

GREY RHEBOK, *PELEA CAPREOLUS*, GROUP SIZE AND COMPOSITION IN THE SOUTH WESTERN CAPE PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA

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Introduction

Esser (1973) is the only person to have undertaken detailed work on the Grey Rhebok, *Pelea capreolus*, but no information has been recorded on group size and composition in the south-western Cape Province. The only references dealing with this species in the Cape are of a general nature.

The authors maintained records of Grey Rhebok sightings in the coastal sandveld (Ruëns) of Bredasdorp and in the eastern sector of the Robertson Karoo.

Results

The observations involved 109 sightings of a total of 457 individuals, of which, 101 were males, 335 females and 21 were small lambs of undetermined sex. Group size ranged from one to ten and the distribution frequency of herd size is presented in Table 1. Although the maximum group size observed by the authors was 10, there have been reports of 20 or more individuals in one herd, but these are believed to be temporary aggregations of two or more groups. Of the 79 mixed groups, never more than one adult male was present. This would seem to confirm that herds containing more than one adult male are of a temporary nature. Table 2 presents a break down of group size and composition, as well as frequency of the different groupings. Table 3 summarizes the different sighting categories and the number of occurrences of each. Males and females were recorded together throughout the year.

Mentis (1972) has summarized the life history features of *Pelea capreolus*, and concludes that it is a seasonal breeder. Small lambs were recorded during the present programme in March (2), May (2), August (3), October (3) and November (1) (the dates were not recorded for 10 lamb sightings). No estimates of lamb ages were made. The lambs observed in March were a set of twins.

REFERENCES

- Esser, J. 1973. Beiträge zur biologie des afrikanischen Rhebockes (*Pelea capreolus* FORESTER 1790). Ph.D. Dissertation, Mathematisch – Naturwissenschaftlichen Fakultät, Christian – Albrechts – Universität Kiel.
- Mentis, M.T. 1972. A review of some life history features of the large herbivores of Africa. *The Lammergeyer* 16:1-89.

Table 1. The frequency of group size of *Pelea capreolus* in the south western Cape Province.

Group size	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Number of occurrences	18	13	19	16	9	13	9	4	6	2

Table 2. A breakdown of group size, composition and the frequency occurrence of the different groupings of *Pelea capreolus*.

number of times groups recorded				
15	1	—	—	15
2	2	—	—	4
1	3	—	—	3
3	—	1	—	3
3	—	3	—	9
1	—	4	—	4
8	1	1	—	16
15	1	2	—	45
12	1	3	—	48
9	1	4	—	45
10	1	5	—	60
8	1	6	—	56
3	1	6	—	24
3	1	8	—	27
1	1	9	—	10
3	—	1	1	6
2	—	3	1	8
1	1	2	1	4
3	1	4	1	18
1	1	5	1	7
1	1	5	2	8
3	1	6	2	27
1	1	6	3	10
109	101	335	21	457

Table 3. A summary of relevant occurrences in relation to sex and age groupings.

Category	Number of sightings
Lone males	15
Lone females	3
Male groups	18
Female groups	7
Mixed family groups	10
Females and lambs	8
Total males	101
Total females	335
Total juveniles	21



A young bottle reared Grey Rhebok,
Pelea capreolus

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