

MAMMALS RECORDED ON 'SOUTH AFRICA'S RARE MAMMALS TRIP'

APRIL 2026 ROYLE SAFARIS

The trip was organised by Royle Safaris (UK) as a private trip for a party of 4. The guide throughout was Michael Wright (Sustain Safaris) and the trip ran during the period 5th – 18th April 2026. The trip was highly successful in all aspects as indicated by the impressive species list below.



AARDVARK, several good sightings at both Marrick Safari Farm and Khoisan Karoo Conservancy.

Species appear in order seen.

COMMON NAME	SPECIES	SUBSPECIES	LOCATION SEEN	NOTES
Impala	<i>Aepyceros melampus</i>	<i>melampus</i>	MPGR, SNR	melanistic example seen in MF
White Rhinoceros	<i>Ceratotherium simum</i>	<i>simum</i>	MPGR	significant numbers seen
Greater Kudu	<i>Tragelaphus strepsiceros</i>	<i>strepsiceros</i>	MPGR, SNR, MF, MNP, KNP	common
Nyala (Lowland)	<i>Tragelaphus angasii</i>		MPGR	MNP outside natural range
Blue Wildebeest	<i>Connochaetes taurinus</i>		MPGR, SNR, MF, MNP	
Mauritian Tomb Bat	<i>Taphozous mauritanus</i>		MPGR	
Thick-tailed (Greater) Galago	<i>Otolemur crassicaudatus</i>	<i>crassicaudatus</i>	MPGR	one only

Rusty-spotted Genet (Large Spotted)	Genetta maculata	possibly mossambica	MPGR	one only
Lion	Panthera leo	melanochaita	MPGR	2F sisters, both with cubs 2 (14 months and 3 (10 months).
Vervet Monkey	Chlorocebus pygerythrus	pygerythrus	MPGR, MNP	small numbers
Ground Pangolin (Temminck's)	Smitsia temminckii		MPGR	F, approx. 5 years old.
Epauletted Fruit Bat (Wahlberg's)	Epomophorus wahlbergi		MPGR	disturbed whilst tracking Pangolin
Tadarine Free-tailed Bat (Egyptian)	Tadarida aegyptiaca		MPGR	
Cape Porcupine	Hystrix africaeaustralis		MPGR, SNR, MF, KKC	common
Common Hippopotamus	Hippopotamus amphibius	possibly capensis	MPGR, KKC	
Cape Buffalo	Syncerus caffer	caffer	MPGR, MF, MNP, KKC	common
Slender Mongoose (Common)	Herpestes sanguineus	possibly caui or swalius disputed ssp.	MPGR, MNP	
Common Warthog (Southern)	Phacochoerus africanus	sundevallii	MPGR, MNP, KKC	common
Burchell's Zebra (Plains)	Equus quagga	burchellii	MPGR, SNR, GGHNP, MF, MNP, KNP	common, some Quagga Project individuals seen at KNP
Southern Giraffe	Giraffa giraffa	giraffa	MPGR, MNP	
Leopard	Panthera pardus	pardus	MPGR	1F with cub seen from distance, at night.
Cheetah	Acinonyx jubatus	jubatus	MPGR	F, 5-6 years.
Southern Reedbuck (Common)	Redunca arundinum	arundinum		seen in grassland whilst travelling.
Savanna Hare*	Lepus victoriae		SNR	
Common Waterbuck	Kobus ellipsiprymnus	ellipsiprymnus	SNR	possibly outside natural range, for now included.

Southern Bush Duiker (Grey Duiker)	Sylvcapra grimmia	grimmia	SNR, MF, MNP	several observed
Red Hartebeest	Alceiaphus buselaphus	caama	SNR, GGHNP, MF, MNP, KNP, BNP	common
Blesbok	Damaliscus pygargus	phiiiipsi	GGHNP, KKC	unusual colour variant seen in KKC
Black Wildebeest	Connochartus gnou		GGHNP	also seen whilst travelling to KKC
Chacma Baboon (Cape)	Papio ursinus	ursinus	GGHNP, MNP, KNP, BNP	largest troop in KNP
Black-backed Jackal	Lupulella mesomelas	mesomelas	GGHNP, KNP	
Grey Rhebok	Pelea capreolus		GGHNP, KNP, BNP	relatively common
Common Eland (Cape)	Tragelaphus oryx	oryx	GGHNP, MNP, KNP	huge herd in KNP
Mountain Reedbuck (Southern)	Redunca fulvorufula	fulvorufula	GGHNP, MF	
Southern African Vlei Rat	Otomys irroratus		GGHNP	one only
Rock Hyrax (Cape)	Procavia capensis	capensis	MF, KNP, Meiringspoort Pass	
Springhare (South African)	Pedetes capensis		MF, KKC	common in the 2 locations
Springbok (Cape)	Antidorcas marsupialis	marsupialis	MF, MNP, KKC, KNP	melanistic example seen in MNP, common
Bat-eared Fox (Southern)	Otocycon megalotis	megalotis	MF, KKC	KKC 40+
Steenbok	Raphicerus campestris	campestris	MF, MNP, KKC, KNP	
Southern African Ground Squirrel	Geosciurus princeps		MF, MNP	
Aardvark	Orycteropus afer	afer	MF, KKC	
Aardwolf	Proteles cristata	cristata	MF, KKC	
Scrub Hare*	Lepus saxatilis	subrufus	MF, KKC	
African Pygmy Mouse	Mus minutoides		MF	
Large-eared Mouse	Malacothrix typica	molopenis	MF	
Oryx (Gemsbok)	Oryx gazella	(gazella) generally monotypic	MF, MNP, KNP	relatively common

Eastern Rock Sengi (Elephant Shrew)	Elephantulus myurus		MF	Up to 3 observed (40 min)
Southern Roan Antelope	Hippotragus equinus	equinus	MF, MNP	
Yellow Mongoose (Southern)	Cynictis penicillata	penicillata	MF, MNP, KKC	often seen in vicinity of ground squirrels
Tsessebe	Damaliscus lunatus	lunatus	MNP	possibly outside natural range, for now included
Brown Hyena	Parahyaena brunnea		MNP	brief sighting crossing a track from distance.
Small-spotted Genet	Genetta genetta	pulchra	KKC	one only
Cape Fox	Vulpes chama		KKC	one only
Meercat (Southern African)	Suricata suricatta	suricatta	KKC	harder than expected to observe
Black-footed Cat MAIN TRIP TARGET	Felis nigripes		KKC	brief, viable sighting, following extensive tracking.
Cape Hare*	Lepus capensis	granti	KKC	one only
African Wildcat	Felis lybica	cafra	KKC	one only
Cape Mountain Zebra	Equus zebra	zebra	KNP, BNP	
Cape Grey mongoose	Herpestes pulverulentus	pulverulentus	KNP, BNP	also seen at the top of Table Mountain.
Klipspringer	Oreotragus oreotragus	oreotragus	KNP	
Black Rhinoceros	Diceros bicornis	bicornis	KNP	
Bontebok	Damaliscus pygargus	pygargus (dorcus)	BNP	
Large Grey Mongoose	Herpestes ichneumon	cafer	BNP	Egyptian Mongoose ssp.
Four-striped Grass Mouse	Rhabdomys pumilio		BNP	

LOCATION CODES:

MPGR	Manyoni Private Game Reserve
SNR	Spionkop Nature Reserve
GGHNP	Golden Gate Highlands National Park
MF	Marrick Farm
MNP	Makola National Park

KKC **Khoisan Karoo Conservancy**
KNP **Karoo National Park**
BNP **Bontebok National Park.**

65 MAMMAL SPECIES RECORDED ON THE TRIP.

230 BIRD SPECIES OBSERVED. (Michael significantly more).

10 REPTILE SPECIES OBSERVED.

***Hare taxonomy currently being reviewed by several expert groups, it may be that only 2 species listed not 3 are valid sightings, Savanna could be in doubt. However, 3 very different (morphologically) hares were observed during this trip. Stuart's Field Guide to Mammals of Southern Africa (6th edition) 2025 lists all 3 species with distribution maps, our sightings are all within each species' range. For now, all 3 sp. included.**

I only record sightings of those species that are observed within their historical natural range. On this trip we passed numerous game farms and ranches often observing mammal species which were well outside their historical range, these have not been included in this list. Sable and Red Lechwe would be a good example, we saw several but all well outside their historical range or on game farms or ranches. Tsessebe and Waterbuck historic ranges need further research, for now included.

I observed a Mongoose species cross the road as we were travelling to Bontebok N.P. initially I recorded it as a Cape Grey but on reflection I am virtually sure it was a MARSH MONGOOSE due to the colour of its pelage, which was virtually black, Cape Grey Mongoose tend to be lighter, however I have not included it as a sighting as I have some slight doubt about my ID.

A FEW IMAGES FROM THE TRIP (for significantly more see the link below).



AARDWOLF. Again, commonly seen at Marrick and Khoisan. Up to 25 individuals observed on this trip. Interestingly, Aardwolf were often found in association with Aardvark. (pers obs).



EASTERN ROCK SENGI. Marrick Safari Farm.



SOUTH AFRICAN SPRINGHARE. Common at both Marrick and Khoisan.



BAT-EARED FOX. Again, commonly observed on this trip, particularly at Khoisan where 40+ were recorded during our 3-night stay.



BLACK RHINOCEROS. Karoo N.P., nominate subspecies.



BONTEBOK. Bontebok N.P., a very small park but well worth a visit.

Our accommodation and food throughout the trip were of a very high standard, travel between locations was by road and although some journeys were quite long the 2100 miles covered gave us a very real insight into South Africa. The scenery was generally magnificent. Overall, a very enjoyable and highly successful trip. **Most target species were realised including the number one: BLACK-FOOTED CAT**, which I believe is becoming a very hard species to observe.

Favourite lodge and location: New Holme Nature Lodge, Khoisan Karoo Conservancy. This is a gem of a wildlife destination. Excellent game drives including at night. Accommodation and food wonderful. Above all the lodge is extremely well managed, is deeply committed to conservation and works closely with local communities. A definite return destination.

For a more anecdotal trip report including lots of images please see:

<https://www.safaritalk.net/topic/23676-in-search-of-africas-smallest-wild-cat-elephant-plus-other-rare-mammals-south-africa-april-2026/page/2/#comment-399817>

Special thanks go to the following:

Martin Royle of Royle Safaris UK for arranging the trip and providing such a wildlife rich itinerary. Communications throughout the trip development were excellent. Highly recommendable.

Michael Wright (Sustain Safaris SA), our guide and driver throughout, he was exceptional.

JOHN WEIR August 2026.

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