frog bones	6	33,3%
Invertebrates	12	66,7%
Insects	12	66,7%
Beetle fragments	2	11,1%
Grasshopper + Cricket fragments	9	50,0%
Termites	1	5,6%
Unidentified insect fragments	3	16,7%
Plant material	7	38,9%
Grass	7	38,9%

Fig.2. *Genetta maculata* scat analysis - Kasanka National Park - Zambia

Rusty-spotted Genet *Genetta maculata*

A single sample of 18 scats (Fig. 2) was collected from a hollow in a fallen tree at one location on the bank of the Musola River. For scat identification see Stuart & Stuart (1994).

Rodent remains were present in all scats, of which four species were identified and *Mastomys* was most important. Two scats contained remains of musk shrews (*Crocidura*). Amongst the droppings at the midden site was a well chewed but complete carcass of a crociduran shrew. Amphibian bones were present in six scats. Insects were present in 12 of the scats, of which Orthoptera (grasshoppers and crickets) with an occurrence in nine scats are the most important.

Localities of scat collection (all UTM coord., gridzone 36 L, Mapdatum ARC50):

- Wasa Camp: 2 06 110 E / 86 10 872 N
- Luwombwa Camp area: 1 86-88 E / 86 14-16 N
- Mulembo Waterfall: 2 13 722 E / 86 12 916 N
- Confluence Musola & Kasanka Rivers: 1 99 650 E / 86 07 500 N
- Fibwe Bat Forest at the bank of Musola River: 2 00 892 E / 86 07 134 N

Reference

Stuart, C. & Stuart, T. 1994. *A field guide to the tracks & signs of Southern and east African Wildlife*. Halfway House, South Africa: Southern Book Publishers (Pty) Ltd.

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