



Slender-tailed Meerkat

Fast Facts



Scientific Name: *Suricata suricatta*

Conservation Status: Least Concern



Body Length: 25–35 cm

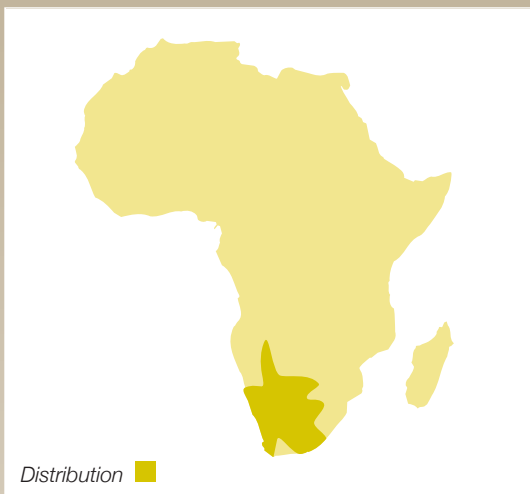
Weight: 600–975 g

Gestation: 75–80 days

Number of young: 2–5

Habitat: Dry sandy plains with little vegetation

Distribution: Southern Africa



Distribution ■

Description

The Slender-tailed Meerkat's coat is a light silvery-brown colour with dark stripes on its back. The eyes are ringed with dark fur. The meerkat has a tail that is 17–25 cm long with a dark tip on the end. Its long front claws are used for digging burrows and finding food.

Diet

Meerkats are omnivores. They eat insects, spiders and other small animals, as well as roots and bulbs.

In the wild

Slender-tailed Meerkats live in large social groups of up to 30 members. While most of the group are out foraging for food, 'sentries' are posted as look-outs for predators such as eagles or cobras. Sentries stand on their hindlegs so they can get a better view of approaching predators. When a threat is sighted, the sentries let out an alarm and the meerkats dive into their burrows. When there is no threat, the sentries make a continuous low, steady peeping sound to let the group know they're still on guard.

Threats

The meerkat is fairly common in Africa. Its main predators are raptors, like hawks and eagles, and jackals and snakes.

At Perth Zoo

Perth Zoo has a breeding group of meerkats in the African Savannah where the meerkats' typical natural behaviours can be observed.

DID YOU KNOW?

Meerkats make at least 10 different vocalisations. These include a threatening growl and an alarm bark. As they search for food they utter a 'vurruk-vurruk'.