

Sexual dimorphism of caracal *Felis caracal* in Cape Province

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This note based on the study of the skulls of 754 known-sex adults confirmed sexual dimorphism in the caracal in Cape Province, South Africa.

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It is generally accepted that distinct sexual dimorphism exists in the caracal *Felis caracal*. Adult male caracal are on average larger than females in all respects (Smithers, 1983; Stuart, 1981).

To date, however, no large sample was available to establish this fact. During the course of an intensive survey (Jan. 1980 - Dec. 1982) of the carnivores of Cape Province the skulls of 754 known-sex, adult caracal were collected. In addition 202 complete carcasses were available for study. The ageing criteria established by Stuart & Stuart (1985) were used.

Table 1 summarises information on five basic body measurements (head & body, tail, hind foot, ear and mass) and Table 2 compares two cranial measurements, namely skull length and zygomatic width. The Figure shows the mean skull length X zygomatic width for male and female caracal from 15 districts in Cape Province.

This short study has confirmed sexual dimorphism in the caracal in Cape Province, South Africa.

Cranial material is lodged in the collections of the Albany Museum, Grahamstown and the Kaffrarian Museum, King William's Town (South Africa).

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References

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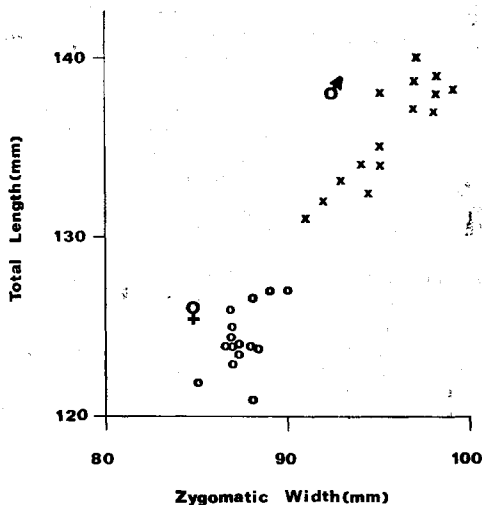


Fig. 1.- Mean skull length X zygomatic width for male and female caracal from 15 districts in Cape Province.

Table 1.- Information on five basic body measurements of male and female caracal from Cape province

Measurements mm/kg	Males					Females					t-test
	mean	n	Range	Stand. Dev.	Stand. Error	mean	n	Range	Stand. Dev.	Stand. Error	
Head + body	868	97	750-1080	77,078	7,746	819	94	710-1029	61,786	6,476	4,21*
Tail	264	99	210-340	29,355	2,920	252	101	180-315	29,897	3,020	4,77*
Hind foot	193	101	170-215	10,606	1,050	180	101	160-208	10,003	1,010	6,43*
Ear	80	98	65-92	7,324	0,736	76	100	60-94	6,855	0,692	2,35**
Mass	12,9	77	7,2-19,0	2,849	0,318	10,0	63	7,0-15,9	1,823	0,231	4,35*

* $p < 0,001$ ** $p < 0,01$ (df = 1)

Table 2.- A comparison of two cranial measurements of male and female caracal from Cape Province

Measurements in mm	Males			Females			Student's test
	n	mean	Range	n	mean	Range	
Total length	424	135,0	113,0-155,0	310	124,5	110,0-144,0	4,44*
Zygomatic width	391	94,8	80,0-114,0	290	87,4	75,0-103,0	3,57**

* $p < 0,001$ ** $p < 0,01$ (df = 1)