Conserving the

BLACK-FOOTED CAT

Small spotted cat

Miershooptier/ klein gekolde kat

Schwarzfusskatze

≠Nu≠aibeb

!koirus

Felis nigripes



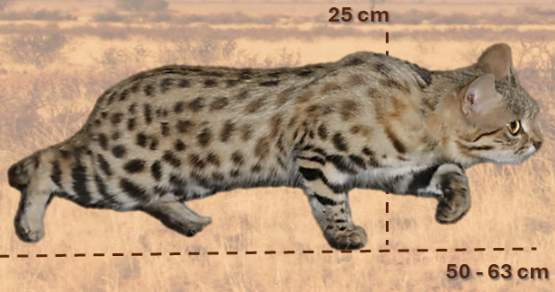


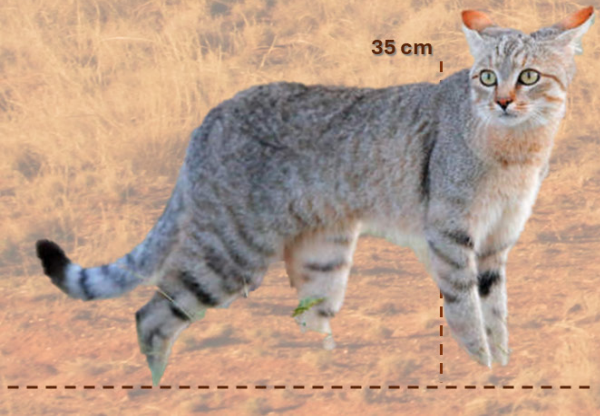
CHARACTERISTICS

- Smallest African wild cat species
- Nocturnal, shy & usually solitary
- Bright, reflective eyes low to the ground at night
- Short tail, less than ½ of body length
- Broad head with large ears (25% of head)
- Bold black spots, broad stripes on legs
- Variable coat colour from rusty to tawny
- Black soles on feet
- Chin, chest and inside of thighs white
- Yellow-green irises
- Brownish coloured back of ears
- Often confused with African wildcat or small-spotted genet

Black-footed cat

♀ 1.2 kg ♂ 1.8-2.5 kg





African wildcat

♀ 4 kg ♂ 5 kg







STATUS

- ‘Protected’ in South Africa & Botswana. Not formally protected in Namibia
- ‘Vulnerable’ under the IUCN Red List & Appendix 1 of CITES
- Rare & uncommon throughout its range
- Small population size at low densities
  - < 10 000 mature adults remaining in wild
  - 1-2 cats/ 100 km^2
- Range mostly outside protected areas

CONSERVATION THREATS

- Habitat loss & degradation
  - Overgrazing, bush encroachment, climate change, loss of burrowing wildlife, loss of habitat connectivity
- Mortality through predator control
  - Night hunts, hunting dogs, traps & cages
  - Misidentification
- Populations are vulnerable
  - High mortality rates
  - High prevalence of AA amyloidosis
  - Observed continuing declines in populations



DISTRIBUTION

- Endemic to southern Africa
- Occur in arid, open savanna, grasslands and Karoo semi-desert
- Most of distribution range is outside protected areas

HAVE YOU SEEN A BLACK-FOOTED CAT?

- Limited understanding of its distribution
- We need your help to collect distribution records

PLEASE REPORT YOUR SIGHTINGS

to the Black-footed Cat Working Group

bfootedcat@gmail.com

Fill out the online form:
Black-footed Cat Survey Questionnaire

We thank our sponsors

KÖLNER ZOO

NCE Namibian Chamber of Environment

PUPKEWITZ FOUNDATION

NAPLES ZOO at CARIBBEAN GARDENS

SWCCF SMALL WILD CAT CONSERVATION FOUNDATION

ISEC



BIOLOGY & ECOLOGY

- Large variety of prey items: 60 species
  - Rodents, ground-roosting small birds
    - Prey size 24.1± 47.4 g
- Home range size
  - Nature reserve, Northern Cape, SA
    ♀ 10 km^2 ♂ 20.7 km^2
  - Farmland, Upper Karoo, SA
    ♀ 20.1 km^2 ♂ 66.0 km^2
  - Farmland, Karas Region, NA
    ♀ 3.0 – 55 km^2

ROLE OF BLACK-FOOTED CATS

- Very successful hunters of rodents, regulating their populations
- Form part of the natural heritage & unique biodiversity
- Indicators of ecosystem health, early warning indicators for ecological threats

Sharing the land with nature & livestock

ROLE OF LANDOWNERS

- Support research & conservation
- Custodians of wildlife
- Raise awareness & cooperation






THE BLACK-FOOTED CAT WORKING GROUP

Conserving Africa's smallest wild cat species
Multidisciplinary team, founded in 2009

RESEARCH

- Biology & ecology of wild free-roaming cats
- Collect distribution records
- Genetics
- Publications & collaborations

EDUCATION & AWARENESS

- Raise awareness & education
- Affect behaviour & attitude towards all small carnivores

CONSERVATION

- Red List Assessments
- Distribution mapping
- Conservation threats & status
- Landowner involvement

www.blackfootedcat.com

Black-footed Cat
Working Group
(Miershooptier Werkgroep)

Black-footed cat Research Project Namibia

Difference between

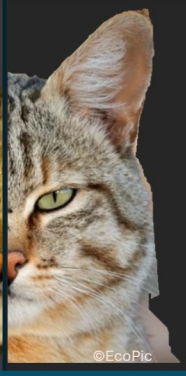
BLACK-FOOTED CAT
Felis nigripes

vs

SOUTHERN AFRICAN WILD CAT
Felis lybica cafra

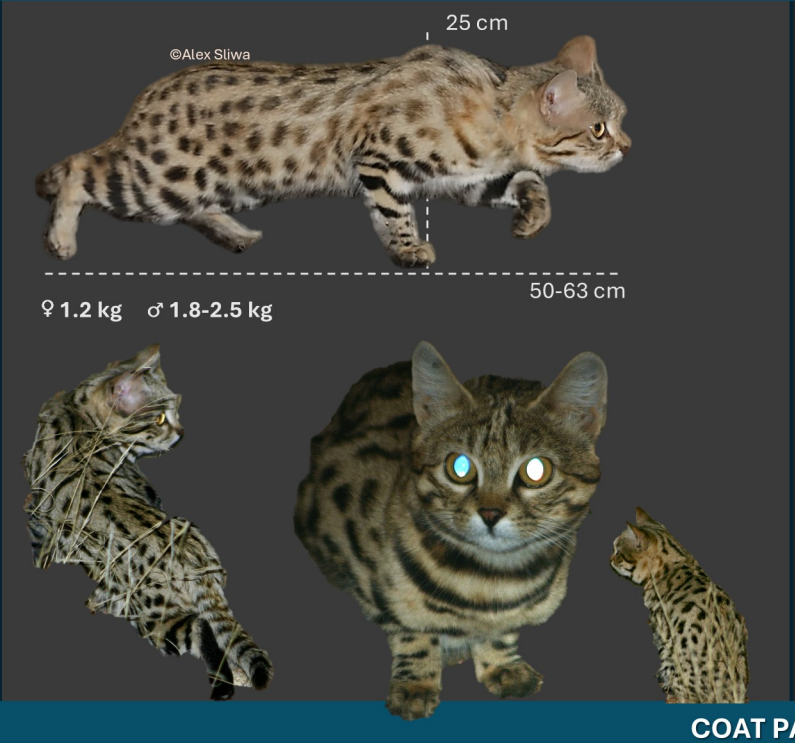
- Smaller in size
- Plain coloured on back of ears
- Bold/ rufous black spots and bands
- Tawny/ rusty brown undercoat
- Short tail: <40% of body length
- Broad, oval head with large ears
- Shorter legs
- Do not typically climb trees

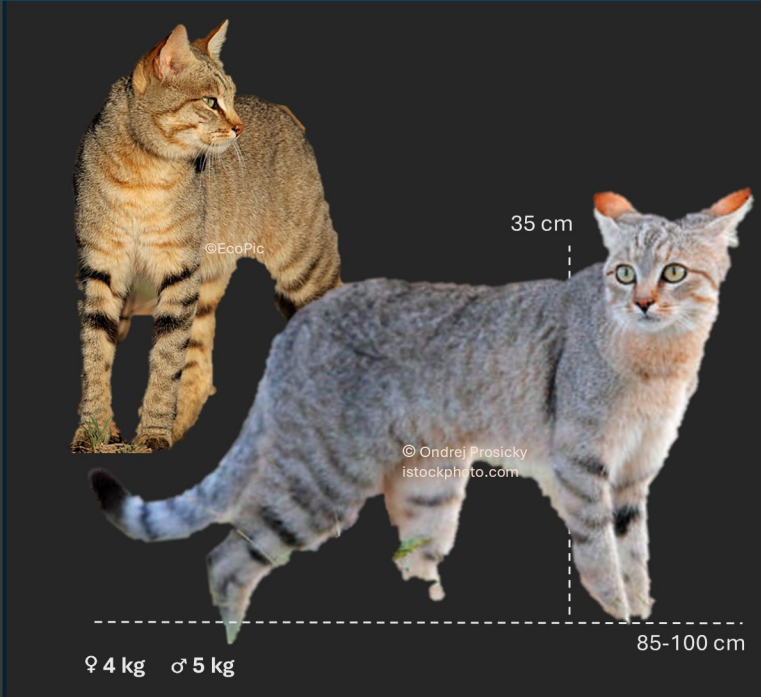




- Larger in size
- Red-brown colour on back of ears
- Variable coat colour & markings & less spots
- Light iron-grey to red-brown undercoat
- Long tail: >50% of body length
- Typical head of domestic cat
- Long legs
- Climb trees

SIZE & APPEARANCE





COAT PATTERN





CONSERVATION STATUS & THREATS

VULNERABLE VU

- Habitat loss & degradation
- Mortalities through predator control
- Populations are vulnerable

- Hybridisation with domestic cats
- Habitat loss & degradation
- Persecution & predator control

LEAST CONCERN LC

DISTRIBUTION RANGE & HABITAT

Restricted & fragmented range. Open, short grass/ shrub plains.



Occurs throughout southern Africa. Wide range of habitats.



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Similarities between BLACK-FOOTED CAT & AFRICAN WILD CAT

Black soles on feet · Black vertical stripes on legs · Vertical stripes on forehead · Diagonal stripes on cheeks · Nocturnal, solitary & secretive · Bright eye-shine in spotlight· Carnivores, feeding mainly on small mammals, birds, reptiles, insects

Black-footed Cat Working Group

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