

PRESS REPORT FOR GANSBAAI COURANT

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CAPE GRAY MONGOOSE

The Cape gray mongoose, also called the small gray mongoose, is a mongoose endemic to Southern Africa. It is a small species with a dark grey colour and the tip of the tail being darker. It feeds mostly on insects and small rodents, but will also eat birds, small reptiles, amphibians, other invertebrates and fruit. They have been known to eat carrion and garbage as well. Insects and other arthropoda such as spiders are caught on the ground and then held down with the forefeet and eaten. Larger prey such as rodents are stalked and killed with a bite to the head. Larger prey items are held down with the forefeet and then torn into bite size pieces with the teeth. Until a few decades ago the species was thought to be endemic to the Cape Province, but it is now known to occur in much of the rest of South Africa and in the west, northwards to southern Angola. Its density in areas where the species is established, ranges from one mongoose per 60 hectares to one per two hectares. It inhabits macchia-type vegetation (fynbos), semi-desert scrub (Karoo), thicket and forest. Often they live in close association with man and even live successfully on the fringe of suburbia. The Cape gray mongoose is diurnal, meaning active during daytime. When not breeding, it is solitary, but a litter remains together in a family party at least until late adolescence. Poor diggers, they utilize piles of rocks, crevices, deserted burrows and hollows in tree trunks for shelter when there is not sufficient bush cover. They are often spotted by humans when they cross roads. Litters of 1 – 3 young are born from August to December and hidden in burrows, rock crevices or tree hollows. At birth the pups are fully furred, but their eyes and ears are closed, opening after about a fortnight. The young remain in the breeding burrow until they are fully weaned, and leave when they are capable of independence.

Source: Wikipedia.

Written by Elrina Versfeld on behalf of the Pearly Beach Conservancy.

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