individuals in the Kaokoveld, on the strength of which Zukowsky has suggested the possibility of there being two distinguishable races in that region. A caracal somewhat recalls a Siamese Cat in general appearance.

Its fine eyes and conspicuously tufted ears render the Caracal the most handsome of the smaller African Cats: although lighter in build than a true Lynx, it is more strongly-built than the similar-sized but slender and cheetah-like Serval, which, in spite of its fine spotted coat, has, in my opinion, a less attractive appearance.

Pale rufous mottlings are usually present on the undersurface of the body, these being particularly noticeable in kittens and half-grown animals. Iris amber-yellow; owing to the brilliant lustre of the enlarged pupils the eyes often appear bright emerald in colour.

Melzenbach (King William's Town) informs me that he shot a coal-black caracal some years ago near the Chalumna Mouth, Kaffraria. This appears to be the only record of melanism.

Weight, 40 lb. approx. Shoulder height, 16-18 in. (Bryden and Ward).

The Serval Cats

Leptailurus

Leptailurus Severtzow, 1858, Rev. Mag. Zool. (2), X, pp. 389-390; genotype *L. serval* Schreber, 1776, Säugthiere, Pl. CVIII; op. cit., 1777, Theil III, p. 407. The Serval Cat from the Cape.

Serval—Tierboskat

Leptailurus serval Schreber

LEPTAILURUS SERVAL SERVAL.

Felis serval Schreber, 1776, Säugthiere, Pl. CVIII; op. cit., 1777, Theil III, p. 407.

Type (not in existence) from near Cape Town.

LEPTAILURUS SERVAL LÖNNBERGI.[1]

Felis serval lönnbergi Cabrera, 1910, Bol. Soc. Española, Hist. Nat., X, p. 427.

Type (in the Upsala Museum) from the Upper Cunene, Angola.

LEPTAILURUS SERVAL MABABIENSIS.

Leptailurus serval mababiensis Roberts, 1932, Ann. Transvaal Mus., vol. XV (1), p. 7.

Type (in the Transvaal Museum) from the Mababe Flats, Northern Bechuanaland.

[1] = *Felis* (*Serval*) *togoensis niger* Lönnberg, 1898, Zool. Jahrb. Abt. Syst., X, p. 571. Name preoccupied by *Felis nigra* Erxleben. (Based on a melanistic specimen.)

NATIVE NAMES:

PERSONALLY COLLECTED

Herero; Ovambo: *Ongwethéra, Onkwethéra.*
Bechuana: *Táli, Tádi.*
Mambakushu: *Nüíra.* Ovadirico: *Ditüíra.*
Ovacuangari: *Tugíra.*
Nama Hottentot; Berg Damara; Hei||kum Bushman: *Xam/hõab.*
||K´au||en Bushman: */Ĩ/ĩb* (?).
Naron Bushman: */A:re/nõa/goa* (?).
!Kung Bushman: *!Hom!a* (*!Homxam*—?).

OTHER SOURCES

Bechuana: *Tali* (Bryden). *Tadi* (England).
Mambakushu (Simbukushu): *Nuela* (Balme).
Sikololo: *Nuwera* (Lancaster); *Nuela* (Balme).
Chinkoya: *Ntuwila* (Lancaster).
Tonga, Chila: *Inzuzhi* (Lancaster).
Kaonde: *Musuzhi* (Lancaster).
Chilavale: *Chilambu-cha-nzuzi* (Lancaster).

DISTRIBUTION IN SOUTH-WEST AFRICA.—The Serval occurs chiefly in the northern parts of South-West Africa, and is fairly well-known in northern and central Damaraland—eastwards to the Waterberg, the Etosha Pan Area, and Grootfontein District.

"It is very scarce in the Omaheke and the Kaukauveld."—Wilhelm.

It appears to be moderately plentiful in the neighbourhood of the Okavango and through the Caprivi.

"Found in the Hukweveld."—Wilhelm.

A serval skin was seen in the Kaokoveld village of Kovares.

"The Serval is not uncommon in the southern Kaokoveld; it also occurs in the north."—Steinhardt.

It is stated to be scarce in Ovamboland, nevertheless, I have seen a karross made from serval skins procured in the Namutoni Reserve. A single skin was also seen in the possession of a native at Ukuambi.

The Serval is rare and perhaps only of sporadic occurrence in the southern, south-central, and coastal regions of South-West Africa. It appears to be quite unknown anywhere near the Orange River, and in Great Namaqualand, west of the railway; and is generally scarce in southern Damaraland, Gobabis District, and elsewhere along the south-western Bechuanaland Border. A few trade skins are said to be brought in occasionally from Rietfontein-South (near the junction of the Nossob and Molopo Rivers).

A considerable number of serval karrosses come from Bechuanaland, but they are probably mostly made from skins collected in Ngamiland and elsewhere north of the Tropic of Capricorn.

General Distribution outside South-West Africa.—The Serval ranges over the greater part of Africa south of the Sahara, from Senegal on the west to the Sudan, and probably Abyssinia and Somaliland, in the east—southwards to the Cape. (W. Sclater, in error, gives its range "Algeria to the Cape").

In the south the Serval has been recorded from every province of the Union, Portuguese East Africa, Southern Rhodesia, and Northern and Central Bechuanaland.

I do not believe that this cat is ever resident at great distance from permanent water, it also seems to avoid barren open plains.

The Serval appears to be extremely scarce to-day everywhere south of the Orange River.

"It is now rare in the Eastern Cape Province, but was formerly common, especially in forests."—Hewitt.

There is a single local specimen in the Kaffrarian Museum. Among other Cape localities Hewitt records East London, (Port St. Johns ?), Aliwal North, and Grahamstown (1889).

There is an old specimen in the South African Museum from Somerset West, not far from Cape Town (1898).

"In Northern Rhodesia the Serval is ubiquitous at high and low levels, and in all types of country."—Pitman.

Historical.—The Serval appears to have been first noticed by Kolbe in 1719. It was described by Buffon and Daubenton in 1765 from a menagerie specimen at Versailles, and afterwards by Schreber in 1776, and Erxleben in 1777.

Habits.—The Serval is essentially an inhabitant of level forests or thickly bush-covered plains where there is a comparatively heavy rainfall, but does not avoid hilly country. It becomes scarcer in the low bush-veld, and still more so in open sand-plains, being apparently most plentiful near rivers or vleis with plenty of reed-cover, long grass, or dense undergrowth.

"The Serval inhabits thick thorn-bush near the Okavango."—Wilhelm.

In Gobabis District it is said occasionally to lie up by day in the burrows of antbears or porcupines. Unlike other South African *Felidæ*, the Serval does not seem habitually to wander very far from water, and its scarcity in entirely arid situations may be due to the absence of permanent water. In Southern and Central Bechuanaland it may be a wanderer after rain when surface water is plentiful, or resident here and there where isolated water-holes occur in conjunction with suitable cover. The Serval is nocturnal and is seldom seen moving about by day. It is extremely active. Standing high at the shoulder, it differs from the Caracal in its slighter and less powerful build, in much the same manner as the Cheetah does from the Leopard. The long limbs and general slimness of a serval suggest unusual speed, and it is so like a miniature cheetah in build that I suspect it of coursing hares and small antelope in the same manner as the Cheetah does larger game. Like the Caracal, it is an expert climber, and when pursued by dogs generally takes to a tree, although not normally an arboreal

species. Serval prey on small antelope, hares, cane-rats, small rodents, birds, reptiles, etc., but are said as a rule to live on smaller game than do caracal. When opportunity occurs they raid poultry yards, and have been known to kill lambs and young goats. The spoor, like that of the Cheetah, may show slight indications of claw-marks.

"Its cry is a shrill 'mwa mwa' repeated seven or eight times in succession."—S. Hamilton.

A young serval kept alive in Northern Rhodesia some years ago became as friendly as a domestic kitten, although at the same time two caracal kittens remained comparatively savage. In the Windhoek Zoo there used to be a full-grown serval that had become perfectly tame, and would purr loudly like a cheetah when stroked.

"A serval lived in the London Zoo for a little over 8 years."—Flower.

Breeding Habits.—Stevenson-Hamilton records finding three serval kittens in an antbear hole early in September, and also mentions others captured during July and August.

According to H. H. Johnston, the kittens are easily reared.

Descriptive Notes.—The Serval is a long-legged and exceptionally lightly-built cat. The proportionately small skull, closely-set eyes and ears, and comparatively elongated face, give the head a slightly viverrine appearance. Iris, bright ochre-brown.

The ground coloration of individuals from one locality tends to vary between pale yellowish-buff and rusty orange.

A kitten had woolly, rather short fur, the spots being relatively small, although fairly well-defined.

The following melanistic specimens have been recorded from South and Central Africa:

(1) South Africa (Selous).

(2) Kilimanjaro (Hunter)—like the Asiatic Black Leopard, the spots could be seen shining through in certain lights.

(3) Kenya (Belhaven)—coat described as coal-black.

(4) Angola (Lönnberg).

(5) Eastern Transvaal (Kirby)—stated to have been a very dark-coloured specimen—almost a melano.

Weight, 34 lb. (ref. unrecorded).

Shoulder height, 50-60 cm. approx. (Wilhelm).