

Il faut noter que de telles variations ne s'observent ni sur la M¹ ni sur la M² dont la morphologie est génétiquement bien fixée et très caractéristique du genre *Holochilus*. Comme le fait remarquer Hershkovitz (*op. cit.*), il faut noter également que cette variabilité de la 3^e molaire supérieure contraste avec la stabilité du dessin sigmoïde de la 3^e molaire inférieure.

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HYENA PREDATION ON AN ADULT MALE BABOON

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This is a report of the capture and killing of an adult male yellow baboon (*Papio cynocephalus*) by a spotted hyena (*Crocuta crocuta*) in the Amboseli National Park, Kenya, in late January of 1979. To the best of our knowledge, such a predator-prey relationship has never before been described for these two species, although cases of predation on baboons by striped hyenas (*Hyaena hyaena*) have been previously noted. The predation event was observed at the eastern margin of Lake Amboseli in the course of ecological studies being carried out on a group of 42 baboons. Vegetation in the area consisted primarily of dense thickets of sapling *Acacia xanthophloea* with intervening open areas of low halophytic grasses.

At 1008h on 26 January, alarm barks, screams, and the rapid movement of individuals caught our attention. The baboons ran into a small clearing, with a single spotted hyena running closely behind one of the younger adult males (male Dogo); neither animal appeared to be sprinting at top speed. The pair went out of sight for approximately 20 seconds, and when resighted, the male baboon was on his back, being dragged about by the hyena. The hyena had a firm bite on one of the male's distal hindlimbs; although the male made thrashing movements, he was not observed to bite the hyena, and his defensive actions seemed ineffectual. The male did, however, have blood of unknown origin around his mouth and muzzle.

When the predation commenced, all observable juvenile baboons ascended nearby *Acacia* trees or shrubs, while several adult animals, both males and females,

remained on the ground near the site of the interaction. Although these other baboons alarm-barked repeatedly, only one individual made an overt attempt to aid the victim of the attack. In this instance, an adult female (female Lulu) ran up to and bit the hyena in the rump several times. When the hyena eventually turned toward the female, however, she ran away. At this point, the hyena grasped Dogo's forelimbs in its jaws, then bit him several times around the neck and muzzle, using both twisting and pulling actions in the process. Dogo's head was covered with blood, and he flailed about weakly; he appeared dazed and almost unconscious. By 1015h the hyena had picked up Dogo's body by the hindquarters, and carried it about 250 meters from the nearest members of the baboon group. No baboons followed, and the frequency of alarm barks subsided, increasing briefly only when the hyena paused enroute and looked back toward the group. The hyena then began to feed on the carcass. About 15 minutes later, an adult male baboon began a progression away from the general area of the predation event, and the group resumed their normal daytime activities.

Discussion.

Several points are of interest in connection with the observed predation of a spotted hyena on a yellow baboon. First, Dogo was both a young (7 yr.) and small adult male, and consistently remained at the periphery of the group. Secondly, group members gave little aid to their conspecific during the encounter, and in particular, no organized group defensive action occurred. Further, the solitary female who did counterattack the hyena had no known genealogical relationship to Dogo. Although Dogo's mother was in close proximity to the scene, she offered no assistance to her son; nor did either of Dogo's two known siblings, both females. The aiding female, Lulu, was sexually cycling at the time of the attack, as were both Dogo's mother and eldest sister.

The spotted hyena takes a broad range of sizes and species of mammalian prey, but predominantly ungulate species (Kruuk, 1972). Primates are probably not a highly significant component of their normal diet. Baboons occupy the safety of sleeping trees during the major nocturnal activity period of hyenas. Kruuk (1972) reported that the 1000h time period was one of virtual inactivity for spotted hyenas in Serengeti and Ngorongoro, and that most food obtained during the midday period was scavenged rather than run down. Additionally, during most predations by hyenas, head and neck bites as used on the baboon male occurred much less frequently than disembowelment (Kruuk, 1972). Although hyenas must usually cooperate to bring down larger prey, the above-described episode demonstrates that a lone individual can effectively cope with the strength and canines of an adult male baboon.

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