



# Genetta genetta

Common name: **Common Genet**Latin name: **Genetta genetta**

Local name: قط الزباد



## ECOLOGY

Type:

**Wild****Role in Ecosystem:**

Given its reliance on small rodents as the main energetic intake, the species is likely to play a role in controlling rodent populations and potential vectors of zoonosis. It may also play a secondary role in seed dispersal.

## HABITAT

Common Genet is a widespread species, occurring on the northern Saharan fringe (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and possibly Lybia), and then in open and dry savanna zones throughout sub-Saharan Africa in three large blocks, corresponding roughly to West Africa, East Africa and southern Africa (Delibes and Gaubert 2013). Also occurs in coastal regions of Arabia, Yemen and Oman.

The Common Genet tends to prefer all types of wooded habitats (deciduous and evergreen), where it is often associated with rivers and brooks, but it is a generalist and can be found in other habitats where there is suitable prey. It avoids open habitats, but may occur even in small fragments of woodland in farmland or near villages, and usually is absent from rainforests, dense woodlands and woodland-moist savanna. Is not uncommonly found in proximity to human buildings, people and their domestic animals, which could have implications for disease transmission.

**Food****Carnivore**

The Common Genet feeds mainly on small mammals, but will also take birds, other small vertebrates, insects, and fruits.

**Movement and Communication**

Both male and female scent marks in their home ranges. Females mark their territory using scent glands on their flanks, hind legs, and perineum. Males mark less frequently than females, often spraying urine, rather than using their scent glands, and do so primarily during the breeding season. Scent marks by both sexes allow individuals to identify other genets' reproductive and social status. Common genets also defecate at specific latrine sites, which are often located at the edge of their territories, and perform a similar function to other scent marks.

Five communication calls have been reported. The hiccup call indicates friendly interactions; it is used by males during the mating period and by females to call the litter. Kits purr during their first week of life and, during their dependent weeks, moan or mew. Kits also growl after the complete development of predatory behavior and during aggressive interactions. Finally, genets utter a click as a threat. The clicks, or, in younger individuals, growls, are used to indicate aggression. Threatening behavior consists of erection of the dark central dorsal band of hair, an arched-back stance, opening the mouth, and baring the teeth.

Although they're good climbers, common genets spend most of their time on the ground, only ascending trees to look for food or to escape danger. When walking, they hold their bodies close to the ground and their tails horizontal. To travel long distances, they typically follow roads, game tracks, or dry streambeds.

**Social Habits****Solitary**

Genets are primarily solitary animals, though male and female ranges may overlap. Individuals of the same sex have exclusive territories. They are nocturnal and only rarely appear during the day.

They are stealth hunters, much like cats, and kill with a quick bite to the neck. Their sharp claws allow them to pin prey and make them excellent climbers.

**Reproduction****Viviparous**

The breeding season varies across regions. In West, East, and southern Africa common genets breed during the wet seasons. In North Africa and Europe, they breed during spring and autumn. In the courtship stage of mating, (which has only been studied in captivity), the male increases his scent marking frequency while the female decreases hers. Females reach sexual maturity at two years of age and gestate for 10 to 11 weeks. They give birth in hollow trees or abandoned burrows to one to four young. At birth, young genets weigh two to three ounces (60 to 85 g) and gain weight slowly. At 45 days after birth, the young begin eating solid food, though they do not start hunting until fully developed at 18 weeks. The mother provides milk to her young until they become successful hunters.

**Attributes****Weight**

Male: 3.5 to 5.0 lbs (1.6 to 2.3 kg)

Female: 3 to 5 lbs (1.4 to 2.3 kg)

**Size**

Male: 34 to 41 in (86 to 105 cm) long, including tail

Female: 34 to 41 in (86 to 105 cm) long, including tail

## INTRODUCTION

The Common Genet is a widespread species, occurring on the northern Saharan fringe (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and possibly Lybia), and then in open and dry savanna zones throughout sub-Saharan Africa in three large blocks, corresponding roughly to West Africa, East Africa and southern Africa.

The species is mainly hunted for its fur for decorative purposes but they are eaten by people in some localities. Body parts are used for perfume and medicinal purposes while skins are used for the manufacture of karosses.

## LIVELIHOODS AND CULTURE

**Human interaction**

The species is mainly hunted for its fur for decorative purposes but they are eaten by people in some localities. Body parts are used for medicinal purposes while skins are used for the manufacture of karosses.

A genet was among presents sent by the leader of the Funj Sultanate to Mohamed Ali Pasha in 1813. Even though it did not survive the journey to Egypt, this shows that genets were considered highly prized at the time.

**Cultural value**

Genet skin and scent glands are used in the making of sudanese local perfumes.

**Cultural expression**

"Galad" is the leather of the genet that is used as an aromatic substance. It is also used to make galad necklaces which is distinguished by its special fragrance. The word galad is used in traditional poetry and local songs. "Eigd Algalad" is a well-known Sudanese singing band.

## THREATS

Locally, Common Genets have been and are still killed for their meat, body parts, skin and fur. Common Genet is listed as Least Concern as it has a wide distribution on the African continent and extraliminally. It has a very broad habitat tolerance, and is present in numerous protected areas.

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