

WATER MONGOOSE *ATILAX PALUDINOSUS* IN THE TSITSIKAMMA COASTAL NATIONAL PARK

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In a catalogue of 38 mammals recorded from the Tsitsikamma Coastal and Forest National Parks, Robinson (1976, *Koedoe* 19: 145-152) mentions only one type of mongoose, the Cape grey mongoose *Herpestes pulverulentus*. However, Stuart (1981, *Bontebok* 1: 1-58) also includes the water mongoose *Atilax paludinosus*. His list of mammalian carnivores occurring in the Tsitsikamma National Parks otherwise agrees with that of Robinson. Confusion arises, because on the distribution map presented by Stuart for water mongoose in the Cape Province, no records are indicated for the Tsitsikamma National Parks. The nearest material, sight, literature or hunter records shown are from Knysna in the west and Port Elizabeth in the east, ca 50 and 130 km respectively from the boundaries of the Tsitsikamma Coastal National Park. Stuart mentions that the water mongoose occurs throughout the coastal area of the Cape Province, and he may therefore have presupposed its presence in the Tsitsikamma Coastal National Park. Recent trapping in the Storms River Mouth vicinity has confirmed this. On 14 August 1980 one female water mongoose (3,0 kg) was caught near the coast alongside a stream that flows through the rest camp. Then, following a sight record from Paul Sauer Hoek at 22h15 on 13 August 1981, a second female (1,2 kg) was trapped at this locality on 10 December 1981. Measurements were 372 mm for head and body and 225 mm for tail, well below the ranges listed by Stuart for adult females, and it can therefore be assumed to have been immature.

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