

# The moult pattern of some southern African Soricidae

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Les changements de pelage dans la nature chez *Crocidura flavescens*, *C. hirta*, *C. mariquensis* et *Myosorex varius* sont présentés. Chez toutes ces espèces la mue d'automne s'effectue entre mars et juin, de l'arrière vers l'avant. La mue de printemps, chez la plupart d'entre elles, s'effectue entre août et janvier, et de l'avant vers l'arrière. En captivité les mues sont déréglées.

Les variations saisonnières de la longueur du poil de trois espèces (*C. flavescens*, *C. hirta*, *M. varius*) sont présentées.

The moult patterns of some European and North American shrews have been extensively studied by *inter alia* Hamilton (1931, 1940a, 1940b, 1944), Borowski (1952, 1958, 1963, 1968), Crowcroft (1955), Skaren (1973), Fons (1974) and Pernetta (1976). Data for African shrews are restricted to a single species *Myosorex cafer* studied by Meester (1958). Consequently, when the general biology of some southern African shrews was investigated, a study of the moult patterns was included. Reported here are the patterns of *Crocidura f. flavescens* (I. Geoffroy, 1827), *C. h. hirta* (Peters, 1852), *C. m. mariquensis* (A. Smith, 1944) and *Myosorex varius* (Smuts, 1832).

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

Wild moult patterns of autumn (post-juvenile) and spring moults were studied in prepared skins from the Transvaal Museum and the Smithsonian Institution. A series of *C. flavescens* skins from Port St Johns and Ngqeleni, another of *C. hirta* from Ndola, Zambia and a number of samples of *M. varius* from Manicaland, Haenertsburg, Houtbosdorp, Magoebaskloof, Hardingdale and the Drakenberg were examined. Casual examinations of *C. mariquensis* moult patterns were made using skins from a variety of localities.

Moult data on captive *C. flavescens* were obtained from weekly records of the moult patterns of all captive individuals over a three-month period from autumn to early winter. The latter study was discontinued when it became apparent that the observed patterns were not indicative of wild moult patterns. Data for captive *C. hirta* and *M. varius* were obtained from random observations of a number of captive animals.

Hair length measurements were taken on the rump (after Meester, 1958).