

SEX AND AGE DETERMINATION OF THE GRASSCUTTER

(Thryonomys swinderianus Temminck)

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Abstract

Large collections of grasscutter (2546) at three bush meat processing centres and grasscutter reared in captivity (36) from day old were used as specimens for characterizing sex and age.

Resulting from gross body morphology, six differences due to sex were identified i.e. the head, the position of external genitalia, presence or absence of teat, vulva, the penis and the testis. The distance between urinogenital protuberance and anus in the male grasscutter was significantly ($P < 0.01$) longer than that of the female ($X = 2.74 \pm 0.39\text{cm}$ for male and $0.48 \pm 0.07\text{cm}$ for the female). Sex differentiation was not influenced by study sites.

A combination of the status of the vulva, mammary glands and colour of the ventral side of the female animals, the status of the scrotal sac patch and pigment, penis and testicles of male grasscutter were used to ascertain the maturity statues of the grasscutter. Thus three age classes viz: immaturae or juvenile, subadult and adult were depicted on the field.

Keywords:

Sex, Age, Grasscutter