

OBSERVATIONS ON TWO POPULATIONS OF THE
WOODLAND DORMOUSE (*GRAPHIURUS MURINUS*) IN THE
EASTERN CAPE PROVINCE, REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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We compared *Graphiurus murinus* caught in two regions in the Eastern Cape, South Africa, between January 30 and February 25, 2002: the riverine forest in Andries Vosloo Kudu Reserve (AVKR) near Grahamstown (N = 32) and the afromontane forest at Hogsback, Amatola Mountains (N = 23). All dormice were trapped during the night and the majority (= 94.5%) were caught in traps set on logs or in trees. Trap success per 100 trap nights (TN) in traps set above ground was 6.5 in AVKR and 2.3 at Hogsback. Three age classes were distinguished in both samples on the basis of size, colour and tail hairiness. Adults from AVKR were significantly larger than the Hogsback specimens, having longer hair, relatively longer ears, and a rusty chest and chin bib. Sex ratio was female biased in both samples. Both sexes showed reproductive activity at the time of our study. Based on the number of placental scars and embryos, the mean litter size was estimated to be 3.5 (range 3–4). Habitats populated by *G. murinus* in South Africa are small in area, patchy in spatial distribution, and subjected to degradation. We estimated the populations in two AVKR riverine forest patches to be c. 250 and c. 500 individuals, respectively (density c. 10 per hectare).

Observations on two captive AVKR dormice showed the woodland dormouse's strong preference for an insectivorous and carnivorous diet. Food remains from experiments on captive dormice are compared with the remains collected from tree hollows in the wild. The latter contained the remnants of beetles, millipedes, spiders, snails, and remains of vertebrates (lizards and small mammals).