

ORIBI

Ourebia ourebi

OTHER NAMES

- Oorbietjie (Afrikaans), Ourébie (French)

DESCRIPTION

Shoulder Height

- 50-66cm

Length

- 92-110cm

Weight

- 12-22kg

Key identification features (adult)

The back and upper chest is yellowish to orange-brown. The chin, throat, chest, belly and rump are white. The tail is short and bushy, the upper side black or dark brown, and the under surface white. They have relatively small ears. Only males grow horns, which are slender and upright, ridged to about halfway up, the ends being smooth and pointed, with some reaching a length of up to 19 cm.



Habits

Oribi are found on their own, in pairs, or in small groups of one male with two or more females. Resting (hidden in tall grass patches) during the heat of the day, Oribi are most active in the early morning and late afternoon. When alarmed, they produce a shrill whistle. Often they do not attempt to flee until an intruder is within a few meters, remaining motionless in

the grass, relying on camouflage. If threatened they gallop away, bounding stiff-legged into the air every few strides – a behaviour known as stotting – and travel only a relatively short distance before taking cover again.



ECOLOGY

Diet

Predominantly short grass grazers. They are selective grazers and require intact primary grasslands.

CONSERVATION STATUS

Widely distributed through Africa stretching from Senegal in the west to Ethiopia in the east and down to the Eastern Cape in South Africa in the south. In South Africa they occur along the eastern parts of Mpumalanga, KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape, with a small population extending into the Free State.

Their global status is Least Concern (IUCN) but in South Africa they are considered Endangered.



WHY ARE ORIBI THREATENED?

Habitat destruction (loss and fragmentation) due to commercial forestry activities, intensive commercial farming, grassland degradation and mining has led to considerable declines and fragmentation of the population in South Africa. Over-utilisation due to illegal hunting with dogs is the most serious current threat to the survival of the species. Trapping of animals with snares also poses a severe threat to the Oribi.

WHAT IS THE EWT DOING TO CONSERVE ORIBI?

Population monitoring as well as relocation from "doomed" to healthy populations forms the basis of the EWT's role in the conservation of this species. Along with this, the EWT assists with stewardship, conservation education and awareness. The Oribi Custodian Programme recognises landowners with healthy Oribi populations and a new drive to investigate and hopefully decrease the extent of illegal hunting with dogs will assist in addressing the population decline.



HOW CAN YOU HELP?

Assist with the reporting of any illegal hunting (with dogs) activities. Enhance the awareness of the problem through communicating the drive to stop illegal hunting. Assist with the annual population census. Sponsor the development and printing of educational materials, fuel costs and field worker expenses.

Support conservation organizations such as the Endangered Wildlife Trust – go to www.ewt.org.za to find out how.