

A short note on the diet of
Tyto alba
at Sandwich Harbour,
Namib Desert Park,
South West Africa

by

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Sandwich Harbour (23° 17'—23° 30' S; 14° 25'—14° 30' E. 2314 ADb,d) is a lagoon area isolated from similar habitats by the southern Namib "dune sea". Because of its isolated location, with a limited small mammal population and because the species composition of this population was being assessed by trapping it was thought to be of interest to analyse a number (73) of *Tyto alba* (barn owl) pellets collected in the same area. All the pellets collected were reasonably fresh and most of the prey items could be identified to the species level.

Of special interest is the occurrence of small birds of the family *Scolopacidae*, which accounted for 21,5% of the prey items. *Mus musculus*, although captured during the trapping period did not occur in any of the pellets examined. Details of the pellet contents are given in the table.

Table: Prey of *Tyto alba* at Sandwich Harbour.

Prey species	Total number —prey items	% Total
INSECTIVORA		
<i>Crocidura cyanea</i>	16	14,9
RODENTIA		
<i>Rhabdomys pumilio</i>	14	13,1
<i>Rattus rattus</i>	1	,9
<i>Desmodillus auricularis</i>	2	1,9
<i>Gerbillus paeba</i>	49	45,8
AVES		
<i>Calidris testacea</i>	6	5,6
Unidentified small waders	17	15,9
Unidentified small bird	1	,9
REPTILIA		
<i>Palmatogecko rangei</i>	1	,9
TOTAL	107	100%