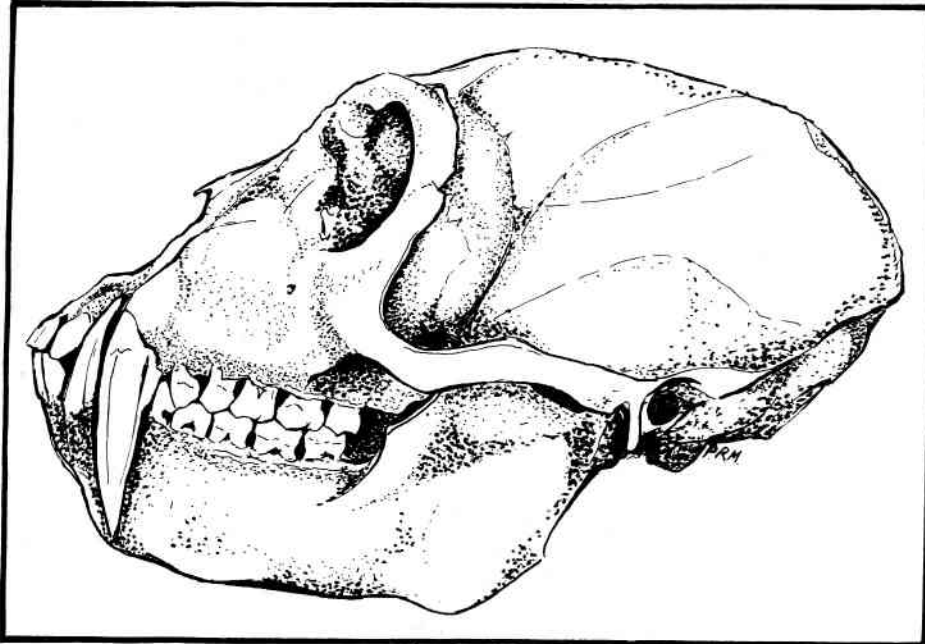


## THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE VERVET MONKEY (*CERCOPITHECUS PYGERYTHRUS*) IN THE CAPE PROVINCE

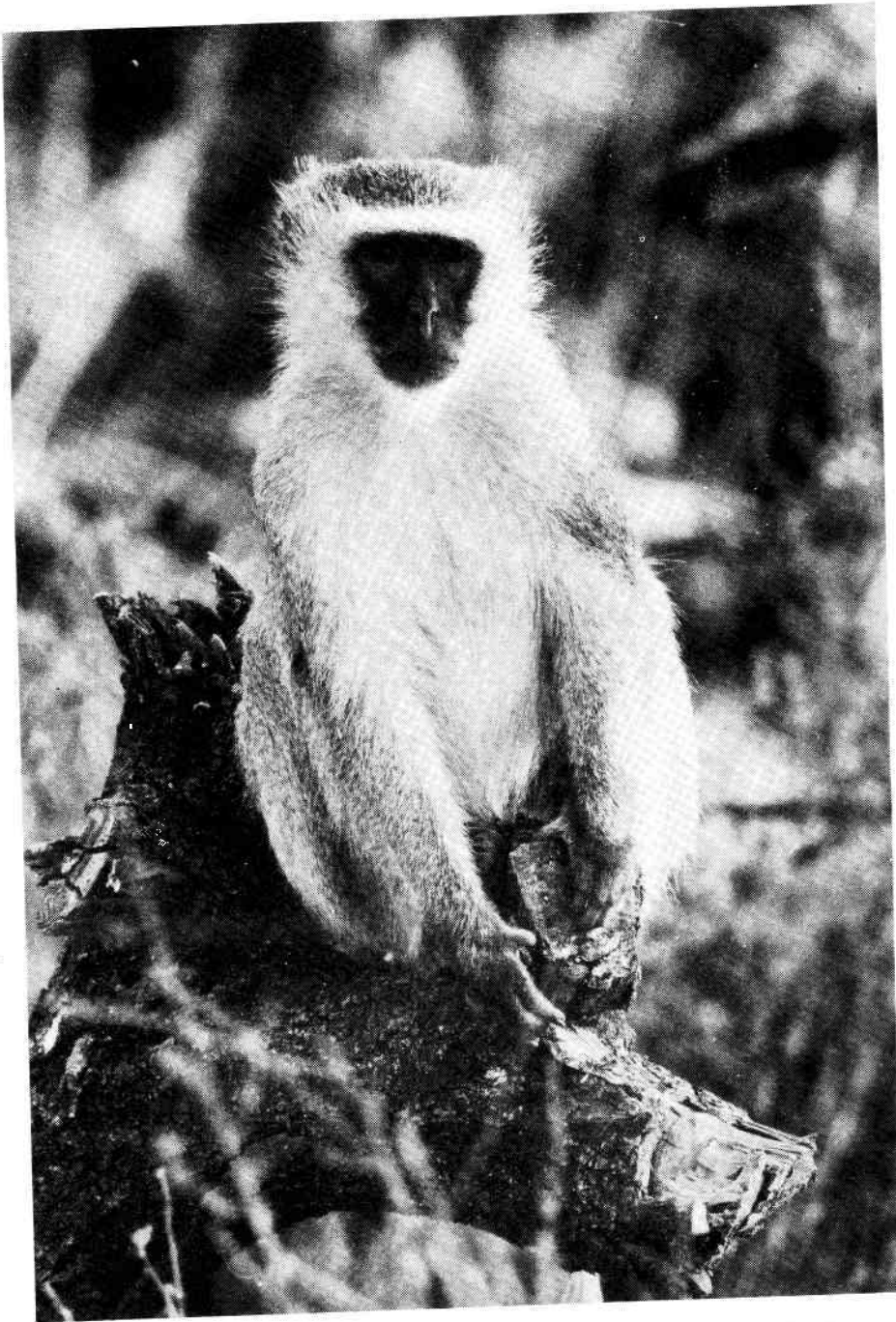
By C.T. STUART

In Southern Africa the Vervet Monkey *Cercopithecus pygerythrus* has a wide distribution in the eastern areas but in the west its distribution is closely linked to the westward flowing Cunene and Orange Rivers. These "passageways" allow access to an otherwise inhospitable environment. This is particularly the case along the Orange River. The monkey populations that live along the Orange and Cunene differ in one important way; the Cunene animals (with the exception of those in the extreme west) are not entirely restricted to the environs of the river, whereas those occurring along the Orange are entirely restricted to the narrow band of vegetation along the banks of this river for at least 600 km. The only exception being monkeys which are occasionally said to move up the Fish River into South West Africa/Namibia (Shortridge 1934).

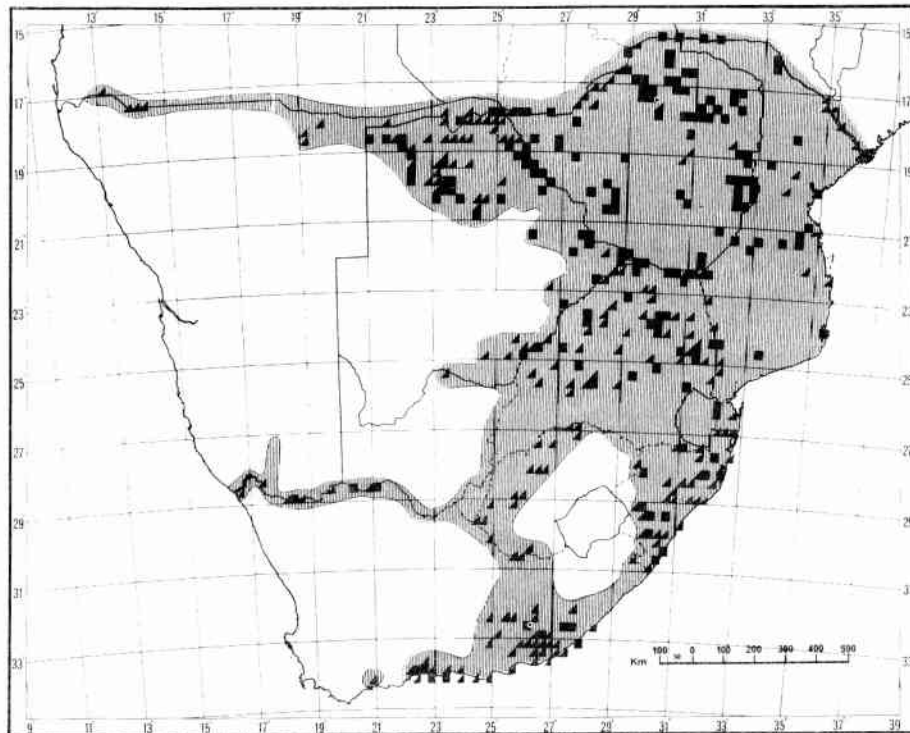
In the extreme south the distribution of the Vervet Monkey follows the narrow coastal belt, as far west as Mossel Bay, and the most westerly population is found in isolation at Grootvadersbos (40 km east/north/east of Swellendam). An adult male Vervet Monkey was trapped early in 1982 at Wolfskloof, in the Langeberg mountain range, behind Swellendam, and in October 1978 J.W.A. Kleynhans killed an adult male in the vicinity of Groot Jongensfontein near Stilbaai.



Skull of the adult Vervet Monkey male, killed at Groot Jongensfontein (Drawing by Penny Meakin).



Vervet Monkey (*Cercopithecus pygerythrus*). (Photograph by Alan Weaving)



The distribution of the Vervet Monkey *Cercopithecus pygerythrus* in Southern Africa.

Three scattered sightings have also been recorded in areas removed from Grootvadersbos and Mossel Bay. During November 1979 a lone sub-adult Vervet Monkey dashed across the road within a few metres of the Breede River bridge near Robertson. (T.J. Heinecken, personal communication). A troop of between 10 and 15 "monkeys" was reported from the riverine vegetation on the southern bank of the Breede River, on the farm "Goede Moed", near Robertson. Descriptions given by farm labourers leave little doubt that this was in fact a troop of Vervet Monkeys.

P.H. Lloyd (personal communication) records the sighting of animals believed to have been Vervet Monkeys, near the mouth of the Sout River, De Hoop Nature Reserve, Bredasdorp. It would appear that from time to time Vervet Monkeys follow the river and stream courses and disperse temporarily into normally unsuitable areas of the South West Cape. Skead (1980) in communication with A. Rothman, notes that the owner of the farm "Grootvadersbosch" had never seen Vervet Monkeys in the area. During a survey, undertaken by the author, definite evidence of Vervet Monkey occurrence was found. The Grootvaderbos is spread over three properties, the largest being State Forest. They have been regularly observed by forestry officials, J.P. Wilson ("Snelsetter"), A. Jackson (Sawmill) and M. Barry ("Dundonald"). The local coloured labourforce call them the *Grootvadersbosape*. The author has heard monkeys calling in the main forest and clear tracks were observed at several points on pathways and the stream bank. Several droppings were collected for analysis.

#### References

- Shortridge, G.C. 1934. *The mammals of South West Africa* Vol. 1. Heinemann, London.  
 Skead, C.J. 1980. *Historical mammal incidence in the Cape Province*. Vol. 1: The western and northern Cape. Dept of Nature and Environmental Conservation, Cape Provincial Administration, Cape Town.

C.T. STUART, Albany Museum, Somerset Street, Grahamstown 6140