

A short note on the stomach contents of small cats from South Africa's central Karoo Plateau

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Very little information is available on the diet of the small felids of South Africa's Great Karoo (Stuart 1981). Specimens of three species, Caracal (*Caracal caracal*), African Wild Cat (*Felis silvestris*) and the Small Spotted Cat (*Felis nigripes*) became available for study from local small stock farmers and as road casualties.

Caracal (*Caracal caracal*):

Three individuals, an adult female and her two well grown cubs (a male and a female), were shot at night in March 2001 on the farm *Witaar* (3122AB). The stomachs of all three were full of Springhare (*Pedetes capensis*) remains, including flesh, hair, feet and parts of tails of at least two individuals, possibly three.

African Wild Cat (*Felis silvestris*):

A road casualty collected between the villages of Loxton and Victoria West (3122BC) on 30.01.1999 had the remains of young Rock Hyrax (*Procavia capensis*), 1 Bush Karoo Rat (*Otomys unisulcatus*) and 1 Pygmy Mouse (*Mus minutoides*).

African Wild Cat (*Felis silvestris*):

A road casualty collected between Prince Albert and Prince Albert Road (3320BB), adjacent to the Gamka River. The remains of 2 Bush Karoo Rats (*Otomys unisulcatus*) and 2 Striped Mice (*Rhabdomys pumilio*).

Of interest in the stomach contents of the two African Wild Cats is that all prey items with the exception of the single Pygmy Mouse are strictly diurnal in activity. This felid is generally considered to be a nocturnal hunter.

Small Spotted Cat (*Felis nigripes*):

Date	Sex	Location	Cause of Death	Stomach Content
April 2001	F	Rietpoort= 3120 DB	Shot at night	Small lark-sized bird
May 2001	M	Melton Wold= 3122 CB	Shot at night	1 Hairy-footed Gerbil (<i>Gerbillurus paeba</i>) Small lark-sized bird
9.9.1998	M	15 km south-east of Carnarvon 3122 AA	Dead on road	Empty

Reference:

Stuart, C.T. 1981. Notes on the Mammalian Carnivores of the Cape Province, South Africa.
Bontebok 1: 1-51.