

The IUCN/SSC Afrotheria Specialist Group

The IUCN/SSC Afrotheria Specialist Group facilitates the conservation of hyraxes, the aardvark, sengis, golden-moles, tenrecs, and their habitats by:

- providing sound scientific advice and guidance to conservationists, governments, and other interested groups;
- raising public awareness; and
- developing research and conservation programmes.



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The Afrotheria Specialist Group Is Concerned With 76 Species Of Mammals From Africa And Madagascar



1 Aardvark



33 Tenrecs



21 Golden Moles



5 Hyraxes



16 Sengis

One quarter are Threatened, and several others are NearThreatened
or too Data Deficient to categorize

Aardvark (Tubulidentata)

- The last living species of its Order, it used to be considered a relative of anteaters from South America, but this was only based on superficial resemblances due to convergent evolution.
- Weighs up to 60 kg and occurs across most of Africa south of the Sahara.
- Aardvark distribution is not well known and might be defined by the abundance and distribution of its ant and termite prey.



Golden Moles (Chrysochloridae)

- Linnaeus first describe golden moles nearly 250 years ago, yet knowledge of these blind, subterranean small mammals is still limited.
- The greatest diversity of golden moles is in southern Africa.
- 10 golden mole species are threatened due to habitat degradation from mining, urbanization, agricultural development, or poor management of indigenous forests.



Hyraxes (Hyracoidea)

- Fossil and morphological evidence shows these animals have similarities with elephants and seacows, the other two afrotherian taxa.
- The Eastern Tree Hyrax is heavily hunted for its fur in the forest belt around Mt. Kilimanjaro.
- Because forests are disappearing at an alarming rate in Africa, the Tree Hyraxes are probably the most at risk of all hyraxes.



Sengis or Elephant-shrews (Macroscelidea)

- Sengis occur from deserts to dense forests, but are absent from the Sahara and West Africa.
- Sengis are mostly ant and termite eaters, but many of their life history traits are antelope-like.
- The four species of giant sengi are Threatened or at risk due to forest destruction and fragmentation.



Tenrecs (Tenrecidae)

- The most diverse group of afrotheres, with terrestrial, aquatic, fossorial, and arboreal species.
- The largest species, the tailless tenrec produces litters of up to 32 young.
- The 7 Threatened species require conservation of rainforests and river systems in western Africa and Madagascar.



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Main Threats To Afrotheres

- Habitat loss and fragmentation.



- Incidental capture and subsistence hunting for fur and meat.

Conservation Actions Needed for Afrotheres

- Forest and riverine habitat conservation and restoration in Africa and Madagascar.
- Ecological surveys to establish distribution, abundance, and conservation status of poorly known species.



- Develop and implement action plans for Threatened afrotheres.

AFROTHERIA SPECIALIST GROUP



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