

= Klipspringer =

The klipspringer ( pronounced / ˈkɪpˌsprɪŋər / ) ( *Oreotragus oreotragus* ) is a small antelope found in eastern and southern Africa . The sole member of its genus , the klipspringer was first described by German zoologist Eberhard August Wilhelm von Zimmermann in 1783 . The klipspringer is a small , sturdy antelope ; it reaches 43 ? 60 centimetres ( 17 ? 24 in ) at the shoulder and weighs from 8 to 18 kilograms ( 18 to 40 lb ) . The coat of the klipspringer , yellowish gray to reddish brown , acts as an efficient camouflage in its rocky habitat . Unlike most other antelopes , the klipspringer has a thick and coarse coat with hollow , brittle hairs . The horns , short and spiky , present only on males , typically measure 7 @. @ 5 ? 9 centimetres ( 3 @. @ 0 ? 3 @. @ 5 in )

Typically nocturnal ( active mainly at night ) , the klipspringer rests during the middle of the day and late at night . A gregarious animal , the klipspringer is monogamous to a much greater extent than other antelopes ; individuals of opposite sexes exhibit long @-@ term to lifelong pair bonding . The mates tend to stay as close as within 5 metres ( 16 ft ) of each other at most times . Males form territories , 7 @. @ 5 ? 49 hectares ( 19 ? 121 acres ) , in which they stay with their partners and offspring . Primarily a browser , the klipspringer prefers young plants , fruits and flowers . Gestation lasts around six months , following which a single calf is born ; births peak from spring to early summer . The calf leaves its mother when it turns a year old .

The klipspringer inhabits places characterised by rocky terrain and sparse vegetation . Its range extends from northeastern Sudan , Eritrea , northern Somalia and Ethiopia in the east to South Africa in the south , and along coastal Angola and Namibia . The International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources ( IUCN ) classifies the klipspringer as Least Concern . There are no major threats to the survival of the klipspringer , as its habitat is inaccessible and unfavourable for hunting . Significant numbers occur on private farmlands . As of 2008 , nearly 25 % of the populations occur in protected areas throughout its range .

= = Taxonomy and etymology = =

The scientific name of the klipspringer is *Oreotragus oreotragus* . It is the sole member of the genus *Oreotragus* and classified under the family Bovidae . The species was first described by German zoologist Eberhard August Wilhelm von Zimmermann in 1783 . The vernacular name " klipspringer " ( pronounced / ˈkɪpˌsprɪŋər / ) is a compound of the Afrikaans words klip ( " rock " ) and springer ( " leaper " ) . Another name for this antelope is " klipbok " .

A 2012 phylogenetic study showed that the klipspringer is closely related to Kirk 's dik @-@ dik ( *Madoqua kirkii* ) and the suni ( *Neotragus moschatus* ) . The klipspringer evolved nearly 14 million years ago . The cladogram below is based on this study .

As many as 11 subspecies have been identified , though zoologists Colin Groves and Peter Grubb treat a few of them as independent species in a 2011 publication :

= = Description = =

The klipspringer is a small , sturdy antelope reaching 43 ? 60 centimetres ( 17 ? 24 in ) at the shoulder . The head @-@ and @-@ body length is typically between 75 and 115 centimetres ( 30 and 45 in ) . It weighs from 8 to 18 kilograms ( 18 to 40 lb ) . The klipspringer is sexually dimorphic ; females are slightly larger and heavier than the males . The tail measures 6 @. @ 5 ? 10 @. @ 5 centimetres ( 2 @. @ 6 ? 4 @. @ 1 in ) . Prominent facial features include the brown forehead , short ears marked with black , prominent preorbital glands near the eyes , and white lips and chin . The horns , short and spiky , present only on males , typically measure 7 @. @ 5 ? 9 centimetres ( 3 @. @ 0 ? 3 @. @ 5 in ) ; the maximum recorded horn length is 15 @. @ 9 centimetres ( 6 @. @ 3 in ) .

The coat of the klipspringer , yellowish gray to reddish brown , acts as an efficient camouflage in its rocky habitat ; the underbelly is white . Unlike most other antelopes , the klipspringer has a thick and coarse coat with hollow , brittle hairs . The incisors might even get damaged by the hairs while

grooming . However , the coat is a significant adaptation that saves the animal during steep falls and provides effective insulation in the extreme climates characteristic of its mountain habitat . A study showed that ticks occur in larger numbers on the underbelly , where the hair is less coarse . The hair often turns erect , especially if the animal is ill or if its temperature increases . Another feature unique to the klipspringer is its gait ; it walks on the tips of its cylindrical , blunt hooves . This enhances the grip on the ground , enabling the animal to deftly climb and jump over rocky surfaces .

The subspecies vary in coat colour ? from golden yellow in the Cape klipspringer , Ethiopian klipspringer , golden klipspringer and Transvaal klipspringer to ochre or rufous in the Maasai klipspringer , Stevenson 's klipspringer and Zambian klipspringer . Cape klipspringer populations tend to have the largest males , while Maasai klipspringer exhibit the largest females .

#### = = Ecology and behaviour = =

Typically nocturnal ( active mainly at night ) , the klipspringer rests during the midday and at late night ; the animal tends to be more active on moonlit nights . It basks in the morning sunlight to warm itself . A gregarious animal , the klipspringer , like the dik @-@ diks and the oribi , exhibits monogamy to a much greater extent than other antelopes ; individuals of opposite sexes form pairs that might last until one dies . The mates tend to stay as close as within 5 metres ( 16 ft ) of each other at most times ; for instance , they take turns at keeping a lookout for predators while the other feeds , and face any danger together . The klipspringer will hop a few metres away from the danger . Other social groups include small family herds of 8 or more members or solitary individuals . Klipspringer greet one another by rubbing cheeks at social meetings .

Males form territories , 7 @.@ 5 ? 49 hectares ( 19 ? 121 acres ) large ( the size depends on rainfall patterns ) , in which they stay with their partners and offspring . Males are generally more vigilant than females . Klipspringer form large dung heaps , nearly 1 metre ( 3 @.@ 3 ft ) across and 10 centimetres ( 3 @.@ 9 in ) deep , at the borders of territories ; another form of marking is the secretion of a thick , black substance , measuring 5 millimetres ( 0 @.@ 20 in ) across , from the preorbital glands onto vegetation and rocks in the territories . A study revealed that the tick *Ixodes neitzi* detects and aggregates on twigs marked by the klipspringer . Another study showed that plants near the borders with neighbouring territories are particularly preferred for marking . The main vocalisation is a shrill whistle , given out by the klipspringer pair in a duet , as a means of communication or anti @-@ predator response . Predators include the baboon , black @-@ backed jackal , caracal , eagle , leopard , martial eagle , serval , spotted hyaena and Verreaux 's eagle . Birds such as familiar chats , pale @-@ winged starlings , red @-@ winged starlings and yellow @-@ bellied bulbuls have been observed feeding on ectoparasites of klipspringer .

#### = = = Diet = = =

Primarily a browser , the klipspringer prefers young plants , fruits and flowers . Grasses , eaten mainly in the wet season , form a minor portion of the diet . Some plants , such as *Vellozia* , may be preferred seasonally . Klipspringer depend mainly on succulent plants , and not on water bodies , to meet their water requirement . They can stand on their hindlegs to reach tall branches up to 1 @.@ 2 metres ( 3 @.@ 9 ft ) above the ground ; some individuals in Namibia were observed climbing *Faidherbia albida* trees up to a height of 5 @.@ 4 metres ( 18 ft ) .

#### = = = Reproduction = = =

The klipspringer is a seasonal breeder ; the time when mating occurs varies geographically . Females become sexually mature by the time they are a year old ; males take slightly longer to mature . Mating behaviour has not been extensively observed . Gestation lasts around six months , following which a single calf , weighing slightly more than 1 kilogram ( 2 @.@ 2 lb ) , is born ; births peak from spring to early summer . Births take place in dense vegetation . The newborn is carefully

hidden for up to three months to protect it from the view of predators ; the mother suckles it three to four times a day , the visits gradually lengthen as the offspring grows . Males are protective of their offspring , keeping a watch for other males and predators . The calf is weaned at four to five months , and leaves its mother when it turns a year old . The klipspringer lives for around 15 years .

= = Habitat and distribution = =

The klipspringer inhabits places characterised by rocky terrain and sparse vegetation . It migrates to lowlands at times of food scarcity . The klipspringer occurs at altitudes as high as 4 @, @ 500 metres ( 14 @, @ 800 ft ) on Mount Kilimanjaro . The klipspringer can occur at high population densities in favourable habitats extending over a large area ; 10 to 14 individuals occur per square kilometre in the Simien Mountains National Park , Ethiopia . However , the habitat is typically rocky over long stretches and grassy terrain is discontinuous ; consequently the population density is typically between 0 @. @ 01 and 0 @. @ 1 individual per square kilometre .

The antelope occurs in significant numbers across eastern and southern Africa ; its range extends from northeastern Sudan , Eritrea , northern Somalia and Ethiopia in the east to South Africa in the south , and along coastal Angola and Namibia . Smaller populations occur in the northern and western highlands of Central African Republic , southeastern Democratic Republic of Congo , Jos Plateau and east of Gashaka Gumti National Park in Nigeria . It is feared to be extinct in Burundi .

= = Threats and conservation = =

The International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources ( IUCN ) classifies the klipspringer as Least Concern . The klipspringer is hunted for its meat , leather and hair . However , there are no major threats to the survival of the klipspringer , as its habitat is inaccessible and unfavourable for hunting . Moreover , the antelope does not have to compete with livestock , that do not frequent montane areas . However , populations at lower altitudes are more vulnerable to elimination .

In 1999 , Rod East of the IUCN SSC Antelope Specialist Group estimated the total population of klipspringer at 42 @, @ 000 . Significant numbers occur on private farmlands . As of 2008 , nearly 25 % of the populations occur in protected areas such as the Simien and Bale Mountains National Parks ( Ethiopia ) ; Tsavo East and West National Parks ( Kenya ) ; North and South Luangwa National Parks ( Zambia ) ; Nyika National Park ( Malawi ) ; Namib @- @ Naukluft National Park ( Namibia ) ; and Matobo National Park ( Zimbabwe ) .