

# Monks Cowl

Maloti-Drakensberg Park  
World Heritage Site



## Common Mammals



### **Baboon** *Papio cynocephalus ursinus*

These animals move around in troops, or family groups, headed by a dominant male. These are often located by the adult males bark.

This sounds like a “wha hoo”, emitted usually to warn the rest of the group of danger. Their faeces are often visible on rocks or in prominent areas. These animals are omnivorous, meaning that they eat plant material and meat. Meat is obtained by scavenging, as well as actively hunting prey.



### **Bushbuck** *Tragelaphus scriptus*

These timid creatures are found in forests, similar to that found around the campsite. Females are

tawny brown with white spots on their flanks. They stand at about 60 - 80 cm in height. The males are a little bigger, with their coats being a darker brown with white spots also found on their flanks. Their horns have one twist and normally have white tips from rubbing them in the sand. Only males have horns.



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### **Grey Duiker** *Sylvicapra grimmia*

These small animals are found in bushy areas. They are a grey colour with black stripes under each eye.

The males have horns, while the females do not. Both genders have a tuft of hair standing up on the middle of their head. They stand at about 50 cm in height. They live in male/female pairs, so if you see one, look closely for another, as its mate will probably be nearby. These timid creatures are seldom seen.



### **Porcupine** *Hystrix fricae australis*

This is Africa's largest rodent and cannot be confused with any other animal. They grow to about 45 cm in height. They might be confused with hedgehogs, but hedgehogs are much smaller than porcupines, and their quills are very short. Porcupines are nocturnal and are seldom seen.

Their presence is often given away by their droppings and by quills shed along paths. They are avid diggers and their triangular holes can sometimes be found just off the path with uprooted bulbs and roots lying in the loose sand they have dug up.



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### **Black-backed Jackal** *Canis mesomelas*

This member of the dog family has a black saddle with the rest of the body a tawny colour. They are active at all times of the day, with increased activity occurring in early morning and late afternoon. They are optimistic feeders, taking mainly fruit, insects, small rodents and birds, but will however make a kill should the opportunity arise. These kills range from hares and rabbits to large sick antelope. Their wailing calls can often be heard in the evenings, where members of a pack call to each other from all directions.

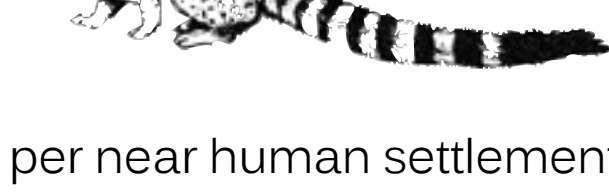


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### **Large-Spotted Genet** *Genetta tigrina*

Although this cat-like animal resembles a domestic cat, it is actually a member of the mongoose family.

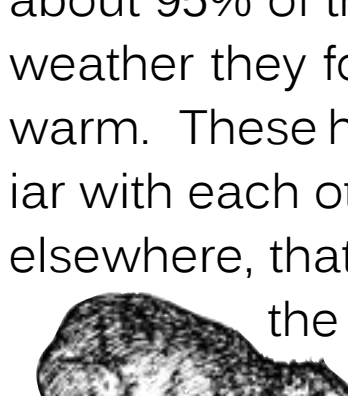
These are very timid creatures, and are thus seldom seen. They are master thieves and are specialists in raiding bird nests. They prosper near human settlements, being very versatile and able to sustain themselves on a large variety of prey and food scraps.



### **Dassies** *Procavia capensis*

**imBila (Z); Rock Hyrax (E)**

See if you can see any rock dassies on the rocks around you. These interesting animals live in rocky areas where they hide from predators and escape high temperatures or low humidity. Dassies spend about 95% of their day sunning themselves. In cold weather they form huddles inside the colony to stay warm. These huddles also ensure that they are familiar with each others' smell so that other dassies from elsewhere, that do not smell “right”, are evicted from the colony. If there is no predation on dassies, their numbers increase rapidly which results in all of the available food being eaten and causes environmental degradation. Sound conservation of biodiversity ensures that natural processes, such as predation, prevent such imbalances.



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### **Eland** *Tragelaphus oryx oryx*

Eland are the largest antelope in Africa. During summer, they eat mostly grass whilst living in large breeding herds high up in the mountains. During the winter months, the breeding herds break into smaller groups which move down into the lower areas of the Drakensberg to feed upon the leaves of woody plants. Bushmen probably followed the seasonal migration of the eland as they moved up and down the Drakensberg. The sheer size of the eland made them a valuable food source, but they were not simply a desirable food source. They also had great spiritual value to the Bushmen.

The Bushmen prized the fat of the eland, as they believed it contains vast quantities of an invisible power, which has been described as an energy that boils within them. They used it during important rituals.



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