

The serval (*Leptailurus serval*), also known as the tierboskat, is a wild cat found in Africa. It is the sole member of the genus *Leptailurus* and was first described by German naturalist Johann Christian Daniel von Schreber in 1776. Eighteen subspecies are recognised. The serval is a slender, medium-sized cat that stands 54–62 cm (21–24 in) at the shoulder and weighs 9–18 kg (20–40 lb). It is characterised by a small head, large ears, a golden-yellow to buff coat spotted and striped with black, and a short, black-tipped tail. The serval has the longest legs of any cat relative to its body size.

Active in the day as well as at night, servals tend to be solitary with minimal social interaction. Both sexes establish highly overlapping home ranges of 10 to 32 km² (3.9 to 12.4 sq mi), and mark them with excrement and saliva. Servals are carnivores – they prey on rodents (particularly vlei rats), small birds, frogs, insects and reptiles. The serval uses its sense of hearing to locate the prey; to kill small prey, it leaps over 2 m (6.6 ft) above the ground to land on the prey on its forefeet, and finally kills it with a bite on the neck or the head. Mating takes place at different times of the year in different parts of their range, but typically once or twice a year in an area. After a gestational period of two to three months, a litter of one to four is born. Weaning occurs at one month, and kittens begin hunting on their own at six months. The juveniles leave their mother at 12 months.

The serval prefers areas with cover such as reeds and tall grasses and proximity to water bodies, such as wetlands and savannahs. It is rare in northern Africa and the Sahel, but widespread in southern Africa. The International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) classifies the serval as least concern. It occurs in protected areas across its range, and hunting of servals is either prohibited or regulated in several countries.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Serval>