

Ecology, distribution and status of the Rock Hyrax, *Procavia capensis syriaca*, in Jordan

by Lina B. Rifai, Mohammed Abu Baker and Zuhair S. Amr

Abstract: The ecology, including habitats, population structure, and behavioural aspects of the Rock Hyrax, *Procavia capensis syriaca*, in Jordan are discussed. The current distribution in the Middle East is mapped. Direct threats affecting the current populations of the Hyrax were identified, with emphasis on conservation measures that should be implemented.

Kurzfassung: Die Ökologie, einschließlich Habitat, Populationsstruktur und Verhaltensaspekte des Klippschliefers, *Procavia capensis syriaca*, wurden in Jordanien untersucht und werden hier diskutiert. Die derzeitige Verbreitung im Vorderen Orient wird in einer Karte dargestellt. Faktoren, die die Population des Klippschliefers direkt bedrohen, wurden identifiziert, einschließlich von Schutzmaßnahmen, die durchgeführt werden sollten.

Key words: *Procavia capensis*, mammals, conservation, Jordan, Middle East.

Introduction

The Rock Hyrax, *Procavia capensis* (Schreber, 1784), is the only representative of the order Hyracoidea in the Middle East. This African species extends its range into the Arabian Peninsula, Palestine, Lebanon, and Jordan (HARRISON & BATES 1991). In the Middle East, two subspecies are recognized: *Procavia capensis syriaca* (Schreber, 1784), distributed in Jordan, Palestine and the Lebanon, and *Procavia capensis jayakari* Thomas, 1892, which occurs in the Arabian Peninsula; the former differs from the latter by its larger size (HARRISON & BATES 1991).

In Palestine the Hyrax has been reported on the mountains of the western side of the Dead Sea and the Jordan Valley. Populations also occur close to Eilat. They are also known from the mountains in the northeastern part of the country and the northwestern part, on the Mediterranean coast. In Lebanon it occurs on Mount Lebanon, from which the form *syriacus* was first described (as *Hyrax syriacus*) and which also represents the northernmost limit of the distribution of this species. Another report for Lebanon was from near Tyre (HARRISON & BATES 1991). LEWIS et al. (1968) describe the occurrence in the Lebanon as "occurs from the southern border, north to at least Kartaba, and possibly to the northern terminus of the Lebanon mountains". KUMERLOEVE (1975) in his list of mammals of Syria could not list any locality from this country. M. KASPAREK (pers. comm.) observed the Rock Hyrax on the southwestern Golan above Lake Tiberias in 1990.

Despite recent studies on the mammals of Jordan (AMR & DISI 1988, QUMSIYEH et al.