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Civettictis civetta, African Civet

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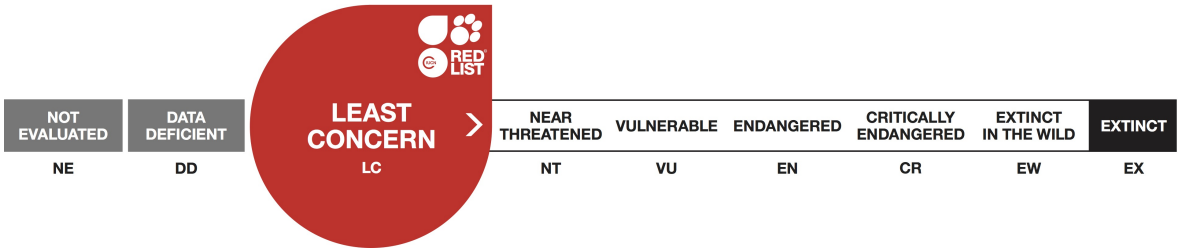

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Taxonomy

Kingdom	Phylum	Class	Order	Family
Animalia	Chordata	Mammalia	Carnivora	Viverridae

Taxon Name: *Civettictis civetta* (Schreber, 1776)

Common Name(s):

- English: African Civet
- French: Civette africaine, Civette d'Afrique

Taxonomic Notes:

This species was formerly considered to be congeneric with Asian civets of the genus *Viverra*. It was first included in *Civettictis* by Pocock (1915) and retained in that genus by several authors, including Ray (1995, 2013), Kingdon (1997) and Wozencraft (2005), although others, such as Ellerman *et al.* (1953) and Coetzee (1977), continued to include it in *Viverra*.

Assessment Information

Red List Category & Criteria: Least Concern ver 3.1

Year Published: 2015

Date Assessed: May 12, 2015

Justification:

African Civet is listed as Least Concern because the species has a wide distribution range, is present in a variety of habitats, is relatively common across its range, is present in numerous protected areas, and has a total population believed to be relatively stable. It may, however, be undergoing some localised declines through hunting, including the off-take of wild animals (males) for the production of civetone, which is used as a fixing agent in the perfume industry.

Previously Published Red List Assessments

2008 – Least Concern (LC) – http://dx.doi.org/10.2305/IUCN.UK.2008.RLTS.T41695A10519533.en

1996 – Lower Risk/least concern (LR/lc)

Geographic Range

Range Description:

African Civet is widely distributed in Africa from Senegal and Mauritania to southern Sudan, Ethiopia, Djibouti, and southern Somalia southwards in all countries to north-eastern Namibia, north and east Botswana, and north-eastern South Africa (Ray 2013). It is present on Zanzibar Island (Pakenham 1984, Stuart and Stuart 1988) and Sao Tome I. (Dutton 1994). The species is recorded from almost sea level to altitudes of 5,000 m a.s.l. on Mt Kilimanjaro (Moreau 1944).

Country Occurrence:

Native: Angola (Angola); Benin; Botswana; Burkina Faso; Cameroon; Central African Republic; Congo; Congo, The Democratic Republic of the; Côte d'Ivoire; Djibouti; Equatorial Guinea (Equatorial Guinea (mainland)); Ethiopia; Gabon; Gambia; Ghana; Guinea; Guinea-Bissau; Kenya; Liberia; Malawi; Mauritania; Mozambique; Namibia; Niger; Nigeria; Rwanda; Senegal; Sierra Leone; Somalia; South Africa; Sudan; Swaziland; Tanzania, United Republic of; Togo; Uganda; Zambia; Zimbabwe

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Distribution Map

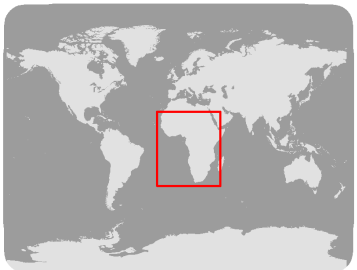
Civettictis civetta

NE | DD | LC LEAST CONCERN | NT | VU | EN | CR | EW | EX

Range

Extant (resident)

Compiled by:
IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature)



The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply any official endorsement, acceptance or opinion by IUCN.

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Population

This species is generally common. In South Africa, Amiard (2014) reported densities of 7.5–14.2 individuals/100 km² in three game reserves located in the Limpopo and Mpumalanga provinces, respectively; these estimates were based on camera-trapping and individual identification (using natural markings on the flanks). Using the same methods, Isaacs *et al.* (in press) reported slightly lower densities (4.43–8.63 individuals/100 km²) in three study sites—two conservation areas and one mosaic area made of ecotourism, hunting and livestock farms—within the Waterberg Biosphere Reserve (Limpopo). These authors hypothesised that differences in African Civet density might result from top-down regulation from large carnivores, recreational hunting, poisoning, resource provisioning or human activity.

Current Population Trend: Unknown

Habitat and Ecology **(see Appendix for additional information)**

African Civets occupy a wide variety of habitats including secondary forest, woodland, and bush habitats, as well as aquatic environments. They are generally absent from arid regions, with the exception of riverine systems therein. They are apparently uncommon in mature interior forest habitats, but will infiltrate deep forest via logging roads, and in the forests of West and Central Africa, they thrive in degraded and deforested areas, and are regularly encountered near villages (Ray 2013). They are also found on cultivated land, for instance in Gabon (Bahaa-el-din *et al.* 2013) and Ethiopia (Mateos *et al.* 2015). African Civets are omnivorous and opportunistic foragers (Ray and Sunquist 2001, Bekele *et al.* 2008b, Amiard 2014), and their diet may include cereals (maize, wheat, barley) and domestic fruits (e.g., bananas, figs, olives; Bekele *et al.* 2008b). They are terrestrial, nocturnal and solitary, with exception of the breeding season when two or more individuals can be seen together. In Ethiopia, in the Bale Mountains National Park, one radio-tracked sub-adult male had a home range of 11.1 km² (Admasu *et al.* 2004), while in Wondo Genet, one adult male (0.74 km²) and one sub-adult female (0.82 km²) ranged over much smaller areas (Ayalew *et al.* 2013). The last two individuals moved at an average speed of 326 m/h and travelled between 1.33 and 4.24 km each night.

Systems: Terrestrial

Use and Trade

Besides their prevalence in bushmeat markets in West and Central Africa, in particular, African Civets are economically important because of their perineal gland secretion (civet musk; Randall 1979, Bekele *et al.* 2008a, Wondmagegne *et al.* 2011), which was exploited for many centuries as a fixing agent, called 'civetone', in the perfume industry (Anonis 1997). Even though synthetic alternatives have been available for nearly 70 years, civetone remains an important export commodity in several countries, such as Ethiopia, and to a lesser extent, Niger and Senegal (Ray 1995, 2013; Abebe 2003; Ray *et al.* 2005).

Between 1985 and 1997, civiculture (civet cat farming) generated a total revenue of between *ca* US$ 150,000–835,000 per year in Africa. According to Kumera (2005 *in* Bekele *et al.* 2008b), there are over 200 registered and licensed African Civet farmers who capture African Civets in the wild and keep several thousand individuals in captivity for musk production in Ethiopia. In that country, only 2% of the civet musk produced is used nationally; the rest is exported, essentially to France (85%), for the perfume

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industry (Girma 1995). Small quantities of civet musk are also exported to Arabian countries for medicinal purposes and to India for use in the tobacco industry (Tamiru 1995).

Threats (see Appendix for additional information)

There are no major threats to the species. However, African Civets are commonly found for sale as bushmeat, for example in Gabon (Bahaa-el-din *et al.* 2013) as well as in SE Nigeria, where they are used for both food and skin (Angelici *et al.* 1999). They are frequently found trapped for meat in other countries, including Sierra Leone, Cameroon, Republic of Congo, DR Congo and Central African Republic (Ray 2013). The majority of animals (generally males, because of their higher civet musk production) kept for the trade of civetone are taken from the wild, and such off-takes are likely to have localised impacts on wild populations, as well as potentially to lead to a severely female-biased sex ratio. In addition, several African Civets have been reported to die within the first three weeks of capture because of severe stress and physical assault during capture and transportation (Pugh 1998). There are also some concerns about the welfare of these animals, which are typically maintained in very small cages in order to facilitate handling during musk extraction from the perineal glands.

Conservation Actions (see Appendix for additional information)

They are present in numerous protected areas across their range. The population of Botswana is listed on CITES Appendix III. Detailed recommendations to ensure the sustainable use African Civets for musk production can be found in Abebe (2003).

Credits

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External Resources

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Appendix

Habitats

(http://www.iucnredlist.org/technical-documents/classification-schemes)

Habitat	Season	Suitability	Major Importance?
1. Forest -> 1.5. Forest - Subtropical/Tropical Dry	-	Suitable	-
1. Forest -> 1.6. Forest - Subtropical/Tropical Moist Lowland	-	Suitable	-
1. Forest -> 1.8. Forest - Subtropical/Tropical Swamp	-	Marginal	-
1. Forest -> 1.9. Forest - Subtropical/Tropical Moist Montane	-	Suitable	-
2. Savanna -> 2.1. Savanna - Dry	-	Suitable	-
2. Savanna -> 2.2. Savanna - Moist	-	Suitable	-
3. Shrubland -> 3.5. Shrubland - Subtropical/Tropical Dry	-	Suitable	-
3. Shrubland -> 3.6. Shrubland - Subtropical/Tropical Moist	-	Suitable	-
5. Wetlands (inland) -> 5.1. Wetlands (inland) - Permanent Rivers/Streams/Creeks (includes waterfalls)	-	Marginal	-
5. Wetlands (inland) -> 5.3. Wetlands (inland) - Shrub Dominated Wetlands	-	Marginal	-
14. Artificial/Terrestrial -> 14.1. Artificial/Terrestrial - Arable Land	-	Marginal	-
14. Artificial/Terrestrial -> 14.3. Artificial/Terrestrial - Plantations	-	Suitable	-
14. Artificial/Terrestrial -> 14.4. Artificial/Terrestrial - Rural Gardens	-	Marginal	-
14. Artificial/Terrestrial -> 14.6. Artificial/Terrestrial - Subtropical/Tropical Heavily Degraded Former Forest	-	Marginal	-

Threats

(http://www.iucnredlist.org/technical-documents/classification-schemes)

Threat	Timing	Scope	Severity	Impact Score
5. Biological resource use -> 5.1. Hunting & trapping terrestrial animals -> 5.1.1. Intentional use (species is the target)	Ongoing	Minority (50%)	Negligible declines	Low impact: 4
	Stresses:	2. Species Stresses -> 2.1. Species mortality		

Conservation Actions in Place

(http://www.iucnredlist.org/technical-documents/classification-schemes)

Conservation Actions in Place
In-Place Land/Water Protection and Management

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Conservation Actions in Place
Occur in at least one PA: Yes
In-Place Education
Included in international legislation: Yes
Subject to any international management/trade controls: Yes

Additional Data Fields

Distribution
Lower elevation limit (m): 0
Upper elevation limit (m): 5000
Population
Population severely fragmented: No
Habitats and Ecology
Generation Length (years): 6

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