Family HYAENIDAE

The Typical Hyænas

Hyæna

Hyæna Brisson, 1762, Regn. Anim., ed. 2, p. 13; genotype *H. hyæna* Linnæus, 1758, Syst. Nat. p. 40. The Striped Hyæna from India.

Brown Hyæna—Strandwolf, Strandjut

Hyæna brunnea Thunberg

HYÆNA BRUNNEA.[1]

Hyæna brunnea Thunberg, 1820, K. Vetensk. Akad. Handl., Stockholm, p. 59. Type (in the Stockholm Museum ?) from the Cape.

NATIVE NAMES:

PERSONALLY COLLECTED

Herero, Ovambo: *Mbúngu, Ombúngu.*
Bechuana: *Setinekwána, Herichwán.*
Mambakushu: *Dimbúngu.*
Ovadirico, Ovacuangari: *Simbúngu.*
Berg Damara, Nama Hottentot, Hei||kum Bushman: *ǂHĩras, !Nei:be*ǂ *hĩras.*
||K'au||en Bushman: */Gui.* !Kung Bushman: */Ga:ha.*
Naron Bushman: */Nutsa.*

OTHER SOURCES

Mambakushu (Simbukushu), Makuba: *Libungu* (Zukowsky).
Nama Hottentot: ǂ*Heirab,* ǂ*Hi:rab* (Krönlein and Bleek); *Hiras* (Zukowsky).
||K'au||en Bushman: *!Go* (Bleek).
!Kung Bushman: */Gwi* (Bleek); *Gaxa* (Zukowsky).
Naron Bushman: */Nutshwasha* (Bleek).
Sikwengo (Hukwe) Bushman: *Gau-un* (Zukowsky).
Masarwa (Kakia) & ||N!ke Bushmen: */Xãĩ* (Bleek).
/Auni Bushman: */Kãĩn* (Bleek).
/Nu||en Bushman: */U:n* (Bleek).
/Kam-ka!ke Bushman: *!Gwãĩ* (Bleek).
!O!kung Bushman (Central Angola): */Gwi* (Bleek).

DISTRIBUTION IN SOUTH-WEST AFRICA.—The Brown Hyæna ranges over practically the whole of South-West Africa, and is generally plentiful except in those portions of Great Namaqualand where game is scarce, and in the Caprivi.

[1] Pocock distinguishes a dark-footed South-Western race of the Brown Hyæna, a description of which will appear shortly in the P.Z.S.

From Damaraland northwards-on the west, and everywhere along the Eastern Bechuanaland Border, the Brown Hyæna appears to be by far the most abundant of the larger Carnivora.

It extends through the Namib Desert, and there, as elsewhere, within its coastal range, subsists to a great extent on marine refuse.

In the Kaokoveld, Ovamboland, and the Etosha Pan Area, *H. brunnea* is the common hyæna, although *Crocuta* may approach it in numbers on reaching the Cunene Watershed—as it is said to do farther north in Angola.

In the east, from the north of Grootfontein District southwards—through Gobabis District—to at least as far as the Karas Ranges, the Brown Hyæna is everywhere plentiful and well-known, and in the Kalahari is said to occur within 50 to 100 miles of Upington—although it is scarce in the vicinity of the Orange River between that town and the Augrabies Falls.

In the north-east Wilhelm found Brown Hyæna numerous in the Kaukauveld but doubts their occurrence in the Okavango 'Flood Area.'

In the Caprivi, east of the Okavango, the Brown Hyæna is either absent or exceedingly scarce, being in that region replaced by the Spotted Species. According to Neale 'only' the Spotted Hyæna occurs in the Caprivi, although Zukowsky gives Hukwe Bushman names for both species.

"The Brown Hyæna only occurs in the south of Angola."—Statham.

Distribution outside South-West Africa.—The Brown Hyæna is an exceedingly rare migrant to-day in the Cape Province and the Orange Free State. It has never been reported from Natal. Elsewhere in Southern Africa, however, it is widely and plentifully distributed throughout Bechuanaland, and more restrictedly in the Transvaal, Zululand, Portuguese East Africa, and Southern Rhodesia.

Beyond the Zambesi the Brown Hyæna becomes almost entirely replaced by the Spotted Species, although it reaches Southern Angola on the west, and occurs sporadically in a few parts of Northern Rhodesia, Nyasaland, and Mozambique; there have been rare records of its occurrence in Tanganyika Territory (Sclater) and Kenya (Ward)—(as far north as Kilimanjaro—Bryden and Lydekker).

The Brown Hyæna still makes rare and sporadic appearances in various parts of the Cape Province. As recently as 1929–30 a pair of brown hyænas visited the Perie Forest.

During the last five or ten years other records have come from various parts of the Transkei Coast, East London, Graaff Reinet, and the Fish River. There are specimens in the Kaffrarian Museum from Kaffraria, in the Albany Museum from Olifant's Kloof (Fish River—1899) and in the Port Elizabeth Museum from Graaff Reinet (1926). Less recent specimens are preserved in the South African Museum from Groenkloof (Malmesbury Div.) and Beaufort West.

"A Brown Hyæna was recently killed in the Marquard Dist. (O.F.S.), and others have been seen in the Eastern and Western Orange Free State."—Austin Roberts (1928).

"The Brown Hyæna is unknown in Natal."—Warren.

"It seems never to have reached Natal."—Sclater.

"In Zululand (July, 1922) the Brown Hyæna was plentiful in the Umfolosi Game Reserve; the Spotted Hyæna, on the other hand, being rare there."—A. Roberts.

"In the North-Eastern Transvaal the Brown Hyæna is not indigenous to the low bush country, and is everywhere rare. A few specimens have been secured from among the lower hills west of the Sabi Reserve."—S. Hamilton.

"The Transvaal Museum has received skulls and skins from the Northern Transvaal and the Sabi Game Park."—Roberts.

"Brown Hyæna are still not uncommon in the Pretoria and Rustenburg Districts of the Transvaal."—Haagner.

"Brown Hyæna possibly occur in the Lomagundi District of Southern Rhodesia; they were once present there."—Fleming (1931).

"They are said to be fairly common in Western Matabeleland."—Sclater.

"In Portuguese East Africa, natives who formerly had lived on the coast north of Delagoa Bay and along the lower course of the Limpopo informed me that the Brown Hyæna used to be not uncommon there. In Mozambique, tracks of Brown Hyæna were observed on the sea-shore near Port Amelia."—S. Hamilton.

"In Nyasaland the Brown Hyæna is so scarce that it is very seldom seen."—Lyell.

"Reported to occur in Northern Rhodesia, but exceedingly rare."—Pitman.

HISTORICAL.—"Formerly, less than a hundred years ago, the Brown Hyæna was to be found ranging down to the very shores of Table Bay where, as in other parts of the littoral, it was in the habit of devouring the remains of dead whales, fish, and other carrion of the sea-coast. It is still heard of here and there along the coast-line of the Colony and Namaqualand."—Bryden.

"The Brown Hyæna was once numerous in South Africa, but is now practically exterminated in the settled districts."—S. Hamilton.

"Almost extinct in our region (Eastern Cape): recorded from Riebeek East in 1869, but even then said to be fast disappearing."—Hewitt.

Sparrman (1785)—apparently the first record of the Brown Hyæna from the Cape.

Steedman (1835)—record of inland distribution (Cape).

Delagorgue (1847)—from Piquetberg.

Cumming (1855)—from Griqualand West.

"The genus *Hyæna* has at the present time two living species, the Striped Hyæna of North Africa[1] and Asia and the Brown Hyæna or Strand Wolf of Southern Africa. In former times the genus was much more widely distributed, as evidenced by the several fossil species which have been found in the Pliocene and Pleistocene beds of Southern Europe and Asia."—Roosevelt and Heller.

HABITS.—Although the Brown Hyæna or Strand Wolf is best known through its habit of wandering along the sea-shore and preying on marine refuse, it is

[1] The southern limits of the range of the Striped Hyæna (*H. hyæna*) are the Rift Valley and Kalimanjaro Regions of Tanganyika Territory.

"The Striped Hyæna is believed to occur in Northern Rhodesia, but it is often confused with the Aard-Wolf."—Pitman.

equally a frequenter of the interior of South-western Africa; its main headquarters, in fact, are the dry Kalahari sand-plains of Bechuanaland and South-West Africa. Considering how numerous they are in these regions, brown hyæna are not often put up by day; and when this does happen they are rather slow and clumsy. On one occasion, when a brown hyæna was chased by two kaffir dogs, it did not show much fight but concentrated its efforts on trying to escape. The dogs adopted the same methods as when hunting wild pig, attempting to seize and cling to the hyæna's ears.

Brown hyæna lie up singly by day in ant-bear holes, caves, crevices between rocks, or thick bush cover.

"The Brown Hyæna is a solitary animal, nocturnal in habit, and lying up by day in deep ravines and thick bush."—S. Hamilton.

Owing to their similar size and colour—which may appear black in certain lights—brown hyæna may easily be mistaken for wart-hog, or even baboon, when prowling round at dusk or on moonlight nights.

Brown Hyæna are extremely plentiful in the northern and eastern parts of South-West Africa. Around Oas (Gobabis District) it has been estimated that at least half a dozen brown hyæna are trapped for each leopard, notwithstanding that leopard are exceptionally numerous. These hyænas, not being appreciably destructive (locally) of livestock, are not trapped intentionally, being in fact objectionable through the habit of getting into traps set for leopards, which traps they damage with their strong teeth to an extent that requires constant replacement.

In remote districts where they have not been persecuted, and so rendered cunning, hyæna are easily trapped; the traps, however, must be carefully concealed under layers of earth or sand and all foot-marks must be scuffled or brushed away. In new camps brown hyænas may often be caught night after night for about a week, whereafter, the remainder becoming wary, it is difficult to secure any more, however carefully hidden or shifted from place to place the traps may be.

They will never touch a bait if scraps of paper, cartridge cases, or any unusual articles are left lying around. If a hat, a coat, a handkerchief tied to a stick, or anything of a suspicious nature be left on, or leaning against a carcass, hyæna, jackal, and other scavengers (even vultures) may generally be relied upon to avoid a 'kill' for twenty-four hours at least. An exceptionally heavy trap is required to hold hyæna, as they can twist or break all but the very strongest with their teeth. In any case, if caught early in the night, they, more often than not, succeed in escaping before daylight—perhaps leaving a chewed-off foot in the trap. To insure against losing them in this manner it is well to visit hyæna traps at least once during the night.

"A trapped hyæna will go backwards into a hole, dragging the trap after it."—Wilhelm.

A burrow or cave that has been much frequented by hyæna becomes extremely foul-smelling, although, in spite of being carrion eaters, the animals themselves are less offensive to handle than might be imagined—perhaps less so, during the process of skinning, than the larger *Felidæ*.

The usual call of the Brown Hyæna is a resonant 'wah-wah-wah,' which is repeated at varying intervals and heard chiefly in the late evening or early morning just before daybreak. This is perhaps the most frequent of its many and varied calls—another being rather similar to the hoot of a large owl; but I have never heard any distinctive 'laugh,' which sound may be characteristic of the Spotted Hyæna. Brown Hyænas assembled in numbers around a carcass are noisy like other members of the group; although at other times they are much quieter than spotted hyænas which, even when only a few are about, soon make their presence known.

"As a rule the Brown Hyæna does not howl; its calls differ from those of the spotted species. Its cry of pain is a long 'hi ah.' "—Wilhelm.

Apart from feeding on offal of all descriptions, Brown Hyæna prey upon the injured and newly-born of small and medium-sized animals, reptiles, the young and eggs of ostriches and other ground-nesting birds, locusts, and probably fruit and berries.

In coastal or tidal areas they subsist on marine refuse of every kind, stranded whales, porpoises, fish, dead sea birds, etc.; whilst individuals are said occasionally to swim out to rocks or reefs in order to feed upon mussels and other shellfish.

"When met with inland the Brown Hyæna is an eater of the same description of carrion as the other species, and also attacks living animals. When its haunt is near the seashore it is said to live on dead fish, crabs, and other marine creatures."—S. Hamilton.

"In captivity in Egypt the Striped Hyænas (*H. hyæna*), in addition, or almost in preference, to meat, eat ripe dates, bananas, tomatoes, plums, watermelons, etc."—Flower.

The Brown Hyæna is more timid and retiring, and far more exclusively a scavenger than the Spotted Species. In South-West Africa, unlike the Spotted Hyæna, it is seldom accused of preying on livestock, other than occasional sick animals. At the same time—like jackal—when driven by hunger, in regions where there is little or no carrion or other natural food, it soon acquires the habit of attacking sheep and goats—as is indicated by their destruction of small stock, whenever individuals pay sporadic visits to the Cape Province. Under normal conditions, however, there appears to be good evidence that the Brown is less formidably predaceous than the Spotted Hyæna. In Gobabis District the most serious charges brought against brown hyæna were of their now and then carrying off recently-born lambs that had not been kraaled at night, and of their extraordinary habit of biting off the tails of sleeping cattle. I examined several oxen, said to have been mutilated by brown hyænas, with parts of the tails, sometimes the entire tails, missing. In the Windhoek Zoo a pair of brown hyæna were recently housed in a cage next to that occupied by an adult leopard, the division between being iron railings. The leopard was discovered one morning with the greater part of its tail bitten off, the said tail having protruded into the hyænas' compartment during the night.

Although donkeys become restless and liable to break out of their kraals on scenting lions, wild dogs, or spotted hyænas, I never knew a donkey stampede

obviously caused by the proximity of a leopard or brown hyæna—both of which animals are very often numerous in South-West Africa. On one occasion a donkey in the waggon team dropped a colt which, on the night of its birth, was dragged away from its mother and partly eaten by a leopard. The mother donkey was discovered next morning close to the remains of its foal; whereas, if the visitor had been a wild dog or spotted hyæna, she would probably have galloped miles away. Stevenson-Hamilton mentions that in Gazaland, according to old natives, the Brown Hyæna used occasionally to take small children in addition to attacking sleeping adults—a practice of which, in other localities, the Spotted Hyæna has frequently been accused.

The spoor is very large (exceeding that of a leopard in diameter).

Although dog-like, with well-defined claw-marks, it may easily be identified, the slots of the fore-feet being considerably larger than those of the hind; this difference is more pronounced in *brunnea* than in *crocuta*.

"A Brown Hyæna lived in the London Zoo for about 13½ years. A Striped Hyæna lived in the Giza Zoo for about 23 years."—Flower.

Breeding Habits.—"Two to four cubs are born in a litter, the probable average being two or three. Period of gestation (of *H. hyæna*) three months."—S. Hamilton.

Descriptive Notes.—Size, a little smaller throughout and somewhat more lightly-built than the Spotted Hyæna, although the jaws and teeth of the two species appear to be equally powerful. Ears, large, thin, and rather pig-like compared with those of *crocuta*.

In captivity brown hyæna at times raise the tail in a half-curl over the back, and when excited erect the dorsal hair.

"On the back and sides the hair will measure as much as ten inches in length; there is, however, no spinal mane or crest as with the Spotted Hyæna."—Bryden.

"In *Hyæna* (as opposed to *Crocuta*) the sexual organs are normal in structure."—Roosevelt and Heller.

Testes, external; scrotum, small, almost devoid of hair-covering. Mammæ, 4; these become permanently large and conspicuous, as in the *Canidæ*, after the females have once suckled.

Weight.—90–110 lb. approx.

Shoulder Height.—2 ft. 4 in. to 2 ft. 8 in. (Bryden); 2 ft. 1½ in. (Ward).