The Spotted Hyæna

Crocuta

Crocuta Kaup, 1828, Isis, vol. 21, p. 1145; genotype *C. crocuta* Erxleben, 1777, Syst. Regn. Anim., p. 578. The Spotted Hyæna from North (?) Africa.

Spotted Hyæna—Gespikkelde Hyæna, Weerwolf

Crocuta crocuta Erxleben

CROCUTA CROCUTA WISSMANNI.

Hyæna (*Crocotta*) *wissmanni* Matschie, 1900, Sitz.-ber. Ges. nat. Freunde Berlin, p. 22.

Type (in the Berlin Museum) from Epukiro, S.W. Africa.

CROCUTA CROCUTA CAPENSIS.

Hyæna capensis Desmarest, 1820, Mamm., p. 216.

Type (in the Paris Museum?) from the Cape.

CROCUTA CROCUTA GERMINANS.[1]

Hyæna (*Crocotta*) *germinans* Matschie, 1900, Sitz.-ber. Ges. nat. Freunde Berlin, p. 27.

Type (in the Berlin Museum) from Lake Rukwa, Tanganyika Territory.

CROCUTA CROCUTA GARIEPENSIS.

Hyæna (*Crocotta*) *gariepensis* Matschie, 1900, Sitz.-ber. Ges. nat. Freunde Berlin, p. 25.

Type (in the Berlin Museum) from "Bambusbergen im Orange-Gebiet" (Gariep÷Orange Free State).

NATIVE NAMES:

PERSONALLY COLLECTED

Herero: *Mbúngu-mbidíwa.*
Ovambo: *Kafúkambúngu, Mbúngu-omanini.*
Bechuana: *Piri, Phiri.*
Mambakushu: *Dimbúngurúmba.*
Ovadirico, Ovacuangari: *Divúndu.* Berseba Hottentot: *!Gaub.*[2]
Berg Damara, Nama Hottentot: *‡Nube‡hĩras.*
||K´au||en Bushman: *!Hau.*
Hei||kum and Naron Bushman: *!Gau.*
!Kung Bushman: *!Khum:ap.*

OTHER SOURCES

Herero: *Ombungu* (Zokowsky).[3]
Bechuana: *Piri* (Zukowsky). Ngamiland Natives: *Piri* (Ward).
Mambakushu (Simbukushu): *Limbungu* or *Dumbungu* (Balme); *Lioka* (Zukowsky).

[1]According to Lydekker *C. c. germinans* extends as far south as the Zambesi. Specimens from the Caprivi are here provisionally referred to this race.

[2] Also used for *Hyæna brunnea.*

[3] Also for *Hyæna brunnea* (Zukowsky).

Sikololo: *Sitonkwane* (Lancaster & Balme).[1]
Chinkoya: *Muntambwi* (Lancaster). Chila: *Kabwenga* (Lancaster).
Chilavale: *Munguli* (Lancaster). Tonga: *Suntwi* (Lancaster).
Kaonde: *Mungolwe* (Lancaster).
Nama Hottentot: *ǂNubeǂhĩras, ǂNu:beǂhĩ:ras* (Krönlein & Bleek); *Hiras* (Zukowsky).
||K'au||en Bushman: *!Kau* (Bleek).
Naron Bushman: *||Gau* (Schinz).
!Kung Bushman: *!Khum* (Bleek); *Gui* (Zokowsky).
Sikwengo (Hukwe) Bushman: *Hu* (Zukowsky); *Ngua* (Balme).
/Nu||en Bushman: *Kanja* (Bleek).
/Auni Bushman: *!Gi:* (Bleek).
||N!ke & Masarwa (Kakia) Bushmen: *!No:e* (Bleek).
/Kam-ka!ke Bushman: *Nauïten, /Xauru* (Bleek).
!O!kung Bushman (Central Angola): *!K''ãũ* (Bleek).

Distribution in South-West Africa.—In South-West Africa the Spotted Hyæna is much more local and very much scarcer than the Brown Species, being absent or of sporadic occurrence everywhere south of the Tropic of Capricorn. In the western districts, in fact, it appears to become scarce below the latitude of the Etosha Pan—although sparsely distributed throughout Damaraland.

Except in the Central and Eastern Caprivi (where *H. brunnea* is said not to occur) and perhaps in the valleys of the Cunene and Okavango Rivers, the Brown Hyæna everywhere greatly outnumbers the Spotted Species.

In addition to the two specimens collected in the Kaokoveld and one from near Omaruru, skins were seen from Nagazub (near Namutoni), Epukiro, and Oas (Gobabis District)—the last being apparently the most southern (recent) record for the Spotted Hyæna in South-West Africa.

Brown and Spotted Hyænas are equally well known to natives in the Namutoni Game Reserve, Ovamboland,[2] the Kaokoveld, and the northern portions of Grootfontein District.

"Found everywhere in the Kaokoveld, but not numerous."—Steinhardt.

"Spotted Hyænas are irregular visitors in the Grootfontein Sandveld. They appear to trek along the Omuramba-Omatako in the dry season and increase in numbers along its lower courses. They were met with everywhere in the Kaukauveld, but are scarcer in the Kungveld. They are quite plentiful in the Okavango Flood Area."—Wilhelm.

Spotted Hyænas are said to be plentiful in the Central and Eastern Caprivi.

"They are very numerous in the Hukweveld."—Wilhelm.

"Only the Spotted Hyæna is found in the Caprivi."—Neale.

"The Spotted Hyæna is sparsely distributed all over Angola, but chiefly in the south."—Statham.

General Distribution outside South-West Africa.—In Southern Africa the Spotted Hyæna still ranges through Zululand, the Northern and

[1] Barotsé: *Setongwani* (Ward).

[2] Recorded by W. Sclater (on unstated authority) as being particularly numerous in Ovamboland.

Eastern Transvaal, Portuguese East Africa, Southern Rhodesia, and the northern and north-central parts of Bechuanaland.

"Spotted Hyæna still occur in Zululand."—Warren (1931).

"They are rare in the Umfolosi Game Reserve (Zululand)."—A. Roberts (1931).

"In the Transvaal Spotted Hyæna are found in the Sabi Reserve and also around Piet Retief."—Haagner.

"In Southern Rhodesia they are numerous in Lomagundi District; there are also a few in Nuanetsi District."—Fleming (1931).

"(In Portuguese East Africa) these animals formerly used to swarm round the town of Tete on the Zambesi, and after dark would enter the narrow streets of the native quarter in large numbers, fulfilling the duties of public scavengers." —S. Hamilton.

There is a specimen in the South African Museum from near Beira. In Northern Bechuanaland Spotted Hyæna are said to be not uncommon so far south as Ghanzi and Lake Ngami.

Beyond the Zambesi Spotted Hyæna are widely distributed from Angola on the west—through Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland—to Mozambique (Kirby) in the east, then northwards through Tanganyika Territory, Kenya Colony, Uganda, a portion of the Congo,[1] the hinterland of the Cameroons, Togoland, etc., to Senegambia on the west—along the southern borders of the Sahara—to the Sudan, Abyssinia, and Somaliland in the east (and finally as far north—according to Lydekker—as Egypt).[2]

Historical.—Within the last 50 to 100 years the Spotted Hyæna ranged all over Southern Africa to as far south as the Cape Peninsula. It is to-day extinct in the Cape Province, Natal, the Orange Free State—including the whole of the Orange River Region, Southern Bechuanaland, the greater part of the Transvaal, and the more closely settled portions of Southern Rhodesia.

"(In the Eastern Cape Province) the Spotted Hyæna occurred at Riebeek East in 1870: in Pringle's time it was very destructive to local stock."—Hewitt.

Kolbe (1719)—records the 'Tyger Wolf' from the Cape.
Sparrman (1785)—from Cape Town and Caledon.
Lichtenstein (1812)—from near Cape Town in 1804.
Grout (1863)—from Natal.

There is a well-preserved specimen provisionally referred to the extinct Cape Spotted Hyæna (*C. c. capensis*) in the Kaffrarian Museum (—label record, Cape Colony). There is also a skull from Beaufort West in the South African Museum, and the fragment of a skull from Dordrecht in the Albany Museum.

"In Pleistocene times the species also ranged over the Mediterranean Coast of Africa (Algeria, etc.) and a large part of Europe—from Gibraltar to the

[1] Recorded from the Congo by Lydekker and from Faradje, N.E. Congo (Allen). According to W. Sclater it has not been noted from the Congo Basin.
"In my experience *crocuta* is by no means common in Northern Rhodesia."—Pitman.

[2] In *The Recent Mammals of Egypt* (S. S. Flower—P.Z.S., 1932, II, pp. 369–450) only the Striped Hyæna (*H. hyæna*) is mentioned.

British Isles (Yorkshire and Ireland). There is evidence that it also extended into Asia as far east as the Madras Presidency of India."—Lydekker.

HABITS.—The Spotted Hyæna is more noisy and less retiring in habits than the Brown Species; notwithstanding the comparative scarcity of the former in South-West Africa, the two are almost equally well known—whereas in those parts of Africa where the more timid and obscure Brown Hyæna is the scarcer species it is little known.

Being more habitually predaceous, *crocuta* is a bolder animal than *brunnea* and very often invades villages and camps after dark; both species, however, will prowl around if there is carrion lying about. Where hyænas are plentiful, it is well when on trek to keep harness, boots, and other leather articles out of their reach.

"Hyænas collect at sunset in large numbers around pans. Three individuals were once watched drinking in the morning. On another occasion two were observed sunning themselves in broad daylight. If there is fresh game in a camp spotted hyænas announce themselves in a very short time and circle round waiting an opportunity for robbing the meat. When hungry they become exceptionally bold; one of these animals once attempted to carry away a saddle to which a steinbok had been fastened in full view of the fires. At Andara a spotted hyæna swam across to one of the Okavango islands and devoured a tame eland calf. The walk of hyæna is rather noisy and they can often be heard approaching from some considerable distance."—Wilhelm.

"Although most active after nightfall, the Spotted Hyæna frequently prowls about in the mornings and afternoons in lonely lands. Generally, however, in the daytime it retires to its lair, which may be in a cave or a hole under a stone, or merely in a patch of reeds or bush. Normally it is solitary, but quantities will assemble around any big dead beast. In East Africa spotted hyæna range up to an altitude of 10,000 feet."—Roosevelt & Heller.

"Where not exterminated by the advance of civilization, the Spotted Hyæna exists throughout most of the African Continent, and is found even in districts thickly inhabited by natives, where it subsists on the offal and refuse of the villages. It is nocturnal in habit, but may be seen on the move upon cool and cloudy days, and often for some time after sunrise in bright weather. Hyænas leave their lairs at dusk and, during the night, travel by preference along the game tracks and native paths, sometimes patrolling backwards and forwards along one stretch for hours. In the daytime they lie up in thick bush or in long grass, occasionally—especially in mountainous country—sheltering themselves in holes and caves. They are very heavy sleepers, and it is often possible to approach quite close without disturbing them when thus occupied. I have come across individuals during the heat of the day lying in forest pools completely immersed except for their heads. Hyænas have wonderfully keen noses and can detect the slightest taint in the air, while they often follow lions and troops of wild dogs about the country. It is certain that they occasionally make towards any spot above which they have noticed vultures gathering; recognising in this a tolerably sure indication of the presence of a carcass. Although a large number of spotted hyænas may sometimes be found collected

at a 'kill,' it is quite incorrect to assume that they are gregarious by habit. They are in fact solitary animals, and when a number of individuals are drawn together for a common purpose, they separate and depart singly, or in pairs at most, in different directions. Normally they consort only in the case of a mating male and female, or of a mother and her progeny. I do not believe that a male remains associated with a female permanently, and a family party consisting of father, mother and offspring is outside my experience. Skins, raw-hide ropes—anything with the slightest smell of animal matter about it—is liable to be taken from a camp at night by these creatures. They come readily to baits, but so powerful are the hyæna's jaws that the tongue of an iron trap is often bitten off or so badly twisted as to render it unserviceable for the future."—Stevenson-Hamilton.

"Spotted Hyænas are nocturnal—leaving their lairs in the evening and retiring thereto at high dawn. Their lairs are made in thorn thicket, under a steep bank, or in deep grassy hollows; sometimes in holes among rocks. Very seldom they take to a burrow, but the female when parturient always retires to such a spot. Hyænas are gregarious; troops of six or eight are common; I have seen nineteen together. Hyænas seldom leave beaten tracks, game or footpaths, and will travel to and fro along the same one night after night. Their organs of scent and hearing are highly developed. The spoor may be instantly recognised by the impression of the nails—it is much larger than that of the hunting dog."—Vaughan-Kirby.

"In Nyasaland, when living in the bush, hardly a night passes without one or more hyænas being heard. They usually live in hilly ground and descend in the late afternoon to look for food. Hyænas have regular rounds which they pursue nightly, and haunt the outskirts of all villages for any offal they can pick up. I have known a single hyæna drag away a large slab of hippo skin weighing about 200 lb. for over a hundred yards."—Lyell.

"Though half a dozen or more spotted hyænas will collect round a kill, they are not gregarious but go in ones or twos. They generally appear at sunset or shortly before, and I have often seen them in the daytime prowling round when an animal has been shot."—Inverarity (Somaliland).

"Spotted Hyæna circle around resting game at night; they attack large antelope. They drink at sunset and during the night."—Wilhelm.

The sounds produced by hyænas usually afford very little clue as to the exact whereabouts of the animals.

"The usual howl of a Spotted Hyæna, which may be repeated a couple of times, sounds like 'hu hu—hu hu'—ending up with a growl when the animal moves off."—Wilhelm.

Sparrman compares the cry of a Spotted Hyæna to the letters 'aauae.'—beginning low and ending high; this being the usual call of one animal to another.

"The voice of this creature is extraordinary and the sounds it produces are legion; there is the weird 'who-oop' commonly heard; the snarling whine of baffled annoyance; the hideous laughing cackle round a carcass; and the

fierce growl when wounded or caught in a trap. I have heard them also endeavour, not unsuccessfully, to imitate a lion."—Vaughan-Kirby.

"Hyænas are noisy; besides the usual questing cry, they at times cackle and screech and more rarely laugh."—Roosevelt & Heller.

In South-West Africa, accounts of persistent destruction of stock by hyænas were heard only in those parts of the territory where the Spotted Hyæna occurs, and according to local report the Spotted and not the far more numerous Brown Species is mainly responsible for the killing of adult domestic animals.

The Spotted Hyæna will attack full-grown donkeys, which are very liable to break out of their kraals and stampede when wild dogs or spotted hyænas are about.

"Ordinarily they are scavengers; yet they occasionally kill mules, cattle and donkeys. When hungry they pounce on and carry off dogs. When hunted they are very cowardly. To a man there is absolutely no danger in hunting them; the utmost they will do is to snap at a stick when wounded and at bay. The Hyæna is a singular mixture of abject cowardice and the utmost ferocity. A troop has been known to kill a half-grown rhinoceros which had returned to the body of its mother, slain by hunters. More extraordinary still is the fact that hyænas sometimes kill and devour old crippled lions."—Roosevelt and Heller.

Donald Smith has related an instance in which a pack of hyænas entered into a regular fight with a couple of lions near a bait and got the best of it.

"A Hyæna will eat the flesh of any mammal or bird except one of its own kind; I never remember one coming to a trap baited with the remains of another. Lack of speed and natural tendencies prevent him from being a game killer in the same sense as the Hunting Dog or the Leopard; but he has been known to kill cattle and donkeys as well as infirm and crippled wild animals and the unprotected young of all species."—Stevenson-Hamilton.

"Spotted Hyænas will attack sheep in the daytime, and at night will slay cattle and donkeys."—Inverarity.

"I have never observed that these animals seize and kill wild game, though natives say that they sometimes do. At all events they kill goats, donkeys, and even cattle. Usually, however, they confine their attention to wounded animals, or carcasses lions have secured."—Vaughan-Kirby.

I heard several reports from N.W. Bechuanaland of spotted hyænas having severely mauled sleeping natives and also of having dragged children out of huts during the night.

"There are many cases on record of sleeping natives having been attacked by spotted hyænas; they are not, as a rule, dangerous to Europeans, but it is unwise to sleep with a tent open unless one has a mosquito net between one's face and a possible intruder."—Lyell.

"Spotted Hyæna are far more apt than Leopard to prey on human beings, and in certain districts where they are bold and numerous it is dangerous for any man to sleep alone in the open. Their attacks are always made at night,

with extreme caution, and when the victim is sleeping. Usually they seize the face; and we saw more than one Native who had been frightfully scarred in this manner, although the beast had been driven off. A hyæna once took a Native from a hut in Nairobi itself."—Roosevelt & Heller.

"Spotted Hyænas in captivity have lived for periods ranging up to 25 years. Striped, Brown and Spotted Hyænas are all long-lived animals; 54 individuals in 14 different collections had an average life of 12 years and maximums of from 23 to 25 years."—Flower.

Breeding Habits.—"Hyæna pups are usually born in March and April, and I believe the number in a litter to be four; personally I have only seen two."—Kirby.

"Two young are produced at birth."—Roosevelt & Heller.

"The young are born as a rule during the South African winter; they are brought forth in old ant-bear and other burrows within which they remain for several months, and there is no doubt that the female regurgitates for the benefit of her offspring, two or three being probably the usual number."—Stevenson-Hamilton.

"The young are said to be born in enlarged ant-bear burrows during the rains."—Wilhelm.

Period of gestation: about 3 months (S. Hamilton, Wilhelm).

Descriptive Notes.—If *C. c. gariepensis* is separable from *C. c. capensis*, Spotted Hyænas from South-East Africa (the Transvaal, Zululand, etc.) may perhaps be referable to the former subspecies.

"The skins vary a good deal in colour and type, even within the same area."—S. Hamilton.

"In the Spotted Hyæna the female exceeds the male in size, a peculiarity not found in the Striped Hyæna or in any other existing carnivore. The feet are four-toed and furnished by stout non-retractile claws. Externally *Crocuta* differs from *Hyæna* by the small size of the ears.

Large anal glands or sacks are present, but beyond this similarity there are marked differences in the sexual organs in the two genera comprising the family. In *Hyæna* the sexual organs are normal in structure. In *Crocuta* the female sexual organs are quite peculiar in structure and closely resemble those of the male in external appearance—a condition quite unique among carnivorous mammals. The young at birth are uniform seal-brown without any indication of spots or markings of any sort. After a few months have passed their coloration becomes paler in spots and assumes gradually the heavily spotted coat characteristic of the immature."—Roosevelt & Heller.

Stevenson-Hamilton records the number of mammæ as six, but in *Hyæna brunnea* and *Proteles* I only found four.

Weight: ♀ 172–173 lb. (Wood—Nyasaland); ♀ 121 lb. (Meinertzhagen—Kenya); ♀ 79 lb. (Powell-Cotton—Abyssinia).

Shoulder height: 3 ft. (Kirby—a large specimen—S.E. Africa); 2 ft. 6 in. (Lyell—Nyasaland); 2 ft. 5 in. (Meinertzhagen—Kenya); 2 ft. 6 in. (Dodds—

Somaliland); 2 ft. 9 in. (Powell-Cotton—French Chad), 2 ft. 6 in. (Powell-Cotton—Uganda), 2 ft. 3 in. (Powell-Cotton—Abyssinia); 80–95 cm. (Wilhelm).

Dimensions: The following are the measurements, before skinning, of the three largest specimens recorded by Rowland Ward(1928):

	Total length.	Tail.	Locality.
(1) ♀	5 ft. 11 in.	1 ft. 1 in.	Uganda (Powell-Cotton).
(2) ♀	5 ft. 6 in.	1 ft. 0½ in.	French Chad (Powell-Cotton).
(3) ♀	5 ft. 2 in.	1 ft. 1 in.	Abyssinia (Powell-Cotton).

Vaughan-Kirby records an 'over all' measurement of 6 ft. 3 in. from S.E. Africa.

Family CANIDAE

The Typical Dogs and Jackals

Canis

Canis Linnæus, 1758, Syst. Nat., 10th ed., 1, pp. 38–41; genotype, *C. familiaris* Linnæus, id., p. 38. The Domestic Dog.

Black-Backed Jackal—Rooijakkals

Canis (*Thos*)[1] *mesomelas* Schreber

CANIS MESOMELAS MESOMELAS.

Canis mesomelas Schreber, 1778, Säugth., iii, p. 370.

Type (not in existence ?) from the Cape.

CANIS MESOMELAS ARENARUM.

Thos mesomelas arenarum Thomas, 1926, P.Z.S. (I), p. 295.

Type (in the British Museum) from Berseba, Great Namaqualand.

CANIS MESOMELAS ACHROTES.

Thos mesomelas achrotes Thomas, 1926, P.Z.S. (I), pp. 295–296.

Type (in the British Museum) from Rooibank, Kuiseb River (nr. Walvis Bay), S.W. Africa.

NATIVE NAMES:

PERSONALLY COLLECTED

Herero, Ovambo: *Ombánji.*
Bechuana: *Pukúję̆, Phokóyę̆.*
Ovadirico: *Gi'iróhwé.*[2]

[1] *Thos* Oken, 1816, Lehrb. Naturg., Zool. Theil 3, p. 1037; genotype *T. aureus* Koempffer, Amoen., p. 413, Fig. 3; p. 5, No. 5 (*cf.* Linnæus, 1766, Syst. Nat., i, p. 59): The Persian Jackal from the Benna Mts., Laristan, S. Persia.

[2] Possibly of Bushman extraction.