

MAMMALS OF THE UITENHAGE AND CRADOCK DISTRICTS C.P. IN
RECENT TIMES

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My terms of reference from the Director, the National Parks Board of Trustees, called for the compilation of a list of the indigenous mammals which previously had roamed the areas near the Addo Elephant National Park and the Mountain Zebra National Park, in the Uitenhage and Cradock districts respectively, in recent times.

Additional instructions were as follows: "There are undoubtedly different kinds which are rather well-known but we would very much like to have information on the occurrence and distribution of the following: Bontbok and Blesbok; Blue Wildebeest and Black Wildebeest; Eland, Gemsbok, Hartebeest, Vaal Ribbok and Mountain Reedbuck; Mountain Zebra and Burchell's Zebra. A short note on the carnivora will be appreciated."

In so far as extant mammals are concerned, the accompanying checklist has been based, where possible, on specimens obtained in the districts concerned, but as no full-scale zoological surveys of these districts have yet been undertaken, much of the information has been derived from the distributional evidence of contiguous districts.

The disappearance of some of the fauna under the pressure of civilisation has meant a recourse to the records of early naturalists, travellers, hunters, military men and missionaries, and, although about a hundred such works have been consulted, not all have been used in the compilation of this report. Correspondence with members of the farming community has also been of great value.

In drawing on the records of the past it is necessary to use discretion in interpretation. None were on a truly scientific basis and many statements were based on hearsay. Many early mistakes were repeated by subsequent authors and their repetition has perhaps tended to give them an air of authority to which they are not entitled. One must perforce draw conclusions which are reasonable in the light of all the records available and on their degree of probability based on ecological considerations.

The list of mammals follows Ellerman *et al* (1953) in the main, but has been modified here and there in the light of experience from competent

workers in South Africa, e.g. Mr. D. H. S. Davis, Government Ecologist and Mr. J. Meester, Mammalogist at the Transvaal Museum, who supplied information on the rodents and shrews respectively. Where such have seemed reasonably sound the names of the subspecies have been included but where these are still somewhat fluid, only the specific names have been used.

An animal's absence from a district is denoted by a dash and its presence by a cross. Where there is a reasonable chance of its occurring or of having occurred, a question mark indicates this fact.

A great deal of zoological exploration is still required. For instance, the list of bats will in the future prove to be rather inadequate. Their mobility must influence their distribution more than we know and some migratory tendency may well bring certain bats into a district where they have not yet been found.

Extinct and introduced mammals are referred to in the columns. The lists as here set out, allowing for the shortcomings stated above, reveal that in Cradock there have been 78 known forms of mammals plus an extra seven possibilities and in Uitenhage there have been 97, plus an extra 5 possibilities. Of these, in both districts, 13 are now extinct in their feral state, but although the tally is alike, the same animals are not necessarily concerned in each case. And of the total in both districts two have been introduced from overseas, viz.: the Common House Rat, *Rattus rattus* and the House Mouse, *Mus musculus*.

The extinct forms are as follows: (Up to 1956)

Uitenhage:

Hunting Dog; Brown Hyaena; Spotted Hyaena; Cheetah; Lion; Black Rhinoceros; Quagga; Warthog; Hippopotamus; Reedbuck; Springbok; Red Hartebeest; Eland. In addition, the Mountain Zebra may be included as a possible. (Springbok, Red Hartebeest and Eland were re-introduced in 1957.)

Cradock:

Hunting Dog; Brown Hyaena; Spotted Hyaena; Cheetah; Lion; Elephant; Black Rhinoceros; Quagga; Hippopotamus; Blesbok; Black Wildebeest; Red Hartebeest; Eland. In addition, Bushpig; Warthog; Kudu and Buffalo may be included as possibles. (Black Wildebeest, Red Hartebeest and Eland have been re-introduced.)

There can be little doubt that the distribution of the mammals, and more especially of the game, during the hundreds of years before records were kept, must have fluctuated from time to time depending on the pressure of population dynamics and other biological factors. But such speculations cannot enter into an evaluation of status as here required.

LISTS OF MAMMALS OF THE CRADOCK AND UITENHAGE DISTRICTS

	Cradock	Uitenhage
ORDER — INSECTIVORA		
Family <i>Macroscelididae</i>		
<i>Elephantulus intufi vandami</i> : Roberts	x	—
Bushveld Elephant-shrew/Bosveld Skeerbekmuis.		
<i>Elephantulus rupestris karoensis</i> : Roberts	x	x
Rock Elephant-shrew/Klipklaasneus.		
<i>Macroscelides proboscideus hewitti</i> : Roberts	x	—
Short-eared El-shrew/Kortoorklaasneus.		
Family <i>Erinaceidae</i>		
<i>Erinaceus f. frontalis</i> : A. Smith	x	x
Cape Hedgehog/Krimparkie.		
Family <i>Soricidae</i>		
<i>Suncus gracilis</i> : Blainville	—	x
Dwarf Shrew/Dwergskeerbekmuis.		
<i>Myosorex varius</i> : Smuts	?	x
Forest Shrew/Bosskeerbekmuis.		
<i>Crocidura cyanea</i> : Duvernoy	x	x
Reddish-grey Musk Shrew/Rooigrysskeerbekmuis.		
<i>Crocidura pondoensis</i> : Roberts	—	x
Pondo Musk-shrew/Pondoland se skeerbekmuis.		
<i>Crocidura flavescens</i> : I. Geoffroy	?	x
Giant Musk-shrew/Rooiskeerbekmuis.		
Family <i>Chrysochloridae</i>		
<i>Amblysomus h. hottentotus</i> : A. Smith	—	x
Hottentot Golden-mole/Hotnotkruipmol.		

ORDER — CHIROPTERA

Sub-order — MEGACHIROPTERA

Family *Pteropodidae*

Sub-family *Pteropodinae*

<i>Eidolon helvum</i> : Kerr	x	x
Yellow Fruit Bat/Geelvrugtevlermuis.		
<i>Rousettus aegyptiacus leachi</i> : A. Smith	—	x
Cape Fruit Bat/Kaapse vrugtevlermuis.		
<i>Epomophorus wahlbergi</i> : Sundevall	—	x
Wahlberg's Fruit Bat/Witkolvlermuis.		

Sub-Order *Microchiroptera*

Family *Emballonuridae*

	Cradock	Uitenhage
<i>Taphosus mauritanus</i> : E. Geoffroy S.A. Tomb Bat/Witlyfvlermuis. Family Nycteridae	x	x
<i>Nycteris thebaica capensis</i> : A. Smith Cape Slit-faced Bat/Langoorvlermuis. Family Rhinolophidae Sub-family Rhinolophinae	—	x
<i>Rhinolophus clivosus zuluensis</i> : Andersen Geoffroy's Horseshoe Bat/G. se blaarnevsvlermuis.	?	x
<i>Rhinolophus capensis</i> : Licht Cape Horseshoe Bat/Kaapse Hoefystervlermuis. Family Molossidae	—	x
<i>Tadarida aegyptiaca</i> : E. Geoffroy Egypt Free-tailed Bat/Eg. Losstertvlermuis.	x	x
<i>Tadarida bocagei</i> : Seabra Bocage's Free-tailed Bat/B' se Losstertvlermuis. Family Vespertilionidae Sub-family Vespertilioninae	x	x
<i>Myotis tricolor</i> : Temminck Cape Hairy Bat/Kaapse Langhaarvlermuis.	—	x
<i>Eptesicus capensis capensis</i> : A. Smith Cape Serotine Bat/Kaapse Dakvlermuis.	x	x
<i>Eptesicus hottentotus</i> : A. Smith Long-tailed House Bat/Langstertdakvlermuis.	—	x
<i>Pipistrellus kuhli</i> : Kuhl Kuhl's Pipistrelle/Kuhl se vlermuis. Sub-family Miniopterinae	—	x
<i>Miniopterus schreibersi natalensis</i> : A. Smith Schreiber's Bat/Schreiber se vlermuis. Sub-family Kerivoulinae	x	x
<i>Kerivoula l. lanosa</i> : A. Smith Lesser Woolly Bat/Kleiner Wolhaarvlermuis.	—	x

ORDER — PRIMATES

Sub-Order — ANTHROPOIDEA

Family Cercopithecidae

Sub-family Cercopithecinae

<i>Cercopithecus aethiops pygerythrus</i> : F. Cuvier Vervet Monkey/Blouaap.	x	x
<i>Papio ursinus</i> : Kerr Chacma Baboon/Bobbejaan.	x	x

ORDER — CARNIVORA

Family Canidae

Sub-family Otocyninae

Otocyon m. megalotis: Desmarest x x
 Delande's Fox/Bakoorjakkals.

Sub-family Caninae

Vulpes chama: A. Smith x x
 Silver Fox/Draaijakkals.

Thos m. mesomelas: Schreber x x
 Black-backed Jackal/Rooijakkals.

Lycaon p. pictus: Temminck Extinct x x
 Hunting Dog/Wildehond.

Family Mustelidae

Sub-family Mustelinae

Ictonyx striatus striatus: Perry x x
 Striped Polecat/Stinkmuishond.

Poecilogale a. albinucha: Gray x x
 White-naped weasel/Slangmuishond.

Sub-family Mellivorinae

Mellivora c. capensis: Schreber x x
 Honey Badger/Ratel.

Sub-family Lutrinae

Lutra m. maculicollis: Licht x x
 Spotted-necked otter/Bruinotter.

Aonyx c. capensis: Schinz x x
 Clawless Otter/Groototter.

Family Viverridae

Sub-family Viverrinae

Genetta genetta felina: Thun. x x
 Small-spotted Genet/Kleinkolmuskejaatkat.

Genetta tigrina tigrina: Schreber — x
 Large-spotted Genet/Grootkolmuskejaatkat.

Sub-family Herpestinae

Herpestes ichneumon cafer: Gmelin — ?
 Ichneumon/Grootgrysmuishond.

Herpestes pulverulentus pulverulentus: Wagn x x
 Cape Grey Mongoose/Kleingrysmuishond.

Atilax p. paludinosus: Cuv x x
 Water mongoose/Kommetjiegatmuishond.

Ichneumia albicauda grandis: Thomas x x
 White-tailed Mongoose/Witstert Meerkat.

	Cradock	Uitenhage
<i>Cynictis penicillata</i> : G. Cuvier Red Meerkat/Rooimeerkat.	x	x
<i>Suricata suricata</i> : Schreber Grey Meerkat/Stokstertmeerkat. Family <i>Protelidae</i>	x	x
<i>Proteles c. cristatus</i> : Sparrman Maanhaarjakkals. Family <i>Hyaenidae</i>	x	x
<i>Hyaena brunnea</i> : Thunberg Extinct Brown Hyaena/Strandwolf.	x	x
<i>Crocota crocota</i> : Erxleben Extinct Spotted Hyaena/Gevlekte Hiëna. Family <i>Felidae</i>	x	x
<i>Felis libyca caffra</i> : Desmarest Africa Grey Cat/Vaalboskat.	x	x
<i>Felis nigripes</i> : Burchell Black-footed Cat/Swartpootwildekat.	x	x
<i>Leptailurus serval serval</i> : Schreber Serval/Tierboskat.	—	x
<i>Caracal c. caracal</i> : Schreiber Lynx/Roöikat.	x	x
<i>Panthera pardus pardus</i> Linn Leopard/Tier.	x	x
<i>Leo leo</i> Linnaeus Extinct Lion/Leeu.	x	x
<i>Acinonyx jubatus jubatus</i> : Schreber Extinct Cheetah/Jagluiperd.	x	x

ORDER — TUBULIDENTATA

Family *Orycteropodidae*

<i>Orycteropus afer afer</i> : Pallas Aardvark.	x	x
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ORDER — PROBOSCIDEA

Family *Elephantidae*

<i>Loxodonta africana africana</i> : Blumenbach Elephant/Olifant. Extinct in Cradock	x	x
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	Cradock	Uitenhage
ORDER — HYDROCOIDEA		
Family Procaviidae		
<i>Procavia capensis</i> : Pallas	x	x
Rock Dassie/Klipdas.		
<i>Dendrohyrax arboreus</i> : A. Smith	—	?
Tree Dassie/Bosdas.		
ORDER — PERISSODACTYLA		
Sub-Order — CERATOMORPHA		
Family Rhinocerotidae		
<i>Diceros b. bicornis</i> : Linn	Extinct x	x
Black Rhinoceros/Swartrenoster.		
Sub-Order — HIPPIOMORPHA		
Family Equidae		
<i>Equus z. zebra</i> : Linnaeus	Extinct in Uitenhage x	?
Mountain Zebra/Bergkwagga.		
<i>Equus quagga</i> : Gmelin	Extinct x	x
Quagga/Kwagga.		
ORDER — ARTIODACTYLA		
Sub-Order — SUIFORMES		
Family Suidae		
<i>Potamochoerus porcus koiropotamus</i> : Desmoul	?	x
Bushpig/Bosvark. Extinct in Cradock		
<i>Phacochoerus ae. aethiopicus</i> : Pallas	Extinct x	x
Warthog/Vlakvark.		
Family Hippopotamidae		
<i>Hippopotamus amphibius capensis</i> : Desmoul. Extinct	x	x
Hippopotamus/Seekoei.		
Sub-Order — RUMINANTIA		
Family Bovidae		
<i>Philantomba monticola monticola</i> : Thunberg	—	x
Blue Duiker/Bloubokkie.		
<i>Sylvicapra grimmia</i> : Linnaeus	x	x
Common Duiker/Duikerbok.		
<i>Raphicerus campestris</i> : Thunberg	x	x
Steenbok.		

	Cradock	Uitenhage
<i>Raphicerus melanotis</i> : Thunberg Grysbok.	—	x
<i>Ourebia o. ourebi</i> , Zimm. Oribi/Oorbietjie.	—	x
<i>Oreotragus o. oreotragus</i> : Zimm. Klipspringer.	x	x
<i>Pelea capreolus</i> : Forster Vaal Ribbok.	x	x
<i>Redunca fulvorufula fulvorufula</i> : Afzelius Mountain Reedbuck/Rooiribbok.	x	x
<i>Redunca a. arundinum</i> : Bodd. Extinct Reedbuck/Rietbok.	—	x
<i>Antidorcas m. marsupialis</i> : Zimm. Springbok. Extinct in Uitenhage	x	x
<i>Damaliscus dorcas phillipsi</i> : Harper Blesbok. Extinct but probably re-introduced	x	—
<i>Connochaetes gnou</i> : Zimm. Extinct Black Wildebeest/Swartwildebees.	x	—
<i>Alcelaphus busephalus</i> : G. Cuvier Extinct Red Hartebeest/Rooihartbees.	x	x
<i>Tragelaphus scriptus sylvaticus</i> : Sparr Bushbuck/Bosbok.	—	x
<i>Strepsiceros s. strepsiceros</i> : Pallas Kudu/Koedoe. Extinct in Cradock	?	x
<i>Taurotragus o. oryx</i> : Pallas Eland. Extinct but re-introduced	x	x
<i>Syncerus c. caffer</i> : Sparr Extinct in Cradock African Buffalo/Buffel.	?	x

ORDER — LAGOMORPHA

Family Leporidae

<i>Lepus capensis</i> : Linn. Cape Hare/Vlakhaas.	x	—
<i>Lepus europaeus</i> : Pallas Bush Hare/Kolhaas.	x	x
<i>Pronolagus crassicaudatus</i> : I. Geoffroy Red Hare/Rooihaas.	—	x
<i>Pronolagus rupestris</i> : A. Smith Smith's Red Hare/Smith se Rooihaas.	x	?

ORDER — RODENTIA

Family *Bathyergidae*

<i>Cryptomys hottentotus caecutiens</i> : Brants	x	x
Common Mole-rat/Hotnot se grysmol.		
<i>Cryptomys holosericeus holosericeus</i> : Wagner	x	—
Greater Grey Mole-rat/Groter Grysmol.		
Family <i>Hystricidae</i>		
<i>Hystrix africae-australis africae-australis</i> : Peters	x	x
Porcupine/Ystervark.		
Family <i>Sciuridae</i>		
<i>Xerus inauris</i> : Zimm.	x	—
Ground Squirrel/Waaierstertmeerkat.		
Family <i>Pedetidae</i>		
<i>Pedetes capensis capensis</i> : Foster	x	x
Springhare/Springhaas.		
Family <i>Muscardinidae</i>		
Sub-family <i>Graphiurinae</i>		
<i>Graphiurus ocellaris</i> : A. Smith	x	?
Black & White Dormouse/Gemsbokmuis.		
<i>Claviglis m. murinus</i> : Desmarest	—	x
Forest Dormouse/Boswaaierstertmuis.		
Family <i>Muridae</i>		
Sub-family <i>Murinae</i>		
<i>Grammomys d. dolichurus</i> : Smuts	—	x
Forest Mouse/Bosmuis.		
<i>Rattus rattus rattus</i> : Linn. Introduced	x	x
Black House Rat/Swartrot.		
<i>Rattus (Mastomys) natalensis</i> : A. Smith	x	x
Multimammate Rat/Vaalveldmuis.		
<i>Rattus (Praomys) namaquensis</i> : A. Smith	x	x
Namaqua Rockrat/Namakwalandse Klipmuis.		
<i>Rhabdomys pumilio</i> : Sparrman	x	x
Four-striped Rat/Streepmuis.		
<i>Mus. m. minutoides</i> : A. Smith	x	x
Pygmy Mouse/Dwergmuis.		
<i>Mus. m. musculus</i> : Linn. Introduced	x	x
House Mouse/Huismuis.		
<i>Saccostomus c. campestris</i> : Peters	x	x
Cape Pouched Mouse/Wangsakmuis.		
Sub-family <i>Dendromurinae</i>		

	Cradock	Uitenhage
<i>Steatomys pratensis krebsi</i> : Peters Fat Mouse/Vetmuis.	x	x
<i>Dendromus mesomelas</i> : Brants Chestnut Tree Mouse/Rooiboommuis.	—	x
<i>Dendromus melanotis melanotis</i> : A. Smith Grey Pygmy Tree Mouse/Grysboommuis.	—	x
<i>Malacothrix typica typica</i> : A. Smith Mouse Gerbil/Grootoormuis. Sub-family <i>Otomyinae</i>	x	—
<i>Otomys irroratus</i> : Brants Vlei Rat/Vleirot.	x	x
<i>Otomys saundersiae</i> : Roberts Saunder's Vlei Rat/Kleinvleirot.	—	x
<i>Otomys unisulcatus</i> : F. Cuvier Bush Karoo Rat/Boskarorot.	x	x
<i>Otomys sloggetti</i> : Thomas Ice Rat/Ysrot.	x	—
<i>Parotomys brantsi rufifrons</i> : Wagner Brant's Karoo Rat/Brant se Karorot. Sub-family <i>Cricetinae</i>	x	—
<i>Mystromys albicaudatus</i> : A. Smith White-tailed Rat/Witstertrot. Sub-family <i>Gerbillinae</i>	—	x
<i>Desmodillus auricularis</i> : A. Smith Short-tailed Gerbil/Kortsternnagmuis.	x	x
<i>Gerbillus gerbillus</i> : Olivier Lesser Gerbil/Kleinnagmuis.	x	x
<i>Tatera afra</i> : Gray No records to date		

DISCUSSION ON CERTAIN ANIMALS

The descriptions which follow are in the order given in the letter of appointment. Many of the notes are of such a character that they border on the fantastic but they have been included purposely and evaluated with the intention of trying to place them in their correct perspective.

BLESBOK: *Damaliscus dorcas phillipsi*: Harper.

Uitenhage: No records.

Cradock: No direct records, but must have occurred in the eastern part of the district contiguous to the Tarka where it was known as a very common game antelope.

BONTBOK: Damaliscus dorcas dorcas: Pallas.

Uitenhage: No records.

Cradock: No records. See under the following discussion on the Blesbok-Bontbok controversy.

The Bontbok - Blesbok Controversy

The crux of this controversy may be summed up in the question: Did the bontbok, as we know it today, ever occur among the hordes of blesbok on the high inland plateau of South Africa?

In the past there has been great confusion in both the popular and the scientific nomenclature and, indeed, even today there are differences of opinion as to the classification of these antelopes. It is now generally accepted that their distributions have not overlapped within historic times, but because there have been so many references to bontboks in what may be termed blesbok country, and because the use of both terms has sometimes been applied to descriptions of the bontbok, it is perhaps excusable that a lingering doubt should still creep into the minds of readers of both past and present works.

Added to this, the fact that a well-known stretch of country in the East Cape is known as the "Bontbok Flats", although it is in blesbok country, leads inevitably to the question "If bontbok did not occur there, why is the area known as the Bontbok Flats? Why not Blesbok Flats?" In view of this, extracts from the literature are here assembled and discussed.

The distribution of the bontbok is now accepted as having been the south-western corner of the Cape Province, whereas that of the blesbok was in parts of the north-east high Karoo and grassland of the Eastern Cape, the Orange Free State, parts of Bechuanaland and the Transvaal. There was, therefore, a belt of country some 200 miles at its narrowest, separating the bontbok from the blesbok.

Early Records

The older of the two popular names is, of course, "bontbok" because this animal was the first to be encountered by the earliest settlers in their eastward movement from the Settlement at the Cape, and the name must have been in use throughout the 18th Century. But a crucial question in the unravelling of this point is "When was the term 'blesbok' first used?" There is no satisfactory answer to that question.

By 1778 there were settled farmers beyond the Sneeuwberg Mountains north of where Graaff-Reinet now stands and in what was later recorded as being excellent blesbok country, so that these farmers must indeed have known the animal well. But if they used the term blesbok, they did not put it on paper.

The first truly authenticated use of this word would seem to be that of Burchell (1824:11.335) in a diary entry for 9th July, 1812, on the Makkwarin River in Southern Bechuanaland, but it must obviously have been in conversational use long before this. There is an earlier reference but as it was written in 1856 from memory, it does not qualify as well as Burchell's. Stockenström (1887:1:33) writing of the year 1808, says: ". . . when we descended into the great plains bordering on the Seacow River, the endless droves of the same bucks (i.e. springboks mentioned earlier: C. J. S.) not only, but of wildebeest, quaggas, hartebeest, gemsbok and blesboks were indeed astonishing."

Now although Burchell used the word "Blesbok" it seems certain from his later writings that he did not differentiate it from bontbok. In this work Burchell does not mention the word bontbok at all although, on his way to the north, he had travelled through bontbok country, presumably without seeing them. When writing of the blesbok he went so far as to change its scientific name in order to distinguish the animal from the springbok which had been scientifically incorrectly named by Thunberg, but Harper (1939:89) shows how Burchell was really changing the original name of the bontbok from *A. pygarga* to *A. albifrons* and leaving the later-named springbok with the specific name of *pygargus*. In this he was wrong because *pygarga* as used for the bontbok had priority.

Harper points out that Burchell (1836:5) records shooting near Swellendam, an animal which he referred to as "The blesbok of the colonists, and sometimes bontbok." This animal, shot where it was and later than the above record, must have been a bontbok, as we know it, but it is not without interest that Burchell's original use of the name blesbok was in what we now know to be the true blesbok country, i.e. north of the Orange River, and that he encountered the bontbok afterwards.

This indiscriminate use of both names for either animal was not infrequent. In addition to Burchell (above) Andrew Smith (1833/34:101) and Smuts (1832:73) use both when describing the *Antelope pygarga*, which was then the common systematic name for the bontbok. And it is shown in a great many early journals that the bontbok was well-known and a much discussed animal in the south-west Cape by virtue of its colouration, its conformation, the size and habits of its herds and its edibility.

But on the journey from the western Cape to the eastern and north-eastern Cape, there was that gap of some 200 miles or more wherein neither animal was found. What more natural to the hunter-farmer-trekker, as he then was, than that the first sight of the animals in the east should still be „bontboks" to him — so alike were they to the bontbok he had left behind. Even in Museum specimens, side-by-side, the unpractised eye does not immediately take in the differences. And there can be little doubt that when the fact dawned that there might be some difference, the issue gave rise to many

talking points. One may presume that even at that stage, the absence of the pure white rump need not have been thought adequate reason for calling the animal anything but a bontbok. The dirty-white rump of the blesbok could have deceived the uncritical eye.

Sir Andries Stockenstrom (1887:l:224) who was so intimately connected with events on the Eastern Frontier in an administrative capacity, gives a very clear insight into the way in which the Cape was slowly occupied by the early Dutch farmers. He says: "The encroachment on the aborigines began at Cape Town, and never ceased to extend by degrees until the colonists had got to where they now are; as the leading adventurers advanced their countrymen followed and as a tract of country became what they call full, the more enterprising again moved forward and were followed as before." ". . . The first Sneeuwbergers, or Newvelders, would subsist on these lands throughout the year as long as the country was new, grass and space plentiful and the winters mild; but no sooner would settlers accumulate and unlimited pasturage be restrained than the approach of winter would force down the farmer into the warmer country to preserve his flocks, and as to the south, every good place would be beset by his fellow-adventurers or followers, no alternative would be left than to encroach on the opposite direction. The occupation of the waters drove the game deep into the deserts, and peace having been made with some kraals of Bushmen . . . the mass of that people had followed the game." This suggests that later generations, descendants by some two generations, would not have known the bontbok.

When Stockenstrom wrote he was discussing a period prior to about 1809, when the boundaries of White occupation were from the Kaga Mountains of Bedford in the south to the Tarka and Bamboesberge and thence westwards to the Seacow River. By to-day's geography this would be roughly from Bedford Mountain to Steynsburg, round to Colesberg and then on towards the Orange River via the Seacow River.

The first recorded indication that there was a difference between the antelopes came in 1786 from the pen of Sparrman (1786:ll:219) some 120 years after the first naming of the bontbok by Pallas, and 26 years before Burchell writes of "blesbok". He wrote:—

"The bontbok is not to be found any farther eastward of the Cape than Zwellendam: but a farmer who has been in the country of Tambukie informed me that he had there again seen bontboks, though somewhat different from the above-mentioned." The Tambuckie is shown on Sparrman's own map as north of the Sneezbergen, i.e. Sneeberg. 'Tambuckie' was then still a very generalised term.

This shows that the matter was being discussed, but as yet the idea of a difference was not widespread, because in van Reenen's Journal (1803:23) which describes his journey to the site of the wreck of the Grosvenor on the

Pondoland coast there is a report of "bontboks" being seen near the present town of Cathcart in October, 1790. So, to him, the animals were still bontboks.

Barrow (1801:1:263) writing of the years 1797/98 may also have heard of some difference when he was in that excellent game country between the Sneeu-berg Mountains and the Orange River because he writes:—

"Upon the plains of the Sea-Cow river were springboks in countless troops, hartebeeste and bontboks. The last antelope is marked the same as the *scripta* of the *Systema Naturae*: but the brown colour is darker and the animal considerably smaller than the bontbok of Swellendam". N.B. the Sea-Cow River mentioned here is the one north of Sneeu-berg.

His descriptions, although indicating that he *might* have been aware of a difference are too vague and misleading. His reference to *scripta* indicates that he was using the name given to the bontbok in 1788 by Thunberg who thereby had introduced another confusing element into this already confused tale. Barrow is not always reliable, but was remarkably observant when the conditions of the times are taken into account.

That Barrow was alive to the bontbok is shown when he writes of Swellendam (*op cit.* p. 350):

"Formerly the Bontbok, the *Scripta* of the *Systema Naturae*, was almost as numerous near the Drosdy as the Springbuck still continues to be in the Sneeu-berg. At present they are rarely seen in troops exceeding a dozen."

Barrow in his map shows bontboks in two places in the coastal strip south of the Swellendam mountain ranges but not anywhere else until, just south of the Orange River at what would today be the Colesberg district. Despite the possible doubt in his mind, expressed above, he was not entirely converted to their being blesboks because in his Volume II:373 he remarks that bontboks were plentiful in the ". . . divisions of the Snowy Mountains", and on p. 376 he gives them as common in the Tarka which was to the eastwards and close to the Bontbok Flats as we know them. So it may be presumed that the term blesbok was not then in regular use.

Mention has already been made of Burchell's use of the term "blesbok" in 1812 which is the next reference in the sequence of extracts studied.

Moodie (1835:1:283) is the next to refer to it. Writing of the decade 1819/29 and after mentioning the bontbok at Swellendam, he remarks "there is, indeed, another kind of antelope known by the name of bonte-bok or spotted buck, on the frontiers of the settlement, but it is of a totally distinct species." In 1823 Thompson (copy undated Vol. I p. 95) travelled from Grahamstown to a little north of the Sneeu-berg via Somerset East, Cradock, Graaff-Reinet, and met the large herds of game on the northern slopes of the Sneeu-berg only. He says: "Among the antelopes I found a species only found in this quarter and called the blesbok. It much resembles the bontbok which is found in the vicinity of Swellendam."

On his return journey from the Orange River area, he travelled on the east of the regular route and came via the mountains north of Cradock where he crossed the "Brakke River" and stayed at the farm of one Olivier. He writes, p. 177: "We returned from a plain literally covered with wild animals, having only shot two springboks and a paauw. Among the herd of springboks which we noticed, the farmer pointed out one of the species called bless or blaze-bok; a description of antelope which, from having once been numerous, is now becoming exceedingly scarce, and only found in the remote districts, unless the bontbok, *A. pygarga*, of Pallas, still found in the vicinity of Swellendam, should prove to be the same animal, and against the shooting of which a prohibition has been issued in order to prevent the total extinction of the species."

It seems obvious that at about this time the picture was beginning to clarify, but confusion was nevertheless rife and was made more so by Cornwallis Harris (1839) whose remarks are included in some detail to emphasise the train of thought of the time. These must be read against the background of the fact that his journeys in 1836/37 began at Algoa Bay, went northwards via Graaff-Reinet to Kuruman, turned to the eastwards into the Transvaal and returned via the western Orange Free State and Graaff-Reinet to Algoa Bay. In other words he had not seen a true bontbok before he went north and described the animals he encountered.

On his return from Mosilikatse's country (p. 287) he crossed the Vaal and the Nama-Hari or Donkin R. and on 25th December he describes "... large troops of Blesbuck (*Gazella albifrons*. Delineated in the African views) or white-faced Antelopes, a pied species that we had rarely met with before, likewise chequered the scene." On p. 288 he mentions herds of blesboks busily licking the crystallised efflorescence. He killed a lot. On p. 302 he describes how his party trekked southwards (perhaps S.W.) until they came to a "stream of great promise", which ultimately proved to be the "... 'Gy Koup' or 'Vet Rivier' of the emigrants — rising near the missionary station of Umpukani, and also a tributary to the Likwa . . . (i.e. the Vaal, C. J. S.). At every step incredible herds of bontbok bucks (*Gazella pygarga*, Delineated in the African Views) blesbucks and springbucks with troops of gnoos, and squadrons of the common stripeless quaggas were performing their complicated evolutions." Note that he even gives them their systematic name and mentions the blesboks as well. They continued southwards through what is now the Western Orange Free State and the following record, p. 307, relates to the country between the Vet and Modder Rivers:—

"In many places the ground was strewn with the blanched skeletons of Gnoos and other wild animals which had evidently been slaughtered by Bushmen . . . the base of one hill in particular . . . presenting the appearance of a Golgotha — several hundred Gnoos and Bontibucks' skulls being collected in

a single heap." (It is unlikely that he could have distinguished the skull of a bontbok from that of a blesbok, so this reference is meaningless, C. J. S.)

He continues: "The Bontibuck is the 20th and last known species of the Antelope tribe that is to be met with in Southern Africa, remote from the sea-coast. It was formerly common in the Cape Colony, and a few are even still preserved in the district of Swellendam, a fine of 500 Rix dollars being attached to their destruction unless by special licence from the Government. In point of shape and size the Bontbok bears a close resemblance to the Blesbuck, being equally robust, hump-backed and broad-nosed: but it is more remarkably pie-bald, the legs being perfectly white and the horns black, instead of being black-coloured. The two animals have, in common, a broad blaze down the face, a glazed blue back and fiery red eyes. The horns are placed vertically on the summit of the head, and both species alike invariably scour against the wind, with their noses close to the ground. Numbers of these antelopes had fallen to our rifles during the last few days . . ."

It should be noted that Harris, coming down from the Transvaal and having his initial glimpse of the animals, first called them "blesbucks", and from his writings he certainly seems to give the impression that he could distinguish bontbok from blesbok — indeed he mentions herds of them side by side near the Likwa (Vaal) River. And he goes even further and draws rough field distinctions between them. On p. 389 of his book which was published in 1839, he shows appreciation of the difference between them because he gives adequate descriptions, that of the blesbok being the first description of that animal. But did he really see the difference when in the veld? In his distribution notes he writes (a) of the blesbok: "Very gregarious. Inhabits the plains south of the Vaal River in immense herds", and (b) of the bontbok: "Gregarious. Still found in Zoetendal's Valley near Cape Agulhas. Common in the interior."

If what Harris has written is considered reliable, then the occurrence of the bontbok is established. But is that a reasonable assumption?

Harris's book is not a diary but was written after he had left South Africa. For instance the date upon which he saw the ". . . several hundred gnooks' and bontiboks' skulls being collected in a single heap" was 1 January, 1837. He wrote the foreword to his book in 1838 and the book was published in 1839. Therefore it is not clear whether his descriptions in the Appendix were written in the light of later knowledge or whether he, on his travels, had merely accepted the field names of the antelopes as used by the inhabitants without critically studying the matter. And from what did he compile his descriptions? At the beginning of the Appendix of descriptions and under the order *Ferae* he has a footnote: "With a few deviations, I have followed the classification adopted by Dr. Smith in his copious African Zoology. The

descriptions have all been drawn up from numerous specimens killed by myself."

He does not indicate that this applies to all his descriptions. Frederick Courtenay Selous studied this matter thoroughly and expressed himself in many writings, one of which (1908:37) is very much to the point.

"Owing to the fact that the early Dutch settlers at the Cape first met with the antelopes which they called bontboks on the plains near Cape Agulhas and subsequently at first gave the same name to the nearly allied species which was discovered about 100 years later in the neighbourhood of the Orange River, although these latter were undoubtedly blesboks and not bontboks, a great confusion arose between these two nearly allied species, which I think that I was the first to clear up when I contributed to the 'Great and Small Game of Africa' published by Rowland Ward, Ltd. in 1899. I cannot go into all the arguments I there used but there can be no doubt that the animals which Captain (afterwards Sir Cornwallis Harris) first met with on the Bontbok flats near the Orange River in the Colesberg division of the Cape Colony were blesboks and not bontboks, and that all the millions of antelopes of the same species which he subsequently saw north of the Orange River and thought to be bontboks were also all blesboks, and that he never saw a bontbok at all until after his return to the Cape, when he made a special journey to Cape Agulhas to secure specimens of that species, as he was "anxious to ascertain whether the animal rigorously protected in the neighbourhood of Cape Agulhas differed in any respect from that found in the interior, as pretended by the Colonists."

Lydekker (1908:122) writing of this theme quotes an extract from Selous' own writings as follows: "They (i.e. the Boers) however, confused the two species; those who had had some acquaintance with or knew something about bontbok calling them new species by the old name while the majority (who had never seen or heard of bontboks) gave it the name of blesbok — from the broad white blaze down the face. A confusion thus arose which caused Cornwallis Harris to believe that both occurred north of the Orange River. One reason why I consider it impossible that bontboks and blesboks could have co-existed in the same district is because the two are so closely allied that they would inevitably have inter-bred and become fused into a species more or less intermediate between the two."

Selous' above remarks were made 70 years after Harris' and are today acceptable. It is significant that in support of this argument no less a person than Gordon Cumming (1909:130) in 1848 (i.e. only ten years after Harris) travelled the same western Orange Free State area, viz., near the Vetrivier, and saw ". . . one purple mass of blesboks . . ." and again ". . . a continued stream of blesboks may often be seen . . . covering the landscape as far as the eye can see . . ." and ". . . I resolved to recross the Vaal River and bend

my course for the land of blesboks, a large and beautiful violet-coloured antelope, which is found together with the black wildebeests and springboks in countless multitudes on the vast green plains of short-sour grass about 150 miles to the eastward of my position . . ."

When he reached well-populated blesbok country he tells of their great numbers. On p. 143: "Its colour is similar to that of the Sassaby, its skin being beautifully painted with every shade of purple, violet and brown. The belly is of the purest white, and a broad white band, or 'blaze' adorns the entire length of the face." N.B. No mention is made of the white rump and the word "bontbok" is not used.

It becomes obvious when reading his book that he knew the blesbok well. He shot a great many and he had a high regard for them as animals. Like Harris he had travelled only in "blesbok country" but his experience was ultimately much more extensive because he made several expeditions in search of ivory, skins, etc., whereas Harris went but once, travelling from his headquarters at Grahamstown, to Bechuanaland, the Transvaal and back. Cumming earned his living by his gun. Yet not once does he refer to bontbok in that area. Surely if they were so common he, of all people, would have come to know them, in everyday conversation if nothing else?

In 1889 there came the work of Bryden whose writings have been much followed. He writes (p. 276): "When the emigrant Dutch farmers quitted Cape Colony and crossed the Orange River they found, in the country now called the Orange Free State, the bontbok pasturing upon the plains in still greater plenty. In company with blesboks, springboks, white-tailed gnu, quaqua and ostriches literally darkened the face of the land. Their numbers seemed as inexhaustible as the sands of the seashore; yet between 1840 and 1870 the skin-hunting Boers wrought their downfall. It is believed that not a single bontbok is now to be found in the Orange Free State, or indeed anywhere north of the Orange River . . . its range never seems, indeed, to have extended beyond the Vaal River . . ."

On p. 295 he states that one of its last resorts was on the Bontbok Flats to the north (he meant south — C. J. S.) of the present Queenstown district, and he goes on to say that he was told by a Mr. J. B. Evans of Rietfontein (which from his description was on the borders of the Jansenville and Aberdeen districts, i.e. outside both bontbok and blesbok country) that in 1851 there were only 17 or 18 left on the Bontbok Flats. It seems that most of Bryden's references are from hearsay. By that time he should have been in possession of more satisfactory evidence and he was probably influenced by the writings of Harris as indeed were many others who followed him.

The Bontbok Flats

Because this name figures so often in early writings as a place abounding

in game and because the name would seem to establish the fact that bontbok occurred there, an attempt has been made to ascertain the history of this area.

The boundaries to the west and north were the great loop of the Swart Kei river; in the east the boundary was a rough line from the Windvogelberg behind Cathcart to the Swart Kei, in a north-westerly direction, and the southern boundary was the escarpment of the Amatole Mountains. Some records include Tarka. This is probable in so far as the eastern portion of Tarka is concerned, because Tarkastad district is adjacent to the Queenstown district, in the southern half of which the Bontbok Flats are to be found. The present village of Whittlesea (established 1836 and about 21 miles south of Queenstown) stands in the centre of this area.

Selous makes a passing reference to the Colesberg district being on the Bontbok Flats, but although the boundaries are somewhat arbitrary, his reference stretches the generalisation too far. The true area must have been about 1250 square miles in extent or roughly 50 x 25 miles.

The first reference to anything resembling the term Bontbok Flats came from van Reenen (1792), when on his trip from the Western Cape to the Scene of the wreck of the East Indiaman "The Grosvenor". His party climbed the Amatole escarpment and trekked across the eastern corner of the area. On page 23 he writes: "We this day had travelled the distance of ten hours, and had seen Bonte-bucks, two lions and other wild beasts." That was on Tuesday 5th October, 1790. The next day, the 6th, he writes: "travelling onward, we proceeded this day eight hours to a great river called the White Key." From the map which is not very accurate, these "bontboks" would have been seen somewhere near the present town of Cathcart. On the return journey after visiting the scene of the wreck of "The Grosvenor", and on 19 December 1790, he says (p. 43): "We now passed the Black Key River, having travelled in the course of the day, eight hours". On the 20th he continues: "Pursuing our journey, we arrived in the Bonte-buck plain, and shot several bontebucks". He describes these in a footnote as "A large animal of the deer kind". But note the use of the words ' . . . in the Bonte-buck plain'.

The question now arises: Did van Reenen use this term because it was then in common use? Or was he merely referring loosely to the plain where he had seen bontebok on his upward journey two months before? It was certainly at much the same spot.

On this point indebtedness must be expressed to Prof. P. R. Kirby, who whilst occupied in studying Jacob van Reenen's trek, had access to an original manuscript in Dutch and who, although his work on this subject is still in Press, has most kindly permitted the quoting here of this relevant passage in its original Dutch. It is: "quamen in de bonte boks vlakke . . . schoten verschiede bonte bokken . . ."

Because the words 'bonte' and 'boks' are separated van Reenen may

have merely been referring to 'pied bucks' but because, before setting out on this expedition, he had been living at Riversdale it is more than likely that he knew the bontbok because it was still to be seen in the neighbourhood of Swellendam. What more natural, then, that on seeing animals which looked so like them at Cathcart he should enter them as bontbok in his diary. He need not have known that the name 'blesbok' was evolving in the Agter Sneeuvelde.

On the use of the term 'bontbok vlakte' the surmise is that he did not intentionally use this name because it was in common usage. There was no white occupation there at that time. Stockenstrom (1887:1:41) in 1809 trekked over what is now the Bontbok Flats but never mentions the name. He says: "The whole country between the Tarka and the Kubusie was altogether uninhabited, being then called and considered Bushman country. We did not in the whole of this extent see a human (the few remaining Bushmen keeping aloof in the mountains) except a petty Tambookie chief . . ." What is more, Stockenstrom does not mention seeing any game. Even up to 1856, when he was writing his memoirs and describing, therein, how intimately he was connected with the Tambookie problem he does not mention the name Bontbok Flats. As regards the occupation of the Bontbok Flats, there were no settled European farmers there up to 1850. It was Tambookie Country. Shiloh Mission had been established in 1828 and of course there were farmers on the western boundary in the Tarka. To the south, in the Kat and Koonap Valleys, settlers had been established in 1829, Coloureds and Hottentots in the former and English and Dutch near the latter, while in the Baviaans River Valley the Scotch settlers were established in 1820. There were also small garrisons under the mountain so it is without doubt that the farmers and soldiers must have ventured on to the flats on hunting excursions.

Steedman (1835:1:209) writing of Balfour in the Kat River Valley says: "Mr. Thomson informed me that immediately at the back of this range of mountains about eight hours ride from his dwelling, the Moravian brethren had recently commenced a Missionary Station among the Tambookies, called Silva (he must mean Shiloh, C. J. S.) . . . A bold and lofty mountain fixes the boundary of this settlement on the summit of which was a tract of level country of vast extent, called the Bonte-bok Vlekt stretching to the northward in the Tambookie district, and inhabited by almost every variety of antelope known in Southern Africa, from the little blouw-bok, or pigmy antelope (in the Katberg forest, no doubt, C. J. S.) which seldom exceeds ten inches in height, to the antelope oreas (or eland, C. J. S.) as tall as the common ox . . . an animal now only found beyond the limits of the Colony."

After studying the literature and assessing the probable trends of thought of past times it seems evident that the area has been misnamed, based on the use of the original name bontbok to which the blesbok became heir.